

Indonesia Government Responsiveness during COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the expansion of the centralization-decentralization dichotomy in the midst of the turbulence of the responsiveness of the Indonesian government by offering an alternative lens of concurrency. Simultaneously centralization and decentralization can be used to respond effectively to crisis events that overlap with administrative jurisdictions and require strong coordination. A qualitative case analysis of the Government of Indonesia's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this research finds that concurrency has increased national-subnational tensions which compromised the effective response in the early period of the COVID-19 crisis. This tension is caused by the long-term delay on the part of the central government in the COVID-19 period. This research concludes that concurrency can be effective, but requires a clear division of competencies and consistent implementation from the Government of Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to discuss between centralization and decentralization in Governance Science research as the two main modes of crisis management. Crisis is a situation in which residents of a region of a country are faced with uncertain situations as a result of natural disasters, disease outbreaks and other situations. Such conditions require the presence of the government to control and regulate in order to be able to get out of the crisis. This shows how important it is for reliable crisis management to provide reliable warnings and forecasts as an emergency response once a crisis has started (Zuo et al., 2017). In the process of implementing crisis management, government management is always faced with two methods, namely centralization and decentralization. These two modes have opposite views. Groups that view centralized governance believe that crises that require a rapid and integrated response can only be achieved through centralization (Keel, 2019). On the other hand, decentralization groups argue that the crisis requires a



flexible and contextual response that only a more decentralized government can provide (Bakonyi, 2018). These two very important modes will be discussed later in this article.

In implementing crisis management, most countries combine these two approaches. There is an assumption that centralization and decentralization can be used together to achieve an effective response. This argument is often referred to as the cooperative mode of federalism (Steyrler, 2017). The responsibility of the government (state representatives) to the COVID-19 pandemic is a logical consequence of the principle that the state is the authority to serve the community. As stated by JJ Rousseau in his book "Du Contract Social ou Principes du Droit Politique" in 1762, it is written that the State (government) is obliged to serve and guarantee the rights of the people to a social contract between the community and the government.

This writing aims to understand the responsibility of the Indonesian government in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic which is difficult to control. However, responses to concerns about government effectiveness have been limited. Many measures were shown such as locking doors or quarantine to slow and prevent the spread of the virus. In addition, since 1999, Indonesia has practiced large-scale decentralization and introduced competing arrangements to distribute responsibilities between central and local governments in the process. This paper begins by explaining the debate between centralized and decentralized theories and introduces competition theory, followed by a methodological approach. Then, discuss the dynamics of Indonesia's response to COVID19 at the national and local levels.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze crisis decision making through a nuanced approach (Bakonyi, 2018). Focusing on the Indonesian case, this study complements the transnational analysis with country-specific case studies, adding to the nuances of previous empirical findings (Jalles, 2020). Indonesia's reasons for responding to the COVID19 pandemic were chosen for two reasons: First, since 1999, Indonesia has implemented what is known as the "big bang decentralization" (Hofman, 2004), shifting most of its energy power to local governments while at the same time making agreements competitive together. Local government consists of four successive levels, namely province, city, regency, and village. Of these, the two most important regions with significant self-government are at the provincial and regency/city levels. Together with the central government, it also manages all functional capacities in addition to the six exclusive organs of national power, namely foreign affairs, defense, security, finance and currency, justice and religion, teachers. Also applied in disaster and crisis management. While crisis management and conventional governance follow different logics (Eckhard et al., 2020), the time to assess the effectiveness of competition applied during a crisis remains unexplored. Documenting crisis management, with a nature, speed and scale unprecedented in Indonesia and globally. By July 2021, the crisis had spread throughout the province, affecting 51 regencies and cities across the country with more than 2.8 million confirmed cases and approximately 73,000 deaths (Republic of Indonesia 2021). Indonesia was also recorded to have a positive number of as high as 2% in March 2020, much higher than the WHO limit of 5%. Indonesia has been heavily criticized for its slow



and sporadic response in terms of fast action and the need for coordinated action (Djalante et al., 2020).

