

Dynamics of Covid-19 policy implementation in DKI Jakarta: study of the responses of Muhammadiyah members

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Abstract

This study aims to map the dynamics of Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta members' responses to the handling of Covid-19 policies and seek explanations of variations in responses from the perspective of political partisanship as a determining factor in the process of evaluating citizens against government policies. Qualitative method is used, revealing factors influencing the emergence of different responses to three pandemic management policies: mobility restrictions, 3M campaigns (wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance), and vaccinations. There are two key findings of this research. First, the implementation of the Covid-19 policy has given rise to two clusters of responses among Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta members, namely Affirmation (fully accepting) and Hesitancy, an attitude of doubt that gives rise to negotiation (selective acceptance), and resistance (complete rejection). Second, these variations in response represent the process of contestation of several factors in responding to the pandemic policy against the background of political polarization of the leadership of the Governor of DKI (Anies Baswedan) and the Central Government (President Jokowi), namely political trust and distrust, knowledge construction, and political partisanship. The study offers two recommendations: first, the need for political partisanship and policy synchronization between the central and provincial governments in responding to non-natural disaster issues that demand alertness and innovation from policy makers; second, the need for the government's cultural sensitivity appointing the implementation of its policies to not widen polarization and provoke sentiments of political partisanship in society.

Kajian ini bertujuan memetakan dinamika respons anggota Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta terhadap kebijakan penanganan Covid-19 dan mencari penjelasan atas kemunculan variasi respons dalam perspektif keberpihakan politik yang menjadi faktor determinan dalam proses evaluasi warga negara terhadap kebijakan pemerintah. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif untuk mengungkap faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemunculan respons yang berbeda terhadap tiga kebijakan penanganan pandemi, yaitu pembatasan mobilitas, kampanye 3M (memakai masker, mencuci tangan, dan menjaga jarak), dan vaksinasi. Ada dua temuan penelitian ini. Pertama, implementasi kebijakan Covid-19 telah memunculkan dua kluster respons di kalangan anggota Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta, yaitu Afirmasi (menerima sepenuhnya) dan Hesitansi, yaitu sikap keraguan yang melahirkan negosiasi (menerima secara selektif), dan resistensi (menolak sepenuhnya). Kedua, variasi respons tersebut

merepresentasikan proses kontestasi beberapa faktor dalam menyikapi kebijakan pandemi dengan latar belakang polarisasi politik kepemimpinan Gubernur DKI (Anies Baswedan) dan Pemerintah Pusat (Presiden Jokowi), yakni kepercayaan dan ketidakpercayaan politik, konstruksi pengetahuan, dan keberpihakan politik. Kajian ini merekomendasikan dua hal. Pertama, perlunya keselarasan politik dan sinkronisasi kebijakan antara pemerintah pusat dan provinsi dalam merespon persoalan-persoalan kebencanaan non alam yang menuntut kesigapan dan inovasi dari pembuat kebijakan. Kedua, perlunya kepekaan kultural pemerintah dalam menunjuk penanggung jawab implementasi kebijakannya sehingga tidak memperlebar polarisasi dan memancing sentimen keberpihakan politik di masyarakat.

Keywords: *Covid-19 policy; Political partisanship; Muhammadiyah; Pandemy*

Introduction

The spreading case of the Covid-19 pandemic (SARS CoV-2) in Indonesia started from the Religious Activity Cluster. Traditions and religious events which emphasize communality are a challenge to the success of the social distancing strategy in controlling the pandemic.¹ The emergence of this pandemic has created fundamental problems in the health sector (epidemiology), economics, politics, social and religious traditions² as well as triggering acts of discrimination and even violence based on racism.³ World Health Organization (WHO) sees the success of suppressing the spread of a pandemic at the community level as largely determined by the effectiveness of infection prevention and control measures which are appropriate to the context, physical distancing according to the population level, and proportionate restrictions on non-urgent domestic

¹Scott L. Greer, Elizabeth J. King, Elize Massard da Fonseca, André Peralta-Santos, *Coronavirus Politics: The Comparative Politics and Policy of Covid-19*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2021.

²Riyanti Djalante et al., "Review and Analysis of Current Responses to Covid-19 in Indonesia: Period of January to March 2020", *Progres in Disaster Science*, Vol. 6 (2020), 1-9.

³The Economist, "The pandemic appears to have sparked a rise in anti-Asian bigotry", 23 March 2021, <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2021/03/23/the-pandemic-appears-to-have-sparked-a-rise-in-anti-asian-bigotry>

and international travel.⁴ The challenge of overcoming these religious clusters has become a serious problem in many countries in order to control the spread of Covid-19.

In the context of the Indonesian Muslim community, Covid-19 forced them to adapt and re-understand the difference between the essence of the goal of religion (*maqasid*) and rituality (*fiqh*) as an expression or medium of religion. Islamic teachings understand that efforts to maintain health and exclude things, which can cause exposure to disease, are part of maintaining the main goal of religion (*al-Dharuriyat al-Khams*), maintaining the safety of the soul. This view underlies the responses of Islamic organizations, such as the MUI Fatwa No. 14/2020 concerning Organizing Worship in a Situation of the Covid-19 Outbreak and the Circular Letter of the Central Leadership of Muhammadiyah concerning Demands for Worship in the Covid-19 Emergency.

