

Policy Pathology in Urban Traffic Governance: The Case of Bandung City

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes policy pathology in handling traffic congestion in Bandung City using Hogwood and Peters' theory. Through qualitative methods with in-depth interviews and document analysis, this study identifies two forms of dysfunction, namely organizational pathology and information pathology. The findings show that the failure to reduce congestion stems from three indications of organizational pathology, namely sub-optimization of multiple organizations, muscle atrophy, and a shift in objectives. Information pathology was also identified in the form of an inability to learn and failure to implement policy instructions. This study concludes that the root cause of congestion lies not only in technical aspects, but also in systemic dysfunction in the policy process, which requires a fundamental approach through strengthening inter-agency coordination, increasing fiscal capacity, and developing an effective information system, with priority given to the development of integrated public transportation as a sustainable solution.

Keywords

Bandung, Congestion, Policy Pathology, Public Transportation.

Introduction

The government, as a governmental institution, holds the authority to regulate the objectives of the state. In the context of governance, Indonesia adheres to a decentralized system through regional autonomy as regulated in Law No. 23 of 2014. This concept of decentralization is supported by a statement from the UNDP (1997: 4 in Noor, 2012:5) which asserts that decentralization can improve the quality of the government system and strengthen regional authority and capacity. Through regional autonomy, the regional government, which consists of the Regional Government and the Regional Representative Council (DPRD), obtains the authority to administer government affairs. This is in line with Hoessein's (1994, in Hamid, 2011) view that the objectives of regional autonomy include lightening the burden on the central government, improving the efficiency of public services, and optimizing the utilization of resources.

Based on Law No. 23 of 2014, government affairs are divided into three categories, namely absolute, concurrent, and general affairs. In this context, regions have authority over concurrent affairs. One of the concurrent authorities in non-basic service affairs is transportation. This is because transportation affairs involve public goods such as roads, public transportation, and others. One of the impacts of transportation problems is traffic congestion.

Along with the development of transportation technology in cities such as Bandung, a paradox has emerged. Instead of facilitating mobility, this progress has actually triggered a drastic increase in the number of vehicles. As a result, traffic congestion has become the most serious downstream problem that must be addressed by the local government (Dewi, et al., 2020). Traffic congestion has become an acute problem that has captured public attention, especially in the city of Bandung. The latest data from the TomTom Traffic Index reveals that Bandung ranks first as the most congested city in Indonesia, even surpassing Jakarta with an average travel time of 33 minutes per 10 km.

Based on 2024 data, efforts to reduce traffic congestion in Bandung City have shown fluctuating results. During the first three quarters, the target for addressing traffic congestion was achieved at 100% through interventions on major roads such as Buah Batu, Braga, and Sukajadi. However, in the fourth quarter, the target was not met as only one of the three planned road sections could be addressed. Overall, the 2024 performance achievement of 98.42% decreased compared to the previous year's realization of 100%, indicating the need to evaluate the congestion management strategy. The failure to achieve the target needs to be analyzed to determine the cause so that the "problem" can be *treated* appropriately (Bandung City Government, 2024).

Previous studies have consistently identified congestion as a crucial problem in Bandung City with various solution approaches. Aswal (2023) emphasizes the need for infrastructure optimization and transportation management through

comprehensive policy analysis. Herdiani & Natsir (2023) underscore the importance of a collaborative approach to transportation management, while Yuniarti et al. (2022) and Gunawan & Fajar (2022) reveal the challenges of implementing Trans Metro Bandung and the real conditions at the Ciwastra intersection. Inayah et al. (2023) complement this with the identification of specific factors at the sub-district level.

Previous studies have similarly viewed Bandung's traffic congestion as a major issue and emphasized technical-operational solutions through the evaluation of infrastructure, transportation services, or governance coordination. However, this study is different because it not only captures policy performance but also traces the roots of failure in the form of policy pathology using Hogwood and Peters' theory. Thus, this study fills a gap at the level of analysis that highlights structural failures, formulation biases, implementation distortions, and actor disintegration as the main sources of stagnation in the city of Bandung.