This research is mainly based on government policy documents (laws, decisions and speeches) and media reports. A policy document covering all relevant laws and policies related to COVID19 was released from March to April 2020 when most of the important decisions have been made. To measure local response, this study also documents and analyzes regulations and statements made by local leaders.

Analysis of policy documents is supported by analysis of national and local media in the form of anecdotes. Only online media registered with the Indonesian Press Council will be collected through SEO (Search Engine Optimization) using relevant keywords such as COVID19, national policies, local (regional) responses, national (regional) conflict bases, capacity allocation, and combinations thereof. To filter the choices, this study only focuses on the most relevant and valid media. Using these criteria, The Jakarta Post, Kompas, Tempo, Detik, Republika and Liputan6 were selected which include: national and local dynamics. To avoid bias, this study uses a triangulation technique, namely cross-checking data and information sources. It first starts by analyzing government policy documents and then looks at how accurately the media cite and analyze them. There is also a triangle between media facilities to ensure the accuracy of reporting. In case of disagreement, this study conducted several assessments using these different sources and only used the most reliable sources.

This study uses an efficient data analysis approach, which uses inference and induction, as well as logical and empirical inference (Mingers, 2012). Policy document analysis focuses on policy instruments and the distribution of functional capacity across levels of government. Meanwhile, media analysis is carried out thematically, focusing on the evolution of the crisis, the response of the central and local governments, and the actual performance of competing governments that affect intergovernmental relations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Explaining the Debate Resilience in Turbulence Governance

A crisis is a low-probability, high-impact event in which consequential choices and fundamental or excessive values are threatened, simultaneously increasing stress and uncertainty (Hale, 2006). Due to these characteristics, crises challenge the organizational capacity, legitimacy, and viability of the state (Kouzmin, 2008). While theoretically looking for approaches to prevent, respond to or explain these events. Going beyond the point of immaturity in explaining crises (Okoli, 2018), experts have raised questions about how effective crisis management is.

With few exceptions, experts have cited the value of centralized governance as the most effective crisis management method (Keel, 2019). Another opinion reveals that centralized decision-making is important because a crisis that requires a quick response to avoid delays is considered ineffective (Zuo et al., 2017). Democratic processes and deliberative institutions are often seen as obstacles that must be overcome (Hlepas, 2016), to avoid the joint decision trap caused by power-sharing arrangements or bargaining agreements commonly found in modern democratic systems (Sonnicksen, 2018). Furthermore, because responding to crises often involves many actors with different tasks,



levels of preparation, levels of understanding, and political and administrative considerations (Charles, 1989), centralized governance improves coordination and synergy (Legido Quigley et al., 2020). Finally, the presence of a unified organization with primary responsibilities creates a clear view of accountability (Douglas et al., 2019). The convenience of ambiguity commonly found in distributed governance and the accountability requirements that force policymakers to make high-quality decisions can be avoided.

As Kuhn said (Nova, 2011: 68), the crisis itself has no boundaries, it can happen anytime and anywhere. At the macro level, the concentration of power in the hands of a single actor has raised concerns about the sustainability of democracy and the willful marginalization of institutions (Scheuerman, 2009). In addition, deliberate practice does not necessarily impede rapid response and can increase the effectiveness of decision-making. Democracy must be able to balance short-term responsiveness with long-term accountability, and centralization alone is not enough (Goetz, 2014). The pursuit of a quick response by avoiding the democratic process can lead to unrepresentative governance (Cooper, 2017), technocratic authoritarianism (Teik, 2014), authoritarian rule (Glinski, 2014) or illiberalism (Hart, 1993).

