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Policy Communication and the Solidity of the Jokowi's Second Term Coalition in Handling Covid-19

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Abstract: The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a major impact on people's lives, has prompted the president and his cabinet members to respond with various policy stimuli. This study wants to see the solidity of the president's assistants in responding to President Jokowi's general policies in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and analyze the causes of the ineffectiveness of policies taken with an applied communication approach the policy field. By using the literature study method, this research finds that the implementation of policies made by the president's assistants is not in line with the wishes of the president as the Head of Government. This is probably due to the political power dynamics contained in the Jokowi's second term coalition members. In addition, the interests of coalition members may impact the process and decision-making of a policy. The results of this study recommend that the government strengthen the role of the structure in charge of managing and ensuring that the policies taken by the president's assistants in handling Covid-19 are in line with the president's wishes. Furthermore, it is necessary to communicate the policy to all stakeholders involved in the policy process so that the policies taken in handling Covid-19 do not represent the political interests of coalition members. In addition, to maintain the solidity of the coalition cabinet in handling Covid-19, the positions of cabinet members involved in the policy implementation process must submit to the power of the President as Head of Government.

Keywords: policy communication; policy implementation; Covid-19, pandemic, the coalition cabinet

1. Introduction

The emergence of the Covid-19 virus, which is very fast attacking the whole world, has made the international community restless and frightened. This situation is increasingly worrying because this virus continues to spread and has mutated (Mertens et al., 2020). The increasing number of cases that took place quickly and massively and across countries made this Covid-19 outbreak designated a pandemic (Biswas et al., 2020; Pascarella et al., 2020). All heads of state in the world affected by this pandemic responded with policies to control and handle the COVID-19 pandemic (Douglas et al., 2020). For example, in Indonesia, President Joko Widodo (Jokowi) responded to this pandemic condition by issuing a Presidential Decree (Keppres) which stipulates this condition as a non-natural disaster and a Presidential Instruction (Inpres) declaring a health emergency.

In addition to the health impact, this pandemic has had a major impact on the socio-economic conditions of the community (Nicola et al., 2020). In response to this condition, President Jokowi then made various stimuli and policies to protect Indonesia's people in various aspects. The president carries out the determination and implementation of these public policies with the ministers of the cabinet. At the beginning of his reign and his inauguration as President, Jokowi has established a Working Second Term Cabinet, which will help him run the government for five years. The cabinet formed by Jokowi to help run his government was built based on a coalition of several political parties that expressed their support for the president. The concept of coalition refers to political interests and the same platform of political direction. Later, this coalition government is formed and supported by more than one political party (Mainwaring, 1993; Mainwaring & Shugart, 1997). One of the implementations of the government coalition is the appointment of ministers or cabinet members who come from various parties in the coalition, in addition to ministers from professional circles, because the appointment of ministers is the prerogative of the President (Borges et al., 2020; Samuels & Shugart, 2003).

Although the appointed ministers are representatives of the coalition of political parties in the government, the selection of these ministers must be made carefully so that the country's government runs well. The ministers appointed by the president and serve as assistants to the president are government leaders in their respective fields (Freudenreich, 2016). The president's authority to appoint his ministers will not necessarily be based on the entire coalition that has joined but considers the fields of work that non-party coalition professionals will fill. But then, the coalition cabinet has weaknesses, including the potential for conflicts and conflicts of interest of political parties (Kellam, 2017). As a country that adheres to a presidential government system, the ministers in the presidential cabinet appointed by the president are assistants to the president in running the government, including carrying out the president's policies.

The existence of ministers who come from a coalition of political parties in a government may not be in line with the policy direction taken by President Jokowi as the Head of State responsible for handling the Covid-19 pandemic. The existence of potential conflicts among cabinet members due to the interests of their political parties then raises concerns about the solidity of these cabinet members. This includes the cooperation and collaboration of these ministers in making regulations and implementing the regulations that have been made. Furthermore, in an emergency in the midst of a pandemic, the power holders' synergy is important to produce public policies that provide optimal benefits for the community.