On the other hand, it cannot be ruled out that there are certain religious understandings and motivations which encourage Muslims to oppose medical authorities, refuse to comply with health protocols, and continue to attend religious activities normally. The fatalistic attitude and denial of some Islamic groups towards the threat of Covid-19 has shown the other side of the religion which is contrary to science and public policy.⁵ Denial of the pandemic created the 'Covidiot' phenomenon, which is cross-religious, ethnic and national in nature, which reflects an ignorant attitude, not caring about the fate of other people who will be exposed to

⁴World Health Organization, "Covid-19 Strategy Up date", 14 April 2022. https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-mass-gatherings?gclid=Cj0KCQjwuLShBhC_ARIsAFod44fjmlUmfYApplKXoGzfQBJ92Z7yHTQsISchQiWXyEaxPrxNIYNykefUaAiqsEALw_wcB

⁵Mayling Oey-Gardiner and M Amin Abdullah, (Ed), *Ragam Perspektif Dampak Covid-19: Sumbangan Ilmuwan AIPI untuk Bangsa Indonesia*, Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia dan AIPI, 2021.

Covid-19 as a result of their actions.⁶

Muhammadiyah believes that the axiom of Islamic life is to practice Islam rationally, scientifically, and is oriented towards public health. There is no conflict between science and Islam.⁷ Muhammadiyah's perspective on science has positioned this organization as a supporter of public health policies even though facing rejection by some people based on social, cultural, and political factors.⁸ Muhammadiyah believes that Covid-19 is a health problem and is included in the non-natural disaster category. Muhammadiyah defines disaster as a dangerous disturbance caused by natural or human factors which can destroy community functions in ensuring the sustainability of life, protecting assets, preserving the environment, and guaranteeing their dignity as humans.

However, in the aspect of followership, there are still members of Muhammadiyah who think that if Muslims are afraid of Covid-19, it means that they are unfaithful and follow the WHO *Mazhab*.⁹ They continued to practice congregational prayers as in normal situations. Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta activist, HP, has an opinion on this category. Policies for handling Covid-19, which are coercive, should have been taken by the government. Central Board of Muhammadiyah has taken the right steps, which is to support the policy and even play an active role in the success of the implementation of this policy. He noticed the response of various Muhammadiyah members to the implementation of its policies.¹⁰ According to him, "There are those who accept *sami'na wa athona* (we hear

⁶Mahdawi, A., *From Covidiot to Doom Scrolling: How Coronavirus is Changing Our Language*, 2020.

⁷Achmad Jainuri, *Ideologi Kaum Reformis: Melacak Pandangan Keagamaan Muhammadiyah Periode Awal*, Surabaya: LPAM, 2002.

⁸Agus Kusnadi, *Muhammadiyah Membangun Kesehatan Bangsa*, Jakarta: MPKU PP Muhammadiyah, 2020.

⁹Interview with ND, December 16, 2022 and FD, December 8, 2022.

¹⁰Interview with HP, Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

and obey) in accordance with the policy, but there are also those who do not sincerely accept it. Maybe it involves a political viewpoint, then there is a view related to its destiny".¹¹ HP took his own position to choose not to fully comply with Central Board of Muhammadiyah's instructions even though his family had been exposed to Covid-19.

The difference in the responses of Muhammadiyah members raises challenges and questions which require further elaboration considering that this largest modernist Muslims organization is struggling at the forefront during a pandemic by mobilizing its resources¹² based on a progressive faith commitment which is based on science and medicine.¹³ Public policy as a product of knowledge is discursive in nature and cannot be separated from the process of contestation (participation and competition) at the level of its implementation.¹⁴ Seeking further explanation of the dynamics of the response of Muhammadiyah members to the Covid-19 policy by looking at the dimensions of the contestation between demands for obedience to Muhammadiyah institutions and the political preferences of its members as citizens in responding to state policies is an area of study which has not yet received elaboration.

This paper aims to map the dynamics of the response of Muhammadiyah members in DKI Jakarta to the policy of handling Covid-19 in the politically polarized sociological landscape of DKI residents.¹⁵ DKI Jakarta residents

¹¹Interview with HP, Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

¹²Riyanti Djalante et al., "Review and Analysis"..., 1-9.

¹³Andar Nubowo, "Covid-19, Fatwas, and Socio-religious Praxis: Muhammadiyah's Social Engagement and Mission in Coping with the Outbreak in Indonesia", *Social Sciences and Missions*, Vol. 35 (2022), 308-342.

