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Public Policy as an Arena for Meaning Production: An Analysis of the Circuit of Culture in Car Free Night Huma Betang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze Car Free Night Huma Betang as a public policy practice operating within symbolic and communicative domains. Since its launch in June 2025 by the Provincial Government of Central Kalimantan, Car Free Night Huma Betang has functioned not only as an initiative for public space management and community recreation, but also as an arena for the representation of Dayak culture and the formation of regional public identity. This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were obtained from digital audiovisual content, online media coverage, and published reports in digital news platforms. The analysis is conducted using the Circuit of Culture framework, which comprises five interconnected moments: regulation, representation, production, consumption, and identity. The findings indicate that the Car Free Night Huma Betang policy operates as a mechanism of cultural meaning production involving government institutions, media, cultural actors, and the public. Policy regulation serves as a symbolic foundation that frames the direction of Dayak cultural representation. Cultural representations are selectively constructed through media narratives and public spaces. The process of cultural production involves art communities and micro, small, and medium enterprises within the broader framework of regional development policy. Cultural consumption by the public, both through direct participation and digital media, functions as a source of social legitimacy for the policy.

Keyword: Public Policy; Policy Communication; Circuit of Culture; Car Free Night Huma Betang, Dayak Culture

INTRODUCTION

Amid the strengthening of cultural globalization and the increasingly pervasive penetration of symbolic capitalism, the sustainability of local cultural identity faces increasingly complex structural challenges. Globalization operates not only in the economic and political domains but also shapes the symbolic field through the circulation of values, lifestyles, and cultural representations that tend to be homogenized and globally oriented (Amin, 2024; Appadurai, 2013; Couldry & Hepp, 2017; Dąbrowski & Środa-Murawska, 2022; Hesmondhalgh, 2019). Local culture is often reduced to a tourism commodity or symbolic artifact detached from its social and historical meanings, potentially resulting in depoliticization and decontextualization (Barker & Jane, 2016; Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

The development of digital and mass media has further accelerated this process by creating new spaces of representation. Media function not merely as channels for cultural distribution but also actively frame which representations gain legitimacy and visibility in the public sphere. Consequently, individuals' perceptions of culture are shaped not only through linear transmission from one generation to the next, but also through processes of production, negotiation, and consumption involving government, markets, media, and civil society (Gay et al., 2013; Hardy, 2021; Hesmondhalgh, 2019; McGuigan, 2021; Murdock, 2021).

Understanding culture as a social construction has important implications for how public space is viewed. Public space can no longer be understood merely as a physical place where people gather, but rather as a discursive arena in which various interests, narratives, and cultural symbols interact (Low & Smart, 2020; Madanipour, 2017). Therefore, various public policy initiatives, particularly those initiated by government, serve a symbolic function in regulating and producing cultural meaning in public space.

In Public Administration scholarship, public policy is generally understood as a technocratic instrument for achieving development goals. However, interpretive approaches emphasize that policy also operates as a symbolic device that frames social reality through language, symbols, and practices of representation (Boussaguet & Faucher, 2024; Dodge & Metze, 2024). Thus, public policy not only regulates human behavior but also shapes social and cultural meaning. At this point, policy can be understood as a site of meaning production that simultaneously shapes the relationship between government, identity, and society.

At the empirical level, the dynamics of policy as a space for meaning-making can be observed in local government policy practices, including those in Central Kalimantan Province. According to data from Statistics Indonesia's Central Kalimantan Province office, the province has a heterogeneous demographic structure comprising several ethnic groups, with the Dayak people being the dominant ethnic group in the region. The Dayak are an ethnic group and a marker of Indigenous communities inhabiting the island of Borneo (Suswandari et al., 2022). The Dayak play an essential symbolic role in the sociocultural dynamics and regional development of Central Kalimantan Province. This situation encourages local governments to integrate cultural dimensions into various public policies, not only to preserve culture but also as part of local social and economic development strategies.

One concrete manifestation of this policy is the organization of Car Free Night Huma Betang. This activity is held regularly every Saturday night and combines public-space management, the promotion of Dayak culture, and the strengthening of the local economy through micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). It functions not merely as a recreational activity involving the closure of roads to motor vehicles, but also as a social space where Dayak culture is represented and exchanged through various mediums, including

performing arts, traditional cuisine, handicraft products, and visual symbols such as Dayak ethnic clothing and ornaments.