In the face of broad public problems such as natural disasters and health disasters, the government will make decisions to overcome them. Decisions taken in the form of policies are dynamic processes, where there are a series of interrelated decisions that contribute to the goals to be achieved (Volkery & Ribeiro, 2009). Public policy can then also be understood as a government decision followed by an action or series of actions in dealing with issues of concern to the government (Ferretti et al., 2019). So then, it

can be concluded that public policy related to government action is a choice made, and the choice is in the form of a politically determined policy.

Public policy-making involves actors as actors involved in policy-making. Comprehensive and interrelated policies from various actors will increase the complexity of policy-making. For example, policies that affect the role of several ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, or Social Welfare will involve various actors and even non-state actors. This, in turn, results in a much more complex policy-making process (Béland et al., 2018). In the context of government, the resulting policy will have a broad impact on the community because it is a decision taken by the government to solve problems in society (Canary & McPhee, 2009). Its relevance in communication science is growing because of aspects of the communicative nature inherent in the policy itself. The policy domain becomes important in applied communication research because the policy is a combination of assumptions and behavior, which builds knowledge to make decisions and social actions (Wagman, 2010).

One of the central focuses of policy communication is the link between problems and processes. Each policy is a series of related actions or activities that affect the policy process (LeGreco & Tracy, 2009). A key component is the involvement of multiple stakeholders in the policy communication process. The involvement of multiple stakeholders can encourage or hinder the policy-making process. This multi-stakeholder engagement is facilitated by establishing structures and processes that allow participation within and across groups. However, stakeholder participation is not without challenges. Several studies have shown that people from different stakeholder groups will have different goals, values, and expectations in policy formulation and processes (Chang & Jacobson, 2010; Li et al., 2018). Therefore, the involvement of various stakeholders requires ways, time, and resources to be implemented effectively. One way to facilitate this is by providing communication channels. Communication in the public policy-making process will help those responsible for implementation push policies to practice more effectively.

This view emphasizes the breadth and complexity of the policy communication domain that includes many models, media, actors, and processes. It is this complexity that is of most interest and importance in applied communication research. Different policies will involve different sets of actors, power structures, and different public attention levels (Fawzi, 2018). Furthermore, to assess the failure and success of a policy, there are 3 (three) main problems that are the focus of policy communication, namely: power, multi-stakeholder, and contradiction (Canary & Taylor, 2020).

Political parties are political groups that participate in general elections (elections) to get seats from the election to later become public officials (Otjes & Rasmussen, 2017). Thus, political parties are key actors in democratic countries that carry out elections as the main prerequisite (Fraussen & Halpin, 2018). These political parties function as representative agents and steppingstones for various parties to gain political power. The minimum characteristics that political parties must possess include coordination in political activities, involvement in elections, and managing political power (Otjes & Green-Pedersen, 2021). In the presidential system adopted by Indonesia, only political parties and coalitions of parties with a minimum threshold of 20% nominate candidates for President and Vice President. This makes coalitions or coalitions of political parties a determinant of the political power of candidates.

The coalition between political parties is a common occurrence in countries with multi-party political systems. There are two approaches used to explain coalitions of political parties, namely office-seeking as the first approach and policy-seeking as the second approach. Based on the office-seeking perspective, political parties form coalitions to gain power, such as in the executive and legislative realms (Debus & Gross, 2016). Protecting party interests is the main goal in this coalition, so often, these coalitions are started by not seeing ideological similarities. In this approach, coalitions are carried out solely to perpetuate common interests to rule (Carroll & Kubo, 2019).

Meanwhile, based on a policy-seeking perspective, coalitions of political parties are not solely aimed at gaining power; to a certain degree, consideration of the achievement of ideal ideals is essential, especially in the form of policy (Bowler et al., 2020). So then, political parties form coalitions based on ideology because power is considered a tool to achieve party goals, namely ideological ideals which will then become the basis for grouping political parties into coalitions. Based on this approach, parties ideologically close to the president, or parties whose ideology is compatible with the president, will participate more in the government coalition than parties with ideologically distant positions (Alemán & Tsebelis, 2011).