This criticism has led to the development of a decentralized approach to crisis management. Decentralized crisis management uses local knowledge, adaptation and innovation to respond to crises more effectively. Decentralized decision making allows local leaders to make decisions that reflect local conditions, needs and priorities (Bakoni, 2018). It also receives information about insurmountable complexities, such as the advantages or disadvantages of centralized governance (Savi, 2015). Furthermore, the decentralized decision-making process results in high-quality decisions with the participation of those with relevant expertise, including local governments (RandmaLiiv, 2015). Decentralized crisis management also has higher levels of legitimacy, efficiency, and social acceptance (Holtmann, 2016). This leads to a stronger sense of ownership and successful policy implementation (Börzel, 2000).

In the midst of this debate, scholars have proposed a crisis management approach that effectively utilizes both centralized and decentralized crisis decision management (Hlepas, 2016). This approach is based on more contextual and nuanced factors such as decision level (strategic versus operational), time pressure, leadership, communication channels, organizational structure, and type of crisis (Bonvecchi, 2016). That said, centralization and decentralization should be seen as a spectrum with varying degrees of dichotomy (Kuipers et al., 2015). What is needed is a smart combination of the two which requires institutional flexibility and wider participation from local governments (Eckhard, 2021). Or argue that centralization and decentralization can be used together. While some elements of crisis decision-making require centralized governance, others are best handled by decentralized governance. This also applies to different types of seizures, adding to the nuance that no one type of response is most effective and that different responses show different levels of effectiveness in different situations (Kenis et al., 2019). De Mello (2020) also reveals that the three crises affect intergovernmental relations, they may require strengthening or weakening local authorities for better coordination. Adds the nuance that no single type of response is most effective and that different responses show different



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Although this concept is mainly applied to normal conditions, it is not uncommon in crisis conditions. Many countries have standardized this method rather than treating it as an exception (Fenna, 2013). In its application, competition has different manifestations (Dziedzic, 2017). There is pure competition when two levels of government have equal legislative and administrative power over the same matters, at the same time and over the same territory. Conditional competition can occur when the central government is only involved in the public policy arena to the extent that it fulfills certain conditions which are usually in the national interest. Meanwhile, complementary or concurrent frameworks limit the national government to a regulatory framework which is then supplemented by subnational units with detailed information laws. Thus, when two public orders operate in the same policy domain but are confined to different aspects of the domain, mutual competition occurs. A system may also have arrangements where the central government has legislative power while local governments have the power to implement it, ultimately competition can also be very real, where the central government government can be divided into local spaces with varying degrees of constitutional or legal force. Punishment in the end competition can also be very real, where the central government can be divided into local spaces with varying degrees of constitutional or legal force. Punishment ultimately competition can also be very real, where the central government can be divided into local spaces with varying degrees of constitutional or legal force punishment.

The move to competition stems from presenting the argument as a better response to the new complexities and transparency of issues when a full monopoly of jurisdiction is not possible. (Styler, 2017). Prioritizing effective intergovernmental coordination processes to address specific issues (Fenna, 2013). Siddiki et al. (2018) found that such a system can encourage the development of context-specific solutions and innovations. The system provides a more integrated policy, which is characterized by consistency of objectives and consistency between instruments, so that they help each other in achieving certain goals. When the policy-making process requires concerted action at all levels of government through consultation and cooperation, competition offers a solution (Börzel, 2000).

In practice, competition can lead to more or less centralized decisions with more or less decentralized solutions (Cepilovs, 2017). The central government can only provide a common framework through laws and regulations, while local governments are fully responsible for its implementation. In addition, local governments are allowed to participate in national decision-making by providing the necessary information and context. This participation prevents the central government from shifting the burden to local communities. Similarly, the central government can intervene in the implementation



of decisions, rather than just monitoring them, which is especially necessary when local governments are incompetent or slow to act. When fully developed,

Although competition is common in modern democracies, such as South Africa, the United States, Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, Germany, Canada, Nigeria, and Spain, it is complex. This governance approach is generally applied under normal circumstances and must be carefully adapted to the crisis. Governance has several weaknesses, such as the trap of joint decisions or the entanglement of decisions that endanger the results of public services. This can encourage strategic avoidance by shifting costs and responsibilities without a clear division of responsibilities, resulting in poor service. In addition, duplication and overlapping of policies can lead to mismanagement. If mishandled, these problems can lead to complexities and tensions between governments (Hollander, 2010).

