

Research article

Government Response in Managing Citizen Journalism in Pandemic Times

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The Covid-19 pandemic has been going on for the past two years. During this time, there has been a lot of news about Covid-19, which has affected the attitudes of citizens including through social media. There has been a rise in journalism among citizens who write about the pros and cons of the government efforts to manage the recovery from the pandemic. There are still debates about whether citizen journalism can be used as a form of public participation. Public participation in the context of open government can demonstrate citizen involvement in the policy-making process of democratic countries. The response of governments to citizen journalists varies. Some countries have banned them, some have ignored them, and some have documented their opinions. What about Indonesia? To what extent do the central and local governments accommodate and respond to their citizens who write about their complaints and experiences? This paper employed qualitative descriptive methods using secondary data and analyzed the culture and behavior of citizens and governments within the democratic context. There have been changes in opinions and a polarization in aims to spread accurate news. As a result, the correct information about Covid-19 could be obtained not only from official government information, but also from the citizen journalists who were given space by the central and regional governments in Indonesia. Local governments have used citizen journalism to evaluate several policies during the pandemic times. The central government accommodates citizen journalism, but the government policies are issued using a top-down approach. Trying to prevent citizen journalism can lead to backlash from citizens. This article aimed to provide an analysis from the public administration perspective about the importance of the involvement of citizen participation during the pandemic times, especially when the media and experts are forced to be silent.

Keywords: pandemic, public participation, citizen journalism, government openness, policy making, culture and community behavior

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has been going on for almost two years. During this period, since the beginning of the Covid-19 cases in Wuhan in December 2019, many news had been buzz. The Chinese government was considered suppressing the virus information from the World Health Organization, especially about the zero patient. The new pandemic

virus, within two weeks since it was reported, had amounted 2.3 percent of deaths. Another news revealed that the number of deaths in Wuhan was actually more than 2.3 percent. Local authorities in Wuhan first thought and announced that the virus was only transmitted from animals to humans, not transmitted from human to human.

The governments of neighboring countries, such as Vietnam and Bhutan immediately closed the entry from people coming from China. Vietnam implemented quarantine the region and conducted gradual testing and tracing starting from people who have just returned abroad, people with the close contact of Covid-19 patients, the family contacts. Bhutan increased the capacity of its health workers to deal with severe respiratory illness. Both Vietnam and Bhutan had different strategies. The similarity that both countries conducted regional isolation from testing to tracing. South Korea, at the beginning was the most successful in tracing positive Covid-19 patients.

They implemented the precaution policies based on the consideration of leaders through directive policies. Some countries copied the success of neighboring China in controlling the virus transmission, such as South Korea and Vietnam. South Korea put the importance of exchanging information of suspects with Wuhan Local Authorities and the Korean Government had experience in handling SARS in 2003. Lee (2021)¹ Infodemic become most important information during pandemic. The role of media which were pointed out by the government become trusted mediators to spread news about preventive behaviors. Therefore, the citizens were more confident and motivated to follow the preventive behavior.

The same as Taiwan government. The government *countered* the pandemic issue at the beginning by listening the input of business people or people traveling from China as well as hearing the input from health experts. Taiwan combined the input from outside government and the experience in dealing with SARS virus in 2003.

The Indonesia government, when neighboring Malaysia and Singapore reported the case findings, was still relaxed and declared as a country free from Sars Cov type 2. When Indonesia discovered the first case in April 2020, epidemiology suspected it was too late. The assumption was based on the fact, the government was lack of Covid-19 tracing to the foreign tourists. Some foreigners reported that they got infected when visiting Bali. The virus was spreaded from local tourists who visited foreign countries or several cities in Indonesia.

Depok was the first case of findings due to reports by the tourists who have recently traveled to Bali and Jakarta. There were so many buzzing news on Covid-19 transmission until it was announced by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global pandemic and can be transmitted from human to human in mid-2020. WHO began required healthy

and sick people to wear masks. Previously, WHO stated that the use of mask is only for medical officers and the sick people.

The governments and the global communities were confused about the dangers of this pandemic virus. They did not whom should be followed, the advice of health experts or making policies according to the state emergencies. As a result, the government responses of each country were different. There were not global precautions. Each states implemented the policies based on the emergencies of the virus spread.

In Indonesia, there was little information on Covid-19 from the official media. Most of net citizen updated the information from main stream media, which was more hoaxes than the truth. The response of the Indonesian Government dealing with the beginning of the pandemic was very slow, neglecting the reported findings of Covid-19 cases from foreign tourists who had been traveled to Indonesia.

Epidemiologists assumed that Covid-19 had entered Indonesia around February 2020, but the number one patient found in Indonesia in the beginning of April 2020. The late finding case was fatal to control the virus spread. Indonesia once still believed that the virus' death rate ratio was not more than 2 percent. The belief ended up with swallowing bitter pills where the hospital were collaps. The death increased due to Covid-19.

The advanced of technology communication during the pandemic conditions were speeded up. The social distancing and the diminishing of activities required people work and study from home. Most governments make online communication through the internet as primary tool to solve social distancing problem. Starting from learning from home, working from home, until shopping from home. People spend more time at home using internet. This situation raise the number of social media users.

People are forced digitalized and social media become increasingly favored. Based on www.statista.com², the number of social media users worldwide reach 4.2 billion people, increasing by 49% during the pandemic. In Asia, social media users reach the highest number, above 70%. The social media users in the United States and Europe increase more than 65%. The number are not as much as in Asia.