Several studies related to the Covid-19 policy in Indonesia have been carried out. Amin et al. (2021) research focuses on the collaborative governance practices of the Riau provincial government in dealing with Covid-19. This study analyzes the dimensions of collaborative governance using 6 (six) elements, namely the initial role of the government, non-state actors, joint decision making, formal organizing, consensus building, and collaboration issues in policy and service aspects. This study found that collaborative governance practices in handling the Covid-19 pandemic were not optimal due to inequality of power. Local governments dominate in decision making so that the involvement of non-state actors is not optimal.

Furthermore, Agustino's research (2020) examines the government's strategy through efforts, steps, and policies in handling the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This study found several factors that made it difficult to control the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia. Negative narratives were found by political elites that occurred before the virus entered Indonesia, which impacted slow decision-making.

Furthermore, it was found that the government's response was slow in dealing with the spread of Covid-19, weak coordination between stakeholders, especially between the central government and regional governments. This makes controlling the coronavirus adrift. The public's disobedience to the state's appeal has hampered efforts to handle the spread of Covid-19. Research by Gustomy (2020) focuses on the impact of post-election political polarization in the Covid-19 discourse by using social network analysis and social network actors that occur on Twitter social media. This study found two opposites of the large cluster, namely the poles of the pluralist populist cluster and the Islamic populist cluster. These findings show that the Covid-19 policy discourse has become a sentiment war between the two great poles. Meanwhile, the voices of rational critical groups were drowned out by the negative sentiment echoed by the buzzer.

Sirait and Sanjaya's research (2021) conducted a comparative case study on handling information communication related to COVID-19 in China and South Korea. This is based on the assumption that too much or too little information can lead to confusion, increasing public distrust of official statements issued by the government. This study found that in dealing with the Covid-19 infodemic, the Chinese government-controlled the circulation of information by using force. In contrast, the South Korean government encouraged the involvement of its citizens in the infodemic through South Korean social media resulting in public participation in social media. Indonesia can use the experience of these two countries to be better prepared to face the communication crisis in handling Covid-19.

Furthermore, Kamim (2021) explores the policy for handling Covid-19 in Indonesia through the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) to understand how advocacy coalitions in the policy subsystem try to make policy changes by setting a belief system and policy-oriented policy learning. This study found 2 (two) main things that competed in the Covid-19 handling policy subsystem. The first is the encouragement to maintain the economy, and the second is the pressure to take the Covid-19 outbreak seriously from a coalition of people, scientists, and the mass media. Furthermore, it was found that there was no cross-coalition policy learning, even though the Covid-19 Task Force had been formed to act as a liaison to bring together the core beliefs of each coalition. This study also found that the government made

adjustments to encourage policy changes despite changes in public opinion and changes in government coalition members.

Previous research has generally looked at the response of the affected community to the government's policies and political polarization in the Covid-19 discourse. This study takes a different perspective because it aims to see the solidity of the president's assistants in responding to the policies taken against President Jokowi's general policies in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this study also aims to analyze the causes of policies' ineffectiveness with an applied communication approach in the policy field. The results of this study will be useful for stakeholders in each institution involved in policy-making in controlling Covid-19. They can be used as an evaluation tool in policy formulation and implementation, especially from policy communication which has not been widely studied in Indonesia.

2. Methods

This research was conducted using the literature study method, which collects data from various literature or news reports (Neuman, 2011). The literature study method is carried out from various sources such as national and international journals, books, and news in online media. Researchers use national journals to analyze research related to policies related to handling Covid-19 that has been carried out by the Jokowi's second term coalition in the last year. Furthermore, international journals are used to analyze policy communication strategies used in other countries during the pandemic. In addition, researchers also use online media to track and analyze policies made by ministers, especially policies that were considered overlapping at the beginning of the pandemic with qualitative content analysis methods from mainstream mass media (kompas.com). This research refers to various existing literature sources and news sourced from the internet related to the problems studied. This study then carried out an analysis with a descriptive analysis model related to the concepts or variables used, namely policy communication and coalition solidity, to describe and explain precisely the problems studied, namely cabinet solidity in making and implementing public policies Covid-19. Next, analyze the policy communication and solidity carried out by the Jokowi Second Term Cabinet in handling Covid-19.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Reflection on the Implementation of the Covid-19 Pandemic Handling Policy

