



Embracing Global Transformation

Collaborative Innovations
through Social and
Political Research

Authors

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Solutions in Motion

Insights for Social and Political Issues in Indonesia

Editor

Amida Yusriana, S.I.Kom., M.I.Kom. dan Tim

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FOREWORD

Praise and gratitude to God for all His grace and guidance so that this book can be published. This book is the result of a collaboration of lecturers from various disciplines, such as Communication Studies, Public Administration, Business Administration, and Government Science. Acknowledgments to all parties involved both in writing to editing and compiling as a whole.

This book was compiled under the big theme "Solutions in Motion: Insights for Social and Political Issues in Indonesia". The theme was chosen to reinforce knowledge about social and political problems that occur in Indonesia. Following the development of the world that has changed since the pandemic, people are forced to adapt all aspects of life to the existing conditions. Not only because of pandemics, but the era of the industry has also changed and forced society as well. Therefore, this writing can be a place to introduce innovations and research solutions, both as a result of individual and in collaborative work in the social and political fields.

This book consists of eight articles that cover focus on politics, journalism, social media, health policy, film, tourism, and environmental protection policies. All writings contribute solutions and novelties that emerge in society in various fields. We hope that, apart from providing insight to readers, this book can also be an inspiration for solutions to all related problems.

Semarang, 01 Februari 2023

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Politics Matter: Assessing the Complexities in the Practices of Renewable Energy Policy in Local Indonesian Context

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Abstract. Studies on renewable energy policy is mostly focused on the national locus. Meanwhile, in local context, politics of renewable energy policy and development is not less interesting to discuss. Based on field research in some regencies in Central Java and Yogyakarta Province, this paper found out that local government has not seen the issue of renewable energy as an urgent need, despite the local risk of energy crises. Regency government head does not see renewable energy important because it does not lift up political popularity. On the other, local parliamentary body, merely see this as an objectified policy area, furthering the local policy design that is accommodative for local based development. Community, then, becomes the backbone for some of the renewable energy development, but faces the problem of sustainability, because it heavily relies on the assistance of non-profit organization and donor institution.

Keywords: Renewable Energy, Energy Policy, and Local Politics

1. Introduction

Academic discussion on renewable energy has been growing, yet the concern on the importance of engaging local government and

community in the policy making, as part of climate change mitigation strategy, has not been sufficiently elaborated amongst the scholars. The importance to discuss local government and community's participation in renewable energy policy as revealed in this paper arises is due the awareness that local government and community are amongst the most important actors, yet they are the least to get involved in the development of strategies for renewable energy and climate change policy. This research means to elaborate constraints for promoting local government and community's participation in the policy area with the focus on policy and regulatory analysis, supported with a snapshot of policy implementation in local context Indonesia, to portray the complexities in the empirical basis. Using the case of biogas development, this research aims to portray politics behind the lack of participation of local government and community, despite their potentials to be one of the prominent entities to promote green life.

The discussion of renewable energy gets more important for the rise concern on climate change. Climate change, referring to UN, is "long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas." [1] It is mentioned that the massive use of fossil-based energy is amongst the cause of climate change, and so is with deforestation and land use change into functions other than its environmental purposes. The discussion of climate change is relevant with the campaign of energy transformation, from fossil-based energy to alternative energy that is new and renewable. Therefore, putting emphasis on renewable energy, as mainstreamed strategy in global, national, and local level is unavoidably needed. Yet, the scrutiny about the constraints from both upper and local sides is still hardly identified.

In addition, due to the global encouragement of a better global environment, pressure toward the greener life getting increased, leads to the creation of new political arena for climate change and renewable

energy in policy making. First of all, the old-fashioned debate about whether to prioritize economy over environment rises again. Tension between policy makers even is unavoidable, moreover in the existing political structure, in which political parties dominate the policy making arena, as through the ministries position. Secondly, local government and community's roles have been marginal, and they are rarely counted as main actors to determine the direction of climate change and energy policy in the decision making. As discussed earlier, local government and community's access to resources influences much the structuration of decision making, including in the energy policy. Therefore, it is not a surprise if their participation in climate change and energy policy is often mentioned merely in the secondary areas, instead of in main arena for development policy making.