When official media did not enough provide news about the pandemic. The citizen felt their aspirations to speak up about the true information of Covid-19 had been covered by the authorities. Moreover, some authorities in some countries felt that Covid-19 did not exist Some people believed Covid-19 exist. Those who believed, looked for news from China netizens who acted as freelance journalists.

Chinese netizens through their personal blogs, wrote many experience in avoiding the virus. Wuhan netizens exposed the information of the virus come from different background knowledge, some of them were freelance journalists, the Covid-19 survivors

or the family of survivors, and the self-investigators who visited hospitals and cremation place. The situation, in Chen, et al (2020)³ created loop between China government and the citizen. The citizen can not trust the media and experts as they also under the authorization control. Citizen emotion to government raised negative comments on social media showing the increase of citizen fear and uncertainty feeling.

From Wuhan citizen experience using blog web to inform the world, netizens from other countries got information about Covid-19, eventhough the news was not authorized. The Chinese government never justified the news officially. Meanwhile many netizens saw the news from Chinese bloggers as a warning. Some of netizens considered the Wuhan citizens just exaggerated the news about the virus. Not all the unauthorized information were true. Some news from the Covid-19 survivors or the family patients might have been right.

There are countries which chose to have high vigilance and aware of the virus spread. Those countries were bordered with China. The neighbouring governments were aware of the news brought by the Chinese citizens. These governments, i.e. Vietnam, Bhutan, and Taiwan thought that the citizens' reports from Wuhan as things needed to be learned. This affected the public policy in their countries. Vietnam, for example, was aware that its country was the closest to China and considered Covid-19 as a threat to the health of its citizens. Therefore the government immediately locked down the territory and closed access from abroad to their country. Bhutan did the same. As addition, realising the fact Bhutan had limited human resources, The King, together with the politicians concerned the lack knowledge about SARS and limited resources of health workers. They trained their health workers as well as the volunteers hand in hand to support health facility system (Ongmo and Parikh, 2020)⁴. Taiwan did the same. At the beginning of pandemic, Taiwan government discussed the spread of the virus with Taiwanese who just came from Wuhan, mostly were students dan bussinessmen.

Is citizen journalism an exaggeration or a form of public moral attitude? How should the Indonesian government respond to citizen journalism? Can citizen journalism be the basis of a policy? Research aims to analyze the development of open governance, the effectiveness of citizen reports through news in the mainstream media, and the extent of government concern to manage the news from the citizens. Whether the problem of citizens is handled quickly or handled slowly or ignored by the government. Several times the President of Indonesia, Mr. Joko Widodo, conveys that the country is considered present by its people if the problems which the people complain, can be handled by the government. Therefore, the government needs to open up the public

spaces. Today's society tends to be in the mainstream media because the problem or their input meets the deadlock when going through the formal path of bureaucracy.

2. THEORITICAL CONCEPT

Public participation engagement is still debating to be discussed. the approach to public administration in many countries is top-down and anti-critic. Denhardt dan Denhardt (2000)⁵The close system in bureaucracy tries to limit the citizen involvement. Meanwhile, in the open government, the bureaucrats tend to value the citizen input when delivering the public service.

From the previous researches, Schafer (2018)⁶ did the systematic literature review about citizen participation in the local governance, there is evident on the corelation between government recruitment and citizen participation, but there is little evident that the citizens pratically involve on decision making. It means that there is no proof that local government makes policy based on bureaucrats engagement to the citizen. It means that, the citizens information is likely to be kept and never been discussed among the decision makers.

With various development in public administration science, the bureaucrats as the policy makers urge to use knowledge in improving sensitivilty to deliver good quality of public service. The problem is government organization has limited human resources. I To cope with that, government improves its sensitivity through the citizen sharing dan experience besides asking experts.

2.1. Public Participation in Government

Freedom of speech in Indonesia is protected by law. The article 28 F of the 1945 Constitution states that "Everyone has the right to communicate and obtain information to develop his or her personal and social environment, and has the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information using all available channels".

In Fung, Graham, and Weil's (2007)⁷ book *Full Disclosure*, governments can implement transparency in policy making to avoid the risk of instability for groups that are not inclusive in policy. Every government policy contains an element of political interest that cannot be avoided. Transparency in the policy-making process is a support for political democracy. It is explained that the group of bureaucrats is divided into two groups addressing transparency in government. The first group that defines public openness is everything related to public policy making that can be opened to the

public. The second group defines transparency as a disclosure finding for a policy through extracting information from reliable parties. In Indonesia, the definition of good governance is still in the stage of public openness, not in the stage of second group yet.

In policy making, according to Kingdon (1984) in Wijaya, et al (2020)⁸ there are two important actors in the policy-making process, namely government and non-governmental actors. Government actors consist of public officials, government bureaucrats, and political elites. While non-governmental actors are media, interest groups, organizations, as well as private, and society. Kingdon explained the possibility of public participation as a basis in policy making because society has values or norms before the existence of government policy. Secondly, because societies with their norms have the potential to seek solutive problem solving. While in the policy making, government must think not only about the citizen aspiration but also the political interests, technical implementation, as well as budget adequacy.

