

THE EFFECT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CRIMINAL OFFENDER IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to provide an overview and information about the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on crime trends. This study focuses on the Gowa Regency area as a sample by conducting in-depth interviews with 20 detainees who are criminals during the pandemic period from March 2020 to August 2021. The findings in this study are that the number of crimes tends to decrease during the Covid-19 pandemic in Gowa Regency. This can be seen from the downward trend of 32.5% in 2019 and 11.2% in 2020. Most of these crimes are economic crimes committed to earning big profits, where researchers found a total of 12 types of crime through 20 respondents. Crimes that occur are also dominated by densely populated areas in the capital city of Gowa Regency, such as market areas and densely populated settlements. This is also supported by the perspective of criminals who mostly think that the Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity to commit crimes, and they tend not to believe in the existence of the coronavirus. The following finding is that crimes committed during the Covid-19 pandemic have several causative factors, namely economic pressure, calm conditions, and association, while economic pressure is the dominant factor that gives birth to many crimes. Therefore, this shows that the coronavirus pandemic significantly affects economic conditions that contribute to the growth of crime. The researcher recommends that the police pay more attention to patrolling densely populated areas in the urban area. The government immediately provides alternative solutions in improving economic conditions during the pandemic so that crime does not happen again.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Crime, Crime trend.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic started in China in late 2019 (Chen & Li, 2020). Furthermore, the spread of the coronavirus began to spread to Indonesia and other countries (Fadli, 2020). As the reaction, the Chinese government has conducted a lockdown in early 2020 to suppress the spread of the virus (Fang, & Wang, 2020). The Indonesian government also carried out a lockdown policy called Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) from March to June 2020 through Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Covid-19 (Chryshna, 2020), then continued to do restrictions on community activities (PPKM) in regional level (Amir, 2021). This forced everyone to stay home for work, and learning activities, including school and college students, were turned online. Not only that, shopping centers and non-essential businesses such as malls and restaurants are also closed during the PPKM period, which ends in August 2021 (Santia, 2020).

The spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia initially occurred in March 2020, which caused a commotion (Ihsanuddin, 2020). Furthermore, the spread of the virus began to occur in other areas, forcing the government to classify regions based on the number of Covid-19 sufferers divided into red, yellow, and green zones (Chong, 2020). However, not all regions in Indonesia are affected by this virus, where there are still some areas that are free to be exposed to Covid-19 (Shalihah, 2020).

The closure of business centers and crowded centers makes quiet conditions an excellent opportunity for criminals to carry out their actions (Clarke, 2012). Police officers have been deployed to provide security, but the ratio of the number of police officers and jurisdictions is still not ideal, so that the chances of a crime being committed are still high (Movanita, 2017). The changes that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic have brought Indonesia into a new era called the New Normal (Muhyiddin, 2020).

Various crimes were reported during the Covid-19 pandemic, but there is a downward trend in crime rates in most areas. This trend can be seen in the Jakarta City area, which reported a decrease in crime of around 53.82%, and public order disturbances decreased by around 34.78% (Movanita, 2020). Furthermore, a decrease in the number of criminal acts in Bandung City (Andriyawan, 2020) and sub-districts and cities in East Java Province by 62% (Lam, 2020).

The decrease in crime rates occurs not only in Indonesia but also in various countries on the European continent. For example, the UK (Dodd, 2020) and Poland reported reductions of up to 50% in the number of crimes (PAP, 2020). Furthermore, significant countries such as the United States also reported a decrease in crimes in several large cities such as Chicago by 42% and New York City by 20% (Coyne, 2020).

Seeing this, then what about the influence of Covid-19 on criminals? The declining trend of crime in several countries becomes attractive if it is related to the causative factors that come from within the perpetrators (Azumah et al., 2020). How does the Covid-19 pandemic affect everyone, including criminals, such as how criminals survive and other things that reduce the interest of criminals not to take their actions during the Covid-19 pandemic? Therefore, this research is a vital to be carried out as the basis for the following policymakers on preventing crime.

