Research Original Article

Policy Networks in Handling Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe-Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examined the dimensions of the policy networks in handling Covid-19. This research used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observation and documentation. While data analysis techniques used was an interactive analysis model. The results showed that: 1). the composition of the policy network for handling COVID-19 is still dominated by government elements; 2) the function of the policy network in the context of communication has been established between actors but miscommunication is still found in dealing with Covid-19. 3) The level of network institutionalization in the policy for handling Covid-19 is high 4) there are still inconsistencies in the activities of handling Covid-19 in the field, and 5) The private sector plays an active role in supporting facilities and needs in the network for handling COVID-19.

Keywords: policy networks; network dimensions; handling covid-19;

Introduction

The policy network is a pattern of relationships formed between actors and mutual coordination who have interests and interdependence in a public policy. Policy networks as actors, their relationships and boundaries (Carlsson (2000) form patterns of social relations between several actors who are dependent on each other in which they play a role in the public policy process (Kickertet.al. (1997) as well as having interdependence, coordination, and is plural in nature (Enroth, 2011). That to be said including in the context of the Covid-19 policy network.

The Covid 19 experienced in Indonesia requires a quick and appropriate response from the government for its handling. Cross-sectoral policies are needed to limit the rapid spread of COVID-19 to various regions in Indonesia, Lhokseumawe City is no exception. Statistical data on the distribution of Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City is as shown in the following table 1.

Table 1. Data Distribution of Covid-19 Cases in Lhokseumawe

District	Case Confirmed	Warded/Isolated	Recovered	Dead	Suspect	Probable
Muara Satu	111	9	100	2	56	1
Muara Dua	232	19	204	9	845	3
Banda Sakti	451	32	394	25	439	10
Blang Mangat	50	5	44	1	345	1
Total	844	5	42	37	1685	5

Source: Lhokeumawe Covid-19 Monitoring Data Updated 29 June 2021

In an effort to handle the adverse effects of Covid 19, a policy network with the involvement of various actors is needed to break the chain of the spread of Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City and restore people's lives in the economic, health, educational, social and psychological fields caused by Covid-19.

The Lhokseumawe City mayor has issued regulations related to the handling of Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City as a follow-up to Presidential Instruction No. 6 of 2020 concerning Improving Discipline and Enforcement of Health Protocols in the Prevention and Control of Covid-19. The Lhokseumawe City Government stipulates Mayoral Regulation No. 44 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Discipline and Law Enforcement of Health Protocols as an Effort to Prevent and Control Corona Virus Disease 2019 in Lhokseumawe City.

Studies on policy networks and policies for handling Covid-19 have been reviewed by several previous researchers, such as Jacko Ryan (2020) Role of Actor Networks in Policies for Handling Covid-19, Darmin Tuwu (2021) Policy Dynamics for Handling the Covid-19 Pandemic in Social Welfare Perspective, Yunus, NR, (2020) the policy of implementing a lockdown in anticipation of the spread of Covid-19 and Djalante et al., (2020) regarding the government's, non-government organisations and the community response in handling Covid-19

Previous research has only focused on the role of actor networks at a strategic level, relating to various state institutions at the central level and government at the regional level, to actors at the operational level such as academics, entrepreneurs, the community and the mass media, the dynamics that occur in society after the Covid-related policies. -19 implementation and government response in handling Covid-19. This study has not examined the dimensions of the policy network. Thus, in-depth research is needed on the policy network for handling Covid-19 by exploring the dimensions of the policy network which includes actors, network functions, structure, institutionalization, rules of action, power relations and actor strategies in the policy network for handling Covid-19.

Literature Review

Policy network as an organized entity consisting of actors and cooperative relationships between them who are involved in joint activities to solve problems together (Sandstrom and Carlsson 2008). Relationships formed as a result of coalitions between government actors, the community including the private sector. (Waarden, 1992 in Howlett and Ramesh, 1995). This relational relationship between various actors, both individual and collective, is mainly due to dependence on resources (Menzel, 1987). Relationships in the network will determine how policy implementation is carried out, which problems must be put forward, and the discretions that are expected to be an important part of activities in the network. More specifically Waarden (1992), developed the main dimensions of the policy network, namely actors, functions, structures, institutions, rules of action, power relations and actor strategies.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding the phenomenon of policy networks in handling covid 19 in Lhokseumawe City. The focus of this research is related to the dimensions of the policy network consisting of actors, functions, structures, institutions, rules of action, power relations and strategies of policy actors in handling covid 19 in Lhokseumawe City. Informants in this study were from government, private and community circles. Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. The data were analyzed using several steps according to the Huberman (2014) model starting from the stages of data collection, data condensation, verification and drawing conclusions.

Results and Discussion

Dimensions of Policy Networks in Handling Covid -19 in Lhokseumawe City

There are seven dimensions of policy networks, namely actors, network functions, structure, institutionalization, rules of action, power relations and actor strategies. The seven dimensions were used to examine the policy network in handling Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City.

