Is Policy Integration Real in Policy Practice? Critical Review on How Government of Indonesia Respond to Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the practice of government policy in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic with a focus on cross-sectoral and cross-level policy synergies. At the central government level, ministries tend to respond sectorally and fragmentedly to the pandemic issue. Whereas from a hierarchical perspective, policy practices at the central and regional levels tend to clash with each other. Policy communication through the media also shows the atmosphere of competition between sectors and between levels of government, compared to the portrait of integrated government policy. This research is a literature study based on secondary data from the policy literature as well as policy implementation in the pandemic period April - August 2020. Policy integration analysis is built on the framework of central and local government relations in response to the pandemic. The results of the study show that the objectives of policy integration cannot yet be achieved and done in the policy practice of handling the Covid-19 pandemic organized by the government, both in terms of current problems, policies, and politics. The implementation of policies at both levels of government is not convergent and tends to be reactive, especially in dealing with these emerging pandemic issues. Likewise, in the perspective of the dynamics of the central and regional politics, where the central government tends to compete with the regional government in public in response to this pandemic.

Keywords: policy integration, multiple streams, local autonomy, central government, local government

1. Introduction

This study aims to analyze and explore practices of government policy in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic by looking at policy synergies across sectors and levels of government [1]. In the perspective of governance at the central level, ministries as sector representatives tend to respond to this pandemic issue in a sectoral and fragmented manner [2]. Whereas from a vertical perspective, even though the policy mechanisms in the central and regional government hierarchies are evenly divided into the powers regulated in-laws and regulations, there is a potential for policy conflicts between government hierarchies. In the context of a unitary state, the issue of the distribution of authority at each level of government should have been resolved by itself, because the policy command was centralized [1]. However, in the context of implementing regional autonomy in Indonesia, the central and regional governments have relatively the same space for movement, except for the scope or scale. Thus, in practice, the performance of central and regional policies tends to overlap or duplicate in many ways. Policy communication through the media also reveals an atmosphere of competition between sectors and between levels of government, rather than a full portrait of government performance [3].

At a national level, it has been confirmed 137,468 positive cases by August 15, in which 91,321 recovered. Although the country’s Covid-19 statistic is among the low in the region, it doesn’t mean that the country is far from risk, due the testing ability is also lower than its neighbors, not to mention the late response done by the government. Meanwhile, DKI Jakarta province is selected as a case study due to its highest number of Covid-19 cases compared to other provinces. By August 15, the positive case reached 29,036 number, while more than half has been confirmed recovered i.e. 18,974 [5]. The province has been hit hardest from the beginning of the pandemic period. Data from the government-owned website of Covid-19 shows that the case within Jakarta kept growing rapidly, both positive cases and mortality rates. As the center of political and economic activities, the picture of the case is understandable [6].
Although the government of Jakarta has to deal with such growing cases immediately, policy practices at the central and local levels have been responding in a slightly different direction. Political rivalry between the two has been intensifying in the public space [7]. This is partly due to the different political affiliations between the central government and the ruling government of Jakarta. In addition, such conflict has been exaggerated by mainstream media that led to the split-up of public opinion. For example, when the governor of Jakarta declared large-scale social restriction (PSBB) to minimize the spread of the virus within society, the Coordinating Minister of Maritime, Luhut B. Panjaitan, reacted differently by criticizing the decision. This indicates the different political direction between the two. Such conflicting directions intensified from time to time and were largely exposed by the media to the public, leaving the public confused.

In terms of policy arrangement, there are several laws and regulations related to pandemic condition i.e. Law Number 6 of 2018 concerning Health Quarantine, Law Number 36 of 2009 concerning Health, Law Number 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster, Law 23 of 2014 concerning Local Government as well as any other relevant law. Such laws represent the authority of respective sectors or ministries [8]. Each ministry tends to act and respond referring to different laws and regulations. Meanwhile, local government policy integration at the central and local levels seemed to be difficult to achieve. For these reasons, the study aims to understand how problems, politics, and policy arrangement are mainstreamed by both central and local government in responding Covid-19 pandemic [19]. The researcher investigated whether policy integration in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic has been taken place, particularly in the case of DKI Jakarta province. The research was conducted during the first five months of the pandemic, from March to mid-August 2020 to understand the dynamic of problems, politics, and policy.