In practice, Car Free Night Huma Betang involves various actors whose roles are intertwined, ranging from the local government as regulator and facilitator, MSME operators as cultural and economic producers, and art communities as agents of representation, to residents and visitors as consumers and interpreters of meaning. These interactions make the event a space for symbolic negotiation in which the meaning of Dayak culture is produced, presented, and reinterpreted in a contemporary context.

To examine this complexity, the Circuit of Culture theory is used as the analytical foundation for investigating the phenomenon. The theory views culture as a circular process comprising five interconnected moments: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Edwards & Hodges, 2011; Gay et al., 2013; Novianty, 2024; Pratiwi & Perdana, 2019; Wulandari, 2024). Using these components, Car Free Night Huma Betang can be examined through the Circuit of Culture framework. First, Dayak cultural representation appears through symbols and performances curated in public space. Second, production involves local actors who translate culture into forms accessible to the public. Third, consumption occurs through visitors' participation and experiences. Fourth, cultural identity is constructed and negotiated through social interaction. Fifth, regulation is embodied in local government policies that determine the boundaries, direction, and forms of cultural representation.

Therefore, Car Free Night Huma Betang can be understood as a public policy practice operating in symbolic, communicative, and educational domains. The event not only reflects efforts to preserve regional culture but also demonstrates how government produces and distributes cultural meaning through public-space management. At this point, Public Administration and Communication Studies are closely connected: these disciplines make it possible to examine the policy initiated by the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government as a culturally meaningful communication practice.

Conceptual Framework

1. Public Policy as a Practice of Meaning Production

In public policy studies, policy is often understood as an instrument for regulating action and achieving development goals. However, this understanding does not fully explain how policy operates in social life. Public policy also shapes how people understand government action and assess an issue. Through policy language, displayed symbols, and messages conveyed to the public, government does not merely establish rules; it also constructs particular images of social reality that are considered important and worthy of attention. Thus, public policy extends beyond regulation and also influences how society thinks about and responds to a policy.

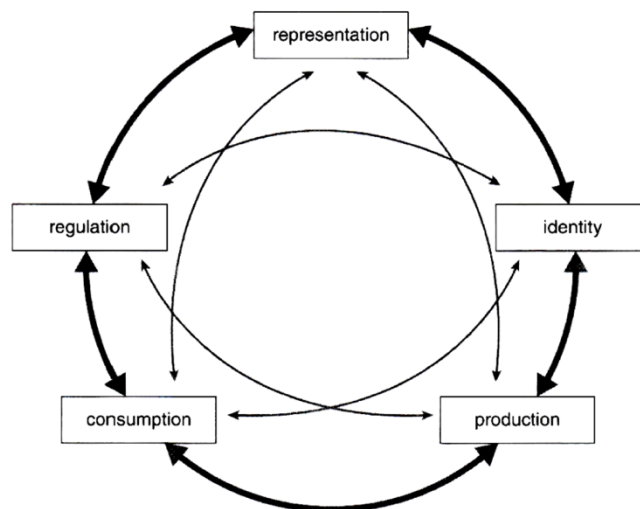
This understanding is consistent with previous research that explains policy as a symbolic practice imbued with meaning. Boussaguet and Faucher (2024) demonstrate that public policy always contains symbolic messages that function to build legitimacy and public support for government action. Similarly, van Hulst et al. (2024) show that people understand policy through how government explains program objectives, constructs narratives, and presents policy activities in public spaces and the media. Public policy can therefore be understood as a process involving communication and interpretation, in which policy meaning is gradually constructed through interactions among government, media, and society.

Cultural communication policies implemented by local governments are often realized through activities that directly engage with people's lives. Through such activities, policy

appears not merely as a written rule but as a social experience that the public can see, feel, and participate in. Car Free Night Huma Betang indirectly demonstrates how public policy operates through the management of public space and the regular presentation of cultural activities. Road closures, stage arrangements, performing arts, and local economic activities all form part of how government communicates messages about Dayak culture and its place in urban life. These messages are not conveyed explicitly through policy statements, but through practices experienced directly by the public and reinforced by media coverage. Through this event, Car Free Night Huma Betang illustrates how public policy can function as a symbolic practice that gradually shapes cultural meaning and regional identity through interactions among government, media, and society.