The government's role in handling the Covid-19 pandemic is mainly done by intervening in the community. This intervention is mainly related to controlling people's behavior, namely by issuing public policies to regulate how people can carry out their daily activities and at the same time prevent the spread of this disease more widely and reduce the harmful effects of this pandemic. Tummers (2019) argues that there are 4 (four) policy instruments: incentives, prohibitions and mandates, communication, and encouragement. This instrument serves as a control tool for the community. However, various difficulties are often found in doing so because of the diverse mentality of the community. Therefore, a behavioral approach using social attributes is needed (Ewert, 2020).

Handling health problems requires a direct commitment from the President and Vice President to fulfill the government's mission in general (Rivai, 2017). Handling global health problems such as the Covid-19 pandemic requires innovation or novelty at the level of policy implementation because the state's task is to serve the community (Andhika, 2017). This will provide a sense of security and comfort for the community during a pandemic because implementing policies puts the community in the main position in services (Wahyudi, 2016). On the other hand, existing regulations do not necessarily support innovation, so discretion is needed to implement policies

(Wahyudi, 2017). These problems require strong solidity from the president's assistants to realize policies for handling the Covid-19 pandemic.

Responding to this pandemic condition, President Jokowi then gave all ministers in the cabinet a mandate to take collaborative and voluntary action in handling the Covid-19 pandemic and the impacts that followed. The president hopes that policies regarding the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic are expected to have a consistent vision and are based on aligned policies. In this case, President Jokowi stated that every existing policy at the provincial level should calculate the health, safety, and socio-economic impacts (Sekretariat Kabinet Republik Indonesia, 2020).

Public policy will bridge administrative actions and the government's intention to carry out a real action based on the policies that have been made. The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic requires cooperation and coordination at all levels of government, including ministers who work to create and implement public policies. Solidarity from these ministers is needed, especially to avoid confusion for the public in implementing existing policies.

The Coalition of the Working Cabinet Volume II is a cabinet formed by President Jokowi at the beginning of the second government. The cabinet is an important part of the government, where the president elects cabinet members as the Head of Government (Lee, 2020). This cabinet contains ministers who work under the responsibility of the president and consists of various political parties with special expertise in their fields, which will then implement the policies that the president has taken into each of the ministries/agencies they lead, including policies in dealing with crises such as crises health and economy due to Covid-19.

There are various public policies that the government has issued in the form of Presidential Regulations and Ministerial Regulations in various sectors to control and

Figure 1. Vice President's Statement

handle the Covid-19 pandemic, which has had a major impact on the health, economic and social sectors. However, then it appears that there is a discrepancy and overlap of existing policies. This was addressed by a member of the House of Representatives from an opposition political party to the Jokowi government, who said that there were overlapping regulations regarding the handling of Covid-19 issued by the government (Riana, 2020). The discrepancy of existing regulations is also evident from how regulations issued by certain ministries are not implemented properly and undergo various changes during their implementation in the field. This then shows that in the implementation of policy implementation there is no coordination between ministries and poor communication between ministers as implementers of the president's policies.

The Vice President's statement regarding the obstacles to handling the Covid-19 pandemic through media coverage of tempo.co shows the asynchronous and overlapping public policies issued by the president's assistants in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. This misalignment causes public confusion in implementing policies in the field. The policy response requires joint action between the government and the community to implement the policy and achieve the policy's objectives. According to Jenkins-Smith et al. (2018), policies can only be implemented stable when there is a regular interaction pattern between the government and the community and within the government itself. Therefore, implementing good public policies requires synchronization between one party in the government and other parties in the government. However, this was not implemented in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the implementation of this policy in the field not to occur properly. As a result, ministerial regulations as implementing the president's policies often become unclear due to their incompatibility with other ministers (Qodir et al., 2020).