2.2. Effectiveness of Public Participation

So far, both central and local governments have not made public participation the basis of decision-making. The policy making in Indonesia is *top-down* from the central government and implemented by local governments. Local governments are obliged to implement together the integrated policies from the central government. The example of a centralized policy in the pandemic period is the policy of lockdown or social restrictions which must be implemented to all regions. Local Governments are required to follow the direction of the Central Government Policy in implementing Large-Scale Social Restrictions (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar/ PSBB) which then changes with the policy of Implementing Restrictions on Community Activities (Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat/ PPKM).

The government has two tasks: to overcome pandemics and to keep the stability of economy. In carrying out its duties, the central government has made various breakthroughs such as building Covid-19 emergency hospitals, provide social assistance to those affected on social restriction policies, and regulate the availability of vaccinations and medicines.

The government can't be alone in handling the pandemic. Citizen engagement is needed to help the government to disseminate the correct information. Some citizen help help the government by disseminating and reporting the right information which help local governments implementing the PSBB. Through social media, residents report

on crowds and violations of PSBB / PPKM. The citizen reports are very useful for the Local Government to apply sanctions for PSBB / PPKM violators.

There is a time when local governments are excessively proactive in implementing sanctions to violators of health protocols, netizens including epidemiologists analyze some sanctions are not effective. They argue the sanctions can cause more risks of transmission, i.e. punishing the violators to enter the coffin or using the attributes of punishment interchangeably. The community also give some opinion to make the punishment for the social restriction violators more effective. In this case based on the citizen reports, the local government reevaluate its policy.

Sherry Arnstein (1969)¹⁰ arranges the level of public participation as community empowerment in decision-making. She categorizes the level of the public participation in the form of stairs or stages, in which are referred to as the eight steps of community participation. Of the eight stages of the rung, which are (1) manipulation dan (2) therapy, when citizen have not yet participated or even apathy with government programs. The third (informing), the fourth (consultation), and the fifth (placation) rungs are the stage where citizens have tokenism, they can give advice to the bureaucrats but they do not have power to make decision. Meanwhile, the stage (6) partnership means that citizens are the government co-worker that can implement program together. The stages (7) delegated power and (8) citizen control mean that citizens obtain the government trust to be involved in decision making process. The citizens may have managerial power to control and to fix the government program.

People's attitudes towards government policies at the beginning of the pandemic were similar to Sherry's analysis. At first people felt antipathy to the government policy when government did not provide the correct information. Then, the citizens become an informants whether they spread the correct information or wrong information. Some citizens with correct information based on their knowledge or their experience finally help the government, to give input and recommendation.

At the beginning of the pandemic in Indonesia, seeing the government underestimation towards the virus, the government is confusing the public on mask policy and the disinformation about the first time of virus spreading. It causes antipathy among the public. The second disinformation was about the cytokine, which can be cured by herbal medicine. The situation evolved the idea to against the government. As a result, whatever the government implements the policy, public see as the fault information. Whatever government implements the policies, it gets critical in society, such as social restriction policies until the rejection of vaccinations. In this early stages, Sherry explained that the government's attitude of manipulating citizens gets rejected.

The emergence of the journalism community marks the maturity in the society. In this stage, some netizens become the government informants who provide information correctly. In this intermediate stage, the antipathy of some society turns into the empathy when the government asks for public involvement to overcome the pandemic. The government realises it can not work alone and needs the community involvement. The government start to colaborate with local community by opening up the public spaces to report, such as in social media. Some netizens become the government's helping hand to clarify the vaccine, to promote of using masks, and to supervise the crowd.

The next stage is when the government is facing the bed occupancy crisis. The hospital and health facilities collapse, the scarce of Covid therapy drugs in the market and the scarcity of oxygen tubes rise to the creative idea of some local communities to become partners of the government by providing information of drug location, vaccine location, or oxygen availability.

In the final stages of assessing the effectiveness of community participation is when citizen journalism analyzes becomes the society which streghten the government policies and sometimes can control the government policies.

2.3. Citizen Journalism

The term citizen journalism occurs as a result of the use of the internet by the community when the community thinks the unavailability of public spaces provided by the government to convey their aspirations. The public respond the various official media which has limited information on the virus which have been the public concern. The emergence of community groups who become journalists and write, is an effort to convey information amateurishly without editing by any media parties. Mainstream media generally only accommodate by providing public space facilities or delivering news audio-visually whenever the original news is made in written format.

In Indonesia, media presence based on the community is legally allowed by the enactment of Broadcasting Law No. 32 of 2002. The law opens wider opportunities for citizens who express their opinions and experiences.

In times of pandemic, freedom of speech becomes unchecked. Pandemics originating from Wuhan are considered to be fake or hoax news, especially after the Chinese Government as the place of origin of the virus, confirms that the news about the origin of virus in the the mainstream media is incorrect. People and the government around the globe are confused. Indonesia still follow the World Health Organization (WHO) suggestion about the spread of the virus, at the same time, Indonesia government has

lack of knowledge. Having not knowing on how the virus spread makes experts in the worldwide suggest inconsistently

The inconsistency of the beginning information from both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of Indonesia is a big question to the community. News about the risk of death is only 2% compared to MERS cases and the obligation to use masks only for those who are sick. Logically, considering the incubation period and the onset of symptoms, it is impossible for a person to recognize himself has Covid-19 or not and will consider as healthy person without mask.