Hogwood and Peters (1985) explain that policy pathology reflects a series of systematic failures that occur in the policymaking and implementation processes. The two policy pathologies used as analytical tools in this study are organizational pathology and information pathology. Indications of organizational pathology include Pathological Bureaucratic Stereotypes (public pessimism towards government performance), Multi-Organizational Sub-Optimization (organizations operating based on their own goals and logic), and Goal Shifting (focus shifting from the main goal to other goals). Procedures are Bureaucratic Addiction (procedures become the goal, not the tool), Hyperactivity (institutions create too many unnecessary programs), Building Empires (expanding organizations for power, not service), Atrophied Muscles (organizations are weak due to lack of resources), and Succession Crises (major disruptions due to poor leadership transitions).

Indications of information pathology include Wrong Receptors (failure to receive and respond to important information), Failure to Communicate with Decision Makers (important information does not reach the right people), "Brain" Public Policy (Decision-making is scattered, fragmented, and inconsistent), Wrong Nerve Signals to Muscles (Policy instructions are not carried out accurately), Failure of Information to Reach Targets (Information is unclear or misdirected), Inability to Learn (Failure to evaluate and follow up on internal or external information), Memory Failure (Inability to use past knowledge) and the Better Information Paradox (Quantity of information does not guarantee policy quality).

Using relevant analytical lenses to understand policy failures in efforts to reduce traffic congestion in Bandung, which is also experienced by many metropolitan cities around the world. One indication of organizational and information pathology can be seen in transportation policy in Bandung, such as the inconsistency between the 2023-2044 Transportation Master Plan and Bandung City Regulation No. 1 of 2023, which still discusses the construction of

flyovers/underpasses that actually contradict the principles of sustainability according to a GIZ study (Baedeker, 2024).

Baedeker (2024) explains that such a program will make private transportation users more comfortable and less likely to switch to public transportation. From this, it can be seen that there are indications of information pathology, namely the inability to learn. Hogwood and Peters (1984) explain that the inability to learn in public policy is the systematic failure of the government or policy-implementing organizations to effectively absorb, evaluate, and follow up on information from experience or policy outcomes.

This policy pathology approach allows for an in-depth diagnosis of the structural "disease" inherent in policies aimed at reducing congestion in the city of Bandung. The significance of this research lies in its ability to identify the root causes of the ineffectiveness of existing policies through a theoretical framework of policy pathology that has never been applied in previous studies on congestion in Bandung. With this diagnostic approach, the research does not merely add to the variety of technical solutions but attempts to uncover the bureaucratic and informational dysfunctions that hinder the effectiveness of the programs that have been implemented. Therefore, the study "Policy Pathology in Reducing Traffic Congestion in the Transportation Sector" is expected to make a significant contribution to improving transportation governance through targeted recommendations to cure the "disease" of policy that has been the cause of the failure to address traffic congestion in the city of Bandung.

Method

This study uses qualitative methods to analyze issues related to policy pathologies that have led to the failure to reduce congestion in Bandung. The results of the qualitative study will be further elaborated in a descriptive form in order to analyze and explore the deeper meaning of a problem (Bogan and Taylor, 1975 in Yakin, 2023). Data collection techniques include observation, interviews, and document analysis. The data collected included secondary data from various sources, including government reports. In addition, there was also primary data collected through interviews with two informants who were knowledgeable and understood the topics discussed in this study (Wada et al., 2024). In order to process and analyze the data in this study, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing were carried out (Miles and Huberman in Qomaruddin and Sa'diyah, 2024). To validate the data, the researchers used source triangulation techniques by checking the data through several other sources.