The chaos caused by overlapping policies in handling Covid-19 then caused increased concern for all Indonesian people. The government's stuttering in dealing with this pandemic can be evidence that the government has other priorities besides the health of its people. This can then trigger distrust and even public dissatisfaction with the state. Socio-politically, the Indonesian people have become a nation that knows about social, medical, political, and economic disasters. If the government cannot handle Covid-19, the government can be considered negligent.

3.2. Coalition Cabinet Solidity

Policymakers often have diverse values, backgrounds, goals, and priorities (Jones et al., 2006). Because it involves many political actors, the policy-making process will face the power between the political actors involved. The dynamics that occur in the policy-making process to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic are very likely to be influenced by the most prominent role of the political actors involved so that the power that is considered the most powerful will be seen through how policies will be narrated and decided (Byerly, 2011; Wagman, 2010). In addition, the political affiliation of the policymaker influences the framing and value of the message, and the recipient's political affiliation also affects the way the message is received (Gollust & Cappella, 2014). This assumption can explain the possible involvement of ministerial or cabinet political affiliations in the public policy-making process in the cabinet coalition. The variety of coalition political parties that make up the cabinet impacts the many political agendas that are carried out so that the quality of the policies produced may not be following the directions or policies of the president as the head of government.

The desynchronization and overlapping of public policies in handling the Covid-19 pandemic then raise questions about the solidity of the ministers working in the cabinet. This is mainly related to how these ministers cannot coordinate so that overlapping and sometimes even contradictory public policies emerge. The issue of solidity was emphasized at the beginning of the formation of the Second Working

Cabinet. This is because the solidity of the cabinet-forming ministers is considered important, especially in accelerating the resolution of public problems.

Fragmented power in a solid cabinet is the main prerequisite for implementing nationally applicable policies such as policies in handling Covid-19. The meaning of this power should be seen from the solidity of the presidential assistants in the cabinet to realize the president's wishes as outlined in the form of policy. This solidity will then encourage the ministers in the cabinet to put forward their main goals in implementing the existing policies. In this case, it means that the solidity in the cabinet will cause the ministers in charge to be able to issue and implement public policies that are in harmony and have the main goal of protecting the community from the effects of the pandemic, such as health impacts, economic impacts and social impacts felt by the community.

According to Azizi et al. (2016), the solidity of ministers who work in the cabinet as assistants to the president is influenced by several factors. The first is the ability or capability of the assistant president. The expertise of the ministers in their fields should be a measure for the president in selecting ministers to occupy positions according to their expertise. The minister's position as assistant to the president will carry out the duties and functions to lead a ministry with great burdens and responsibilities. The expertise possessed by the minister will make the performance of the ministry increase. The decrease in the ministry's performance will become the president's evaluation tool to replace the minister with someone who has better expertise.

The second is the political background of the coalition members. The coalition cabinet in the multi-party presidential system adopted by Indonesia makes no political party the majority. This made the president enter into a coalition with other political parties to strengthen his government. The coalition formed is a combination of political parties that do not necessarily have the same political ideology. So, the ministers appointed by the president are not absolute in a political, ideological platform that is in line with himself. The elected president will consider the ministers' proposals from the coalition of political parties that support him and act as fairly as possible in arranging the cabinet seats. With the composition of the cabinet consisting of many parties, the coalition will have an impact on the presence of ministers who come from various parties with certain political backgrounds and represent certain groups and groups as well. This condition raises caution so that the presidential assistants can work together for the common good (Azizi et al., 2016).

The third factor relates to the loyalty of these ministers. The difference in political platforms and party origins makes the loyalty of the ministers to the political party that carries it. Loyalty will affect how the ministers make decisions in implementing policies, whether they will be in line with the president's policies or follow the directions of the political parties that carry them. The disloyalty of the minister to the directions and policies of the president ultimately resulted in the non-implementation of national policies that were following the needs of the community (Azizi et al., 2016). So that loyalty to the president and the arrangements made by the president will lead the ministers to a higher solidity between them.