The impact of these inconsistencies, the rampant news circulated massively about the true or untrue dangers of Covid-19. The Indonesian people became divided by the media information or following the government orders. There are people who believe Covid-19 is a dangerous disease and some do not believe Covid-19 is a disease. Even when Covid-19 has been designated as a pandemic, most Indonesians still think that their region will not be affected by Covid-19. Some believe that they can avoid the virus by drinking certain herbs and many more. In times of pandemics, people must face with the reality that the more they challenge Covid-19 by violating the health protocol, the more Covid victims exposed. After experiencing Covid-19, some netizens who used to be not believe turned into journalists to share their stories to survive from Covid-19. The netizens support government programs to obey the health protocols, to avoid crowds, and to promote vaccinations.

According to ICT Watch in the Indonesian Digital Literacy Framework Book, the citizen journalism is the participation of netizens in the form of reports, analysis and delivery of information and news through the *online* applications. Citizen journalism is needed to keep pace with mass media coverage.

The role of citizen journalism as a form of community participation is still a debating, especially for countries that support democracy. The reports from netizens which construct the positivism, objectively and develop the discussion openly, can actually build public participation and a healthy democratic community (Riaz, 2011)¹¹.

2.4. Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is a person's ability to use digital technology as a communication device for good. The development of human civilization is characterized by the freedom of humans to communicate through digital devices. Literally, humans as social beings want freedom. Freedom in a state, which already has government jurisdiction, governs human to be socially responsible, and respect the social boundaries of society such as norms

of decency, culture respectfulness, indiscriminatory, and know the legal awareness and the consequences of his actions. Therefore, freedom in the digital world should be a form of limited freedom, according to the norms of society and not violating the laws of the country.

Freedom of expression in the social media is excellent, encourages creativity. People become self-confidence connected with the international community, and trains for information openness. Paul Glistler's (1997)¹² emphasizes that the literacy involves the big idea of literature. Similarly, Lanham (1995)¹³ says that the literacy has expanded semantics from the notion of "read-write" to the ability to digest information and convey it. While in the digital era many people interpret the literacy by understanding the operation of the internet and computers that someone can be said to have digital literacy. Digital literacy encompasses recognizing the concept of information management standards, not just operating standards. Through the digital literacy, society practices socio-cultural values, while the digital world allows these values to be different and diverse, therefore it needs proficiency in understanding and using information.

The development of information on social media accommodates the curiosity of Indonesian netizens seeking information related to the pandemic. Sulistyawati (2021)¹⁵, 78% of internet users in Indonesia seek information about Covid-19 on social media. However, this knowledge did not immediately make people believe the dangers of Covid-19. Based on a survey conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS)¹⁶ at the beginning of the pandemic in September 2020, the level of public awareness of implementing health protocols was low. More than 50% of respondents expressing distrust in implementing health protocols because no one around them had Covid-19. The media can guide public opinion and attitudes towards Covid-19.

2.5. Polarization of Society in Shaping Opinions

The polarization of society in public participation is inevitable. Especially if an issue in the society raises a wide variety of the different views.

Humans are social creatures who cannot live alone. In the days before the development of technology such as the internet, people tend to group and conduct the physical interactions by working together and supporting each other in achieving their common goals. With the development of technology, cooperation among individuals can be done in the digital world. In the digital world, information expands widely without limits.

In addressing the pandemic issues, un-integrated information, and the number of state reports that failed to overcome the virus outbreak. The community is divided into

groups who believe the Covid-19 outbreak and a group that does not believe that there is a deadly outbreak called Covid-19.

Talcott Parsons in 1942 dalam Raho (2021)¹⁷ successfully talked about the polarization of society in the social society system. In theory, society in its function as a social being will be integrated looking for balance to overcome conflict. Who would have thought that the theory of polarization which he put forward is increasingly felt in the present, especially in the time of the Covid-19 outbreak. This theory is not the same as the democracy party in Indonesia, i.e. Pemilihan Umum and Pemilihan Kepala Daerah which still do not create a conflict balance until now.

Pandemics have changed human behavior to be very dependent on the digital world. Restrictions on activities that limit humans as social beings are diverted to 100 percent of activities done in the digital world. News of the pandemic has made people in various parts of the country inevitably polarized, into two opposing groups. Surprisingly in the case of pandemic, the polarization becomes narrowed as the beliefs about the plague increase when the victims reveal the truth about Covid. The trust determines more of the netizens who support the government policies. The netizens become informants for the government or become philanthropy for the government.

2.6. Good Governance

Epistemologically, governance can mean governing. However, in the development of bureaucratic reform after the 1998 financial crisis, in developed countries, emerge the spirit to reform the bureaucracy. New theories come from big question on whom the public policy ideas are made. Should the government always be a *top-down* or should they listen to *bottom-up*?

The concept of good governance according to international organizations including the United Nations (UN) that good governance needs to involve public participation. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) states that to realize good governance needs the involvement and support from all parties, the synergy of the government and the society.

Osborne and Gabler (1992)¹⁸ in the book *Reinventing The Government*, in the chapter *Customer Driven Government*, argued that in a democratic government, the state must be present for the people. Therefore, the state organizer needs to be close to his people. In the next chapter, *From Hierarchy to Participation and Teamwork* they photographed the group of modern society who prefer to be involved in the government policy.