Result and Discussion

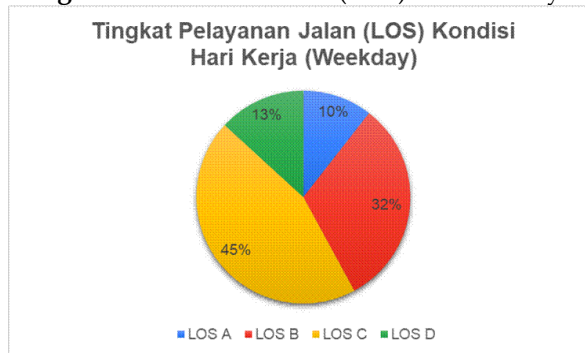
Bandung is the most congested city in Indonesia according to Tomtom traffic. This can be proven by the Level of Service (LOS) data calculated based on the

division of each road in the DISHUB report on the ratio of private vehicles to public vehicles. There are several categories in LOS, as follows (Prayitno and Veronika, 2021):

1. **LOS A** → Very smooth flow (VCR < 0.60).
2. **LOS B** → Fairly smooth flow (VCR 0.60–0.70).
3. **LOS C** → Starting to get congested, but still stable (VCR 0.70–0.80).
4. **LOS D** → Congested, speed decreasing (VCR 0.80–0.90).
5. **LOS E** → Nearly congested, unstable flow (VCR 0.90–1.00).
6. **LOS F** → Total congestion (VCR > 1.00).

The data is divided into two categories, namely Level of Service (LOS) on Weekends and Level of Service (LOS) on Weekdays. To make the data easier to read, the researcher has presented it in the following diagram:

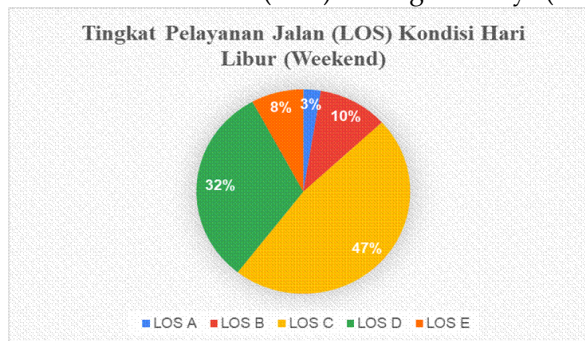
Figure 1. Level of Service (LOS) on Weekdays



Source: Final Report on the Study of the Ratio of Public Transportation Users vs. Private Vehicle Users in 2024, Bandung City Transportation Agency

Most roads in Bandung City are categorized as LOS C, meaning they are starting to become congested but are still stable. Additionally, on weekdays, some roads such as Jl. Dr. Djunjunan, Jl. AH. Nasution (Jl. Sindanglaya - Cibiru Roundabout), Jl. AH. Nasution (Cicaheum Terminal - Jl. Sindanglaya), Jl. Ibrahim Adjie (Sp. Samsat - Pasar Kordon), and Jl. Marga Cinta are categorized as LOS D, meaning they are congested with decreasing speeds. During holidays, the road conditions in Bandung City on some road sections become even worse. This situation can be explained in the following diagram:

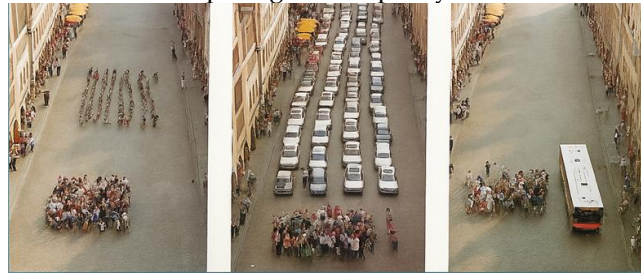
Figure 2. Road Service Level (LOS) During Holidays (Weekends)



Source: Final Report on the Study of the Ratio of Public Transportation Users vs. Private Vehicle Users in 2024, Bandung City Transportation Agency