This research is urgent because this study can be the source to know the trend of crime during the Covid-19 pandemic, finding out the reasons for the downward trend in crime during the Covid-19 pandemic. It also provides alternative solutions to policymakers in formulating strategies to prevent crime during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond. Then, assist law enforcement institutions in dealing with criminals during the Covid-19 pandemic and become a source of knowledge to the community so as not to become victims of crime. Therefore, the focus of the questions in this study are: 1) How will the Covid-19 pandemic affect crime trends?; and 2) What are the factors that cause criminals to commit less crime during the Covid-19 pandemic?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Essence of the Problem and Approaches to Combating Space Debris

Today, the problem of contamination of outer space with artificial objects is obvious, which is reflected in the works of various scientists (Aslan et al., 2019; Booth et al., 2008; Felson et al., 2020; LeBeau & Leitner, 2011). The main negative consequence of space exploration is its progressive contamination with man-made products accompanying the implementation of space activities. In the 60 years since the beginning of the space era, more than 6,000 launches of artificial spacecraft have been carried out. Since 2019, their number has more than doubled, from 583 launches to 1,250. This result is explained by the increasing interest in satellite broadband services from commercial entities such as SpaceX and OneWeb. According to the Index of Objects Launched into Outer Space, provided by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, there are currently 7,793 objects in orbit, including inoperative spacecraft.

According to the Space Environment Report, published by ESA Space Debris Office the number of debris objects in orbit in 1980 was about 4,800, by 2000 this number had increased to an approximate number of 8,000. After an explosive growth, in 2010 there were already about 15,000 debris objects in outer space. According to current data, as of May 20, 2021, their number reached 28,600 objects. In addition, according to the latest data, the number of debris objects in orbit that are larger than 10 cm is 34,000, from 1 cm to 10 cm in size - 900,000, and from 1 mm up to 1 cm - 128 million. Basically, this debris consists of paint stains from spaceships; the ships themselves; parts of satellites and missiles that are either lost or have long been inactive. Based on the aforementioned statistics, we can conclude that the numbers are growing rapidly, and this trend causes concern of the entire world community for a good reason.

It becomes obvious that it is necessary to ensure safety in space and to establish regulations for the movement of space objects, taking into account the data obtained from monitoring of space debris movement. The solution to this problem requires regular interaction at the international level, the creation of an international legal framework for space traffic management and information exchange, the maintenance of an up-to-date information base on the space situation, uniting national and international information resources of states and organizations engaged in space activities, practical implementation and control over the observance of international legal provisions in the space sphere. Problems of national and international regulation over activities in space will also arise. There is already the need to assign telecommunication wavelengths to communications with satellites and space objects. Other types of regulations having serious security implications will have to be worked out for the identification of space objects and for some type of traffic control to prevent congestion and interference.

The potential for collisions, accidents, misunderstandings and conflicts is growing. Each accident releases garbage that threatens the space activities of another state. In 2007, the Chinese anti-satellite weapon test created tens of thousands of fragments that caused geopolitical problems. Such actions not only opened the way for an arms race, but also created a threat to all space activities, provoking the emergence of a cloud of space debris in the valuable orbital plane. In 2012, the crew of the International Space Station was forced to take refuge in the saving capsules of the Soyuz spacecraft when debris flew next to it because of a 2009 satellite collision.

Moreover, in order to avoid collisions with space debris, it is necessary to regularly adjust the trajectory of the International Space Station, which has a major impact on the efficiency of its operation.

Collisions of space objects lead to the formation of fragments, which can generate more and more pieces of space debris, colliding with each other. Because of these processes an exponential increase in the number of objects should be expected, which together form a so-called “*debris belt*” around the Earth. This theory (the so-called “*Kessler Syndrome*”) was formulated by NASA consultant Donald Kessler in 1978. The theory suggested that space debris in low-Earth orbit, which appeared as a result of numerous launches of artificial satellites, could lead to complete unavailability of the near space for practical use.