To address this, it is important to establish a clear allocation of institutional capacity. Despite some changes, the central government is generally responsible for the laws on principles of governance and local governments are responsible for the operational details through the regulatory framework. The tendency of national governments to dominate in good times should be limited and avoided in bad times. In South Africa, for example, local government involvement must be consistent with national law and national government intervention must not compromise or impede the ability or right of local governments to carry out their functions (Steytler, 2005). Therefore, competition requires a more cooperative mechanism to manage the inherent stress (Steytler, 2017).

Indonesia's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic is a big test for the Indonesian government, especially the dynamics of regional-central relations. First, new epidemics are spreading at an unprecedented speed. Second, as a new phenomenon, COVID19 requires an accurate, integrated, and fast response, which is impossible for many countries including Indonesia.

National Initiative

The Indonesian government's response to COVID19 has been slow and unsystematic. When the virus hit Wuhan and started to spread, several actors urged the Indonesian government to give a firm response. Instead of answering firmly, the Minister of Health hesitated to make strategic decisions other than evacuating Indonesian citizens from Wuhan, as well as declaring Indonesia's safety for genetic moral and ethical reasons. The response drew a backlash from the public, raising concerns about the commitment, capacity and readiness of the Indonesian government.

This new initiative follows Indonesia's first recorded positive case in March 2020, when the Ministry of Health declared COVID19 a major health threat and initiated a response. President Joko Widodo has given a more severe early warning. In mid-March, the President issued an executive order, Presidential Decree No. 7/2020, established a COVID19 task force and assigned the head of the National Disaster Management Agency to lead. After that, the Indonesian National Police (POLRI) issued a ban on mass gatherings or group activities in public places, enforced a policy of working from home, and closed access to main offices, government and schools. Private institutions and businesses continue to operate as usual, which has been heavily criticized.



In response to public criticism and the World Health Organization's statement on the global pandemic on March 11, 2020, the President issued a new Executive Order, Keppres 9/2020, expanding the steering and implementation committees to cover most governments. Ministries and agencies, including intelligence agencies and NGOs. Decisions involve local government through the participation of the governor as well as in the steering committee.

On March 31, 2020, the President suddenly and simultaneously set three important policies. The most controversial policy is the Government Regulation Act (PERPU 1/2020). The policy provides several fiscal guidelines to address COVID19 and related economic threats, such as fiscal reallocation, loosening of the deficit ceiling, and fiscal incentives. This ensures there is no accountability to all officials involved in the decision-making process, prohibiting any policy, decision or action against them in court. This raises concerns about the constitutionality and quality of the democratic process.

On the same day, the President issued two additional policies, namely the Government Regulation on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PP 21/2020) and Government Regulation on Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PP 21/2020) and the Government Regulation on Large-Scale Social Restrictions on the scale of social restrictions. Social Restrictions (PP 21/2020). Presidential Executive Order, declaring COVID19 a public health emergency (Perpres 11/2020). PP 21/2020 is the most awaited policy due to the magnitude and speed of transmission affecting thirty-four provinces. On April 13, the President issued another policy (Perpres 12/2020), making COVID19 a national disaster. The new policy encourages greater participation, thanks to the establishment of a task force for handling Covid-19 at the provincial and regional levels. A week later, on April 21, the President took the bold but controversial step of banning their families' homecoming (exodus, the annual large-scale travel of Muslims from the city to their homeland) to celebrate Ramadan and Eid with their families. The Minister of Transportation introduced a policy to limit the use of public and private transport to limit mobility.