There is an increase in road density percentage for LOS C and LOS D, with three road sections even reaching LOS E. LOS C increased by 2% during holidays, while LOS D increased by up to 19%. The three road sections that experienced an increase in LOS E were Jl. Dr. Djunjunan, Jl. AH. Nasution (Cicaheum Terminal-Jl. Sindanglaya) and Jl. AH. Nasution (Jl. Sindanglaya - Cibiru Roundabout). The shift in the modes of transportation used by the people of Bandung has greatly contributed to the reduction of traffic congestion in the city (Ariesandi, et al., 2020). Based on the presentation by Ir. Didi Ruswandi, M.T. in the FGD on Sustainable Mobility in Bandung held on October 22, the following illustration explains this:

Figure 3. PowerPoint illustration comparing road capacity with various modes of transportation



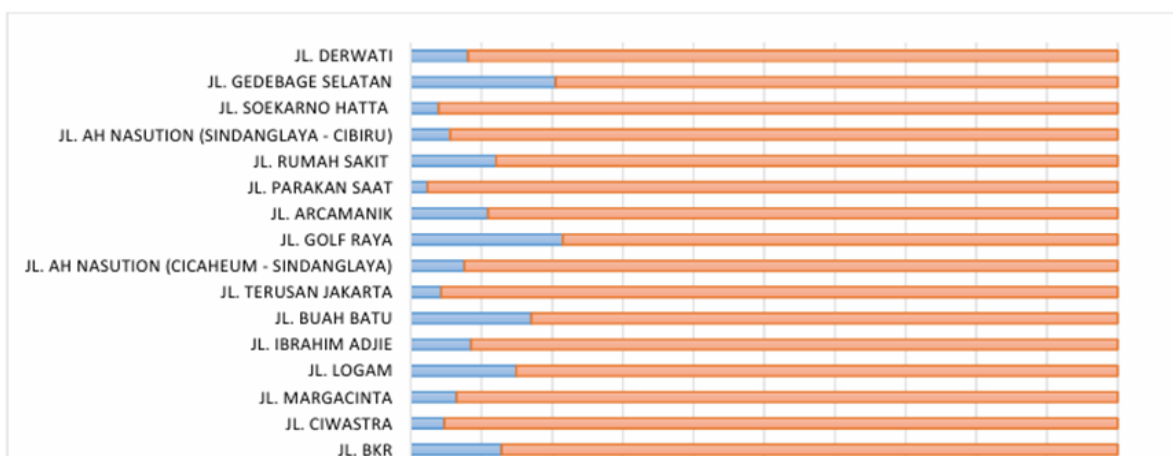
Source: Presentation by Ir. Didi Ruswandi, M.T.

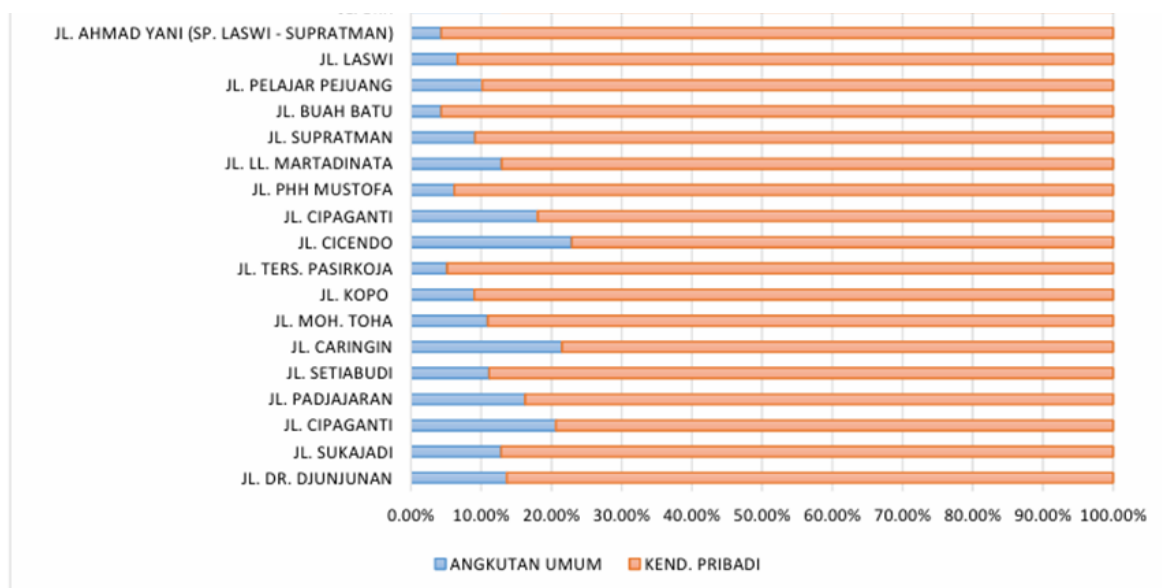
<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/4/folders/1umv0T7ldpXSION17oFLTVTYnYkSod5Z>