2. Literature Review

The existing state of knowledge on policy integration is considerably limited to date, although there are other areas of literature that address similar themes to policy integration, such as policy coherence, cross-cutting policy-making, joined-up government, and policy coordination. However, literature in these areas is also limited [9]. Most literature employs the term policy integration in discussing the incorporation of an issue into different sectors [10],[11],[12], while others use the term mainstreaming in doing so [13],[14]. However, there are no clear differences in the usage of the two. It seems that both terms are used interchangeably.

Based on the literature, policy integration is understood as the incorporation of a cross-cutting issue by a certain sector which furthermore could be taken into account in the policymaking process and finally incorporated into daily organizational activities by sectors from all levels of government institutions to achieve both sectoral and cross-cutting goals. One way of looking at policy integration is that it refers to the integration of policy considerations into core institutional thinking within other areas of policies and related activities, as well as with policy coordination and harmonization, to ensure policy coherence [18]. The term policy coherence is widely used by several international organizations like OECD and UNDP [14]. Policy integration has to satisfy certain requirements i.e. comprehensiveness, consistency, and aggregation, to have the policy integrated [16]. This is in line with policy integration that aims at increasing policy coherence, minimizing possible contradictory policies, and creating opportunities for win-win situations in terms of increased adaptive capacity and lower emissions [17]. These requirements should also be part of the boundary spanner’s job. Comprehensiveness should be sought at the input stage, covering space, time, actors, and issues [10].

Define vertical policy integration as the integration of [sectoral] issue within a sector with no overarching [sectoral] goals and relatively loose cross-ministerial coordination (p. 12) [7], as opposed to horizontal policy integration which uses a cross-sectoral approach, led by the certain ministry in charge with a more permanent inter-ministerial body (p. 14). An illustration of the contrast between vertical and horizontal integration can be seen from figure 1 below.
Vertical integration takes place within the same policy field or a sector. Coordination goes through from ministerial level to its sub-ordinates or units hierarchically, to either a designated unit in each level of organization or commonly all units within the organization. This vertical integration infers similar interpretation within sectors or ministries [4]. In contrast, horizontal integration creates general principles across different sectors and ministries at the national level and standardized integration across ministries but infers different interpretations across sectors. Yet, the silo problem can be seen and understood from this arrangement. The following illustration can be drawn, adapted from [13] shows the combined model of vertical and horizontal integration.

From this illustration, the ministry of A serves as a coordinating institution in coordinating other ministries to push and create cooperation among them [10]. At the same time, a senior ministry takes a lead by producing guidance, helped by an inter-ministerial body to mobilize ministries in adapting policy integration. This kind of integration can be done among ministries at central government [7].

3. Research Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative research to provide an overview of government policy practices in responding to the Covid-19 issue. The research method used in this research is a literature study that comes from secondary sources, such as journals from ProQuest, google scholar, covid19.go.id site, Ministry of Politics, Law, and Security, Ministry of Home Affairs, BNPB, and the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta. Data collection and analysis for problem currents and political flows based on literature searches using keywords, such as pandemic policy, policy integration, multiple streams, covid-19, PSBB, and regional autonomy, while for policy flow based on the identification of laws at the central level and regions [19]. Data analysis was carried out through gap analysis to determine gaps in government policy practices at the central level with the regions, especially DKI Jakarta. Other data were obtained through group interviews through online Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with competent resource persons on policy issues in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. In this forum, the participants have the opportunity to express their opinions, as well as get the views of various group members. In
this relatively limited number, it is hoped that the exploration of problems through more focused group discussions or discussions and more complete and in-depth information can be extracted.