The concept of public opinion and public participatory are the concepts carried by the modern groups after bureaucratic reform. A new style of public administration (New Public Administration) wants a bureaucratic order (New Public Management/NPM) is more transparent. One of the government transparencies is the opening of public space to determine the policy agendas.

Based on a release issued by the UN e-Government Development Index (EDGI), participation over the internet jumped in 2020 or during the pandemic, from rank 53 to rank 35. However, the ranking has not examined the issue of the quality of public services in Indonesia, especially the government's response to citizen reporting problems.

European Union (Christian, 2016)¹⁹ has determined seven indicators to evaluate good governance. Whether or not the country has implemented the good governance, based on the available of:

1. The rigor and efficiency of the rules of law
2. The policy efficiency implemented
3. The government responsiveness
4. Transparency
5. A well examining on the corruption process
6. Accountability, and
7. The active public participation.

Responsiveness is one of the important points to measure the government has done well in overcoming the pandemic.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The government's handling of the pandemic elicited mixed reactions from the public, including constructive news and news that discredited the government or cynical attitudes in the form of invitations not to follow. Government advice to the news in order to handle Covid-19 in the beginning is misguided, such as disinformation on Covid treatment which is spread by the netizens.

Public relations to the information and the government response are the indicator of the implementation of democracy in Indonesia. The government's response is divided

into two in this democratic relationship, the response of the central government and the response of the local government. All of them raise the dynamics of relations which come up to a reaction among the public. Some people have expressed satisfaction, or some have expressed disappointment, and some protest the government policy. Until now, the netizens are still divided into those reactions.

This study examines the public relations with the government which tries to overcome with the surge in Covid-19 cases in the democracy corridors. Do the government have provided enough the public spaces to respond to the community. To what extent that the public spaces provided by the government. To what extent that the community wants to be heard by the government.

The methodology used in the writing of this paper is qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative research is descriptive (Satori and Komariah,2020)²⁰ to describe social problem, i.e. pandemic phenomenon based on based on empirical experience and the existing theory. In this manuscript, the experience which is examined, is taken from citizen's in various media. Community reaction and the government response can be studied in order to learn on how positive construction of literacy knowledge in both groups can be developed and its effectiveness in spreading right information on pandemic.

Pandemics have spawned many new theories not only in the health sciences, but also occurred in good governance, including the emergence of citizen journalism theory. Citizen journalism in the period of pandemic observed to have different pattern with the citizen journalism during political parties, such as of the general elections or the regional head elections.

The object of research is the behavior of the public in doing repotase on the mainstream media and the government's response to the news. The scope of research was conducted in Indonesia by comparing the same or dominant dominant response between local government and central government.

Indicators used to measure the effectiveness of citizen journalism and government responsiveness are

1. the level of community literacy to measure the ability of the local community in warding off hoax issues and putting forward actual news,
2. public spaces provided by local and central government as a form of government attention to manage citizen journalism, and
3. government responsiveness, both central and local governments in responding to citizen journalism.

The research step is by gathering the citizens' opinions towards the role of government to overcome pandemics, the opinions of citizen experts and experienced citizen in citizen journalism. The data collected interpreted based on the theories of behavior and culture, and its effect on the government's attitude in making policy. The results of the data collection are analyzed descriptively to gain knowledge in order to draw conclusions on whether citizen journalism can be used as a reference in the government policy agenda to change the government policy structure from top-down to bottom-up.

4. DISCUSSION

The role of citizen journalism determines the decline in cases. Citizen vigilance to spread pandemic information correctly does not directly reduce the number of infections. When looking at the following data, it appears that citizen journalism has begun to be noticed by local governments as a presenter of information that can help the government. This can be seen in the following table. The chronology of events is divided into four time periods, namely the beginning of 2021 where the first Covid-19 wave occurs (December 2020-March 2021), mid-2021 (April-May 2021) where Cases hit and soared the number of travelers, mid-2021 (June-August 2021), and early September 2021 where cases began to hit.

Examining from the table above, after a pandemic that lasted for a year, false reports about Covid-19 still continue to circulate. When reviewing again at the beginning of the Government announced the discovery of Covid cases, there was *panic buying* in a number of shops and supermarkets. *Panic buying* that occurs in Indonesia, occurs in almost all countries. This is due to the rise of half-true news about wipes, soaps, handsanitizers, and masks so that many people buy these items. The government then made a policy that only the sick were obliged to wear masks. It turns out that the policy is not effective to overcome the virus that is already a pandemic. The policy was later revised after hearing input from health experts. The government encourages people not to panic *buying* and social *distancing* but does not explain how to avoid *panic buying* or social *distancing*. This creates a gap of community trust to government policies implementation in the field. The government tackles the issue of *panic buying* with direct news from mask factories, hazmat factories (protective equipment from infectious diseases), to check into factories of medical mask.

In the first month of 2021, people still experienced obstacles in implementing government recommendations to implement social restrictions. Many shopping centers, shops, restaurants until salons remained open which eventually caused contagion. The

TABLE 1: The Pandemic Chronology and the Government Policy to Overcome.