As widely known, climate change not only been a concern due to its impact to the change of environment, which leads to the degrading quality and quantity of fishing, farming and other aspects of daily life. Beyond these issues, climate change has been impacted as well national-local government's relations, due to the shift in access and control, inhibited by the national regulatory framework, which tends to put the heavier pendulum on the central governmental locus. Since the application of Law No. 23/2014, environmental and natural resources governance have been shifted to be the national government's shoulder, with minimized roles of the local government. As a consequence, local government and community are amongst those furthered from accessing and controlling resources, including within the access and control for developing sustainable life. The existing social and economic structuration, in which national actors dominate the playgrounds, has furthered local community from equitable and equal access to resource and resource control, including within the initiatives to develop an alternative way for having greener energy sources. The capitalism logic which is embedded within the regulatory frameworks in the national level has led to human beings in local level to a challenging life. Climate change, as such, is believed to be impacted by the so call centralistic domination of the natural

resource, in which national and global entity drive more the running of global economic and social norms. Therefore, talking about local community and climate change is important not only through the scrutiny of its impact, but more fundamentally through the roots that lead to the complex current state of being.

This paper identifies complexities in local Indonesian context in developing renewable energy policy. Based on our findings, first, regulatory framework provides limited spaces for local government and community to participate in the development of green energy. The national government tends to only count large scale of alternative sources of energy in order to speed up energy mix target (as asserted in RUEN). As a result, small scale renewable energy as initiated by local community has not gain optimum support to grow. In local level, because renewable energy has been resulting in lucrative political support, it is hardly seen as an important sector to lift up.

Secondly, on the side of local government itself, local government have not seen climate change and renewable energy as an important strategy for promoting the sustainable life, despite the environmental and energy crises they are facing in the recent decades. Their short-run oriented interest for political benefits has hampered them to contribute more to the bettering off the local ecology and social economic life. These situations have furthered local community to be aware and participate more on the renewable energy development in local level, because socialization is then not a priority, training is not facilitated, and facilitation is not provided, which later on contribute to the hardships in climate change mitigation on the local basis.

Applying case study of biogas development in Rembang and Yogyakarta area, this research identified the low interest of the local policy makers in the promotion of renewable energy development, despite high potentials for development. As such, while regulatory framework in national level has not yet strongly asserted the participation of local government and community in green energy, the local government itself not always get into the importance of promoting sustainable life.

There has been massive research about the impact of climate change on local community. Confirming this research, most of them, however, identifies the minimum participation of local government and community in climate change mitigation. This research confirms that although local community are amongst the most impacted, their participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation together with local government are still minimal, and further encouragement is still needed.

In this regard, scrutinizing the structure of policy making, to identify the extent of local community getting incorporated in the way the state responding to the issue becomes important. The result of the identification will inform us the mindset of policy makers about the issue and the implication of policy towards justice and equality.

Considering the above context, the research aims to elaborate complexities of climate and energy policy in Indonesia in incorporating local government and community, as well as to identify the local politics of climate and energy policy in the country. Therefore, the research question of this paper includes: “what is the political explanation of the stagnancy of the renewable energy in local level?”

2. Research Methods

This is qualitative research that, first of all, applies desk study as a methods to collect initial information on renewable energy, climate change and local government and community’s participation. The aim of desk study is to conduct policy review of climate and energy regulatory framework applying political economic analysis. In this case, policy reviews are used as framework to scrutinize policy and regulatory frameworks accommodation towards local government and community’s participation is conducted. National Law on energy, National Planning on national energy, decentralization, and some other following regulatory products are amongst the main sources for desk reviews. Those laws matter in shaping the existing structure of energy policy, including those that relate to central and local government, as

well as government and community relationships.

The second data collection methods are Key Informant Interview and FGD, which are expected to enable researcher to elaborate perspective of various stakeholders that may be involved and be impacted from the policy. The fieldwork was conducted during January- July 2022, added with the secondary data collected during January-May 2021.

The stakeholders include policy makers, non-profit organization (CSO) and community-based organization in the grass root level. The researchers have visited local activists in Rembang regency that have been actively involved in biogas development that worked together with some non-government organizations. The researchers also visited local community who have insisted to use biogas as their energy sources for daily needs and ask about complexities of widening the scope of biogas development in their village. In Yogyakarta, researchers have met with academician who is expert in biogas development and is active in renewable energy advocacy for decades. The stories in Rembang and Yogyakarta, despite having different socio-political context, have identified similar complexities in terms of policy structure, where support from both national and local governments towards the bio-energy development like biogas has been minimalist.

3. Result / Finding and Discussion

In the context of Indonesia, the national government, however, has tried to anticipate further impact of climate change through the pushing of energy mix, as stated through National Energy General Planning or RUEN (Rencana Umum Energi Nasional). Through the RUEN, the government asserted its commitment to reduce carbon as through the further encouragement of renewable energy use in Indonesia. The government realizes that the state has been so dependent on fossil fuels as a source of energy in the country. RUEN is meant to enact national commitment towards the global concern on emission reduction.