The topic of combating space debris began to be discussed at the UN level in the late 1970s. Between 1977 and 1988, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space provided information on the situation in the geostationary orbit, in particular, on the likelihood of a collision, on several occasions (Raskolnikov, 2019).

It is important to note that since 1979 no new international treaties have been adopted in the field of space law. Thus, the process of deviation from “*rigid*” international legal norms towards a new interpretation of legally binding rules is evident through the adoption of recommendations on specific aspects of space activities (Syamsuddin et al., 2020). For example, the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines were developed by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) and were first presented to the Committee in 2002, and then, jointly with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, were revised in 2007. In 2020 and 2021, the IADC also made adjustments to the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines. This document defines the concept of “*space debris*”, which means “*all human made objects including fragments and elements thereof, in Earth orbit or re-entering the atmosphere that are non-functional*” (Widowaty, 2019).

For many years, the topic of space debris had been discussed exclusively in the Committee’s Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, although some delegations recommended that the Legal Subcommittee be engaged, convinced that the growing space debris problem would have to be addressed from both a technical and legal point of view. Unlike the various Principles, the COPUOS SDM Guidelines, endorsed by the UN General Assembly, have never been discussed in the Legal Subcommittee and remain a technical document of a recommendatory nature and content. The lack of participation of the Legal Subcommittee in the development of this document means that the issues of liability and the legal definition of “*space debris*”, like many other legal issues, remain open.

The main provisions governing the protection of outer space from space debris pollution are contained in the 1967 Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. According to Article IX of the Outer Space Treaty, states “*shall pursue the study of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, so as to avoid their harmful pollution, as well as adverse changes in the environment of the Earth resulting from the introduction of extraterrestrial matter*”.

Paragraph 3 of Art. V of the Outer Space Treaty is also of some interest. In accordance with this paragraph, the States Parties to the Treaty shall immediately inform the other States

Parties to the Treaty or the Secretary-General of the United Nations of any phenomena they discover in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, which could constitute a danger to the life or health of astronauts.

Article VII of the Outer Space Treaty limits liability to damage caused by space objects. The concept of “*space object*” is not defined in any of the treaties, including the 1972 Liability Convention, despite all efforts made in this direction during the development of the original text of the Convention. The definition of this term requires the determination of the content of the concepts “*object*” and “*outer space*”. Article I of the 1972 Liability Convention includes in this term “*component parts of a space object as well as its launch vehicle and parts thereof*”, but this only indicates that the individual parts or components should be included in the definition, and their definition of is not given.

The term “*space object*” was introduced as a generic term referring to any object that is planned for launch, is launched or has already been launched into outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies. At the same time, there are no legal restrictions on the size and purposes of use of the space object. Therefore, some scientists are of the opinion that parts of space debris are included in the concept of objects for which the state is “*responsible*”.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research (Marshall et al., 2018) with an ethnographic approach. This approach requires the researcher to adapt to the target respondent's environment. The population taken is criminals during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, the sample is 20 criminals who have committed crimes in the jurisdiction of Gowa Regency, Indonesia with the purposive sampling method. The data collection technique used is documentation and in-depth interviews (Neuman, 2002). Documentation will be carried out on data from the Gowa Regency regional police.

Meanwhile, in-depth interviews will be conducted on 20 samples (Questionpro, 2020). The data analysis technique used is document analysis and audio analysis (Marshall et al., 2018). This technique will process data from the police, which is presented in tables and graphs followed by audio analysis on the recordings of in-depth interviews repeatedly to get accurate results (Questionpro, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Crime Trends

The Covid-19 pandemic and crime trends: The findings of this study are to find out the relationship between the Covid-19 pandemic and the number of crimes that occur, in this case focusing on the legal area of the Gowa Regency. If the trend in other parts of the country is decreasing, then our findings at the Gowa Police Station are also decreasing. This can be seen in the following data (Table 1).