2. The Circuit of Culture

To understand the relationship between public policy and cultural communication, this study uses the Circuit of Culture theory as the basis for analyzing the findings. The theory positions culture as a circular process consisting of five interconnected moments: regulation, representation, production, consumption, and identity (Curtin & Gaither, 2007; Gay et al., 2013; Novianty, 2024; Pratiwi & Perdana, 2019; Wulandari, 2024). These moments do not operate independently; rather, they influence one another in the production of cultural meaning.



Source: Gay et al. (2013).

Building on the discussion of public policy, regulation is understood as the initial mechanism that frames the boundaries and direction of meaning production. Regulation includes not only formal rules but also policy narratives and symbolic framing that determine which forms of culture are considered legitimate and suitable for presentation. Representation refers to how culture is presented and communicated through media and public spaces, a process that always involves selection and simplification of meaning. Production within the Circuit of Culture includes the creation and packaging of culture by social actors, including government, art communities, and cultural economy actors. Consumption refers to how the public receives, interprets, and uses cultural representations, both directly and through digital media. Consumption is an important moment because it is where cultural meaning gains social legitimacy (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

Identity in the Circuit of Culture is understood as the outcome of a series of interconnected processes involving regulation, representation, production, and consumption (Gay et al., 2013; Pratiwi & Perdana, 2019). Identity is not a fixed attribute; rather, it is

formed through the ways culture is governed by policy, presented in public spaces and media, produced by various actors, and received and interpreted by society. Identity emerges from an ongoing process of collective meaning-making, in which changes in representation, production patterns, or consumption practices affect how individuals and groups understand their position within the social order. In the contemporary era, as technology and digital media develop rapidly, identity formation is increasingly influenced by public participation in interpreting and using cultural symbols.

METHODS

1. Research Type and Approach

This study employs a qualitative research design with an interpretive approach. A qualitative design was selected because the study does not aim to measure causal relationships between variables or produce statistical generalizations, but rather to understand and interpret the social meanings, symbols, and representations embedded in public policy (Sugiyono, 2022). The interpretive approach is used to examine policy as a social practice shaped through language, symbols, and discourse (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). From an interpretive perspective, social reality is understood as a contextual social construction that remains open to interpretation. Accordingly, public policy in this study is treated not as an administrative text, but as a social text that produces and distributes cultural meaning. This approach is relevant to the study's focus on positioning Car Free Night Huma Betang as a public policy practice operating in symbolic and communicative domains.

2. Data Collection Techniques

Data for this study were collected from secondary sources that had been published and were publicly accessible. This technique was selected based on the assumption that public policy, particularly culture-based policy, operates predominantly through symbolic representations circulated in media spaces and official documents. The data sources included:

- a. Digital audiovisual content, particularly videos published on YouTube by official local government channels, local media outlets, and public documentation of Car Free Night Huma Betang.
- b. Policy documents and official publications, such as local government press releases, activity reports, policy documents, and public communication materials related to Car Free Night Huma Betang.
- c. Online news coverage, news articles, and media publications containing narratives, framing, and representations of Dayak culture in the event.

3. Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using the Circuit of Culture theory. The analysis examined how the five moments of the Circuit of Culture, namely representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation—operate in Car Free Night Huma Betang.

