

Post-Disaster Rehabilitation And Reconstruction Policy Study: Between Public Interest And Project Politics

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Abstract

As an archipelagic nation, Indonesia is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, both geological and hydrometeorological, making the need for post-disaster policies particularly urgent. Post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction go beyond rebuilding physical infrastructure; they also encompass social, economic, and psychological recovery, as well as aspects of sustainable development. However, in practice, post-disaster policies are often mired in project-based political interests, with funding allocation, aid distribution, and prioritization of recovery areas influenced by electoral agendas and political patronage. This shifts policy orientation from meeting the needs of survivors to elite legitimacy, potentially leading to unfair distribution of benefits and marginalization of vulnerable groups. Furthermore, private sector involvement in the reconstruction process is often tainted by short-term economic interests that neglect the humanitarian dimension. Bureaucratic fragmentation, overlapping authority, and weak coordination mechanisms further undermine the effectiveness of recovery policies. These conditions demonstrate that post-disaster policies are not a neutral space, but rather a political arena rife with competing interests. Therefore, principles of good governance such as transparency, accountability, public participation, and independent oversight must be foundational to implementation. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method to examine the dynamics of project politics and public interest in post-disaster policies. The literature analysis allows for the identification of patterns of policy distortion as well as opportunities for governance reform. Thus, this study seeks to provide theoretical and practical contributions to formulating more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable post-disaster policies.

Keywords: *Government Policy, Procurement of Goods and Services, Policy Evaluation*

1. Introduction

Indonesia is an archipelagic nation with a high level of vulnerability to natural disasters due to its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire and its proximity to three major tectonic plates. This geographical condition makes the region frequently experience earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and hydrometeorological disasters such as floods and landslides. The high frequency of disasters has significant social, economic, and environmental impacts on affected communities. Therefore, post-disaster management cannot be viewed as a one-time intervention but requires comprehensive, sustainable policies. Appropriate rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts will determine the speed of community recovery and the sustainability of development in affected areas. Therefore, the state is required to have post-disaster policies that are adaptive, transparent, and oriented towards the public interest (Rama & Qadriina, 2024).

Post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction are not limited to rebuilding destroyed physical infrastructure but also encompass the restoration of social, psychological, and economic aspects of the community. This policy dimension demands synergy between the central government, local governments, humanitarian agencies, and civil society. However, in



practice, cross-actor coordination often encounters obstacles due to overlapping authorities and limited institutional capacity. These limitations demonstrate that post-disaster policies involve not only technical issues but also political and institutional ones (Firmansyah et al., 2023). Thus, rehabilitation and reconstruction constitute a complex, dynamic policy arena with the potential to generate conflicts of interest.

In a political context, post-disaster policies often serve as a means of legitimizing the government and certain political actors. The allocation of aid funds, infrastructure projects, and the determination of priority recovery areas are often influenced by electoral interests and the interests of elite groups (Febiola & Yuliani, 2024). This phenomenon creates the potential for policy orientation to be distorted from the public interest to project politics. Public funds, which should be allocated fairly and appropriately for affected communities, are sometimes used as an instrument of image building or even political patronage. This risks marginalizing vulnerable groups who should be a top priority in the post-disaster recovery process.

Furthermore, private sector involvement in the reconstruction process often presents a dilemma. On the one hand, private sector participation plays a crucial role in accelerating infrastructure reconstruction and providing resources. However, on the other hand, private sector involvement is often driven by short-term economic interests that potentially neglect the social needs of affected communities. A focus on project profits can shift rehabilitation and reconstruction objectives from humanitarian aspects to the commercialization of public policy. Therefore, it is crucial to review post-disaster policy governance to avoid being trapped in project logic that solely prioritizes the interests of certain actors (Riansyah, 2023).

This situation emphasizes that post-disaster policy is not a neutral domain, but rather a space fraught with political, economic, and social interests. In emergency situations, when communities require rapid recovery, decision-making is often top-down and involves minimal public participation. Yet, local community involvement is crucial to ensuring that their needs are truly accommodated at every stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction. The misalignment between elite-formulated policies and the reality of community needs leads to dissatisfaction, resistance, and even potential social marginalization (Setyonugroho & Maki, 2024). Therefore, critical research is needed to examine the extent to which the public interest dimension is truly prioritized in post-disaster policies.