Location	Description	Time		
		December 2020-March 2021	April-July 2021	June-August 2021
Central Government (twitter, Facebook, Instagram, then Chatbox)	Government policy	1. The Government replaces ppkm policy with the enactment of restrictions on community activities (Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat/ PPKM) 2. PPKM is divided through zoning, green, yellow, orange, and red. 3. The Government of Indonesia does not close access to Indonesia, especially for tourists and foreign workers (Tenaga Kerja Asing/ TKA)	The government has cut the holiday by the end of 2020 with the aim of mobility of people out of the city as long as the pandemic can be controlled. After a long holiday at the end of 2020, Covid cases are on the rise. Talk of PPKM is trending on social media	Government converts PPKM zoning to PPKM level 1-4
	National media coverage	Peak of Covid cases in mid-January 2021 with nearly 2,000 more deaths	The number of cases began to hit but with a long holiday, the enthusiasm of the community for homecoming was unstoppable. News about homecoming became a trending topic around April and May 2021.	90 percent of deaths are caused in patients who have not been vaccinated. Influx of new vaccine-resistant virus variants
Indonesian	Misinformation (google trend)	The problem of vaccine rejection and vaccines causes a person to die.	Covid-19 drug therapy problems, ranging from milk brands, eucalyptus oil to WHO recommended therapy drugs	Disinformation news about vaccines goes from the issue of ineffectiveness to the issue of vaccine location. This is due to enthusiasm for vaccination and becomes a condition of entry into public spaces. The problem of handling Covid is still a hot conversation due to the ups and downs of community discipline implementing health protocols.
Jakarta Sites used: twitter, Instagram, and laporcovid19.org	Trending (google trend, reaching 100% in June to August 2021)	Bed availability (Bed Occupancy Ratio BOR) Contagion cluster Thecrowd, Drugs such as azithromycin and quinine	New variant (delta) Homecoming Bed availability (Bed Occupancy Ratio/ BOR) Self-isolation Oxygen tube	Vaccines (community enthusiasm) Expensive and scarcity of Covid test prices and medicines
	Local Government Policy	Tightening psbb after new year holidays Vaccinating the whole community Odd-even policy for motor vehicles	Activity restrictions by cluster Applying An Exit Permit (Surat Izin Keluar-Masuk/ SIKM) for users of inter-city/country modes Maximize homestead to JiExpo as a place of isolation of Covid patients	Maximize vaccinations Policy for workers in the essential sector (Worker Registration Certificate / Surat Tanda Registrasi Pekerja/ STRP)

most clusters were from the family and the office clusters. Most office clusters come from official trips and eating together. While residential clusters come from visiting to

TABLE 1: The Pandemic Chronology and the Government Policy to Overcome.

Location	Description	Time		
		December 2020-March 2021	April-July 2021	June-August 2021
		Citizen journalism enthusiasm is increasing to report on social restriction, Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar/ PSBB violations. Residents report the Odd Even policy is ineffective in times of pandemics. Then the policy was revised.	The enthusiasm of citizen journalism is on the rise, especially as cases rise in May 2021. Citizen journalism takes the form of not only reports but philanthropic efforts to help patients inform the availability of oxygen tubes. In reporting, residents complained about the ineffective Surat Izin Keluar Masuk (SIKM) policy.	Citizen journalism enthusiasm is increasing to inform about the new variant Covid vaccine and test (Mu) and other variants

public areas, being together in the close room, like offices, making crowds or gathering activities.

Citizen activities on topics include violations of social restriction policies, especially violations of distance, mask discipline, and crowding. The Jakarta Regional Government was socializing the Vaccine Program. At the beginning of 2021 there was still a lot of disinformation news about vaccines. One of the disinformation was the imposition of people’s human rights to the news of vaccines that cause someone died. To help the government, a number of netizens began to find out and calculate disinformation news about vaccines. Those who understood, countered the issue of vaccines which had caused a person died. Some netizens provided proper information about preparations before the vaccine. The preparation before vaccine was spread to counter hoaxes about pasca vaccine. The media then investigated the issue about the death of vaccinated person by interviewing the vaccine experts. The possibility was that the vaccinated person had already shown symptoms of illness before vaccine. The comorbid or exposed to Covid before vaccination could be the cause of the death.

The role of citizen journalism to local governments when the Jakarta government in March 2021 would have reimposed odd and even policies for four-wheeled vehicles on main roads. Netizens considered Even and Odd number policy too early to be implemented in the midst of a pandemic situation, which required most employees to be forced to choose private modes of transportation to avoid virus transmission. At the same time, Covid-19 cases were still high. The policy lasted only a few weeks after hearing citizen criticism and the opinions of public policy experts. Even and Odd number policy was officially revoked.

In mid-2021, a number of people who considered Covid-19 had been slowed down, urged the Government to loosen social restrictions, especially allowed to return home. Instead of granting, the central government made a policy of cutting holidays, prohibiting the state civil apparatus (ASN) and private workers from going home. The prohibition had carried out the test restrictions at airports. This regulation made citizen went homecoming by vehicles. The efforts of the central government supported by the local government. But the local government could have not banned its citizens from not returning home. The local governments only could have provided more checkpoints and temporary shelters. This is less effective, because in practice, the addition of quarantine requirements affected to all local governments. On the other hand, local governments had budget and human resources limitations.

In the case of DKI Jakarta, which is facing a backflow of travelers, the availability of checkpoints in mid-May 2021 in DKI Jakarta is still low. The postal issue, had been the concern of the Covid-19 Task Force and was conveyed openly to the Governor of DKI. What is done by the Jakarta Provincial Government is to re-enact the Exit and Entry Permit (Surat Izin Keluar-Masuk/ SIKM) policy, especially the tightening of entry access imposed during the homecoming ban period for Travelers returning from outside the city or from abroad head to Soekarno Hatta Airport and Halim Perdana Kusuma Airport.