Figure 1 illustrates the space occupied by 60 cyclists, Figure 2 illustrates the space occupied by 60 private car users, while Figure 3 illustrates the space occupied by 60 bus users. The road load occupied by 60 people using public transportation is lighter compared to using private transportation.

Solving this traffic congestion problem can be achieved by facilitating the public with public transportation (Puspitaningrum, 2024). However, based on the final report of the 2024 study on the ratio of public transport users to private vehicle users conducted by DISHUB, during the peak hours of November 2024, the number of private vehicles reached 295,713 units, while public transport vehicles only reached 29,150 units. This means the ratio of public transportation to private vehicles is approximately 1:10. The data is further detailed in the following figure:

Figure 4. Percentage Comparison Chart of Vehicle Numbers





Source: Final Report on the Ratio of Public Transportation Users vs. Private Vehicle Users in 2024, Bandung City Transportation Agency

Based on this data, it is evident that on various roads in Bandung City, public transportation users do not exceed 30%. In addition to facilitating the community in meeting their public transportation needs, the Bandung City government also needs to pay attention to the principles of public transportation. Based on the results of a study conducted by the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing in a study entitled "Transportation and Urban Mobility," it explains that public transportation needs to pay attention to the principles of easy access, safety, efficiency, affordability, and sustainability. It is further explained that once these principles are implemented, the public will shift to using public transportation instead of private transportation. On the other hand, public transportation also needs to be integrated so that the development goals in addressing traffic congestion can be achieved (Mustika et al., 2025; Puspitaningrum, 2024; Adinegoro, 2022).

1. Organizational Pathology

Organizational pathology refers to structural and behavioral failures of institutions that cause policies to not work as intended (Hogwood & Peters, 1985). In this case, organizational pathology can analyze the causes of the failure to reduce congestion in the transportation sector. This can be further explained as follows:

a. Muscles that have atrophied

Public transportation is not only road-based but also rail-based, such as trains. The city of Bandung already has plans to build an LRT. Based on a presentation given by Asep Kuswara Ama PKB., S.T., M.M., Head of the Bandung City Transportation Agency, on October 21, 2024, entitled "The Government Towards Sustainable Mobility Through Integrated Transportation Services," it was explained that two LRT corridors will be built. Corridor 1 is planned to have a route length of 10.14 km, starting from Babakan Siliwangi to Leuwipanjang. Meanwhile, Corridor 2 has a route length of 20.05 km, starting from Cimindi to Gedebage.

However, based on a statement made by Mr. Sam during an interview as a Junior Expert in Infrastructure and Regional Development Planning at Bapperida Kota Bandung, he explained:

"We have already done such planning. The hope is that within the city, there will be more public transportation than private vehicles. I mean, rail-based transportation already exists, right? That's why we already have two corridors that have actually been awarded through a tender process. Even though they're not operational yet. It's such a shame." (Interview results, 2025)