Policy Network Actors

Actors in a policy network are related to the number of people involved and the number determines the size of the network to be built. Actors in the policy network come from individuals or organizations as representatives of certain groups/parties.

In the Lhokseumawe City Covid-19 policy networks, the actors involved consist of: City Government, DPRK, TNI and Polri, MPU, BPKD, BPBD, Academics, Communication, Information and Encryption Service, RAPI Team, Islamic Shari'a & Education Office Dayah, Department of Education, Department of Transportation, DPMG, Department of Health, Satpol PP & WH, PMI, TAGANA, and PSC. These actors were formed because of the relationship that exists to overcome common problems related to covid-19 and are representatives of elements of the Government, Private and Public.

Policy network is a relationship that is formed as a result of the relationship that exists between government, private and community actors (Waarden, 1992). These actors form a coalition in handling Covid-19 so as to form a policy network in handling Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City. The composition of the policy network for handling COVID-19 is still dominated by government elements, while outside the government is still minimal.

The Function of Policy Networks

The function of the network includes the role of each actor who carries out activities in the policy network. The function of the network can be seen from the communication that exists between actors. The function of the policy network in the context of communication has been established between actors in coordination meetings, socialization and simulations on how to sit in Warkop, socialization and simulation of the use of masks, socialization in public places, distribution of masks, spraying of disinfectants. in 4 sub-districts, mask raids, mass vaccinations (Source: Lhokseumawe City Covid-19 Monitoring Data, 29 June 2021).

In the implementation of the policy network function, there is still miscommunication between actors and the community, especially when actors are in the field implementing health protocols. This should be avoided if the network function is implemented properly. Network functions include information exchange, communication media, coordination and cooperation in the process of formulation and implementation of a policy (Warden in Hugh Compston, 2009).

The Structure of Policy Networks

In the implementation of the policy network function, there is still miscommunication between actors and the community, especially when actors are in the field implementing health protocols. This should be avoided if the network function is implemented properly. Network functions include information exchange, communication media, coordination and cooperation in the process of formulation and implementation of a policy (Warden in Hugh Compston, 2009).

Table 2. Lhokseumawe City Covid-19 Handling Task Force Structure

Actors	Roles
Danrem 011/ Lilawangsa, Danlanal Lhokseumawe, Chief of MPU Lhokseumawe City	Chairman
Mayor of Lhokseumaewe	Chief
Dandim 0103/ North Aceh, Lhokseumawe Police Chief, Lhokseumawee, Deputy Mayor of Lhokseumawe	Deputy
Regional Secretary of Lhokseumawe	Secretary
Head of Administration Section	Secretary of BPBD Lhokseumawe
Finance Section	Head of the Lhokseumawe BPBD Finance Subdivision

Head of the Lhokseumawe DPRK, Head of the Lhokseumawe District Attorney, Head of the Lhokseumawe District Court, Chancellor of Malikussaleh University, Director of Lhokseumawe State Polytechnic, Chancellor of IAIN Lhokseumawe, Commander of Radar Unit 231 Lhokseumawe, Dandenpom IM/Lhokseumawe, Head of BIN, Jelopokse Regional Police Brigadier General Lhokseumawe, Kasrem 001/Lilawangsa	Team of Experts
City Regional Secretariat General Administration Assistant	Coordinator for Data, Information & Public Communication
Aceh Special Government Assistant and People's Welfare Regional Secretariat of Lhokseumawe City	Coordinator of Behavior Change, Law Enforcement and Disciplinary
Assistant for the Economy and Development of the Regional Secretariat of Lhokseumawe.	Healthcare Coordinator and Volunteers
Head of Lhokseumawe City Communication, Informatics & Encryption Service	Field of Data & Information
Head of Protocol and Leader's Communications Division	Field of Public Communication
Head of the Department of Islamic Law and Dayah Education in Lhokseumawe	Field of Behavior Change
Head of Lhokseumawe City Health Office Lhokseumawe City	Field of Helalth
Satpol PP & WH Kota Lhokseumawe	Law Enforcement & Disciplinary Field
BPBD elements, PMI Chair, TAGANA Chair, PSC Chair	Volo120Field

The pattern of relationships has been established between policy actors in the Lhokseumawe City Covid-19 handling policy network. Actors from the city government are mandatory actors, while the private sector and the community are voluntary members in implementing policies.

Policy Networks Institutional Level

The level of network institutionalization in the Covid-19 handling policy is already high, as can be seen from the formation of a team to handle COVID-19 from the city, sub-district to village levels, making it easier to monitor the development of Covid-19 in four sub-districts within the Lhokseumawe City area. High network institutionalization in the Covid-19 handling policy network, the policy network can be said to be effective in terms of its institutionalization. Network institutionalization depends on the form/characteristic of the network structure. The higher the level of network institutionalization, the more effective the policy network will be (Waarden in Hugh Compston: 2009).

