

# COVID-19 and Social Change in Indonesia

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The pandemic Covid-19 has caused disruption and a crisis all over the world, including Indonesia. It is important to describe and analyse the identity and magnitude of social changes due to the pandemic Covid-19 in Indonesia more precisely. The objective of this paper is to describe social changes in Indonesia due to the spread of Covid-19. The information is derived from abundant information in mass media, as well as my personal networks and activities related to Covid-19. This paper shows that the Covid-19 outbreak caused a wide range of social changes in Indonesia's society; from everyday social interactions to basic social institutions such as family, economy, education, health, religion, and government.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19; Indonesia; Institution; Social Interactions; Social Changes*

## INTRODUCTION

There is an agreement among social scientists that social change is an integral part of any society. There is no society that is completely stagnant, or unchanged. As explained by Lauer, social change is a normal phenomenon (Lauer, 2001). From the end of the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century, social change has come more quickly and with bigger impact. This change was mainly triggered by technological developments, especially technology related to transportation and communication, with digital technology at the centre. Rapid and fundamental social change due to technological development has also been emphasised by Schwab (2016) in his notion of "the fourth industrial revolution" and Salgues (2018) in his notion of the "society 5.0".

In early 2020, a sudden global social change occurred due to the spread of the corona virus, Covid-19. This virus initially appeared in Wuhan, China (Bao et al, 2020; Phan et al, 2020), and then spread rapidly to various parts of the world. With its very "sociological" character, the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus has brought about significant social changes in various parts

of the world, including Indonesia. Changes or crises are not limited to the health sector, but all aspects of life in a significant way. As Hanafi (2020) said, "The current disruption will change, at an unprecedented rate, how we eat, work, shop, exercise, manage our health, socialize, and spend our free time". Hanafi further says that "And this crisis is not just limited to public and environmental health or the economy - what we are witnessing is a moment of truth regarding the crisis of late modernity and its capitalist system on a broad, overarching scale". Kinseng (2020) even stated that the pandemic Covid-19 may cause "the greatest disruption in the 21<sup>st</sup> century". Hence, it is interesting to investigate social changes in Indonesia caused by the pandemic Covid-19. With this background, the purpose of this study is within the category of "description" according to Babbie (2016), namely, to describe social changes which have occurred in Indonesia as a result of the outbreak of Covid-19.

## METHODOLOGY

This article is basically a sociological reflection on the phenomenon of the spread of the corona virus (Covid-19) that shaken the world (Zizek, 2020; Buscher et al, 2020), and caused a crisis in Indonesia as in other countries around the world. The reflection is based on the information from mass media, coupled with observations of people's daily lives, as well as personal experiences as a member of an education institution (a lecturer at IPB University), a religious institution (an elder in the church), and a family institution (a husband and father of three children; one still studying in a university and one in Junior High School). In addition, other information was also obtained from various webinars I attended which discussed various aspects of the Covid-19 pandemic. So in a sense, this is a form of participatory research. The data is organised into themes, basically consisting of two categories, namely process and identity of social changes. These themes are then described and presented in this paper.