The slow response has led several researchers to conclude that the dominant feature of the first phase of the COVID-19 crisis in Indonesia is political delay (Djalante et al., 2020). This delay is detrimental to Indonesia. The president hesitated several times before issuing a draft with stricter regulations. Indonesia's response was much slower than that of China and Italy, which took immediate action to implement social distancing, lockdown, and mandatory quarantine on a large scale. Due to delays, the virus spreads at an exponential rate, causing more victims.

Subnational Response

The delay in the central government's response prompted local governments to initiate a unilateral response. The first and worst-affected province, with nearly 70% of deaths, the capital Jakarta is a sensational case; Governor Anies Baswedan is constantly under pressure to take decisive action. He asked the central government to implement a regional quarantine, but was only allowed to implement social distancing. On March 13, he issued an order to close all tourist attractions. Two days later, he sent a letter asking the company to allow its employees to work from home. A day later, the same policy of delegation for government employees was implemented. At the same time, schools were



closed and the operation of intercity trains was restricted. On March 19, the governor declared a state of emergency in Jakarta and banned religious gatherings. The central government was hesitant to respond to a new call for a regional quarantine at the end of March, which finally imposed large-scale social restrictions on April 9.

The Governor of Papua is taking a firmer stance in the fight against COVID19. First, he declared a state of emergency on March 17. When the first confirmed case occurred in Papua, he arranged a meeting with the mayor and all regents as well as the Kapoldas and the National Police Chief on March 2, the meeting resulted in recommendations to close, close all ports and airports, limit community mobility and lead to a lockdown. Only logistics related activities are allowed. The governor gave the central government two days to implement the policy, but when the central government failed to act, he used his position as the national government representative to implement the restrictions in March. Although widely welcomed by Papuans and expatriates, the policy has drawn criticism from the Minister of Transportation. The governor later modified the order, increasing complexity by implementing extensions and tightening social restrictions. This action was imitated by the Governor of Maluku by imposing social restrictions in the regions.

At the local level, before the central government imposed large-scale social restrictions, many local governments took a different approach (Table 1). As the virus spreads and deaths rise, mayors and regional leaders take innovative but controversial steps that deviate from national politics. The regent of Central Mamberamo and the mayor of Sorong obeyed the ban imposed by the governor of Papua, despite strong opposition from the central government. The mayor of Solo implemented a semi-lockdown after declaring COVID19 an unusual event. This was done when the central government was still socializing the social distancing policy. Likewise, the Mayor of Tegal has implemented a "total lockdown", banning all vehicles and passengers from entering and leaving, since March 30.

Other regional leaders are beginning to challenge national mandates to protect their local communities. The Mayor of Bekasi delivered a unique response called self-isolation (www.Bekasikota.go.id). The policy is not too restrictive, requiring people to self-isolate by staying at home and restricting movement (wri-indonesia.org). Not long ago, the Regent of ToliToli in Central Sulawesi quickly implemented a local blockade which he called regional quarantine (liputan6.com). The decree limits the mobility of people in the area by reducing ship and plane traffic, as well as carrying out strict inspections of cars. Likewise, the Mayor of Tasikmalaya, West Java, immediately implemented a local blockade after the first case was confirmed on March 31. Meanwhile, Banda Aceh's mayor has announced a partial lockdown, which has been extended across the province. The Regent of Magetan, East Java and the Mayor of Medan, North Sumatra, both implemented a limited lockdown and added isolation groups.

The mayor of Surabaya is also a prime example of bold action to stop the virus. Surabaya is one of the worst affected places after Jakarta. The mayor initially implemented a temporary local blockade to limit residents' activities. When these measures were deemed insufficient, he proposed an isolation area, limiting access and travel from Surabaya to nineteen strategic points. The move was almost fully implemented in early



April when the East Java governor approached him and asked for reconsideration. Instead of implementing isolation or detention, the governor suggested quarantining the area.