RUEN (Rencana Umum Energi Nasional) is a realization and implementation guideline of Law No. 30/2007 on Energy and Government Decree No. 79/2014 on National Energy Policy, which mandated the national government to reach target by 2025 of the energy mix by 23%. The RUEN is affirmed through Government Decree No. 22/2017 on National Energy General Plan, hereinafter abbreviated as RUEN, is the policy of the Central Government regarding the national level energy management plan which is as the elaboration and implementation plan of the National Energy Policy which is cross-sectoral aimed to achieve the targets of the National Energy Policy. RUEN is supported with RUEP (Rencana Umum Energi Provinsi). Provincial General Energy Plan, hereinafter abbreviated as RUED-P, is a policy of the provincial government regarding the provincial level energy management plan which is an elaboration and implementation plan of a cross- sectoral RUEN to achieve RUEN target. Both RUEN and RUEP is released to respond the domination of fossil-based energy, which getting more difficult to replace period to period. One of the area that relate to energy supply is electricity. As below graph describe, fossil- based materials are the main sources for electricity, while new and renewable energy only comprise 15-10.5% of electricity. The data has not included energy for transportation and communication.

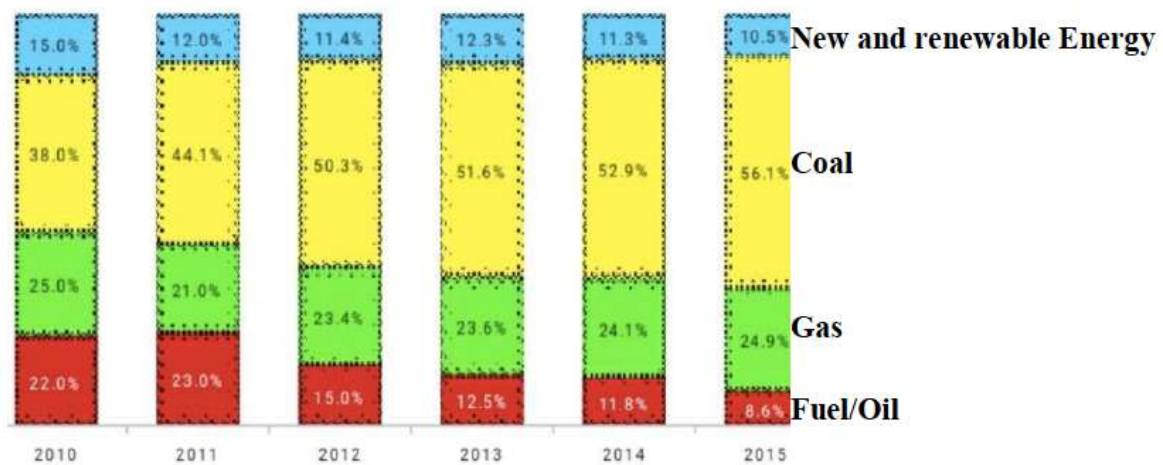


Figure 1. RUEN 2017

Realizing that Indonesia is highly dependent on fossil-based energy, the Energy Law and the National Energy Policy strive to change the composition by inserting more renewable energy as an alternate source for national energy supply. Therefore, the issuance of RUEN is meant to speed up the national energy mix target, which by 2025 is expected to achieve 23% energy mix. By 2017, the energy mix is still in 12.5% achieved, and as per June 2022, the achievement is quite slowly growing at 12.8%.

In order to achieve those targets, mobilization of supports becomes crucial. The government has tried to issue regulation that trigger the development of renewable energy especially in areas that supply raw materials for the electricity plant like biogas in Sumatra, Kalimantan and Sulawesi that are rich with palm oil plantation. Palm oil waste is believed to be a valuable material for generating biofuel, biodiesel, including biogas as amongst the sources of renewable energy sources. However, as the target of energy mix is high, there is a tendency for the national government to prioritize renewable energy that is medium and large scale. It is mentioned in Government Decree No. 25/2021 on the Implementation in Energy and Mineral Energy Resources Sector that electrification is assumed to be conducted by business sectors, either laid in private organization or cooperative (community-based). This leads to the lack of recognition for community to take part within, which further leads to the policy that is not for local government and community.

Prior the implementation of Law No. 23/2014, local government still had a place to design policy for developing local energy sources, including biogas and other bio-energy sources. Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources still had wide room to direct District Office of Energy and Mineral Resource to set up policy initiatives to support the development of renewable energy. However, since the Decentralization Law launched and implemented, technical and political hardship started to evolve. First of all, in district level, District Office of Energy and Mineral Resources no longer exist. It is shifted to provincial government.