¹⁴Hugh T. Miller & Ryan Lofaro, "Political contestation in policy implementation: A narrative inquiry into a needle exchange program", *Critical Policy Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2023), 43-62, DOI: [10.1080/19460171.2021.2016453](https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2021.2016453)

¹⁵Amir refused this opinion. According to him, social cohesion in DKI Jakarta was still strong, polarization could not be found in any social spaces. See Amir, Sulfikar, "Ilusi Polarisasi versus Fakta Kohesi Sosial", Kolom Pakar, *Media Indonesia*, Monday, January 16, 2023.

in the 2017 *Pilkada* (Local Leaders Election) and 2019 Presidential Election were divided when faced with socio-religious and economic issues. The ideology of Anies and Prabowo's voters wants Islam and the clergy to play a bigger role in the political arena and carry the People's Economy narrative. Voters for Basuki Tjahaya Purnama and Jokowi channeled the opposite ideological position, encouraging political secularization and tending to support liberal economic policies.¹⁶

The novelty of this research lies in the effort to uncover determinant factors outside of trust in the state that determine public health behavior during the pandemic. Goldfinch, Taplin and Gauld's study emphasizes trust in government in managing the pandemic as a determining factor in Australia and New Zealand¹⁷. A study by Zaki, Nicoli, Verschuere et al, found that trust in the government is key to reducing the death rate of Covid-19 victims¹⁸. Muhtadi and Soderberg provide a valuable initial explanation by proposing three factors that influence the health behavior of the Indonesian Muslim community. First, membership of religious organizations is important to see citizens' compliance with health protocols. Second, residents with weak economic incomes tend to be more afraid of Covid-19. Third, political partisanship is the main predictor factor in responding to the pandemic policy if there is a policy conflict between the central and regional governments¹⁹. Muttaqin found three

¹⁶Afrimadona, "Revisiting Political Polarization in Indonesia: A Case Study of Jakarta's Electorate", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Volume 40, Issue 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211007490>

¹⁷Shaun Goldfinch, Ross Taplin, Robin Gauld, "Trust in government increased during the Covid-19 pandemic in Australia and New Zealand", *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 80, Issue 1 (2021), 3-11.

¹⁸Bishoy Louis Zaki et al., "In trust we trust: The impact of trust in government on excess mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Public Policy and Administration*. Vol. 37, Issue 2 (2022), 226-252.

¹⁹Seth Soderborg and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "When is Staying Home Partisan? Policy Conflict and Precaution-Taking during a Pandemic", www.scholar.harvard.edu

factors that triggered variations in Muhammadiyah members' responses to Central Board of Muhammadiyah's fatwas and worship guidelines during the pandemic, namely conservatism, the decline of modernist values, and the dominance of the *fiqh* approach. However, this research will show that obedience to Muhammadiyah is a determining factor in determining member compliance when government performance is faced with challenges of political distrust²⁰.

This study utilizes qualitative methods to analyze the factors which trigger variations in member responses to policy instruments for handling Covid-19, specifically mobility restrictions, 3M campaigns (wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance), and vaccinations. Primary data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with a number of informants selected by snowball sampling technique²¹ and literature study. Analysis of all interview transcripts cannot be separated from the social and political-economic discourse struggles which are taking place in the public space of Jakarta as the main stage of national politics. Informants are Muhammadiyah leaders and administrators (regional branch and autonomous organization levels) as well as former administrators and members. This research treats informants as co-researchers which allows researchers to have dialogue with informants, so that the process of verification and confirmation in understanding field data can be carried out dialogically and simultaneously.²²

²⁰Ahmad Muttaqin, "Religion, Science, and Culture Amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic: Muhammadiyah's Worship Guidance and Members' Response", *al-Albab*, Volume 10, Number 1 (2021), 3-32.

²¹Atho Mudzhar, *Pendekatan Studi Islam: Dalam Teori dan Praktek*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 1998.

²²Marianne W Jørgensen, Louise J Phillipps, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, SAGE Publications, 2002.

Covid-19 and political partisanship

According to Campbell, et.al, political partisanship is a set of beliefs and feelings which culminate in a sense of “psychological attachment” to a political party. The identity of political partisanship influences a person in choosing, digesting, and responding to information and determines what action to take. Political polarization and political partisanship have had a strong influence and have even become a determining factor in determining citizens’ preferences and behavior towards public health policies. The term “political partisanship” in this study reflects the political preferences and attitudes of Muhammadiyah members as citizens who are involved in the policy implementation process. It is within this framework that the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic does not only become the domain of public health, but also has a political-religious dimension.²³

Studies on the discourse of political partisanship have developed rapidly in America in the last ten years as the political poles of the Republican Party and the Democratic Party divide. In the early phase of Covid-19 in America, Gadarian, Goodman & Pepinsky found that differences in political orientation were the single most consistent factor which determined citizens’ health behavior and policy preferences²⁴. The politicization of the public health response to the pandemic has allowed for differences in community responses based on orientation and political affiliation. Political partisanship is an important driver in ensuring adherence or disapproval of health policies during a pandemic. Political partisanship is an important driver in ensuring adherence or disapproval of health policies

²³Marcus Mietzner, “Populist Anti-Scientism, Religious Polarisation, and Institutionalized Corruption: How Indonesia’s Democratic Decline Shaped Its COVID-19 Response”, *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Vol. 39, Issue 2 (2020), 227-249.