There are still many instances where local governments take a very different approach from that of the central government. For example, the Mayor of Kendari only requires self-quarantine for three days out of the specified fourteen days. The National Disaster Management Agency asked the public to ignore the decision and asked the Governor of Southeast Sulawesi to warn the mayor. The Regent of Bolaang Mongondow Timur opposes the national social safety net policy by withholding subsidies.

Differences in local responses only subsided after large-scale social restrictions were imposed on March 31. In this framework, local governments can only choose large-scale socialization restrictions (partially restrictions) or social restrictions (social distancing). As of May 2020, four provinces and 22 cities and provinces have implemented large-scale social distancing measures, while other provinces are still implementing social distancing measures.

Budgeting is another area of controversy examining the regional-to-central relationship. Through Presidential Instruction 4/2020, the President has directed ministries and local governments to refocus operations, allocate taxes, and purchase goods and services within the scope of handling COVID19. However, as of April 13, the President noted that 103 regional governments had not yet prepared a social security program to help ease the financial burden of those most affected by the COVID-19 emergency situation. Similarly, another 140 local governments have yet to implement policies designed to mitigate the economic impact of COVID19, while another 34 local governments have yet to release their final budgets. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Home Affairs finally implemented a temporary suspension of 35% tax transfers for 380 of 548 regional agencies (SK 10/KM. 7/2020 Minister of Finance). These local governments include those in the epicenters of virus transmission, such as East Java, West Java, and Yogyakarta. This reflects the difficulty of maintaining coordinated action.

Reviewing Concurrency

Previously, it was revealed how concurrency works in Indonesia in dealing with the pandemic. It is clear that in a country as diverse as Indonesia, it is difficult to establish a centralized mode of decision-making even in times of crisis, if not impossible. Comparative experience confirms that only China and Singapore can implement such a system quite effectively (Tchounwou, 2020). Similarly, decentralized decision-making has limitations due to emergencies in administrative jurisdictions. This is where competition can bring an edge. However, the analysis also shows that there are some limitations in the application of this framework.

At the start of the pandemic, there was competition between national (central) and local (regional) governments to determine who was in charge of a particular area. Local governments have pursued a number of different, even contradictory, policies mandated by the central government. This initiative responds to the need to protect the public from the virus amid the central government's slow response to the emergency. The competing petitions were so obvious that they gave rise to conflict between governments. This is a reminder of the "competitive curse" (Steytler, 2005). Competition, especially when applied



in an emergency, can undermine effective and efficient government operations by creating duplication of services, bottlenecks in decision making, uncoordinated and polarized policies, tasks that are not delegated to lower levels of government, domination of local government by higher levels. governance, lack of transparency and accountability, and even centrifugal dynamics (Steytler, 2017). Similarly, Hollander (2010) states that the presence of two or more independent government systems can lead to duplication of inefficiency and endless conflicts characterized by costs and mutual blame. Rodrigues (2017) also points out the difficulties in government practice in coordinating policies and implementing federalism in collaboration with local governments. lack of transparency and accountability, and even centrifugal dynamics (Steytler, 2017). Similarly, Hollander (2010) states that the presence of two or more independent government systems can lead to duplication of inefficiency and endless conflicts characterized by costs and mutual blame. Rodrigues (2017) also points out the difficulties in government practice in coordinating policies and implementing federalism in collaboration with local governments. Lack of transparency and accountability, and even centrifugal dynamics (Steytler, 2017). Similarly, Hollander (2010) states that the presence of two or more independent government systems can lead to duplication of inefficiency and endless conflicts characterized by costs and mutual blame. Rodrigues (2017) also points out the difficulties in government practice in coordinating policies and implementing federalism in collaboration with local governments.

To manage competition, there are several strategies. Many scholars have argued for clearer skills regulation across levels of government (Steytler, 2017). However, the demarcation line between central and local government capacity remains, never clear, despite many constitutional efforts to clearly divide capacity and power between different levels of government. In addition, some argue that a clear division of roles and responsibilities will be effective in resolving agent arrests, legal jurisdiction disputes, and opportunities for innovation, and policy testing (Hollander, 2010).