This policy creates a gap for travelers to return to Jakarta by sea and land. Policy observers consider the SIKM policy ineffective because it is not applied thoroughly. For foreign workers (Tenaga Kerja Asing/ TKA) for example, the policy for employers shows Rencana Penggunaan Tenaga Kerja Asing/ RPTKA (a list plan of the use of foreign labor) from the Ministry of Manpower. Other conditions such as Covid-19 free swabs and quarantine periods for foreign workers are enforced to the employers. In Indonesia, the quarantine period for TKA and people traveling from abroad, is very short, namely for 8 days and after that continued independently in the area, including for migrant workers from abroad, they continue the quarantine period at the place of placement, for TKA or domicile, for migrant workers. It is not certain whether the regional Covid-19 Task Force is informed about this. In many positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia, those who travel from abroad are not monitored and do not report independently to pamong (chairman of Rukun Tetangga (RT) / Rukun Warga (RW) /Head Village) in his area. This gap is one of the causes of soaring cases, especially in the regions. While DKI Jakarta spiked cases occurred because of interactions with people in their hometowns during the homecoming period.

The involvement of citizens in helping the government is seen when the government feels overwhelmed by the surge in Covid-19 patients two weeks after the holiday. The

local government continues to look for traceability of transmission ranging from the alleged influx of migrant workers who have just returned from abroad ahead of the holiday, transmission from shopping centers and people's markets , up to the crowd accompanied by a photo event or a meal together. Two weeks after the euphoria of the holiday in April-May 2021, the average hospital availability reaches 90 to 100 percent. Some hospitals and health facilities turn parking spaces into hospitalizations. The local government collaborates with hotel and guesthouse managers to open integrated hospitalizations for self-isolation patients. All efforts are made by the local government to suppress death cases, including efforts made by the Jakarta Provincial Government.

4.1. Local Government Response

Local governments realize that budget and human resource limitations need to be addressed by participating in communities to help those affected by Covid-19. Jakarta Provincial Government coordinates collaboration with private and public to go through laporcovid19.org columns or through chatbox, whatsapp and telegram. In addition, the DKI Provincial Government also opened a special report service for citizens who want to report crowd violations in their area through JakPD which is connected to social media platforms twitter and Facebook. The purpose of the DKI Provincial Government to open various public spaces is none other than the awareness that based on experience handling the surge in Covid-19 cases, the Jakarta Provincial Government cannot work alone.

At a time when hospital availability has reached the maximum number and scarcity of availability of Covid-19 therapy drugs and oxygen supply for patients, many hospitals are forced to submit to the hospital the patient's family. This is where the form of caring arises. Especially facing the scarcity of availability of therapeutic drugs as well as information on oxygen supply providers. Many netizens who help each other extend assistance in the form of information and the borrowing of oxygen tubes. Empathy comes not only from survivors or families of Covid-19 survivors but communities that empathize and as social creatures understand the difficulties experienced by sufferers.

4.2. Citizen Controls

The public consciously turns to government agencies to promote vaccinations and health protocols while proof of real health protocols can ward off viruses from entering the body and Vaccination can reduce the risk of Covid-19 infection. For Covid-19 survivors they conduct independent evaluations of their transmission. There may be health protocols that have passed, for example the use of masks that have not been correct or lack of hygiene when traveling home. Eventhough based on some citizens' experiences obeying health protocols is very effective. For some people who do not have experience on Covid or severe respiratory rarely believe on mask, according to the survey of the Central Statistics Body in last 2020.

The fact that cases of Covid-19 patients died in addition to health workers, 90 percent have not been vaccinated. This further strengthens the ranks of the community that supports vaccination. Untrue news, such as the issue of the Covid-19 antidote supplements are gradually eliminated by true news by the journalism of citizens who see The existence of truth (*ontrack*) with government efforts to deal with pandemics.

In the case of odd-even policies in March 2021 and SIKM during the homecoming ban period, netizens are able to advise local governments to assess the effectiveness of a policy. In the case of pandemics, citizen involvement in public participation based on Sherry Arnstein's level, has reached the stage of controlling local government policy.

4.3. The Central Government Policy

The central government level, policy is still *top down* (one-way). Examples are the TKA inflow policy which is still controlled by the Ministry of Manpower, the PPKM Policy set by the Coordinator of the Covid-19 Task Force, and the level of PPKM at regions needs to be approved by the Ministry of Health.

Although the central government's policy is vertically or one-way, the central government receives various public complaints related to the scarcity of Covid-19 therapeutic drugs and the price of test kits which is expensive. The central government evaluates the test kits and drugs prices and determine the regulation on the upper limit of the prices. The future governance government arranges the regulation on public services to value the public demands to create fairness and justice (Dunleavy and Hood, 2009²⁴; Bojang, 2020²⁵)

4.4. The Level of Community Literacy

Information does not belong to individuals, organizations or governments. No matter how much false information is spread, it will gradually be eroded by the truth. Traditional human ethics is being able to live a moral message. No matter how hard lies are told by irresponsible individuals, the space of human freedom will be analyzed by a sense of responsibility to convey the truth (Magnis and Suseno, 1987)²⁶.