²⁴Shana Kushner Gadarian, Sara Wallace Goodman, Thomas B Pepinsky, “Partisanship, health behavior, and policy attitudes in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic”, *Plos One*, Vol. 16, Issue 4 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249596>.

during a pandemic. The consequence is that the effectiveness and success of the Covid-19 countermeasures policy is determined by the level of trust in government institutions and the political partisanship of the people in responding to health protocols; wearing masks, keeping distance, washing hands, staying at home, avoiding crowds, and limiting mobility outside the home. Republicans have little concern for the pandemic situation.

In the Indonesian context, understanding and evaluation of policies for dealing with a pandemic are closely related to political partisanship factors. Soderberg and Muhtadi elaborate on the thesis of Gadarian, Goodman & Pepinsky on the American case by proposing a framework for understanding when political partisanship emerges and how they become important factors. America, Britain, and Brazil have different views on responding to Covid-19, also have different perspectives on evaluating pandemic risk, and show different behavior in responding to public health instructions. There is a strong correlation between political polarization and political partisanship which deny the risk of a pandemic. This situation determines the variations in the response of the central government and regional or state governments. When polarization meets clear partisan views about pandemic risk, the intensity of the separation is higher. In the American case, there is a clash of identities between Evangelicals, Republican voters, and Conservatives in the issue of political alignments.

However, the phenomenon of denial of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is not as strong as that of America. Based on the theory of variations in the separation of political alignments, the Indonesian case falls into the model of non-partisan denial with high variations in partisan policies. This model weakens the division of political partisanship at the national level accompanied by significant variations at the provincial (state) level. The response patterns of Jokowi and Anies supporters follow the model of positive partisanship (supporters) and negative partisanship

(haters) following the line of voter political support. The difference is that the positive sentiments of Jokowi's supporters and negative sentiments against Jokowi are equally strong. On the other hand, the positive sentiment of Anies' supporters is not as strong as the negative sentiment of his haters. This finding reinforces the polarization thesis of political partisanship and at the same time questions rational-economic theory as a consideration for citizens in responding to policies²⁵.

Mapping of responses: affirmation and hesitancy

The responses of Muhammadiyah members towards the Covid-19 policy were not always in the form of binary opposition due to the complex interlocking of factors on the ground encouraging a process of negotiation and compromise, both for pragmatic, political-economic and cultural reasons. The response model is influenced by the dynamics of its habitat environment²⁶ and political partisanship in choosing a trusted source of information.²⁷ The dynamics of this response reflects the ongoing process of institutionalizing Islamic values in the perspective of Muhammadiyah²⁸ as a sociological consequence of the diversity of social backgrounds of Muhammadiyah members and the inhomogeneous patterns of religious thought of its members.²⁹

²⁵Arya Budi and Warih Aji Pamungkas, "Partisanship in Crisis: Public Response to Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia" *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, Volume 24, Issue 1 (2020), 15-32, doi: 10.22146/jsp.52770

²⁶Kellie Playter, "Followers' Independent Critical Thinking and Active Engagement for Collocated vs Virtual Work Teams", *Regent Research Roundtables Proceeding*, 2022, 68-87.

²⁷Taberez Ahmed Neyazi and Burhanuddin Muhtadi, "Selective Belief: How Partisanship Drives Belief in Misinformation", *International Journal of Communication*, Vol. 15 (2021), 1286-1308.

²⁸Interview with DB on Monday, December 12, 2022. Muhammadiyah has formed their latest Islamic view in the document of *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan* which issued during the 48th Muktamar Muhammadiyah in Surakarta.

²⁹Abdul Munir Mulkhan, *Islam Murni dalam Masyarakat Petani*, Yogyakarta: Bentang, 2000; Abdul Mu'ti, Fajar Riza Ul Haq, Kristen Muhammadiyah: *Konvergensi Muslim dan Kristen dalam Pendidikan*, Jakarta: Al Wasath, 2009.

In the context of the dynamics of the rejection response, the author uses the definition of “vaccine hesitancy” formulated by the WHO Sage Working Group to map the acceptance and rejection responses (either partially or completely) of Muhammadiyah members to the three main instruments of the pandemic policy, specifically limiting mobility, implementing 3M (*wearing masks, washing hands, keeping distance*), and vaccinations.³⁰ Vaccine hesitancy is to be understood as “to delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccination despite availability of vaccination services. Vaccine hesitancy is complex and context specific, varying across time, places and vaccines. It is influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience, and confidence.”³¹ This paper adopts the nature of hesitancy towards vaccination by expanding the scope of the doubts in addressing health protocols, especially regulations on wearing masks and keeping a distance during worship, especially regulations limiting activities at mosques and schools.

This study found two response clusters, which reflect the construction of followership and leadership relationships in Muhammadiyah based on a democratic (contractual), egalitarian, and autonomous spirit,³² specifically the Cluster of Affirmation and the Cluster of Hesitancy.

Cluster of affirmation

This cluster supports and complies with all policies for handling Covid-19, starting from wearing masks, vaccinations, keeping a distance during worshipping, limiting mosque activities (prayers and religious events), and guidelines for worshipping during a pandemic issued by the Central

³⁰Government Regulation No. 21/2020 and Instruction of Domestic Minister No. 1/2021.