The case of Indonesia also shows that when facing competition or conflict between governments, the central government uses alternative strategies. Initially, he consistently said that declaring social closure or segregation - something some local governments have done - was a concern for the central government. Local governments have no legislative power other than implementing national policies. This development is part of the general trend and institutional arrangements towards federal primacy: in the event of a contradiction or conflict between the central and local governments in certain respects, the regional policy will be null and void. In other words, national law is the default law (Steytler, 2017). After the central government decides to make laws, local governments lack the initiative and existing laws are flawed (Ayele, 2017). This is combined with a fiscal instrument in which the national government stipulates much more stringent spending conditions, failing which will result in delays in national transfers. Because local governments rely heavily on national transfers, they can only meet certain conditions, leading to policy adjustments.

Another approach taken by the Indonesian government is to use a more flexible and participatory approach. Initially, only the central government decided the policy. At the end of March 2020, the provincial government was also consulted and involved. This option is



strategic because it strengthens the sense of ownership of local government, which bears most of the responsibility for its implementation (Steytler, 2005). Furthermore, developing more constructive relationships through coordination or cooperation between governments and dialogue is a better recipe for conflict management than relying on constitutional arbitration or other methods, other judicial facilities (Palermo, 2017).

The case of Indonesia demonstrates the weakness of centralized governance, which the central government did not immediately respond to. However, this shortcoming cannot be completely overcome by simply switching to a decentralized system. For a crisis like COVID19, which crosses administrative jurisdictions with varying speed and severity, a more unified and coordinated response system is needed and this requires a certain mode of cooperation (Kuipers et al., 2015). Marcusulescu (2020) concludes that a decentralized system alone is not enough and works better when combined with a decentralized system.

Despite the experience, there is a growing need for more adaptive governance practices that prioritize collaboration across organizations and jurisdictions (Djalante et al. 2020). This study proposes a concurrency arrangement, where centralization and decentralization can be combined to make centralized decisions with a decentralized solution (Cepilovs, 2017). Effective crisis management must bring together different levels of authority and combine the benefits of local government knowledge and accountability with central government guidance and support (Boyd, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to expand the existing literature on crisis management. Offering an alternative competitive lens to the Indonesian crisis management case demonstrates that, both institutionally and practically, crisis decision-making can combine centralization and decentralization. On the one hand, centralization is important to facilitate consistency of national policies in a geographically diverse and institutionally complex country such as Indonesia. However, there were no delays resulting in institutional complexity and centrifugal pressure. On the other hand, decentralization can promise synergies across jurisdictions as emergencies like COVID19 cross administrative boundaries.

In proposing competition, this study nevertheless acknowledges deficiencies in the framework. Unless there is a clear description and division of labor, such an arrangement can lead to avoidance or stress. The case in Indonesia shows that tensions between governments arise as a result of a late response from one party, influencing the decisions of the other. In the interest of quick response, many local governments have taken unilateral actions that are contrary to national policy. Although the principles of shared responsibility or competition are generally accepted, their actual implementation needs to be clearer. An extraordinary combination could be developed where the central government is responsible for purchasing and distributing medical products while local governments are responsible for tracking and testing (Aubrecht et al., 2020). Even in clearer contexts, crises almost always require cooperation between multiple actors, which also requires institutional flexibility (Eckhard et al., 2020). What is needed are intergovernmental processes and tools for managing skills.

This research has limitations. While providing a more nuanced understanding, the selection of a single case study may limit the potential for generalization. However, the



results from Indonesia still show broader implications for countries with similar institutional structures. Further comparative research is needed, both qualitative and quantitative. Decentralization is being promoted on a global scale and centralization is being exaggerated, reflecting in depth the value of the two approaches in a crisis context. A more adaptive crisis management approach is needed, in the context of repeated crises and less effective crisis management. Future concurrency research is needed to assess how these alternatives might work better during a crisis, with particular emphasis on how concurrency is managed.

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