Year	Number of Activities	Description	Trend
2018	304	Before Covid-19	-
2019	205	Early Covid-19	↓32.5%
2020	182	During Covid-19	↓11.2%

Source: Gowa Police Data processed by researchers

Based on the data in Table 1, it can be seen that throughout 2018 where the coronavirus outbreak has not spread, there were 304 crimes for all categories of criminal acts that occurred in the legal area of Gowa Regency. When entering March 2019, Indonesia officially declared the first outbreak of Covid-19 to date. Data shows that throughout 2019 the crime rate decreased by 32.5% from the previous total number of crimes, while the crime rate again declined in 2020 by 11.2%. The data was extracted from the Gowa District Police (Polres Gowa) records, which cannot be published publicly, so the researchers took the data with special permission for research purposes.

Seeing this fact, researchers know that the Covid-19 pandemic also affects the trend of crime in Gowa Regency, a satellite city of the capital Makassar with a population of ± 652,941 people an area of 1,883.32 km² (South, 2021). If we refer to the legal area of Gowa Regency, we can see that Gowa Regency consists of 18 sub-districts, namely Parangloe, Manuju, Tinggimoncong, Kuncio Pao, Parigi, Bungay, Bontolempangan, Tompobulu, Biringbulu, Somba Opu, Bontomarannu, Pattalassang, Pallangga sub-districts, Barombong, Bajeng, West Bajeng, Bontonompo and South Bontonompo. Crime rate trend data can be seen in the following data.

The crime trend shows that the urban area shows a higher crime rate than rural area, where the urban area is the center of commerce and government administration with a higher population and population density than other areas. This also shows that the complexity of the problems that occur in the area around the capital is higher due to the influence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which causes economic uncertainty that leads to various problems, mainly for daily survival.

Based on the results of an interview with the head of the criminal investigation unit at the Gowa Police, he also stated that although the overall crime rate was decreasing, most of the crimes occurred in the commercial center area of the capital with various motives, but Covid-19 was also one of the motives of the perpetrators.

Crime mode that occurs: Based on the interviews with 20 respondents who are prisoners of criminal acts at the Gowa Police, the following results were obtained from Table 2.

Type of Crime	Amount
Persecution	4

Theft	3
Drug Abuse	2
Sexual harassment	2
Using Fish Bombs	2
Murder	1
Extortion	1
Kid Abduction	1
Rape	1
Unlicensed miner	1
Embezzlement	1
Land grabbing	1
Total	20

The data above shows that the criminal act of persecution is a mode of crime that occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic in the Gowa Regency followed by crimes of theft, drugs, sexual harassment, and illegal use of fish bombs in 2 cases, then other crimes. This is also related to the incident location of the 20 cases where 50% of the incident locations were in the center of the capital. Seeing this fact, it can be said that even though the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak has reduced the crime rate, the crime still exists and has a distribution that tends to be in densely populated areas.

Factors that Caused Criminals to Perform Crimes during the Covid-19 Pandemic

This section will explain the perspective of the perpetrators of crime and the Covid-19 pandemic according to 20 respondents who conducted in-depth interviews, which can be explained in several aspects, namely.

The perpetrator's view of the Covid-19 outbreak: The interview results showed that 12 respondents considered that COVID-19 was used to commit criminal acts because of the quiet situation that supports several criminal acts such as theft and drug abuse. Meanwhile, six respondents considered Covid-19 an obstacle for perpetrators to commit criminal acts because they felt that the government restricted their movements in charge of the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy. Then 2 of them did not give their opinion.

Looking at this data, it can be said that most of the perpetrators of criminal acts saw the Covid-19 pandemic as an opportunity or opportunity to achieve a personal gain amid difficulties experienced by others, especially in the economic aspect, as evidenced by the majority of respondents who committed criminal acts. Related to economic benefits, such as theft, drug abuse, use of fish bombs, embezzlement, extortion, land grabbing, and mining without permits.