³¹MacDonald NE, “Vaccine hesitancy: Definition, scope and determinants”, *Vaccine*, Vol. 33, Issue 34 (2015), 4161-4. Doi: 10.1016/j.vaccine.2015.04.036. Epub 2015 Apr 17. PMID: 25896383.

³²Kim Hyun-Jun, *Rahasia Satu Abad Muhammadiyah*, 05/07/2010. www.kompas.com.

Board of Muhammadiyah. The group's obedient attitude started from their absolute trust in the Central Board of Muhammadiyah institution, which is believed to have qualified moral and scientific authority so that it can be accounted for. This group puts their trust in the Jokowi-Ma'ruf Government because they see their policies are in line with the attitude of the Muhammadiyah Central Board. The level of obedience to the Central Board of Muhammadiyah institutions is significantly high, capable of bridging and mediating government policies so that Muhammadiyah members of DKI Jakarta can understand and obey them. This step demonstrates the role of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah in domesticating the potential objections or non-compliance of its citizens towards the pandemic policy, so it allows them to compromise with political distrust. Muhammadiyah's policies use the integration of a scientific approach and a theological approach in communicating and campaigning for the Covid-19 policy. Thus, the acceptance of Muhammadiyah policies appears to be stronger, compared to the government.

Cluster of hesitancy

The Hesitancy cluster represents the ongoing process of negotiation and resistance among Muhammadiyah members who do not fully accept the Covid-19 policy. This contestation becomes unavoidable considering the implementation of a policy at the local level cannot be separated from political choices in which the local actors will moderate and adjust policies.³³ This cluster consists of two variants: partial acceptance (negotiation) and complete rejection (resistance).

The variants of partially accepting are those which show compliance selectively. They implement some policies and reject the rest due to

³³Amanda Bell Werts and Curtis A. Brewer, "Reframing the Study of Policy Implementation: Lived Experience as Politics", *Educational Policy*, Volume 29, Issues 1 (2014). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904814559247>

cultural (faith), political (distrust of central government), and knowledge construction (religious views and information selection). This variant explains why someone is willing to be vaccinated, but at the same time refuses to limit congregational prayer activities at the mosque. One of the activists, HP, was reluctant to follow the health protocol and doubted the capability of the Central Government, but took part in the vaccination because he had to fill out the *Peduli Lindungi* application when entering the workplace.³⁴ Activist of Nasyiatul Aisyiah, FA, supported the limiting activities in mosques, but doubted vaccinations due to uncertainty over halal status even in an emergency.³⁵

The completely rejected variants are those who do not comply with all policy instruments for handling Covid-19. This group does not believe in Covid-19, considering it a product of a conspiracy to weaken the Islamic Ummah³⁶ and loaded with business interests of the political oligarchy.³⁷ This variant is characterized by the distrust toward the Central Government, lack of respect for medical endeavors, and belief in death as destiny, which has nothing to do with Covid-19. They ignored the Central Board of Muhammadiyah's instructions and accused its leadership of being an extension of the government's interests.³⁸ This group believes that Covid-19 is God's way of testing the strength of faith and human consistency to keep worshiping in emergency circumstances. FD admitted that the mosque near his house had never been closed since Covid-19 broke out. He refused the Government's vaccine on the grounds of human

³⁴Interview with HP on Wednesday, December 14, 2022

³⁵Interview with FA on Monday, December 19, 2022

³⁶Interview with TAP on Thursday, December 8, 2022

³⁷"That (Covid-19) is just a deception by the rich to the poor. It's just a rich man's trick. Interview with ND on Friday, December 16, 2022; interview with TAP on Thursday, December 8, 2022. In line with the previous interview, *Tempo* Magazine October 30, 2021's edition released an investigative report under the title of "Kongsi Pencari Rejeki" with brought up a few names of state officials.

³⁸Interview with ND on Friday, December 16, 2022.

rights, individual freedom, even though he strongly opposed the ideology of Liberalism. “Can we enforce someone’s human rights? If I don’t get vaccinated, that’s my right, unless the vaccine (product) of Dr. Terawan and Ibu Siti Fadillah is available. I will vaccinate because I am more sure”.³⁹

Gap of responses

The two clusters of Muhammadiyah members’ responses above were delivered from a process of contesting several main factors that directed their understanding and perspective on policies for handling Covid-19 in the context of a society which is polarized and affected by policy conflicts between the Central Government and the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta. There are three main factors interacting dialectically, to be specific political partisanship, political trust and distrust, and knowledge construction.

Political partisanship

Political polarization in the 2017 DKI Jakarta Local Leaders Election and 2019 Presidential Elections not only had an impact on public perception in assessing the policies of the Jokowi-Ma’ruf Government, but also had implications for citizens’ political alignments when facing the pandemic. Political preferences are some of the important factors shaping the polarized social construction of DKI Jakarta residents in which Muhammadiyah is a strategic stakeholder in the process of implementing the Covid-19 policy.⁴⁰ In the context of political choices in the 2019 Presidential Election,

³⁹Interview with FD on Thursday, December 8, 2022.