The data analysis technique is done by collecting facts and data about research studies. Then provide a review by providing analysis. This is done to provide an overview of the various symptoms related to aspects of the research, then it will be followed by efforts to provide an interpretation of the data collected. The data that has been analyzed will be presented in the form of a statement of research results formulated based on research questions that are expected to answer the research objectives.

4. Result and Discussion

Some of the findings of this study indicate that problems, politics, and policies often do not go hand in hand, especially in the context of the relationship between central and local government. Although from the data point of view, generally, the government at the central and regional levels does not differ much. The following is a case comparison data between Jakarta and the national level.

Graph 1. Comparison of National and Jakarta Covid-19 Trend
Source: adapted from corona.jakarta.go.id/id/data-pemantauan

Early March, the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, announced the first 2 positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia. This is where everything starts, where the positive cases keep growing for the following months. An informant from the Ministry of Social Affairs admitted that the problem of data remains the same from time to time, where each ministry has its own set of data that leads to the problem of coordination [19]. Concerning local-election events, these data were used to support particular political interests, benefitting especially the ruling party or the incumbent.

Meanwhile, in terms of politics, the use of data has also been abused to support political interest in many ways, for instance in the case of an election at the village level, an informant stated that:

If the government system is still as it is today, politics extends to the villages, such as when a district/city conducts a regional election and the sub-district or village does not support one of the candidates, the data will be lost to the data on integrated social welfare (DTKS). In the case of village head elections, if the RT / RW has collected data, it will be rectified or sorted again for the sake of smoothing the election process, where the data will be changed so that the supporting community will receive assistance.

In addition, increased awareness of the coronavirus through cooperation between the Jakarta Health Office and the Indonesian Ministry of Health. Placement of a thermal scanner at the entrance of the country as well as a circular alert to the Pneumonia Novel Coronavirus (nCoV) at the hospital.

Handling Covid-19 in a regional autonomy perspective, that regions are given the authority to carry out policies in handling COVID such as those implemented by the DKI Provincial Government such as the issuance of DKI Governor Instruction Number 16 of 2020 concerning increased awareness of the risk of Covid-19 transmission or the coronavirus in DKI Jakarta which was implemented in forming an emergency response team, only then did the central government form a task force so that finally the emergency response was merged into a Task Force. With the establishment of the Jakarta Covid-19 Response Team, the Governor of Jakarta announced as many as 115 Jakarta residents in monitoring
related to the Covid-19 coronavirus and were monitoring 32 people related to this virus. The monitoring status of the ODP was later confirmed at a press conference on Monday 2 March 2020 together with the inauguration of the DKI Jakarta Province Covid-19 Response Team.

If we look closer at how the government prepared for the surge of covid cases, the following is the summary of policies being made by the government, especially the central government which issued two other circular letters. First, the circular Letter of The Jabodetabek Transportation Management of Transportation Ministry Number SE 5 BPTJ Year 2020. This established restrictions on the use of transportation modes to reduce the movement of people from and to the Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. The second circular letter of Health Service Number 63 of 2020 regulates criteria for health workers using accommodation and transportation facilities, followed by Press Release Number 1171/SP-HMS/04/2020 to hold a Rapid Test with serum. Prioritizing high-risk residents assisted by Puskesmas.

There are at least five governor’s regulations being made to address pandemic from April to July. Governor Regulation 51 of 2020, for instance, clearly states that violators of health protocols in Jakarta will be subject to progressive fines.