On the other hand, respondents who consider the Covid-19 pandemic an obstacle have a different perspective. They consider the extra guarding by the apparatus during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially with the strict reporting and socialization by law enforcement officers through television and online media, making the perpetrators of these crimes think again. However, the economic pressure that increasingly strangles people's lives, where there are respondents who are also victims of termination of employment, has forced respondents to commit crimes to cover their economic needs.

Furthermore, respondents who did not provide an opinion tended not to know and did not follow the current Covid-19 developments, while some people still thought that Covid-19 was a hoax and the setting of specific individuals, so they did not know tended to be apathetic about the coronavirus.

Reasons for Committing Crimes during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Economic Pressure: Economic pressure is one of the factors that make criminals commit crimes. It is undeniable that the economic uncertainty that has caused many people to be fired and the epidemic of disease that continues to terrorize everyone can be determined to commit crimes.

The interview results show that economic pressure is a general factor in the motives of the perpetrators. This is consistent with the findings in Table 2, where economic crime is dominant. The interview results also found that respondents who committed economic crimes said they needed living expenses for their daily needs, while the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult for them to carry out their activities and caused their income to decrease drastically. They are perpetrators as well as humans who have families that need to be financed. Therefore they are willing to commit crimes.

However, the economic crimes caught by the Gowa Police can be said to be ordinary crimes that usually occur and are carried out by the lower middle class. Police officers have not been able to identify crimes of more excellent value, such as corruption, that can be carried out in an organized manner.

Silent conditions: The existence of the PSBB and PPKM policies, which are a form of semi-lockdown in Gowa Regency, has made the commercial and entertainment centers where money circulates become quiet. This policy requires shops to only be open until 5 pm and does not accept dine-in for restaurants. After 5 pm, the conditions became quiet, with the shops closed until the next day.

Most of the respondents who thought that Covid-19 was an opportunity were the group that took advantage of this quiet condition. They admit that the quiet condition is an opportunity, so they use it to launch their action. Although police officers carry out patrols, respondents admitted that the patrols did not cover all areas, so the perpetrators carried out their actions after monitoring first.

Intercommunication: Intercommunication is a person's daily process of interacting with other people. The results of the interview show that 25% of respondents commit crimes because of joining in. They explained that they had no intentions from the start, but when a friend of theirs asked them to commit a crime in exchange for money, they were intrigued. Some just follow their friends to commit crimes without thinking about the consequences in the future. When compared with the age of these respondents, they are classified as young, namely 20-25 years.

The environment around criminals that tends to be dense and irregular, such as a market environment and densely populated settlements, makes criminal opportunities more likely to occur. Vandalism and lack of education were also found in the respondents' backgrounds. Therefore, the researcher sees that association is one of the factors behind criminals during the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The number of crimes tends to decrease during the Covid-19 pandemic in Gowa Regency. This can be seen from the downward trend of 32.5% in 2019 and 11.2% in 2020. These crimes are primarily economic crimes committed for the sake of getting big profits, where researchers found a total of 12 types of criminal acts through 20 respondents through in-depth interviews. Crimes that occur are also dominated by densely populated areas in the capital city of Gowa Regency, such as market areas and densely populated settlements. This is also supported by the perspective of criminals who mostly think that the Covid-19 pandemic is an opportunity to commit crimes and they tend not to believe in the existence of the coronavirus.

The following finding is that crimes committed during the Covid-19 pandemic have several causative factors, namely economic pressure, calm conditions, and association, while economic pressure is the dominant factor that gives birth to many crimes. Therefore, this shows that the coronavirus pandemic significantly affects economic conditions that contribute to the growth of crime. The findings in this study may have implications for improving the performance of law enforcement officers who can use the results of this study to identify and prevent crimes from occurring. In addition, the results of this study can be used to further understand the reasons for the birth of crime during a pandemic from the perpetrator's perspective so that subsequent crimes can be prevented. The researcher recommends that the police pay more attention to patrolling densely populated areas in the capital area. The government immediately provides alternative solutions in improving economic conditions during the pandemic so that crime does not happen again.

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