

Decentralization in the Wearing of Face Mask Policy in Indonesia's New Normal Condition

Hirshi Anadza*
Islamic University of Malang
Malang, Indonesia
*hirshi.anadza@unisma.ac.id

Rommel Utungga Pasopati
Dr. Soetomo University Surabaya
Surabaya, Indonesia

Abstract—Facing COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia today has come to phase of new normal by applying health protocols advised by World Health Organization (WHO), such as wearing face mask, social distancing, and washing hands. In supporting the policies, Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture (Menko PMK) has launched campaign especially in giving face masks, policy socialization in formal and informal aspects, and law enforcements. The campaign then reflects how central and local government should work together in the sense of decentralization to habituate the wearing of face mask in public sphere. The question is, how may decentralization take roles in the wearing of face mask policy in Indonesia today? This paper would use qualitative method by asserting data from recent news while analysing them within decentralization and other public policy theories. Three main ideas of decentralization in political, administrative, and fiscal aspects would be explained to show how initiatives from local governments, roles from other institutions, and law enforcements are needed to support central and local connections in this decentralization. While other countries may use centralization to face COVID-19, Indonesia still holds its core in decentralization since it has become such spirit in public matters. Besides, since it has come to the phase of new normal, then speaking of new faces of decentralization is required to realize future policies towards this pandemic situation. From socializing the policy to giving sanctions are attained to show how decentralization is not just about central or national, but also local issues as reflected in today's local autonomy in public sphere affairs.

Keywords—COVID-19, decentralization, new normal, public policy, face mask

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 2020, COVID-19 outbreak has spread into Indonesia. On September 21st, there are 248.852 people positive of this virus, 180.797 people recovered, and 9677 people deceased [1]. The increase is more than 4000 cases per day. This pandemic has been public awareness ever since. Some Big Scale Social Limitation (PSBB) have been applied in many regions to limit people's movement while implementing health protocols everywhere and every time. Moreover, Indonesian government accentuates public policies based on the protocol to prevent broader outbreak of this pandemic.

One significant health protocol today is wearing of face mask policy. Since started in April 2020, this policy has faced many controversies, such as what kind of mask should be worn, suffocated feeling when wearing that, and regulation enforcements by official institutions. Despite all of those controversies, wearing face mask in public places is important today. At least, face mask could limit outcoming droplets going into other people [2]. This policy could not be applied by only central government of Indonesia, but also in local governments. Different from other countries' centralization policy to handle this outbreak, Indonesia combines both centralization and decentralization. Some crucial decisions must be taken centrally, but its executions should be done locally. Central government commits people to wear face mask in public places based on WHO standards [3], while local governments have tasks in making sure that policy is realized in their regions.

By paying attention to former introduction, this paper would like to answer question; how may decentralization take roles in the wearing of face mask policy in Indonesia today? The latter elaborations would use qualitative method by asserting data from recent news and analysing them within decentralization and other public policy theories. Ideas of decentralization in political, administrative, and financial aspects would be explained to show how initiatives from local governments, roles from other institutions, and law enforcements are needed to support central and local connections in this decentralization. This paper would be divided into sub-chapters; introduction, the wearing of face mask policy, decentralization ideas in public policy of face mask issues, analysis on the synergy of wearing of face mask policy, conclusion, and references.

II. THE WEARING OF FACE MASK POLICY TODAY

How Indonesian government handles COVID-19 outbreak is different from other countries. While other states may use centralization policy to restrain the spreading virus as seen on lockdown policies, government of Indonesia combines both centralization and decentralization matters. Health matters such as everyday update of victim of the virus, creation of vaccines, and other crucial issues are handled by central government. Local governments also play big roles in managing this virus.

Massive rapid tests and PCRs are done locally in local laboratories in cooperation with public and private local hospitals [4]. Upstream of central policies is reflected in downstream of local policies. The condition of Indonesia could not abandon abundant roles of local policies as seen in local autonomies. In the wearing of face mask policy, central government decides that people should wear face mask in public places, while its socialization and enforcement are in the hands of local governments.