Rules of Conduct in Acting Policy Networks

The rules of behavior in acting here are how the actors in the policy line implement the SOPs/rules that have been established regarding the handling of Covid-19. Rules of conduct talk about the rules of the game or habits (habits) contained in the interaction patterns of actors in the policy network. Actor fragmentation occurs in the program implementation process (Dewi Gartika et.al, 2020). Actors in the Covid-19 handling policy network have not fully followed the rules of behavior in acting that have been set, there are still inconsistencies in the handling of Covid-19 in the field. This condition occurs because the handling process is in contact with economic factors, local wisdom values and exacerbated by hoax news.

Policy Networks Power Relations

The relationship of power between actors in handling Covid-19 is regulated in Lhokseumawe Mayor Decree Number 24 of 2021 concerning Amendments to Lhokseumawe Mayor's Decree

Number 405 of 2020 concerning the Establishment of the Task Force for Handling Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Lhokseumawe City.

Table 3. Role/Duties of the COVID-19 SATGAS in Handling
Covid-19 Lhokseumawe City

Position in Task Force Role/Task	Role/Duties
Chief	Coordinates and cooperates and supervises the implementation of law enforcement and discipline of health protocols
Deputy	Carries out correspondence for the Covid-19 Handling Task Force Unit.
Secretary	Carries out the management of the Covid-19 Task Force's correspondence and prepares financial accountability reports and Covid-19 implementation reports.danmenyususnlaporanpertanggungjawabankeuangandanlaporanpelaksanaan Covid-19.
Expert Team	Identifying problems and opportunities in handling Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City
Data and Information Sector	- Carry out the collection, validation and processing of data and information. - Coordinate with the Sub-District Covid-19 Task Force and other related parties, to obtain reports on Covid-19 data updates in Lhokseumawe City. - Carrying out data and information analysis to provide input on priority matters in accelerating the handling of Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City
Health Handling Sector	Carry out vaccination activities and efforts to increase the capacity of health infrastructure.
Public Communications Sector	Carry out public communication activities for the prevention and control of Covid-19 in accordance with the directives of the COVID-19 Task Force
Behavior Change Sector	Implement public communication and behavior change by involving the Sub-District, Gampong and Dusun Task Forces.
Field of Law Enforcement and Dicipline	Carry out law enforcement of health protocols both legally and non-judicially and supervision
Volunteer Field	Raising active participation and recruiting volunteers from various parties to support the handling of Covid-19.

There is a clear division of tasks and authority from government actors as regulated in the mayor's decision. The actors in the government have been divided according to their respective duties and responsibilities to carry out their duties in handling Covid-19 and there is no overlap between government actors in carrying out their duties (Compston, 2009). Private actors and the public are only participants/volunteers and provide support to the city government, while the city government as policy makers, implementors and facilitators in breaking the chain of spread of Covid-19.

Policy Networks' Actors Strategy

The strategies carried out by actors in handling Covid-19 are campaigns for the obligation to wear masks in public spaces, contact tracing (tracing) of positive cases being treated, rapid tests, education, self-isolation, hospital isolation and the implementation of a curfew. In addition, to support the policy network activities, the city government also invites the private sector and the public to take part in handling Covid-19 in Lhokseumawe City. The private sector plays an active role in supporting the facilities needed in handling COVID-19. Facility assistance came from Pertamina Perta Arun Gas as much as 250 liters of disinfectant liquid raw materials, PT. PLN Persero (UP3) Lhokseumawe as many as 20 boxes of masks and 24,000 ml of hand sanitizer, Regional Banking Consultative Body (BMPD) as many as 10 portable sink units and PT. Bank Aceh Syariah The Lhokseumawe branch has 1,500 food packages from CSR funding sources.

Conclusions

1. The composition of actors in the Covid-19 handling policy network is still dominated by government elements as policy makers, implementors and facilitators in breaking the chain of Covid-19 spread, and private and community actors play more roles as participants/volunteers,
2. The function of the policy network in the context of communication has been established between actors in coordination meetings, socialization and simulations, distribution of masks, spraying disinfectants, mask raids and mass vaccinations, but miscommunication is still found in dealing with Covid-19.
3. The level of network institutionalization in the Covid-19 handling policy is high, as can be seen from the formation of a Covid-19 handling team starting from the city, sub-district and village levels, making it easier to monitor the development of covid 19.
4. Actors in the Covid-19 handling policy network have not fully followed the rules of behavior in acting that have been set, there are still inconsistencies in the handling of Covid-19 in the field, this condition occurs because the handling process is in contact with economic factors, local wisdom values and made worse by hoax news.
5. The strategies carried out by actors in handling Covid-19 are campaigns, tracing contacts (tracing), rapid tests, education, self-isolation, hospital isolation, implementation of curfews and strategies to optimize the role of the private sector and the community in handling COVID-19.

Recommendations

1. Policy networks need to be expanded, the private sector and the community need to be more optimally involved, especially business entities/business units and religious leaders to strengthen and provide full support in handling COVID-19.
2. Miscommunication in handling covid-19 can be eliminated by carrying out good coordination between actors and delivering public information related to covid-19 through one door.
3. Consistency in the handling of COVID-19 needs to be maintained to foster trust in the city government and actors in the field.

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