4. Limitations

This study has three limitations. First, it does not use primary data from interviews, field observations, or direct participation in Car Free Night Huma Betang. The entire analysis is based on secondary data from publicly available digital audiovisual content, policy documents, and media coverage. Second, the study does not aim to comprehensively describe the subjective experiences of all actors involved in Car Free Night Huma Betang, such as

visitors, MSME operators, or art communities. Its focus is on how policy and culture are represented rather than on an in-depth evaluation of individual perceptions. Third, the interpretations produced are contextual and open-ended; they are not intended to generate empirical generalizations. The findings are positioned as a critical reading of public policy practice in a specific context and may serve as a basis for academic discussion and further research using different approaches or methods.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Results / Presentation of Research Data

a. Regulation

At the regulation stage, Car Free Night Huma Betang demonstrates how public policy operates not only through administrative mechanisms but also through the framing of meaning around a cultural practice. From the outset, the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government positioned Car Free Night Huma Betang as a culture-based agenda. This is evident in official statements by the Governor of Central Kalimantan, H. Agustiar Sabran, S.I.Kom., which have been repeatedly quoted in national and local media coverage. The governor emphasized that the event serves to introduce Dayak culture, activate public spaces, and strengthen the local economic sector. Through this emphasis, the government not only establishes the event's objectives but also directs how the public understands the meaning and function of Car Free Night Huma Betang.

This policy narrative is deliberately and repeatedly constructed through various official communication channels. Media coverage consistently situates Car Free Night Huma Betang within culture-based regional development rather than treating it solely as a recreational activity. In this coverage, Dayak culture is positioned as a principal identity of Central Kalimantan that should be displayed in public spaces. Thus, policy regulation indirectly determines which cultural forms are considered appropriate for presentation and promotion.

The regulatory dimension is also reinforced by official publications from the local government and relevant agencies, which position Car Free Night Huma Betang as a regular agenda coordinated by the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government. Regulation therefore serves not only to govern the timing, location, and technical implementation of the event, but also as a mechanism for establishing its status as an appropriate and strategically valuable public policy. At this stage, the local government does more than manage an event; it also constructs meaning and demonstrates its commitment to cultural preservation and the strengthening of local identity in public spaces.

Media Outlet	Actor	Key Narrative	Meaning	Link
ANTARA News	Governor of Central Kalimantan	- Culture-based policy - Dayak culture - Local MSMEs (Micro, Small,	Legitimacy of public policy	https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4900473/gubernur-kalteng-luncurkan-car-free-night-huma-batang-night-2025

		and Medium Enterprises)		
MMC Kalteng	Governor and regional government agencies	- Regular agenda - A venue for cultural preservation - Local MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises)	Administrative continuity	https://mmc.kalteng.go.id/berita/read/47497/dukung-umkm-dan-budaya-lokal-gubernur-kalteng-resmikan-car-free-night-huma-batang-night https://mmc.kalteng.go.id/berita/read/47897/bukan-sekadar-hiburan-huma-batang-night-dorong-perputaran-ekonomi-dan-kenaikan-omzet-umkm
BeritaSampit.com	Provincial Government	A symbol of cultural revival and the people's economy	Normalization of cultural identity	https://beritasampit.com/2025/06/29/huma-batang-night-jadi-simbol-kebangkitan-budaya-dan-ekonomi-rakyat-kalteng/
MediaDayak.id	Governor of Central Kalimantan	Preservation of Dayak culture and public space	Affirmation of Dayak identity	https://mediadayak.id/huma-batang-night-meriahkan-bundaran-besar-gubernur-kalteng-ajak-lestarikan-budaya-dan-dukung-umkm/
SindoNews Daerah	Governor of Central Kalimantan	- MSME Stage - Cultural richness of Central Kalimantan	Cultural and economic intervention	https://daerah.sindonews.com/read/1580519/174/terobosan-gubernur-agustiar-sabran-huma-batang-night-panggung-emas-umkm-dan-kekayaan-budaya-kalteng-1749992770
SuaraIndonesia.com	Provincial Government	Car Free Night "Huma Batang Night 2025"	Policy consistency	https://suaraIndonesia.com/car-free-night-huma-batang-night-2025/
MetroTVNews	Provincial Government	Local economic activity	Impact-based legitimacy	https://www.metrotvnews.com/read/NQACYz58-perekonomian-masyarakat-kalteng-kian-menggeliat-dengan-huma-batang-night-dan-gubernur-cup-2025
BaritoRayaPost.com	Central Kalimantan Police Chief and Provincial Government	Support for regional cultural development	Cross-institutional support and strengthened legitimacy	https://www.baritorayapost.com/berita-lainnya/tni-polri/dukung-pengembangan-budaya-daerah-kapolda-kalteng-hadiri-acara-car-free-night-huma-batang-di-palangka-raja/06/2025/

b. Representation

In the Circuit of Culture theory, representation refers to how culture is presented, packaged, and communicated to the public through symbols, visuals, narratives, and performance practices in public spaces. Representation is important because it translates the cultural policy legitimized at the regulation stage into forms that people can see,

experience, and interpret. In other words, representation serves as a bridge between policy and the public's experience of culture.