Wearing face mask is believed to be one of health protocol that could limit the spread of COVID-19. There are three evolutions about face mask policy that could be asserted. First, compulsion of wearing face mask. At first, face mask is only worn for sick people so that his or her disease is contained. Today, face mask is worn by all people since there is fact that there are many COVID-19 suspects that are not symptomatic at all [5]. People do not really know whether someone is getting the virus or not unless clinically tested by swab test. Therefore, the wearing of face mask is crucial in public places. Second, kinds of face masks worn by people. At first, people are told to wear any kind of face mask, from medical mask, non-medical mask, to scuba mask. Medical masks became so rare to be found and people are moved to wear non-medical masks. Because of its cheap price and simplicity to be made, scuba masks are worn widely. Later on, scuba masks are said not so effective in stopping the droplets to the outside [6]. Scuba mask is made only in one layer and easily getting dirty and wet so that it is also prone to catch airborne droplets. People are told to wear better non-medical mask with two or more fabric layer that is still easy to find and cheap in price. Third, obligatory to wear face mask in public places. More than just being a compulsion, the policy has become such full obligatory for people in order to save other people's lives by wearing face mask [7]. Wearing face mask is an essential health protocol to be practiced everywhere. Therefore, law enforcement should be present to push people wearing that.

In the level of central public policy, Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture (Menko PMK) has launched campaign especially in giving face masks, policy socialization in formal and informal aspects, and law enforcements [8]. This political decision is used to mobilize all governmental abilities to support wearing of face mask policy. The campaign is based on President's Instruction Number 6/2020 about health protocols [9]. Health awareness in wearing face mask policy should be spread everywhere in Indonesia. That awareness then reflects how that policy should be done locally too. In local public policy, mask procurements, socialization of the mask, and law enforcements are massively done to push people to wear face mask in public places. For instance, government of Cirebon buys many masks from local producers to be given freely to common people in public places such as at traditional markets [10]. Student organizations and government officials stand together to socialize the wearing of face mask in Pontianak [11]. Government of Ciamis organizes operations to socialize the wearing of face mask by mobilizing Police, Military, Satpol PP, and other government officials [12]. In Malang and Surabaya, there is a hunter team who goes

to public places and asking people to be obedient to wearing of face mask [2]. Officials in Jakarta also hold several inspections for people and punish them by doing social work if they do not wear face mask [4]. It is such compulsory for local government to apply health protocols in their areas by socializing the policy, mobilizing all resources to limit the outbreak, and enforcing legal standings about wearing face mask.

Moreover, all of people who relate to public things should be such exemplary in wearing face mask [13]. It is to complement formal policies done by government. From government officials to television presenters should be models for people to wear face mask. Radio broadcasts, community service-based advertisements, and banners in the crossroads are used to socialize this policy as well. Religious institutions and figures also tell people to obey health protocol by wearing face mask, washing hands, and doing social distancing [4]. The main idea is not to push people to wear mask, but to ask them to be discipline in preserving better healthy conditions among people. Wearing face mask policy is about to tell people that it is everyone's responsibility to save other people's lives.

III. DECENTRALIZATION IDEAS IN FACE MASK ISSUES

Decentralization is a development idea that was initiated in the 1970s, developed in the 1980s, and was more rapidly spread in the 1990s. Indonesia itself is a country that implemented decentralization system in the late 1990s to be precise in 1999 with the issuance of Law no. 22 regarding Local Government. On the other hand, the founding fathers of Indonesia have basically established a decentralized system as a suitable system to be applied in Indonesia. This is stated in article 18 of the 1945 Constitution which states the structure of the government from the centre to the peripheries. However, in practice, this government structure is not accompanied by a division of authority from the centre to the regions. This was clearly seen during the New Order era as stated in Law no. 5 of 1974, which implies that all regional governments are bound by a chain of command and are responsible to the level above [14].