From a governance perspective, transparency and accountability are central issues in rehabilitation and reconstruction policies. The large post-disaster budget allocations open up opportunities for corruption, collusion, and nepotism if not strictly monitored. Cases of misuse of disaster relief funds that have occurred in various regions demonstrate that weak control mechanisms can harm affected communities. Therefore, the principles of good governance are key to ensuring the effectiveness of post-disaster policies. Budget transparency, public participation, and independent oversight must be the foundation of every stage of policy implementation.

From an academic perspective, studies on post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction policies are crucial to fill the knowledge gap regarding the relationship between public interests and project politics. A critical analysis of existing policy practices will provide a deeper understanding of how interactions between actors and political dynamics influence the effectiveness of community recovery (Charles et al., 2022; Sospeter et al., 2021). Furthermore, these studies are expected to provide policy recommendations that are more equitable, participatory, and responsive to the needs of disaster survivors. With an academic approach based on empirical evidence, such studies will strengthen the contribution of social sciences to formulating better public policies.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that disasters are not merely natural events, but also socio-political phenomena that test the quality of governance. Post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction must be positioned as instruments for strengthening community resilience, not merely as platforms for political projects or economic gain. If post-disaster policies are

managed transparently, inclusively, and oriented toward the public interest, the recovery momentum can become the starting point for a more just and sustainable social transformation. Therefore, post-disaster policy studies are not only academically important but also strategically important for national development efforts that are resilient to disasters.

2. Method

This research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the dynamics of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction policies by highlighting the trade-offs between public interests and project politics. This approach focuses on the meaning, context, and socio-political interpretations contained in relevant policy documents, research reports, and academic works.

The literature review study was conducted by collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing various written sources related to the research topic. These sources included scientific journals, academic books, official government documents, reports from international institutions such as the UNDP and BNPB, and publications from civil society organizations discussing post-disaster policies. Literature selection was conducted purposively, based on its relevance to the research focus on rehabilitation, reconstruction, public interest, and project politics.

The data collection process was conducted through a systematic search of academic databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, and national portals such as Garuda), as well as official policy documents published by the Indonesian government and international institutions. Each piece of literature obtained was then categorized based on key themes, such as post-disaster policy governance, project political practices, and public interest dynamics.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative content analysis techniques. Researchers thoroughly reviewed each literature to identify patterns, themes, and relationships between concepts relevant to the research problem. The results of this analysis were then synthesized to produce a comprehensive picture of how post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction policies are implemented, and the extent to which these policies reflect the public interest or are mired in project politics.

To enhance validity, this study employed a source triangulation strategy by comparing findings from academic literature, official documents, and independent reports. This minimized interpretive bias and ensured more objective and representative results.

Overall, the literature review method used in this study serves not only as a literature review but also as a critical analytical tool for post-disaster policy dynamics. With this approach, the research is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to strengthening policy orientations that favor the public interest and reduce the political dominance of projects.

3. Results and Discussion

1. Post-Disaster Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Policy Policies

Discussions on the politics of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction policies demonstrate that the recovery process is not merely a technical instrument but also a political arena fraught with vested interests. In policy practice, recovery is often viewed as a strategic moment for political actors to accumulate legitimacy and strengthen power. Disaster emergencies create ample scope for state intervention, but simultaneously open up opportunities for abuse of authority by ruling elites. This aligns with the concept of disaster politics, which describes how disaster crises are mobilized for specific political interests. Rehabilitation and reconstruction, which should be based on the needs of survivors, are often directed toward highlighting the government's success in managing the crisis (Mahmud, 2023). Thus, policy orientation has the potential to shift from community recovery to short-term

political agendas. This reality demonstrates that post-disaster policies are never neutral but always interact with the dynamics of power politics.

The politicization of disaster relief is a concrete manifestation of this shift in orientation. In many cases, the distribution of logistical aid is not solely based on need but is also influenced by the community's political proximity to those in power. Aid distribution is often used as a patronage instrument to build political loyalty, with certain groups gaining faster and greater access than others. This distribution process ultimately creates injustice and exacerbates the vulnerability of communities already affected by disasters. Furthermore, aid is often accompanied by political symbols, such as party logos or images of regional heads, indirectly transforming humanitarian aid into a means of public image building. This practice turns aid into a political commodity traded within the power relations between elites and the public (Syugiarto et al., 2022). Consequently, justice in disaster emergency management becomes difficult to achieve because it is held hostage by the logic of patronage.