At the representation stage, Car Free Night Huma Betang brings Dayak culture into public spaces through various visual and performative forms. Cultural representation can be seen in traditional artistic performances, the use of Dayak symbols, the spatial arrangement of the event, and the narratives used in its organization. The public space used—particularly the Bundaran Besar area in Palangka Raya—not only serves as the event venue but also as a symbolic stage where local culture is openly presented to the wider public.

Media	Form	Cultural Object	Representational Meaning	Source
YouTube	Recording of a live performance	Dayak dance and music	Dayak culture as the main attraction	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAL6-Ud7SmU
YouTube	Event documentation	Traditional clothing and public-space atmosphere	Integration of culture and urban space	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlS1B4lRe8
YouTube	Visual coverage of the event	Cultural stage and public interaction	Normalization of Dayak culture in public spaces	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePg4UzWQd4Q
National media	Cultural representation in public policy	Dayak culture as the identity of Central Kalimantan	Legitimization of culture as a development agenda	https://www.antaranews.com/berita/4900473/gubernur-kalteng-luncurkan-car-free-night-huma-batang-night-2025

c. Production

Within the Circuit of Culture, production refers to the process through which culture is designed, organized, and translated into concrete actions that are presented and made accessible to the public. Production involves not only the creation of cultural content but also decision-making, role allocation, resource management, and coordination among the actors involved.

The production of Car Free Night Huma Betang involves the active role of the local government as the principal actor initiating, coordinating, and ensuring the continuity of the event. The Central Kalimantan Provincial Government acts not only as a facilitator but also as a director of cultural production through the determination of the event concept, selection of the venue, and involvement of regional agencies and relevant communities.

The production dimension is also evident in the arrangement of public space and provision of supporting infrastructure, such as performance stages, sound systems, lighting, and designated areas for MSMEs. This arrangement shows that culture is produced not merely as a symbolic performance but also as part of an event ecosystem that combines entertainment, economic activity, and social interaction.

Element	Form	Output	Meaning	Source
Inauguration and policy direction	The governor inaugurates the event and directs its cultural and MSME concept	Determination of the event's theme and objectives	Dayak culture, local economy, and public space	https://www.kalteng.go.id/berita/read/42050/dukung-umkm-dan-budaya-lokal-gubernur-kalteng-resmikan-car-free-night-huma-batang-night
Regular implementation of the event	Weekly event production; internal coordination	A series of Huma Betang Night events	Consistency in cultural programming	https://www.kalteng.go.id/berita/read/42103/huma-batang-night-kembali-digelar-untuk-keenam-kalinya-gubernur-kalteng-tegaskan-komitmen-lestarikan-budaya-dan-dorong-umkm
Involvement of officials and the public	Speeches, interaction, and public support	Public and official participation	Representation of collaborative production	https://haikalteng.id/berita/read/7687/gubernur-kalteng-agustiar-sabran-hadiri-gelaran-car-free-night-huma-batang-night
Technical event operations	Scheduling and provision of stage facilities and performers	Production of entertainment and stage performances	Cultural production in public spaces	https://desdm.kalteng.go.id/berita/car-free-night-huma-batang-night-kembali-hadir-membawa-semangat-kebersamaan-budaya-dan-hiburan-untuk-seluruh-masyarakat-kalimantan-tengah/

d. Consumption

Consumption refers to how the public attends, observes, uses, and assigns meaning to cultural practices produced and represented in public spaces. Consumption is not understood as a passive act, but as an active process in which people interact with culture, interpret symbols, and determine the extent to which cultural practices are accepted and normalized in social life.