## PROCESS AND IDENTITY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

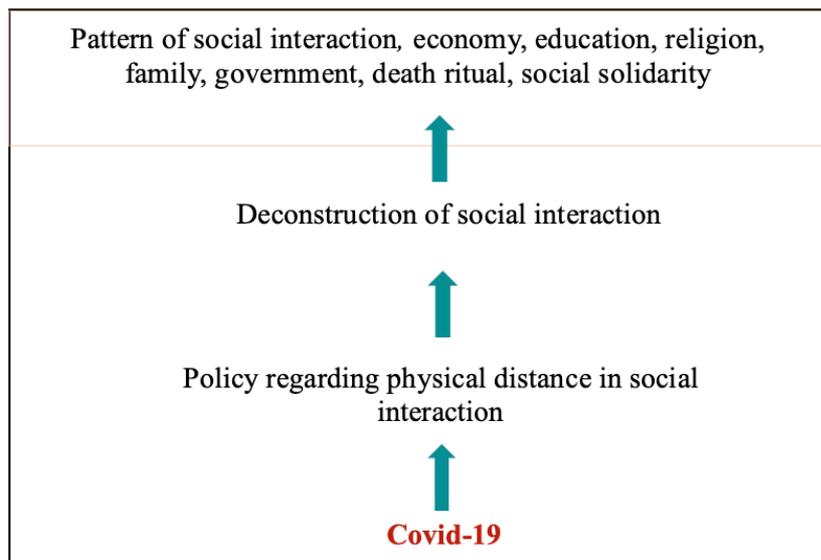
Social change has been a subject of sociological research for a long time. Steven Vago even said that "The science of sociology began in the quest for explanations for social change" (Vago, 1989). There are many definitions of social change; mostly emphasising changes in social structure. Harper for example said that "*Social change* is the significant alteration of social structure through time" (Harper, 1989). Meanwhile, Vago gives a broader understanding that social change means "alterations in social phenomenon" (Vago, 1989). Furthermore, Vago explained that social change involves six interrelated components, namely identity, level, duration, direction, magnitude, and rate of change. According to Vago, "identity of change refers to a specific social phenomenon undergoing transformation such as a definite practice, behaviour, attitude, interaction pattern, authority structure...and stratification system" (Vago, 1989). This article discusses the source, process, and identity of change at various levels due to the spread of Covid-19 in Indonesia.

## 1. Process of social change.

There are two general perspectives regarding sources of social changes, namely materialistic, (especially technology), and idealistic (Lauer, 2001). However, Vago (1989) mentions several sources of social change, namely technology, ideology, competition, conflict, politics, the economy, and structural strains. Interestingly, none of the sources of social change mentioned above became the source of social change that currently shake the world. In this case, the source of social change is what Parsons called “other organism” from the environment (Parsons, 1973), namely the virus known as Covid-19.

Research indicates that Covid-19 was primarily spread through person-to-person contact and respiratory droplet transmission. In other words, Covid-19 transmission occurs through a face-to-face social interaction directly between one person and another in close proximity. As Heymann and Shindo (2020) say, Covid-19 "spread from person to person by the same mechanism as other common cold or influenza viruses - that is, face to face contact with a sneeze or cough, or from contact with secretions of people who are infected ". The same thing was also stated by Shereen et al (2020): "The human to the human spreading of the virus occurs due to close contact with an infected person, exposed to coughing, sneezing, respiratory droplets or aerosols".

Referring to the characteristics of the Covid-19 transmission as mentioned above, physical distancing can help to reduce transmission. Therefore, rules were made about social interaction around the world. In social interaction, physical distance should not be as close as before, but is limited to a minimum of about 1 to 1.5 meters between one person and another. Shaking hands, hugging, and kissing for example are also forbidden in the social interaction, even between close friends and family members. Large gathering and crowds are also prohibited in order to minimise direct and close social interaction. Therefore, people are "instructed" to stay at home and work from home. By adjusting the physical distance of these social interactions, a deconstruction of social interaction patterns has actually taken place. This deconstruction of social interaction turns out to have enormous and fundamental consequences for human life throughout the earth. This is the root cause of the social change that has shocked the world. The process of social change triggered by the pandemic Covid-19 can be seen in Schema 1. Next, identities of social change will be described which are a result of the deconstruction of social interaction.



Schema 1. Process of social change triggered by Covid-19

From Schema 1 we can see that Covid-19 does not actually cause direct social change. The direct impact of Covid-19 is on human health and mortality. The direct cause of social change is actually the policies of the Government and other institutions which regulate social distancing to prevent the spread of Covid-19. This policy has led to the deconstruction of social interactions, which in turn has led to socio-cultural changes that has touched all aspects of human life.