Beyond aid distribution, infrastructure reconstruction projects often become a platform for elite political and economic interests. Ideally, reconstruction projects designed to restore the socio-economic well-being of communities often become trapped in a project logic that prioritizes contractor profits and the image of officials. For example, post-disaster public infrastructure development is projected as a monument to government success, while restoring the livelihoods and well-being of affected communities is neglected (Modifa et al., 2020). This reflects a development bias that emphasizes physical aspects over social ones. Tenders for major post-disaster projects are generally controlled by oligarchic networks with political ties, making reconstruction an arena for capitalizing on the disaster. In this way, post-disaster recovery not only fails to meet the needs of survivors but also contributes to the reproduction of socio-economic inequality. This situation demonstrates that disasters are often used as a gateway to strengthen power relations between elites and major economic actors.

The management of rehabilitation funds is also inextricably linked to complex politicization. Public funds intended for sustainable recovery are often misused to bolster the political image of officials or local authorities. Aid projects are often accompanied by political branding, such as billboards or banners bearing the logos of specific officials, leading the public to associate state aid with individual generosity. This practice transforms public funds into political capital that can be leveraged in electoral contests (Rouhanizadeh et al., 2019). Furthermore, non-transparent fund management opens up room for corruption, misappropriation, and bureaucratic inefficiency. Budget allocations are often directed more toward projects that boost officials' popularity than toward those truly needed by the community. Consequently, rehabilitation funds lose their function as an instrument of social recovery and instead become political instruments. In this context, post-disaster policy exhibits a dual face: the conflict between humanitarian interests and the interests of power.

The political phenomenon in post-disaster policy is also evident in the fragmentation of interests within the bureaucracy. Ministries, institutions, and local governments often compete to access and manage post-disaster funds, resulting in weak coordination. This competition causes the recovery process to be slow and ineffective, as more energy is spent on power struggles than on meeting the needs of survivors. This bureaucratic fragmentation demonstrates that post-disaster policy is influenced by a patrimonial political structure based on transactional relationships. Rather than creating synergy, the institutions involved actually exacerbate policy complexity with their respective interests. This situation further strengthens the dominance of political elites in determining the direction of rehabilitation and reconstruction. As a result, affected communities are often the ones most disadvantaged by this bureaucratic disharmony. Thus, post-disaster bureaucracy is not only a technocratic arena, but also a political arena rife with rivalry.

The consequence of these political practices is the emergence of re-victimization for survivors (Effendi & Zarkasyi, 2025). Those already victims of natural disasters become re-

victims due to the unfair distribution of recovery resources. Groups without political ties are often marginalized in access to aid and reconstruction projects. This creates new inequalities that deepen social wounds within communities. Rather than building solidarity, post-disaster policies have the potential to widen social gaps between groups. In such circumstances, survivors face not only the trauma of the disaster but also the social trauma resulting from discriminatory practices in public policy. This situation demonstrates a policy paradox: instruments that should protect communities actually contribute to further marginalization. Therefore, post-disaster policy politics cannot be separated from issues of social justice.

When analyzed through the perspective of policy theory, this phenomenon can be understood as a form of policy capture. Post-disaster policies, which should be based on the needs of the surviving community, are instead "captured" by the interests of political and economic elites. The process of policy formulation and implementation is dominated by the logic of power rather than the logic of recovery. This demonstrates that the post-disaster space is not sterile from political interests but instead becomes an arena for new contestation. Thus, disasters not only cause physical damage but also open up opportunities for the accumulation of power through recovery policies. This process demonstrates the close relationship between disasters and politics, where crises are exploited as opportunities to strengthen dominant positions. Therefore, rehabilitation and reconstruction must be viewed as highly complex political spaces.

To address these problems, post-disaster policy governance reforms are needed that focus on community resilience. These reforms include budget transparency, independent oversight, and increased community participation among survivors in planning and implementation. A participatory approach is crucial to ensure that policies truly address the real needs of the community, not merely the political agendas of elites. By strengthening accountability mechanisms, the potential for politicization of aid and reconstruction projects can be minimized. Furthermore, the involvement of civil society and independent institutions can serve as a counterbalance to the dominance of the state and political elites. In the long term, these efforts will strengthen state legitimacy while building stronger social resilience. Thus, post-disaster policies can return to their original orientation: restoring community life in a just, transparent, and sustainable manner.