At Car Free Night Huma Betang, cultural consumption is reflected in the large public presence in the public space during the event. Visitors come not only to enjoy artistic performances but also to use the space as a place to gather, interact, and participate in the cultural atmosphere on offer. The presence of families, youth communities, and MSME operators indicates that the event is consumed as both a social experience and public entertainment.

Cultural consumption is also reflected in how people record and share their experiences through social media. Videos, photographs, and short posts published on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok show that the public consumes culture not only in person at the event venue but also repeatedly through digital

media. This practice extends the reach of cultural consumption beyond the time and place in which Car Free Night Huma Betang takes place.

Platform	Content	Form of Consumption	Meaning	Source
Instagram	Informational and documentary reel	The public consumes narratives of Car Free Night Huma Betang's success as a cultural public space recognized nationally	Social legitimacy and public pride in local cultural practices	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DTR0CJpiZ-L/?igsh=MXM2ZXpsOTFxa jc5MQ==
Instagram	Reel video	The public consumes expressions of satisfaction and experiences of art communities given a space to perform and entertain the public	Car Free Night Huma Betang is consumed as an inclusive space that recognizes and provides opportunities for local communities	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DTR0CJpiZ-L/?igsh=MXM2ZXpsOTFxa jc5MQ==
Instagram	Reel documenting literacy activities	The public consumes literacy and educational services offered in the public space of Car Free Night Huma Betang	Car Free Night Huma Betang is consumed as a multifunctional public space integrating culture, entertainment, and education	https://www.instagram.com/reel/DMmOCqNSv1N/?igsh=emZkZXM0M3JjZWl5
Facebook	Shares/public activity	Public content depicting the Car Free Night Huma Betang event	Cultural consumption shared across social networks	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1AKxs77uuJ/

e. Identity

The identity stage is understood as the outcome of ongoing interactions among regulation, representation, production, and consumption. Identity is neither fixed nor naturally inherent; rather, it is constructed through repeated social practices and collectively interpreted by various actors. Identity in this policy therefore cannot be understood separately from the processes through which culture is regulated, presented, produced, and consumed in public spaces.

The identity formed through Car Free Night Huma Betang not only reflects Dayak culture as local heritage but also presents Central Kalimantan as a region capable of

managing public spaces innovatively and remaining open to contemporary developments. Dayak identity is not positioned solely as the exclusive identity of Indigenous communities, but as a shared identity among all residents of Central Kalimantan. This narrative appears in statements by regional officials and in the repeated use of Dayak cultural symbols at each event. The recurrence of Dayak cultural symbols, terms, and visuals across various media indicates that this identity is produced and stabilized through public policy.

2. Discussion

a. Car Free Night Huma Betang as a Practice of Policy Communication

Based on findings drawn from digital documentation and social media posts published by the local government and participating actors, Car Free Night Huma Betang emerges as a policy experienced directly by the public through practices in public spaces rather than through formal policy explanations. The data indicate that the public interacts with this policy primarily through direct experience—attending Car Free Night Huma Betang, watching performances, and participating in activities—rather than through a textual understanding of policy objectives. This suggests that policy communication at Car Free Night Huma Betang is performative and visual, with public space serving as its primary medium.

Official documentation published on local government social media during the implementation of Car Free Night Huma Betang strongly emphasizes the event's successful organization, public enthusiasm, and institutional recognition in the form of awards received. The narratives in these posts present the policy as a positive achievement of the local government, but provide relatively little substantive explanation of the policy's direction and rationale. This finding indicates that the government relies more heavily on symbolic legitimacy to communicate policy messages to the public.

This pattern is consistent with Irawan et al. (2024), who emphasize that communication strongly determines how a policy is understood during implementation. In this study, empirical data show that when policy messages are not communicated explicitly, the public develops its understanding based on what is visible and experienced in public spaces. Thus, policy meaning is not entirely controlled by the government, but develops in accordance with people's social experiences.

b. Producing Policy Meaning through Public Participation and Expression

The findings indicate that the meaning of Car Free Night Huma Betang is produced not only by the government but also by non-state actors. This is evident in posts by art and music communities expressing gratitude to the local government for providing a venue where their groups can perform. These narratives indicate that communities interpret the policy as providing access to public space and recognition for creative expression.