⁴⁰“... this distrust is more dominantly caused by affiliation, political choices in the 2 times of Presidential Election. So, I don’t think it’s a perception that is saturated with the Covid problem, but there are elements of it, logical or not, just logical, that’s the spectrum of people’s thinking. Then there are still some of our Muhammadiyah people, I can’t say about the percentage, but the phenomenon is visible and it can be seen in the Muhammadiyah (Whatsapp) group. Even among the elites of the Muhammadiyah community, it also exists”, interview on Monday, December 12, 2022.

Muhammadiyah members who vote for Jokowi tend to support all policies for handling Covid-19. This group has strong faith and support for the government. They acknowledged the government's success in controlling the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile the attitude of Prabowo's voters is divided into two clusters, specifically those who support government policies (accepting cluster) and the rest are rejecting (objection/hesitancy cluster). Prabowo joining the Jokowi Government for the 2019-2024 period crowned the figure of Anies as a symbol of the political epicenter of Jokowi's antithesis.⁴¹

The background of the political contestation between Jokowi and Anies has sparked a policy conflict in dealing with the pandemic, thereby sharpening the attitude of each other's political alignments in the public sphere.⁴² In terms of the handling of Covid-19, some of Anies' policies are seen as the antithesis of the policies of the Central Government. His supporters consider that the policy breakthroughs made by Anies are faster and more sensitive to the interests of Muslims compared to the Central Government.⁴³ DB explained "Yes (political conflict) continues until now. Even I tend to see it become very sharp. When it is traced sociologically, the roots can be seen, the distrust is more dominantly caused by affiliation, political choices in the two presidential elections. So, I don't think it's a perception that is saturated with the Covid problem, but there are elements of it, logical or not, yes, it's logical as a spectrum of people's thinking".⁴⁴ The existence of a policy conflict between the Central Government and the

⁴¹Afrimadona, "Revisiting Political Polarization in Indonesia: A Case Study of Jakarta's Electorate", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, Volume 40, Issue 2 (2021), 315-339. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18681034211007490>

⁴²Arya Budi dan Warih Aji Pamungkas, "Partisanship in Crisis: Public Response to Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia", *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, Volume 24, Issue 1 (2020), 15-32 Doi: 10.22146/jsp.52770

⁴³Interview with FA on Monday, December 19, 2022

⁴⁴Interview with DB on Monday, December 12, 2022

DKI Jakarta government has hardened political preferences between pro and con support groups. This problem further strengthened the support of Muhammadiyah members for Anies.⁴⁵

This research found that not all DKI Jakarta Muhammadiyah members who supported Anies were included in the Hesitancy Cluster in carrying out the Covid-19 policy despite the conflict between the Central Government and DKI Government. The consistent pattern is that members who are hesitant about the Covid-19 policy have a political preference for Anies and tend to ignore the Central Government. They gave support and praise for Anies' steps, which were confronted with Central Government policies and often even preceded Central Government policies.⁴⁶ The political partisanship factor of Muhammadiyah members in DKI Jakarta is a factor which determines support for Governor Anies' policies. Segregation of political choices forms patterns of acceptance and rejection of Covid-19 policies.

All informants who responded negatively to the Covid-19 policy had the same political choices and preferences, then showed similar narratives and arguments in rejecting the Covid-19 policy. Policy rejection is due to political perceptions and narratives about policy inequality and political distrust. Most of the informants who fall into the Hesitancy Cluster category have connections and connections with the Ummat Party and the figure of Amien Rais. The common narrative and political identity promoted by the Ummat Party met the political partisanship of Muhammadiyah members who objected to the Covid-19 policy. This group

⁴⁵Various controversial statements by central government officials were considered counterproductive and did not show discretion. <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/09/02/09285111/kilas-balik-6-bulan-covid-19-pernyataan-kontroversial-pejabat-soal-virus>

⁴⁶Tempo.co. "Beda Pandangan Anies dan Kemenkes Sebelum Virus Corona Meluas" Mei 11, 2020. <https://metro.tempo.co/read/1341152/beda-pandangan-anies-dan-kemenkes-sebelum-virus-corona-meluas>

echoes the narrative of political resistance against Jokowi's government. The pandemic policy is considered to widen economic disparities and is anti-Islamic bias, banalizing Islamic beliefs.⁴⁷

Political trust and distrust

The government's success in reducing the death rate during a pandemic is not only supported by strict policies with adequate structural support, but also requires a factor of trust in the government.⁴⁸ The low death rate in an area indicates that the people have high trust in the government, and vice versa.⁴⁹ Trust in the government is the foundation for society to overcome the stigmatization of Covid-19 as a conspiracy project.⁵⁰ The role of the Central Government is seen as significant in encouraging the success of handling Covid-19. The government's strategy to balance health and economic approaches has proven successful in saving Indonesia at a critical time despite receiving sharp criticism from epidemiologists. In the view of University Academics Prof. Hamka Desvian Bardansyah, the policy for handling Covid-19 has been quite successful. "We don't experience escalative panic, then state policies are quite effective, our public awareness is above 50% willing to be vaccinated or a combination of all that allows us to get through Covid-19 quite well compared to many other countries," said the Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education Science.⁵¹

However, the results of this study show that the factor of trust in the

⁴⁷Interview with ND on Friday, December 16, 2022.