2. Public Interest in Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Governance

Post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction essentially serve not only as an instrument for infrastructure recovery but also as a mechanism to ensure the collective well-being of affected communities. Within a framework of good governance, this process must adhere to the principles of good governance, including transparency, accountability, participation, and distributive justice. Implementing these principles requires strong institutional commitment to ensure that policy decisions are not solely controlled by the interests of political or private elites. Without strengthened regulations and public oversight mechanisms, the rehabilitation process has the potential to become an arena for resource struggles between actors with greater power (Wahyudi et al., 2024). This often results in the interests of affected communities, particularly socio-economically vulnerable groups, being overlooked in planning and implementation. Therefore, a fundamental question that arises is the extent to which post-disaster policies are able to internalize public interests into equitable policy designs. Therefore, post-disaster recovery should be understood as a political and social process, not merely a technocratic one.

However, in practice, the idealized public participation is often little more than a formality serving as administrative legitimacy. Consultative forums typically only bring the public into the final planning stages, when strategic decisions have already been predetermined by government or private actors. This situation suggests the practice of tokenism, a pseudo-participation that lacks substantive influence on policy direction. The contributing factors can

be found in the limited technical capacity of regional bureaucracies, the pressing need to accelerate recovery, and the weakness of participatory institutional design. As a result, the voices of the community, particularly those who lost homes, livelihoods, or access to land, are not meaningfully reflected in reconstruction programs (Rizqy & Anugrahini, 2024). This phenomenon demonstrates the structural inequality in post-disaster decision-making. Thus, public participation, which should be a democratic instrument, is often reduced to a mere administrative symbol.

The gap between public interests and dominant actors becomes increasingly apparent when the distribution of reconstruction projects is dominated by the government, large contractors, and private investors. In this situation, there is a tendency towards elite capture, where policy resources are controlled by a handful of actors with stronger political and economic access. International donors also frequently influence policy direction by setting specific requirements that favor their interests over the needs of local communities. The consequence of this pattern is the emergence of an unequal allocation of resources, resulting in increasingly established groups benefiting while vulnerable groups are increasingly marginalized. This situation creates legitimacy issues because public policy ultimately does not fully reflect the collective interests it is supposed to serve. When reconstruction becomes more of an instrument of patronage or political image building, its primary function of socio-economic recovery is diminished. Therefore, this problem of power relations needs to be addressed through stricter oversight and accountability mechanisms.

Vulnerable groups such as female heads of households, people with disabilities, the elderly, indigenous communities, and farmers without land certificates face multiple challenges in the reconstruction process. They often lack adequate administrative access to file claims for compensation or official assistance. Structural barriers such as limited ownership documents, low legal literacy, and cultural discrimination exacerbate their position in the benefit distribution process. As a result, despite being the most impacted, policy outcomes actually widen socio-economic inequalities. For example, indigenous communities who lose access to customary land rarely receive official recognition in land certification-based reconstruction programs. Similarly, female heads of households are often not considered primary beneficiaries due to limited administrative norms. Thus, policies that are not based on rights and justice risk reproducing new post-disaster vulnerabilities.

In addition to inclusiveness issues, technical and institutional constraints are also significant factors hampering the success of rehabilitation and reconstruction governance (Alfian & Rapi, 2025). Data on post-disaster damage and community needs are often inaccurate, unintegrated, and even overlapping across agencies. This creates confusion in determining aid priorities and increases the likelihood of misdirection. Limited capacity in local government planning and project management exacerbates the situation, as they often rely more on instructions from the central government or the private sector. As a result, a technocratic approach focused solely on physical development dominates over social and economic recovery efforts. Internal oversight mechanisms are often closed to the public, making it difficult to identify potential budget misuse early on. In other words, technical and institutional weaknesses deepen the gap between the ideals of public interest and the reality of implementation on the ground.

To address these challenges, governance innovations are needed that truly place communities at the forefront of planning and implementation. One mechanism that can be used is community-based planning, which allows affected communities to prioritize their own needs. Deliberative forums must be given real authority, not merely administrative consultations. Furthermore, budget transparency through open contracting can reduce the scope for corruption and misuse of funds. An easily accessible, independent complaints mechanism will provide citizens with a platform to report unfair aid distribution. Gender mainstreaming and quotas for representation of vulnerable groups in local committees are also crucial to

ensuring inclusive justice. Thus, community-based governance and transparency can bridge the gap between public needs and state interests.