When looking at the perspective of the pathology of the Bandung City Government's policy in this case, there is a case of "muscle atrophy." This is due to the government's weak condition in terms of budgeting for rail-based public transportation development. This is actually very unfortunate because according to a survey conducted by the Bandung City Transportation Agency, one of the motivations for the community to switch to public transportation is the availability of rail-based modes of transportation. In addition, a problem that often complained about by the public is the uncertainty of time because public transportation often "waits" for a long time. Another complaint is the high cost of transportation if there are too many transfers. The survey states that 34.1% of respondents are willing to switch to public transportation if this is improved.

b.Sub-Optimization of Multi-Organizations

There has been a delay in the development of public transportation infrastructure in Bandung due to political reasons. Mr. Sam explained that the Bandung City Government had proposed a piloting feeder integrated with Trans Pasundan, which has now been renamed Trans Metro Jabar, with a proposed budget of 50 billion rupiah. However, when it was submitted to the council in 2024, the proposal was rejected. Even though the documents in the plan had been fully designed, such as the rerouting of public transportation and an integrated payment system like the one in Jakarta.

Meanwhile, based on interviews with the council in Commission IV, researchers feel that the council is afraid of a decline in vehicle sales. This is because the council is more concerned about the long-term impact, such as mass layoffs, which would increase the number of new unemployed people because of a policy that would lead to a decline in vehicle sales.

Based on the statements of Hogwood and Peters (1985), one of the characteristics of this sub-optimization of multiple organizations is a conflict of objectives. In the case of the rejection of this feeder pilot program, the conflict of objectives arose because the government believed that public transportation needed to be improved to solve the traffic congestion problem, while the council did not think so. The policy plan could not be implemented because each institution had a different logic in terms of solving the traffic congestion problem in the city of Bandung. In this case, there were three characteristics of organizational pathology in the provision of public transportation facilities, namely the government's inability to

learn, a weak government due to budget constraints, and multi-organizational sub-optimization (institutions operating with different logics).

2. Information Pathology

This refers to distortions, communication failures, and errors in the use of information that impact policy quality (Hogwood & Peters, 1985). Field findings indicate:

a. Inability to learn

Another public transportation problem is *angkot ngetem*, or *angkot* that waits for passengers. In fact, *angkot ngetem* and traffic jams have long been a problem in the city of Bandung. However, the government often sticks to the argument that widening roads or building *flyovers* is the solution. This is because the government believes that the cause of traffic congestion, apart from the increasing volume of vehicles (Nabilah, 2022), is that the roads are not wide enough to accommodate the vehicles (Rachmadona, et al., 2025; Dzahabyyah, 2021). In fact, research published by GIZ shows that widening roads in a city is not a solution but rather provides more comfort for private vehicle users. As a result, people will tend to continue to use private vehicles for mobility, causing their numbers to increase. This condition is an indication of an inability to learn from experience and research. Instead of adapting to new solutions, old policies continue to be maintained.

Bandung is one of the most densely populated cities and it is difficult to find vacant land (Fauzi and Abdullah, 2024), let alone vacant land for widening roads or building *flyovers*. With the government's insistence on expanding roads or building *flyovers* despite limited financial resources, the problem will not be solved. Researchers feel that there are indications of policy pathology. The government has ultimately failed to respond to information from numerous studies conducted by international organizations explaining that the solution to traffic congestion and environmental pollution, mainly caused by motor vehicles, is not road widening or *flyover* construction, but rather the provision of adequate public transportation. This can be proven by the policy outlined in the 2023-2044 Bandung City Transportation Master Plan, which states that one of the directions of road network development policy is the construction of *flyovers/underpasses*.

When researchers interviewed sources at the Transportation Agency, some agreed with road construction, while others were more in favor of developing public transportation. The reason for the disagreement with the development of public transportation is because the public is pessimistic that they will switch to it due to their mindset of wanting everything to be instant. Meanwhile, those who agree with the development of public transportation tend to feel that the construction of *flyovers/underpasses* will only provide convenience for the public to travel with their private vehicles.