Regarding the pandemic, decentralization has become such alternative in handling COVID-19. Although a centralized response is quite a perfect solution in dealing with this widespread pandemic, decentralization cannot be underestimated. This is because both decentralization and centralization have their own respective advantages. Decentralization has the advantage of preferences of citizens, information advantages at lower levels of government and the importance of learning processes, whereas centralization has the advantage of externalities across jurisdiction, scale economies and the risk of destructive competition between legal rules [15]. In other words, the choice of used system does not reflect the advantages of one system over the other. Furthermore, centralization and decentralization must go hand in hand, neither can prioritize centralization nor simply accentuate decentralization [16].

Moreover, decentralization policy in Indonesia is quite related to the concepts of local autonomies. The autonomies mean as right, authority, and obligation of local governments to take care of its own governmental issues in the vast region of Indonesia. The main idea is to make local governments to have its own policies in order to accentuate people's needs. The purposes of local autonomies are to increase people's prosperity, to improve public services, to empower people by their own resources, to make governmental management to be more effective and efficient, and to develop local democracy [16]. In the frame of wearing face mask policy, local governments handle it by regarding its regional update related to the pandemic, understanding legal issues about doing such policy, and realizing better governmental decisions. The ultimate purpose is to make sure people to wear mask in public places. To reach that target, local governments initiate transparent, participative, and creative policies. For instance, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the high price of masks that occurred at the beginning of the pandemic around March 2020 was the impact of the central government's delay in overseeing the flow of exports and imports through Customs. The supply of masks was low, and demand was high, so that local governments mobilize all local health companies, asked Small and Medium Enterprises to make face masks, and tell all government officials to ensure people to wear them in public places.

IV. THE SYNERGY IN WEARING FACE MASK POLICY

Wearing face mask policy in Indonesia is related to decentralization. It is true that central government make decisions for people to wear face mask in public places, but its execution is truly in the hands of local governments. Local governments are given vast scopes to handle this policy. Then, the locals react by mobilizing all resources to push the discipline of people wearing face masks. The mobilization could be divided into several crucial aspects; in financial that is procuring face masks to be given freely to people, in politics that is building better communication and cooperation between provincial, city, and also central governments, in health that is to promote the wearing of face mask to save other people's lives too, and in law enforcement by giving sanctions to those who got caught not wearing face mask in public areas.

Decentralization is not just complementary for centralization policy. Decentralization is a process that reflect local policies in its own autonomies. Local policies are crucial since it is the main realization of policy that obviously touch people's lives. Somehow decentralization is just another kind of broadened centralization, but it is not. Decentralization in the term of local policies is not rigid but flexible following the needs of people. This term is used to accentuate the meaningful local policies rather than merely focusing on central decisions. In other words, while centralization reflects the formal policies in the frame of state issues, local policies face everydayness of people which contains vast conflicting needs and interests. In the perspective of wearing face mask, the clear distinction between centralization and decentralization is that central

policy only decides the health importance and obligation for people in wearing face mask while local policies must also face the rejection, refusal, or even denial from people. Local policies have to mobilize all resources, socialize the program, and give sanctions that are quite difficult to be realized.

The hope of implementing decentralization is that central authority is divided to increase competition, accountability, and participation aimed at effective, efficient, and responsive government [17]. However, decentralization itself has resulted in diverse policy configurations. Therefore, in terms of wearing face mask policy, there is a need for standardization from the central so that policy implementation is flexible enough for local governments but still adheres to the standards set by the central government. Its purpose is to implement a measurable decentralization in handling this epidemic virus.

V. CONCLUSION

Decentralization takes roles in wearing face mask policy by seeing local government's initiatives on the policy such as procurement of the face masks, mobilization of all government officials to make sure people wear it, and socialization by all means. It is not just such complement for centralization policy, but it may stand alone as its policy realization towards people. Decentralization also relates to local autonomies such how to mobilize all local resources to make sure people wearing face masks. By building awareness in wearing face masks, decentralization reflects local public policies in handling this pandemic.

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