However, it must be acknowledged that there is a dilemma between the speed of recovery and the depth of community participation. In the early post-disaster phase, urgent needs such as temporary shelter and food access demand a rapid response from the government (Maulana, 2025). This often makes it difficult to implement in-depth participatory mechanisms in a short time. However, the medium- and long-term reconstruction phase actually provides an opportunity to build a stronger and more comprehensive participatory system. By adopting an adaptive approach, the government can balance the urgency of rescue with the need for long-term policy legitimacy. Public transparency at every stage of the process, for example, the publication of lists of aid recipients and projects, can reduce the risk of manipulation (Gaol et al., 2024). In this way, the dilemma between speed and participation can be managed more proportionately.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of post-disaster governance in meeting public interests must be measured by indicators that go beyond mere physical achievements. The level of livelihood recovery, the distribution of benefits among social groups, and victims' perceptions of justice are far more relevant measures. Independent evaluations involving civil society organizations, academics, and the media must be published openly to ensure accountability. Public accountability mechanisms, such as community hearings and periodic reports, will strengthen the legitimacy of implemented policies. Without an open evaluation system, the risk of recurrence of exclusionary practices and abuse of power is significant. Therefore, post-disaster recovery must be positioned as an opportunity to improve governance, not simply restore physical conditions. Only then can the public interest truly be realized in just, inclusive, and sustainable policies.

3. Dialectics between Public Interest and Project Politics

The dialectic between public interests and project politics in the context of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction reflects the complex dynamics between the idealism of public policy and the pragmatism of practical politics. On the one hand, post-disaster policies should serve to ensure the rapid recovery of basic community needs, including the provision of temporary housing, health services, educational facilities, and the restoration of vital infrastructure. However, the reality on the ground shows that these policies often intersect with the political agenda of projects that involve elite image-building interests, the distribution of patronage, and opportunities for economic accumulation for certain actors. This tug-of-war ultimately creates an unavoidable dialectical space, as public interests and political interests always interact in every policy. In disaster situations, the community's urgent need for immediate recovery often clashes with a slower political process full of strategic calculations (Wibisana, 2025). This creates a dilemma between the idealism of rapid and equitable public services and the reality of political interests fraught with compromise. Thus, the post-disaster arena can be understood not only as a space for physical recovery, but also as an arena for contestation of interests.

Public policy literature emphasizes that rehabilitation and reconstruction should ideally be carried out with the principles of inclusivity, responsiveness, and based on the real needs of affected communities. However, in its implementation, project distribution is often not entirely determined by the urgency of needs, but rather influenced by political affiliations, patron-client relationships, and accompanying economic interests. This condition has implications for the unequal distribution of benefits, where certain groups, especially those socially and economically vulnerable, are often marginalized from the recovery process (Heath & Waymer, 2018). This injustice demonstrates that the idealism of public policy is often compromised in practice, making the primary goal of equitable recovery difficult to achieve. The gap between normative planning and political practice demonstrates the fragility of post-disaster governance

when the public interest is not given top priority. This is further exacerbated by weak social control mechanisms that make project politics more dominant than service-oriented. Therefore, understanding this dialectic is crucial to understanding how politics influences the substance of post-disaster recovery.

This dialectic becomes even more evident when reconstruction projects are used as a means of strengthening the political legitimacy of power. Many politicians and regional officials use post-disaster development to demonstrate leadership capacity and commitment to public welfare. However, the focus on legitimacy often shifts recovery priorities to areas with high electoral value, sometimes neglecting the community's pressing needs (Al-Ra'zie & Wahyudi, 2022). This situation demonstrates how electoral politics can interfere with policymaking, making reconstruction no longer merely an instrument of recovery but also a tool for public image building. As a result, disaster-affected communities are often made political objects rather than policy subjects who must be restored. This phenomenon also indicates that project politics has an ambivalent dimension: it can accelerate the recovery process on the one hand, but simultaneously create inequities in the distribution of benefits on the other. This demonstrates how the public interest is often vulnerable when confronted with the logic of electoral politics.

However, project politics should not always be viewed as a threat to the public interest. In some cases, political intervention actually accelerates resource allocation due to politicians' need to demonstrate tangible results on the ground. This push can expedite the development of vital infrastructure and mobilize budgets quickly. However, this acceleration often sacrifices the principles of accountability, transparency, and the quality of development outcomes. Therefore, the main challenge in managing project politics is how to channel this political energy so that it remains aligned with the goal of public recovery. Strict regulations and transparent governance are crucial instruments for balancing these two competing interests. Without a strong oversight mechanism, the potential for politicization can dominate the process, making it difficult to achieve the goal of restoring social justice (Hilmi & Alghifari, 2022). Therefore, the government's primary task is to manage project politics so that it becomes an instrument of acceleration, not an instrument of policy distortion.