⁴⁸The high number of Covid-19 cases in DKI Jakarta correlates with the level of compliance and trust in the Covid-19 policy. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/4327122/headline-jakarta-masih-pimpin-kasus-tertinggi-covid-19-psbb-transisi-gagal>

⁴⁹Bishoy Louis Zaki et al., "In trust we trust: The impact of trust in government on excess mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Public Policy and Administration*, Vol. 37, Issue 2 (2022), 226-252.

⁵⁰Rinikso, Covid-19 Stigmatization: A Systematic Literature, <http://doi-org.ezproxy.ugm.ac.id/10.1177/22799036221115780>

⁵¹Interview with DB on Monday, December 12, 2022.

state cannot stand alone to ensure its citizens' compliance with pandemic control policy instruments. Muhammadiyah members' full acceptance of all Covid-19 policy instruments is a form of obedience to the Central Board of Muhammadiyah institution. Compliance with the Central Board of Muhammadiyah instructions is based on the belief that the Central Board of Muhammadiyah is staffed by people who are free from interests (purely for the benefit of the community), are supported by competent health experts, and act more swiftly than the Government. "I am more obedient to the Central Board of Muhammadiyah than to the government. Yes (because) in fact many of the Central Board's policies were issued ahead of the Government policies," said NFA.⁵² At the same time, they believe the Central Board of Muhammadiyah is actively involved in reminding the government that every policy taken must be based on scientific evidence.⁵³

On the other hand, the Hesitancy Cluster, either in part or in full, carries a narrative of political distrust of the Jokowi Government vis a vis the political trust pinned on the DKI Government. In this cluster, distrust of the central government dominates the attitude and response to policy rejection. The Covid-19 policy is seen as part of the elite's political economy agenda to gain profits from the health business which is controlled by a group of elites and oligarchs. "That (Covid-19) is just a deception by the rich to the poor. It's just a rich man's trick. So they sell drugs, sell vaccines and so on. Take a look, this vaccine just emerged, right? There are non-informal organizations that sell *Peduli Lindungi* (certificates), right? So even if we don't get vaccinated, if we can buy it, we'll get it. Finally, a new source

⁵²Interview with NFA on Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

⁵³Central Board of Muhammadiyah issued Muhammadiyah's official stance as stated in official letter Number 20/PER/1.0/H/2020 concerning the Handling of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Muhammadiyah issued 7 attitudes related to response to government policies in handling a pandemic. Muhammadiyah demands consistency in government policies, in the midst of the political uproar that arose because of the election during the pandemic and the Omnibus Law or *Cipta Kerja*.

of fraud grows again,” said ND. The Covid-19 policy is considered to be a form of momentum created to seek economic benefits from the drug and medical equipment business.

Political distrust of the central government is also based on the centralization of the role of the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment, Luhut B. Panjaitan, who often displays hegemony in power. The negative impact is the emergence of religious sentiment when the PPKM and PSBB policy derivatives are felt to be detrimental to Muslims, such as restrictions on activities in mosques and *mudik*. According to TAF, “Covid-19 regulations are used as an excuse to undermine the faith of Muslims. Friday prayers are not allowed, distance between people during prayers, and so on.”⁵⁴ This government policy is seen as a form of discrimination against Muslims. Another factor contributing to the distrust of the central government is the perception that Jokowi is not pro-Islam.⁵⁵

Knowledge construction

The gap in response to policy cannot be separated from knowledge construction, which is influenced by sources of knowledge and power possessed by individual members. The power and knowledge possessed by each Muhammadiyah member with different levels of involvement in political contestation has determined their response and behavior towards the Covid-19 policy.⁵⁶ The knowledge construction of Muhammadiyah members is influenced by the members’ knowledge base, which comes from religious information and understanding. In the hesitancy cluster, understanding the information obtained strengthens narratives of

⁵⁴Interview with TAP on Thursday, December 8, 2022

⁵⁵Interview with FA on Monday, December 19, 2022

⁵⁶Mary E. Pettenger in Wahyu B. Nugroho, “Konstruksi Sosial Revolusi Hijau di Era Orde Baru”, *Jurnal Sosial Ekonomi Pertanian dan Agribisnis*, Vol.12, No.1 (2018).

rejection of policies, such as information about Covid-19 as a conspiracy, information from government officials behind the PCR business, and implementation of mass vaccinations decorated with economic motives which strengthen perceptions of the government's inability to overcome Covid-19. The sources of information obtained shape the perceptions and strengthen the political direction in constructing the knowledge of Muhammadiyah members to denounce the Covid-19 policy. At the same time, it is strengthened by religious understanding, which tends to be conservative in viewing the phenomenon of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Religious understanding quite dominates the reason for rejecting the policy; an understanding of death and destiny from a religious perspective leads to interpreting death and Covid-19 as matters of destiny. This view emphasizes self-surrender and confronts the fear of being exposed to the plague and the fear of God. "Those who don't go to the mosque are infected with Covid-19, why should the mosque be closed? We can also get Covid-19 at home, but if God gave us Covid-19, why should the mosque be closed? If you want to pray, just pray," said FD. This group sees the Covid-19 virus as a harmless disease. The deaths of people exposed to Covid-19 are more due to congenital (comorbid) diseases.

