

Indonesia sepanjang pandemi COVID-19 dihadapkan pada dua permasalahan dilematis; krisis kesehatan dan krisis 'segala hal yang berkaitan dengan ekonomi'. Setelah melalui asam garam konfigurasi kebijakan, penanganan pandemi yang berupaya menanggulangi krisis kesehatan di Indonesia bermuara pada empat konstruksi kebijakan – kedisiplinan protokol kesehatan 3M, peningkatan 3T, percepatan vaksinasi, dan sekuens Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat (PPKM). Dinamika konstruksi keempatnya pun senantiasa menghadapi paradoks akibat dilema penanganan pandemi dua kaki Pemerintah – menangani pandemi dibarengi dengan upaya pemulihan ekonomi melalui pengetatlonggaran mobilitas – yang mengundang banyak tanya dan kekhawatiran publik akan dampak yang ditimbulkan. Bahkan pasca hantaman COVID-19 varian Delta pertengahan 2021 silam yang meletakkan Indonesia pada titik terdalam kedaruratan kesehatan nasional, pola demikian kembali terjadi. Pemerintah kembali menghadapi dilema penanganan pandemi di tengah kedaruratan sektor kesehatan serta kuatnya gesekan wacana penjagaan momentum pertumbuhan ekonomi pasca pertumbuhan positif ekonomi nasional kuartal kedua.

Memanfaatkan teori wacana Laclau dan Mouffe yang diperkaya dengan pemanfaatan konsep *storylines* Hajer dan *framework governmentality* Foucauldian kembangan Methmann, penelitian berupaya menilik strategi diskursif Pemerintah dalam mengonstruksi wacana 'penanganan pandemi' pada tata kelola kedaruratan pandemi COVID-19 varian Delta nasional serta menilik kondisi paradoks yang muncul di dalamnya. Penelitian berargumen bahwa strategi diskursif Pemerintah memfungsikan wacana 'penanganan pandemi' sebagai *empty signifier* untuk menanggulangi dilema 'antara kesehatan dan ekonomi' pasca dislokasi varian Delta, dengan menenun berbagai untaian wacana dari keduanya – menyetarakan keduanya sedemikian rupa – untuk memperbaiki ulang makna 'penanganan pandemi'; suatu proses yang didefinisikan Laclau sebagai proyek hegemonik. Analisis memperdalam penjelasan atas strategi integrasi kebijakan penanganan pandemi Pemerintah yang memasifkan kebijakan 'tiga pilar' – kebijakan 3M, 3T, dan vaksinasi – ke dalam struktur sosial ekonomi masyarakat dan melonggarkan konstruksi pembatasan mobilitas untuk memperluas ruang gerak percepatan pemulihan ekonomi nasional.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dengan mendefinisikan permasalahan pandemi sebagai tantangan nasional, pemahaman atas nuansa ketidakpastian pandemi, tertanamnya cita-cita pertumbuhan ekonomi yang aman COVID-19, dan pemanfaatan cara-cara adaptif dalam menjamin efisiensi penanganan pandemi, Pemerintah dimungkinkan untuk mengonstruksi wacana penanganan pandemi yang produktif terhadap pemulihan ekonomi sebagaimana tercermin dalam strategi mereka. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini berfokus menilik pembentukan 'penanganan pandemi' sebagai *empty signifier* oleh Pemerintah dan bagaimana definisi baru yang terfiksasi parsial di dalamnya mampu menjadi 'lazim' untuk dijalankan oleh Pemerintah dan juga masyarakat, meski di tengah kondisi pandemi yang belum sepenuhnya pulih ataupun stabil.

**Kata Kunci:** COVID-19, penanganan pandemi, pemulihan ekonomi, analisis wacana, *empty signifier*.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Indonesia has always been faced between two dilemmatic problems; health crisis and ‘everything related to the economy’ crisis. After a lengthy configuration, the pandemic countermeasures to overcome Indonesia’s health crisis led to four main policy constructions – health protocol discipline (3M), testing, tracing and treatment enhancements (3T), COVID-19 vaccination, and the Enforcement of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM) sequences. The dynamics of these four constructions were always met with a paradox due to the Government’s ‘two-legged countermeasure’ tendencies – simultaneously balancing efforts for health recovery and economic recovery through loosening mobility restrictions – which raises concern from the wider public about the negative impacts that might follow. Even during the chaos of the COVID-19 Delta variant in mid-2021 which put Indonesia at the lowest point of a national health emergency, these tendencies seem to reoccur. The Government was faced with the dilemma of handling a health sector emergency, amidst growing narratives about urgencies of maintaining Indonesia’s economic recovery momentum after its positive economic growth in the second quarter of 2021.

Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, enriched with the operationalization of Hajer's concept of storyline and the Foucauldian governmentality framework developed by Methmann, this research seeks to examine the Government's discursive strategy in constructing ‘pandemic countermeasures’ discourse during their emergency governance of COVID-19 Delta variant pandemic and the paradoxical conditions surrounding it. This research argues that the Government's discursive strategy functions the discourse of ‘pandemic countermeasures’ as an empty signifier to deal with ‘between health and the economy’ dilemmas after the dislocation caused by the Delta variant, by weaving various discourses from both sides – eventually struggled on equating the two – to recalibrate the meaning behind ‘pandemic countermeasures’; a process that Laclau defines as a hegemonic project. Analysis deepens the explanation of the Government's policy integration strategy for dealing with pandemics, which is to further promote the ‘three pillars’ policies – 3M, 3T, and vaccination policies – into the socio-economic structure of their society while loosening mobility restrictions to open up space for the recovery of their national economy.

The results show that by defining the problem as a national challenge, understanding the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the pandemic, implanting the ethics of COVID-19-safe economic growth, and utilizing adaptable ways to ensure the efficiency of pandemic countermeasures, the Government is made possible to construct pandemic countermeasures as something productive for economic recovery efforts and is appropriate to be executed. Thus, this research focuses on examining the construction of ‘pandemic countermeasures’ as an empty signifier by the Government, and how the new meaning which partially fixed in it is able to become ‘understandable’ to be carried out by the Government and obeyed by the community, even in the midst of a pandemic condition that has not been fully recovered or stable.

**Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic countermeasures, economic recovery, discourse analysis, empty signifier.**