The last one is related to the political interests of the assistant presidential ministers. The assistant ministers of the president have the main task of carrying out the main functions of their ministries, so then it is not justified for these ministers to have an opinion on the policies of other ministers, especially in the media. Understanding the political interests of the assistant presidents is important because it will be very dangerous if the assistant presidents cause noise by knocking each other down, especially in front of the media. Furthermore, when the assistants to the president have certain political interests, such as the desire to advance in the next election contestation. If this happens, the president must reprimand and warn if it has exceeded the limit and harms many people (Azizi et al., 2016). Things like this will disrupt the solidity and trust, which are important prerequisites in a solid cabinet.

3.3. Policy Communication and Implementation Problems

Implementing policies, especially those related to health problems such as the Covid-19 pandemic, is not just designing instructions or regulations (Gilson, 2016). More implementations require an understanding of how the policy can be implemented. The challenge in realizing its policy implementation lies with a different set of stakeholders within the government. Thus, the policy implementation process requires the collaboration of stakeholders to communicate policy objectives, manage conflicts, and the availability of resources related to the implementation of policies expected by the government (Campos & Reich, 2019; Oliver, 2006) so that there are no contradictions. Several programs for handling Covid-19 touched the arena of contradiction, such as the policy of social restrictions, social assistance, and going home. Contradictions in policy implementation should be avoided through communication for effective policy results (H. Canary, 2010). This contradiction occurs because the preparation and implementation processes have different objectives (Urwin & Jordan, 2008) from the stakeholders involved.

In the context of a coalition cabinet that involves many political parties, the involvement of various stakeholders can encourage the inclusion of interests from cabinet members, which can hinder the policy-making process. In addition, the short-term interests of coalition members may impact the process and decision-making of a policy. This can be caused because members of the coalition, as stakeholders from different backgrounds, will have different goals, values, and expectations in the process and formulation of policies (Castor, 2007; Chang & Jacobson, 2010; Li et al., 2018). In this condition, policymakers tend to look in a viewpoint in their favor (Sabatier, 2019). From a political perspective, this advantage can be in the form of opportunities in elections or other political contests. In formulating and implementing policies to deal with Covid-19, all cabinet members who act as stakeholders must understand that the power rests with the president. This means that all policies refer to the direction of the president as the Head of Government, who is fully responsible for the policy of handling Covid-19.

4. Conclusion

The Covid-19 pandemic currently attacking Indonesia has had various impacts on various aspects of society, including health impacts, social impacts, and economic impacts. This then prompted the government to formulate various policies to ease the burden on society in dealing with the pandemic. As a result, public policies related to the handling of pandemics have been issued by the government, such as through Presidential Decrees, Government Regulations, and Ministerial Decrees related to mitigating the impact of Covid-19. However, later there was overlap and asymmetry between the various public policies issued by the assistants to the President. This is probably due to the dynamics of the political power contained in the Jokowi Coalition Volume II cabinet members. In addition, the interests of coalition members may impact the process and decision-making of a policy. This situation then showed the low level of solidity between the assistant presidential ministers who were members of the Jokowi's Cabinet Work second term coalition during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic. The low solidity of the assistant presidential ministers can mainly be seen by the ministers who are not in line with the policies that have been made by the president, which means that some members of the Jokowi's second term cabinet do not support this public policy.

This study recommends that the government strengthen the role of the structure in charge of managing and ensuring that the policies taken by the assistants of the president in handling Covid-19 are in line with the wishes of the president. Furthermore, it is necessary to communicate the policy to all stakeholders involved in the policy process so that the policies taken in handling Covid-19 do not represent the political interests of coalition members. In addition, to maintain the solidity of the coalition cabinet in handling Covid-19, the positions of cabinet members involved in

the policy implementation process must submit to the power of the President as Head of Government.

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