In addition, the emergence of doubts about the vaccination policy which is not clear on the halal/haram status, and the closure of mosques for worship activities is the culmination point that strengthens the construction of rejection of the Covid-19 policy. There is a growing opinion that the vaccine provided by the Central Government contains elements of pork. According to FA, "Why did Jokowi give a vaccine that contains pork? From a religious point of view, it is obligatory to guard against the choice not to introduce something that is unlawful into our bodies. Because if something that is unlawful enters our body, it will make us lazy, it is not a

blessing for us.”⁵⁷ However, this group shows confidence in parties who are at odds with the Central Government, such as former Health Ministers: Terawan and Siti Fadilah Supari. Political distrust in the government was raised from the construction of religious information and understanding which intertwined to form narratives and criticisms of government policies.

In the affirmation cluster, the acceptance of the Covid-19 policy was due to the awareness that the Covid-19 virus is real and dangerous. The Covid-19 virus is real because it is felt directly as a positive-tested victim of Covid-19. According to DS,⁵⁸ “The reality (of Covid-19) has an impact means that a person has influenza, then has shortness of breath, then has a fever. It’s infected with Covid. Muhammadiyah in DKI Jakarta, organizationally, we state that Covid exists.” Factually, the impact which has arisen as a result of the pandemic has contributed to strengthening belief in the Covid-19 phenomenon, moreover it is supported by the massive sources of information from various media which present the latest information on Covid-19.

Conclusion

The response of Muhammadiyah DKI Jakarta members to the Covid-19 policy is divided into two main clusters: affirmation and hesitancy. The affirmation cluster is rooted in the member’s institutional obedience to the Central Board of Muhammadiyah which is a key factor allowing its members to domesticate their political preferences and put aside political distrust in responding to the Covid-19 policy. Affirmation of their response to organizational policies shows stronger trust and obedience to the Central Board of Muhammadiyah compared to the Government. They chose to follow the instructions of the Central Board of Muhammadiyah because

⁵⁷Interview with FA on Monday, December 19, 2022

⁵⁸Interview with DS on Wednesday, December 14, 2022

they were seen as prioritizing the interests of society based on scientific arguments.

The hesitancy cluster describes the process of contestation (negotiation and resistance) which occurs among Muhammadiyah members hesitant about the Covid-19 policy. This contestation arises from the perspective of political criticism in understanding, treating, and even challenging the policies of the central and provincial governments of DKI Jakarta. The background of political partisanship and distrust has placed political criticism of this cluster in the context of the relational imbalance between Muslims and the state (central government). Contest in this cluster was triggered by several factors with different pressure intensities which brought up two response variants: selective partial acceptance and complete rejection.

The findings of this research differ from studies by Gadarian, Goodman & Pepinsky and Soderberg & Muhtadi, which emphasize political partisanship as a determinant factor in responding to the pandemic policies. Obedience and trust in Central Board of Muhammadiyah are determining factors for its members' acceptance of the Covid-19 policy, overcoming factors of political partisanship, religious puritanism and knowledge construction. This research complements the findings of Goldfinch, Taplin and Gauld which highlight trust in government in managing the pandemic. This study also found that the political partisanship of some Muhammadiyah members in DKI Jakarta were a factor which determined their support for Governor Anies Baswedan's policies. They showed political distrust of President Jokowi's policies and showed hesitancy in implementing the three pandemic control policies, either partially (negotiations) or entirely (resistance).

This study offers two recommendations to improve the effectiveness and implementation of public policies. First is the need for political

partisanship and policy synchronization between the central and provincial governments in responding to non-natural disaster issues that demand alertness and innovation from policy makers. Second is the need for the government's cultural sensitivity in appointing those in charge of implementing its policies so as not to widen polarization and provoke sentiments of political alignment in society. This research is still limited to the DKI Jakarta area and requires further elaboration by taking into account the diversity of sociological backgrounds of Muhammadiyah members and the differences in the dynamics of the relationship between the central and provincial governments.

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Interview with Informants

1. Interview with HP, Wednesday, December 14, 2022.
2. Interview with DS, Wednesday, December 14, 2022.
3. Interview with AS, Tuesday, December 13, 2022.
4. Interview with FA, Monday, December 19, 2022.
5. Interview with DB, Monday, December 12, 2022.
6. Interview with NFA, Wednesday, December 14, 2022.
7. Interview with TAP, Thursday, December 8, 2022.
8. Interview with ND, Friday, December 16, 2022.
9. Interview with FD, Thursday, December 8, 2022.