| No | Time          | Legal Protection                                                                 | Remark                                                                                   |
|----|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | 30 April 2020 | Health Service Decree Number 333 of 2020                                           | Procedures for unexpected shopping planning (BTT) in the framework of acceleration of handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the Jakarta Health Department |
| 2  |               | Local Government Secretary Instruction Number 35 of 2020                           | Jakarta Provincial Government Launches Large-Scale Social Collaboration Program (KSBB)    |
| 3  | 1 May 2020    | Governor Regulation Number 47 of 2020 concerning Restrictions on traveling activities outside and/or entering the Province of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) | The Provincial Government of Jakarta is drafting regulations restricting access to residents from out of town during the Eid season this year. Legal Protection |
| 4  |               | Governor Regulation Number 33 of 2020 Pasal 21 Concerning the Fulfillment of the Basic Needs of the Population During the PSBB | The Jakarta Provincial Government has distributed 98 percent of social assistance to residents in need in Jakarta that were conducted during the PSBB period. |
| 5  | 26 June 2020  | Governor Regulation Number 60 of 2020 regarding Control of Travel Activities in DKI Jakarta Province in Efforts to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19 | Residents are urged to fill out medical tests through the Corona Likelihood Metric (CLM) to detect Covid-19 transmission. |
| 6  | 31 July 2020  | Governor Regulation 51 of 2020.                                                     | The Large-Scale Social Restriction (PSBB) Transition Period Phase I extended.             |
| 7  | 1 August 2020 | Governor Regulation 88 of 2019                                                     | The Jakarta Odd-Even Policy will be enforced again.                                       |

Source: adapted from several sources

As a result, in early August 2020, a number of achievements recognized in Jakarta are included in the highest recovery percentage of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia. This includes the distribution of 3,000 units of social aid in the form of basic food packages for art activists who are members of the Indonesian
Dangdut Music Artist Association (PAMMI). One that should be highlighted that coronavirus tests in Jakarta is 4 times more than the World Health Organization (WHO) standard. However, as the case surged, transitional large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) were extended July 3-16, 2020. The Jakarta Provincial Government extends the PSBB Transition Period. On the other hand, the central government seemed to be on its own, by issuing policies that are not completely in line with local policies.

From the description, in relation to horizontal integration, one challenge that may affect the integration process is the existence of organizational silos. This is the situation where a sector tends to fight for its sectoral objectives rather than being more accommodative to the other new incoming issues. Addressing a common agenda like the Covid-19 issue cannot be achieved by sectors in isolation. The problem of organizational silos occurs at a national level where ministries do not coordinate and each ministry tends to maximize and work in isolation in order to fulfill its sectoral function and rather than to achieve common outcomes resulting from the collective work of related ministries. Thus silo behavior is inevitably a threat to the effectiveness of integration. The Provincial Government of DKI and its buffer areas are playing their respective roles in efforts to reduce the number of sufferers and the spread of the Covid-19 virus. However, the form or implementation of the PSBB in each region is not the same, this difference makes controlling the spread of the virus less massive.

Another problem in the implementation of regional autonomy is that the regions feel they have the authority that cannot be intervened by the central government so that they determine their direction in regional administration. One example is the problem of providing data for the benefit of providing assistance affected by Covid-19, regions have not updated population data and it is difficult to coordinate for various reasons. This is in line with what a resource person said from the Ministry of Social Affairs that the problems faced by the existing 29 million Family Identification Numbers (NIK) have not been fully updated by the regions. Only 103 districts/cities did update data, the rest did not update data in the DTKS system (50%) and there was data overlap.

5. Conclusion
Covid-19 is a true challenge for both governments to demonstrate how well policy integration can be achieved. Yet policy integration is rarely practiced in policymaking by two layers of government. Concerning policy practice by both layers of governments, the connectivity among actors and institutions form a certain agreement on a certain policy issue. However, whenever the number of policy issues exceeds the original policy issue in a sector, this will likely create a fractious or chaotic community. The mechanism of policy integration shows how it is done among ministries and agencies, either vertical or horizontal integration. The vertical integration found it more difficult to realize, where politically and legitimately different from one to another. There are two ways of how vertical integration can be done, (1) those within the sector or ministerial organization, and (2) the arrangement that is done across different levels of governance, which includes national level down to regional and local level. Whereas horizontal integration could find it way easier since the central government refers to a kind of coordination among different ministries and agencies using the same guidance or policy direction in addressing and integrating a particular policy issue.

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