One key strategy for maintaining this balance is strengthening regulations regarding rehabilitation and reconstruction governance. Strict regulations will narrow the scope for corruption, collusion, and nepotism in the procurement of goods and services. Furthermore, regulations must establish independent oversight mechanisms that allow for the involvement of actors outside the ruling elite. A clear legal framework can ensure that recovery projects are truly oriented toward the needs of affected residents, not merely the result of compromises by political elites. Furthermore, regulations are also crucial for providing a strong legal basis for public involvement in decision-making. With such involvement, the resulting policies will have greater social legitimacy and be less likely to be politicized. Thus, regulations serve not only as a control tool but also as an instrument for democratizing post-disaster policies (Zulfiani et al., 2022).

In addition to regulations, budget transparency is a crucial instrument for maintaining accountability and preventing political domination of projects (Susanto & Michael, 2023). Open publication of budget allocation and implementation will provide public oversight of the recovery process. This transparency not only strengthens social control but also narrows the room for political actors seeking to exploit projects for personal gain. Independent audit mechanisms involving non-governmental organizations and academics can also strengthen accountability for the use of public funds. Transparency allows the public to ensure that every rupiah of the budget is truly used for recovery purposes. This also fosters trust between the government and affected residents, thereby strengthening social support for the reconstruction process. Thus, budget transparency serves as a pillar linking the public interest with political integrity.

However, transparency alone is insufficient without public participation throughout all stages of recovery. The participation of affected residents, from planning to evaluation, serves as both a control mechanism and a means of social legitimacy. Through direct involvement, communities can articulate their real needs, enabling policies to be formulated more contextually and appropriately to the conditions on the ground. Participation can also mitigate the dominance of political interests, as citizens' voices serve as a balancing factor in decision-making. Furthermore, citizen involvement can strengthen social cohesion, as the recovery process involves more than just physical reconstruction, but also rebuilding trust and solidarity. When communities are given the space to participate, they are no longer objects but active subjects in the recovery process. Therefore, community participation is key to reorienting policies toward the public interest.

Ultimately, the dialectic between public interest and project politics should not be understood as an absolute contradiction, but rather as a negotiating space that must be managed wisely. Unavoidable political interests can be directed toward accelerating and expanding recovery outcomes, provided they are managed within a sound governance framework. When regulations are strengthened, transparency is maintained, and public participation is expanded, the public interest can be assured despite the continued presence of project politics. In other words, politics can serve as a driving force for acceleration, while public interest becomes the primary direction and goal. In this situation, post-disaster governance can produce a more just, equitable, and sustainable recovery. If this dialectic is not managed properly, recovery has the potential to become an arena for competing narrow interests that harm affected residents. Therefore, the balance between these two interests is crucial for the success of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction.

4. Conclusion

The overall discussion on the politics of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction policies demonstrates that the recovery process is not merely a technocratic realm, but rather a political arena fraught with vested interests, legitimacy, and resource struggles. The politics of aid, reconstruction projects, and public fund management demonstrate the practices of patronage, image building, and disaster capitalization by elites, often shifting the orientation of recovery from the interests of survivors to short-term political agendas. Bureaucratic fragmentation and inter-institutional rivalries further impair policy effectiveness, as more energy is devoted to the struggle for authority rather than community recovery. As a result, already vulnerable survivors experience re-victimization through unfair aid distribution, social exclusion, and structural discrimination. This situation demonstrates policy capture, where public policy is captured by the interests of political and economic elites. Ideally, post-disaster policy should adhere to the principles of good governance, which emphasize transparency, accountability, participation, and distributive justice. Public participation, often reduced to a formality, demonstrates the weakness of democratic mechanisms in the policy process. The gap between public idealism and political reality becomes even more apparent when the distribution of reconstruction projects is dominated by large contractors, investors, and vested political actors. In such situations, vulnerable groups—such as women, indigenous communities, or people with disabilities—are often marginalized from policy benefits. Therefore, community-based governance reforms, budget transparency, independent oversight, and regulatory strengthening are needed so that project politics can be directed as a driving force for accelerating recovery. With this mechanism, politics is no longer a distortion, but rather an additional source of energy aligned with the public interest. Ultimately, the success of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction is largely determined by the extent to which the dialectic between project politics and the public interest can be managed fairly, transparently, and inclusively.

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