The data suggest a shift in the meaning of the policy at the public level. Car Free Night Huma Betang is more strongly understood as a space for expression and social entertainment than as a policy instrument with specific objectives. On the one hand, this indicates the policy's success in encouraging public participation. On the other hand, it may obscure the policy message if it is not accompanied by consistent communication of policy objectives.

This finding is consistent with Rangkuti and Rangkuti (2021), who show that unclear communication among actors leads to differences in interpretation and thereby hinders policy implementation. In Car Free Night Huma Betang, the dominance of its meaning as a space for expression indicates that the public interprets the policy based on the experiences most immediate to them, while its public policy dimension tends to remain in the background.

c. The Role of Media and Institutional Involvement in the Circulation of Policy Meaning

Analysis of media documentation also indicates the involvement of various government agencies in Car Free Night Huma Betang. One such agency is the Central Kalimantan Provincial Library and Archives Office. Its participation in the event was publicized through the agency's social media channels. These posts show that the policy was used as a medium for communicating literacy initiatives to the public. This finding confirms that Car Free Night Huma Betang functions as a cross-sectoral communication platform for the local government. Nevertheless, the research data also show that multiple policy messages presented simultaneously may create fragmentation of meaning. Without an integrated policy narrative, the public receives institutional messages separately and interprets them according to individual experiences. This is consistent with Zaenudin et al. (2021), who show that the effectiveness of policy communication through digital media depends heavily on continuity and consistency in message delivery; without these, the focus of policy objectives can be lost amid the dominance of visual or symbolic representations.

Social media plays an important role in policy. On the one hand, it expands the reach of government policy communication to the public. On the other hand, the dominance of visual representation in published content tends to simplify policy messages into images of the event itself. This finding is consistent with Yovinus (2018), who argues that social media in public policy functions not only as a means of disseminating information but also as a space in which public perceptions and assessments of policy are formed.

d. Car Free Night Huma Betang as an Arena for Policy Meaning Production

The research findings indicate that Car Free Night Huma Betang functions as an arena for policy meaning production. The Central Kalimantan Provincial Government produces the policy and represents it through the event and media documentation, while the public and communities consume and interpret the policy through participation and social expression. In this study, culture is not positioned as the primary object of analysis, but as a medium through which policy becomes concrete and is experienced directly by the public.

This study views the meaning of the Car Free Night Huma Betang policy as non-fixed and continually shifting through interactions among government, media, and society. The findings indicate that policy success should not be measured solely by participation levels or the size of the crowd at an event, but also by the extent to which policy objectives remain consistently legible amid diverse public representations and interpretations.

Therefore, Car Free Night Huma Betang operates as a practice of policy communication whose meaning is shaped by public experience, media representation, and the involvement of non-state actors. The research data indicate that the policy has received positive acceptance because it provides an inclusive and participatory public space. At the same time, however, the dominance of symbolic representation may obscure public understanding of policy objectives if policy communication is not substantively strengthened.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that Car Free Night Huma Betang cannot be understood merely as a recreational agenda or a public-space management initiative, but rather as a public policy practice operating in symbolic and communicative domains. Through this policy, the Central Kalimantan Provincial Government actively produces, distributes, and negotiates the meaning of Dayak culture in urban public spaces. Public policy in Car Free Night Huma Betang functions as an arena for meaning production that brings together state interests, local culture, the economy, and public participation.

Based on the analysis using the Circuit of Culture framework, this study demonstrates that cultural meaning production proceeds in a circular and interconnected manner. Policy regulation serves as the starting point that frames the direction and boundaries of cultural representation. Dayak cultural representations are then circulated through media and public spaces in the form of communicative symbols framed through aesthetic values. Cultural production involves local actors, particularly MSME operators and art communities, while remaining within the policy structure established by the local government. Public cultural consumption, both directly and through digital media, plays an important role in providing social legitimacy for the policy. All these processes culminate in the construction of Dayak cultural identity as an identity that adapts to the context of modernity.

This study shows that public policy is not culturally neutral, but always contains a symbolic dimension that influences how people understand their identity, culture, and public spaces. In its implementation, Dayak culture is positioned not only as traditional heritage, but also as an identity actively produced and negotiated through public policy.

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