## 2. Identities of social change

### *Patterns of social interaction*

The deconstruction of social interaction due to Covid-19 has changed the pattern of social interaction and “social practices” (Giddens, 1986; Inglis and Thorpe, 2012) in everyday life. Usually there is no distance limitation in daily interactions, but that is no longer the case. It is well known that Indonesians generally do not maintain physical distance in interacting with each other every day. When meeting, it is very common for people to shake their hands, hug, and even kiss their left and right cheeks. Even more, the traditional greeting of a tribe in Maluku is two people pressing their noses together when they meet. This indicates the friendliness and closeness of Indonesians. Due to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, social life has undergone radical change, and it is dramatically altering interaction patterns of everyday life. People should no longer interact at close range, let alone shake hands and kiss the cheek. In reality physical distancing may reduce the sense of closeness and intimacy between interacting people; in other words, causing wider social distance. In fact, we need to have closer social distance to defeat our common enemy Covid-19. This close social distance is actually a

prerequisite for the creation of high social cohesion and solidarity. Conversely, social distancing tends to cause exclusivity and even social disintegration. Of course, social distance can be close even though one is physically far from others, and vice versa: people can be physically close but have a significant social distance (the Indonesian proverb says “*jauh di mata, dekat di hati*” or “far from the eye, but near to the heart”). Therefore, the term social distancing as an effort to break the chain of Covid-19 spreading is actually not correct. Physical distancing is more apt.

The deconstruction of social interaction means daily social interactions in the community, where face-to-face relationships were the norm, is experiencing a very drastic decline. The government has placed a ban on large public gatherings, and "orders" to stay at home and work from home made, especially at the earlier stage. The streets are quiet, train stations and terminals around Jakarta-Bogor and other cities in Indonesia have been left empty, leaving malls lifeless, and empty schools and campuses. Likewise, many factories have shutdown, and tourist attractions were closed. Domestic and international population mobility has almost stopped. That is why the "world" feels like it has stopped moving, especially during the early and peak periods of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### *Health institutions and patient treatment*

Health institutions are social institutions which have experienced disruption since the beginning of the spread of Covid-19. These changes include, among other things, government orders for certain hospitals to specifically serve Covid-19 patients. In addition, the government has also built temporary "hospitals" that are devoted to treating Covid-19 patients, such as the Athlete's Village in Jakarta. Some buildings, such as schools, are also used for isolating Covid-19 patients.

The procedure for handling Covid-19 patients is very different from handling ordinary patients. Doctors and nurses must wear special clothing as personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid transmission of Covid-19. Meanwhile, the patients themselves must also be isolated and may not be visited even by their own families. In fact, hospital patients usually need attention so are usually visited by their family and friends when they are hospitalised.

On the other hand, there are also cases where families have forcibly taken the bodies of Covid-19 patients, both from the hospital and from the ambulance on the way to the cemetery. They refused to have the corpse buried with the Covid-19 protocol. In cases like this, medical personnel are often harassed and even physically abused, such as being beaten by the patient's family. Furthermore, patients who are suspected of being infected with Covid-19 sometimes experience stigmatisation and mistreatment in society. They can experience rejection from the surrounding community, even from neighbours in the housing complex where they live.

For example, a family was forced to flee to rice fields on the edge of the forest because they were rejected by their fellow-villagers (in Mamasa, West Sulawesi Province). In some places, local government planning to build in order to increase hospital capacity in handling Covid-19 infected people has been strongly opposed by the surrounding residents. Likewise, some healthcare workers have been shunned by the community, and some even have been denied entry to their boarding house accommodation. Coronavirus Covid-19 has turned our long history and patterns of social practices with regards to sick people upside down.