This can be proven by various roads with *flyovers* built in the city of Bandung. Along Jl. Terusan Jakarta, traffic remains congested during rush hour before and

after the flyover was built. Thus, the research conducted by GIZ in a study entitled "National Approach to Urban Mobility Planning and Implementation in the Regions," which explains that road widening or the construction of flyovers will only make the public more comfortable using private transportation and is very likely to increase the number of motor vehicles, has been proven to be true. The following is an overview of the road situation during rush hour after the flyover was built:

Figure 5. Image of Road Congestion in the Morning on Jl. Jakarta on September 23, 2025



(Researcher's Analysis)

In addition, there has been a delay in the development of public transportation infrastructure in Bandung due to political reasons. Mr. Sam explained that the Bandung City Government had proposed a piloting feeder integrated with Trans Pasundan, which has now been renamed Trans Metro Jabar, with a budget proposal of 50 billion rupiah. However, when it was submitted to the council in 2024, the proposal was rejected. This is even though the documents in the plan had been fully designed, including rerouting of public transportation and an integrated payment system similar to that in Jakarta.

b.No Signs of Forgetting

On the other hand, the Bandung City Government has not shown any memory lapse regarding the motor vehicle restriction program implemented at several points in the city. Mr. Sam, a Junior Expert in Infrastructure and Regional Development Planning at Bapperida Bandung City, explained:

"There was definitely an odd-even system. What else, at that time there was also a 3-in-1 system. But the conditions in Jakarta and Bandung are very different in character. In Bandung, if the odd-even system is implemented, it will be a monster, with extraordinary traffic jams. This is because the roads are small and all connected. Here, there is only one route, so the management is like a crossroads, as if it has reached a dead end. The community does not switch to other modes of transportation but instead looks for other roads. Finding other roads has become their alternative to serve the general public, because they are not yet well facilitated. Therefore, the current government program focuses on solving public transportation problems first." (Interview results, 2025)

Based on the interview results, the Bandung City Government has evaluated the restriction program well so that the impact of the problems caused by the previous policy does not last long. On the other hand, apart from the road widening

or *flyover* construction strategies, the interview illustrates the government's ability to learn based on internal and external evaluations.

Traffic congestion in Bandung is not only caused by high vehicle volume, but mainly by the weak provision and management of public transportation. LOS data, which is dominated by congested conditions and a private-public vehicle ratio of 1:10, shows a low mode shift among the public. The pathology of the policy is evident in budget constraints, conflicts of interest between agencies, and an inability to learn from experience, such as the delay of the LRT, the rejection of the feeder pilot budget, and the continued road widening. Although the government has shown that it is evaluating its vehicle restriction policy, this is not enough. Institutional strengthening and acceleration of integrated public transportation services are needed.

Conclusion

Based on Hogwood and Peters' policy pathology analysis, the failure to address congestion in Bandung stems from systemic dysfunction within the government. The findings show that congestion is not solely triggered by high vehicle volume, but mainly by organizational and information pathologies that hinder the effectiveness of policy formulation and implementation. Organizationally, two main pathologies were identified: (1) Sub-Optimization of Multiple Organizations, reflected in the conflict of objectives between the executive and legislative branches in budgeting for the feeder transport pilot program; and (2) Atrophied Muscles, namely the weak fiscal and institutional capacity to realize rail-based public transportation projects such as the LRT. These two pathologies indicate that the transportation governance process in Bandung does not yet have adequate institutional capacity to implement transformational policies.

On the other hand, the pathology of information is evident in the inability to learn, as the government continues to repeat flyover construction policies even though various empirical studies and international research show that this approach is short-term and does not solve the root of the problem. The failure to utilize this information indicates a weak policy learning mechanism within the bureaucracy. Overall, solving congestion in the city of Bandung requires a more fundamental approach to address these policy pathologies. The practical implications include the need to strengthen inter-agency coordination, increase fiscal capacity, and develop a policy information system capable of transforming empirical evidence into strategic decisions. Policy priorities must be directed towards the development of integrated public transportation as the foundation for sustainable urban mobility

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