Secondly, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources can no longer direct district government to support its policy to enhance renewable energy sources in local level. In Rembang district, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources lastly distributed assistance for developing biogas in Kaliori sub-district, which is happened to be a decade ago (2010). Later on, Rembang is the amongst the project location of BIRU (Biogas Rumah Tangga), a project initiated by Hivos, and implemented by Yayasan Rumah Energi. In Rembang [2], BIRU developed biogas digester in Sarang, Sedan and Kragan sub-district. BIRU helped community through lenient credit to enable community to manage their animal waste to be the source of alternative energy sources. In Yogyakarta, BIRU exposed its intervention in Bantul, Kulon Progo, Sleman and gunung Kidul district.

The program runs quite effectively up to 2015, because Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources could still distribute its assistance to succeed the project. However, the program faced serious challenge when the Decentralization Law was implemented, and all the ministries must coordinate with Ministry of Home Affairs, given they have aspiration to interfere local government policy. This led to change in the Ministry of Energy and Mineral resource's strategy and impose constraints to the BIRU implementation. By implication, this allows us to know that Decentralization Law has hampered local and national initiatives to push the renewable energy development, which later leads to stagnancy of policy of renewable energy in local level.

In addition to constraints from the national structure of policy, constraints also raised from the local political structure. As discussed earlier, despite its benefit to environment and economy is clear, pushing biogas policy development in local level is never easy for some reasons. First of all, based on our research findings, biogas both in Rembang and Bantul, as well as some other districts in Yogyakarta, and, in most regions in Indonesia, is not seen as a politically attractive policy sector. Biogas is not like health or

poverty reduction policy, which can be implemented by distributing direct assistance to community and boost up political popularity of the policy makers. Biogas nature is more long-lasting than direct cash transfer, but with the impact on economy, health and environment that cannot be seen in the short run. Therefore, pushing local government to take biogas into consideration, as amongst priority sector in its local governance, is never an easy task, although in the long run, it is clear the government will benefit a lot, as through clean environment, and saved income.

“Things get more difficult since decentralization era, because district government no longer given authority to govern energy issues. It is shifted to national and provincial government. Secondly, all the matters in local government now is the domain of Ministry of Government Affairs. Thus, it is not flexible for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to directly interfere renewable energy development in local level. This is not to mention the national energy policy framework that gives less place for local government and community to take part within the development of renewable energy in local level.” (An interview result with expert in renewable energy policy issue, 2020)

Secondly, as in many other policies that is implemented through projects, biogas is seen not to yield direct material benefits for the local policy makers, especially legislature body. As commonly known, all the policy that needs for the financial support of the government will need approval from local legislature body. However, the good policy both for the community, and for ecology and economy, does not always mean good for the legislature body. The logic of legislature, who is also politician, is not always based on common good, referring to the goodness of the policy for all society. Rather, “good” for politicians is not rare to lay on merely a narrow political interest, as whether it benefits to them personally or

to their own constituent, or to their political parties. It is because, politicians always count for the something that may push the next election result. This political nature has trapped the local government into difficult state of being, moreover if it is related to biogas, which is not popular in community.

“The community through civil society and the other non-profit organizations have given support to local government, yet the local government is not always interested, for both political and technical reasons. They understand the benefit, but they do not have enough willingness to pursue it into policy making.” (An interview with a renewable energy pioneer, Yogyakarta, 2022)

All these constraints, stemming from both the national policy framework, and local political structure, has led to a big challenge in community to take part in renewable energy development. This is predicted to result in the lengthened dependence of the community to energy subsidized by the national government. On the other hand, this may hamper the government to achieve its targeted results, as mandated by the National Energy Law and National Energy General Planning.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, local government and community is placed marginal in climate change and energy policy in Indonesia. The birth of Decentralization Law No. 23/2014 has been a crucial trajectory for the stepping back of the participation of the local government and community in the environmental and natural resource governance. The existing national energy general planning has emphasized the mix energy target by 23% in 2025, which leads to the priority policy on large scale renewable energy resource development to speed up the achievement of the national mix energy targets. While the large-scale energy sources have not grown massively throughout the business locus in Indonesia, the small and micro scales, which are more enabled to grow, have not gained sufficient support to develop. On the other hand,

decentralization has made for the local government facing difficulties to initiate the development of renewable energy sources, considering that energy has been withdrawn to be the authority of national government, given the Law No. 23/2014 has asserted. In addition to these regulatory constraints, politically, in areas where community's initiatives are facilitated to develop, local government support is also minimalist. Local policy makers still count whether the biogas development is producing in lucrative result for political supports. Despite the clear advantage of the policy for the growing of sustainable energy sources and preserved environment, the unclear contribution of the biogas development to the lifting up of political popularity, as well as the material advantage for the local politicians, has made it as an unattractive policy sector. All of these aspects contribute to the low participation of local government and community in renewable energy policy.

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