In some countries, disinformation about pandemics has broken down the truth about the efficiency of vaccine benefits to distort government policies to address pandemics. Citizen journalism in utilizing technology developed into information complexity. However, some people from both journalists and academics think it is important for citizens who have the ability to digest technology to convey information correctly. as per the facts, because this can help the government overcome the pandemic.

The World Health Organization (WHO) assesses the development of information about Covid-19 has given rise to another outbreak, namely disinformation about the pandemic known as "disinfodemic"(UNESCO, 2020)²⁷. Disinfodemic is the development of incorrect information about the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on digital information search engines, various news about pandemics, 40 percent of which are false information and cannot be trusted sources of news. Based on the development of disinformation, especially in the mainstream media, WHO is concerned about the impact on the nation's mental health in overcoming pandemics. The only way to overcome disinformation is to promote infodemic, which is correct information about Covid-19.

Amid the information circulating about the pandemic, according to Widhyarto and Bahri (2021)²⁸ has raised the public awareness of the risks. They are in the midst of an all-round situation of uncertainty and technology is the only way to socialize. Communication without borders provides the ability of the public to absorb more information and disseminate information. Society, like Talcott Parsons 's theory (Raho, 2021)¹⁷, is polarized in various opinions according to the level of literacy or knowledge about pandemics it has.

Public literacy as a journalist is decisive in reporting more infodemic based on personal experience and not spreading information that is not necessarily the truth. In the digital age, of course, the temptation to share information that is not based on facts or information will increase the polarization of opinion in the risk society.

5. CLOSING

Based on the discussion, the polarization of society is formed as a result of the breadth of information in the digital era. Polarization in this case is categorized into two parts, namely the society that spreads infodemic and the community that spreads disinformation about pandemics.

It is the community group that can be used as a guideline for the government, namely community groups "experienced" for chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, HIV and cancer. "Experienced" community groups in the UK, for example, have become part of health facility improvement programmes. Glasgow (2012)²⁹ method of "self management" for patients plays a role in increasing public confidence in health facilities and personal health maintenance by 78 percent. Only by sharing experiences, community groups, survivors of chronic diseases are able to affect other groups of society.

The same thing at the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020 has happened. A group of people, Covid-19 survivors in Wuhan, through their respective blogs revealed how they recovered and what they experienced as the Covid-19 symptom became increasingly critical. These survivors are not accommodated by the government, they work as independent journalists. Knowledge based on their experience has not yet earned a place as a policy basis in China. While the opinion of the experts there at that time was severely shackled by power. The opinions of experts are highly anticipated to issue statements based on the background of science. Some countries still place experts in charge of policy choices, and receive no public input (Lavazza and Farina, 2020)³⁰. But when the opinions of such experts are directed by power, the decisions of the experts become non-neutral.

Other countries invited business people who had recently visited Wuhan to report wuhan conditions. Countries with high pandemic responsiveness have been shown to be able to cope with pandemics. Inclusiveness and diversity of opinion in the handling of pandemics are key factors as countries face new outbreaks of unknown assholes. Inclusiveness is that the government does not cover up about the initial news of Covid and distribute information. Acceptance of religious activities is when the government is willing to listen to the reports of citizens from various circles without distinguishing whether the citizen is an epidemiologist or an ordinary citizen.

The expansion of the word "expert" in dealing with pandemics becomes widespread, because not only the opinion of experts, anyone with information openness can tell their experiences through social media. In the journal *The Role of Experts in the*

Covid-19, Lavazza and Farina in the context of pandemic management, there are two characteristic stages of information dissemination. The first stage is characterized by the concealment of information controlled by the government of the pandemic country's origin, thus eroding public confidence even in international organizations such as WHO. The second stage, the emergence of the testimony of experts who voiced to the governments of each country to improve the condition of public health. When the voices of experts are no longer controlled by power, but based on knowledge, there are also public voices in various media channels that tell the facts of Covid-19. based on experience.

In the second stage of the Covid-19 information era experts and the "experienced" public accurately inform the facts of Covid-19. This accurate source of information should be public policy. The theory of polarization of public opinion in the second stage of the dissemination of information shrinks to the correct informational preaching. This is very different when the polarization of information at the beginning of the pandemic, where the community is divided into two opposing parties, those who believe Covid-19 exists or do not exist. . Similarly, vaccination, the polarization of opinion is split in two, the public who believe the effectiveness of the vaccine and the public who do not believe the vaccine is effective in the case of Covid.

Until now, polarization of opinion still often occurs in the handling of pandemics. Nevertheless, people's literacy about Covid-19 is increasing. The response of the central and regional governments is linear with the increasing understanding of public officials about the prevention of Covid-19 transmission. In dealing with pandemics, the Central Government needs to issue a one-way policy or directive and the policy needs to consider other stakeholders besides information from the public . The community appreciates the local government's response in line with central policy and more quickly responds to citizen complaints.

In terms of there is still polarization of opinion, but the government is becoming increasingly open to listening to citizen input, one of which is by opening official channels on the website page handling Covid-19 and social media. The openness of citizen journalism for the public to share knowledge and experience drowns out the news of Covid-19 disinformation. Instead, the government's repressive actions, to cover the virus news by using its authorization and to set the views of experts, will only foster public distrust.

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