### *Economic institution and social stratification*

Within a short time, after two or three months, the Covid-19 pandemic has generated enormous uncertainty about a global economic crisis. Economists and economic practitioners agreed that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a terrible economic crisis. The Indonesian former Vice President, M. Jusuf Kalla, said that "the world is threatened by the greatest economic crisis in history" due to the coronavirus (*Kompas*, 9 May 2020 p. 6). The Indonesian economist, Enny Sri Hartati, said that "the economic impact of Covid-19 is devastating" (*Kompas*, 12 May 2020 p. 1). Based on the press release by the Central of Statistical Bureau (BPS) in November 5, 2020, Sugiarto (Head of OJK Institute) said that "Indonesia has officially entered an economic recession" (*Kompas*, 7 November 2020). Countries in the world such as France, Italy, Spain, Austria, and America experienced negative economic growth in the first quarter of 2020. Even China also experienced negative economic growth in the first quarter of 2020. As said by Liu et al (2020) that "The Covid-19 outbreak has severely disrupted China's economy ...". Arundhati Roy said that Covid-19 "... struck hardest - thus far - in the richest, most powerful nations of the world, bringing the engine of capitalism to a juddering halt" (*Financial Times*, April 4, 2020).

In addition to Indonesia's annual economic downturn, economic hardship has been felt even more in everyday life. As a result of the deconstruction of social interactions, many formal and informal business unit activities have stopped. Companies no longer produce, or at least have reduced production sharply, some even having to declare bankruptcy. Medium and small businesses and the informal sector have certainly experienced a dramatic upswing in bankruptcy filing. Especially in the earlier phase, many activities in the trade sector stopped, and malls were closed. With the coronavirus pandemic now spreading in Indonesia, the situation for restaurants, and other businesses in the hospitality and tourism industries continue to experience a devastating impact, especially because tourist activities have almost stopped completely. The transportation industry, which includes a variety of passenger transportation modes, experienced a very sharp decline. The *Kompas* newspaper described the condition as follows: "All fields of business are experiencing great pressure. Whether micro, small and medium enterprises or large companies; formal or informal businesses, all are experiencing the indiscriminate Covid-19 storm" (*Kompas*, May 29, 2020 p.3). The cessation of many of these economic activities carries enormous and dangerous consequences; many workers in the formal sector were laid off, while workers in the informal sector have lost their jobs too. The

Ministry of Labour estimates that around 3 million people have lost their jobs due to Covid-19. However, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry estimates that the number of job losses is much higher than that. Meanwhile, according to the Central of Statistical Bureau (press release 5 November), by August 2020, 29.12 million of the workforce were impacted by Covid-19; 2.56 million unemployed due to Covid-19 and 24.03 million experiencing reduced working hours due to Covid-19.

Whatever the number, we clearly see, even among our family members, that many of them have been laid off. Some of these workers who lost their jobs or businesses in cities like Jakarta have lately been “forced” return to their hometowns, because it is more difficult to survive in a big city when there were no jobs or business opportunities due to Covid-19.

As explained earlier, the Covid-19 pandemic is forcing companies to lay off employees. In theory, workers who experience termination of employment (PHK) as well as small entrepreneurs and informal sector "workers" who experience bankruptcy experience downward social mobility or social sinking. That is, the Covid-19 pandemic is causing changes in social stratification of the society. The total number of people now in the lower strata of society has increased, while members the middle-upper strata has decreased.

Natural disasters are often seen as affecting people indiscriminately. As stated by Fothergill and Peek (2004) "Natural disasters have often been overlooked as a site of social stratification because they were viewed as indiscriminate “acts of God” that affected communities randomly”. Likewise with the Covid-19 pandemic. At first glance, it appears that the Covid-19 pandemic does not discriminate, whether rich or poor, educated or less educated. An American philosopher, Slavoj Zizek, for example, said that in fighting of the Covid-19 pandemic "We're all in the same boat now" (Zizek, 2020). However, when it is examined deeper, the impact of natural disasters does not have the same effect on everyone (Fothergill and Peek 2004; Brym, 2009). And this is the case with the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of confirmed coronavirus cases who have died from the disease is in the upper-middle-class in the cities. Meanwhile, the worst economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is felt by the lower class in urban areas as well as the villagers. As Pleyers said (2020) "we are deeply unequal when confronted with it". So, the Covid-19 pandemic has also revealed that social class or social stratification does matter in confronting a disaster. Thus, I agree with the statement accompanied by images circulating on social media lately, namely "we are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm" (Figure 1).

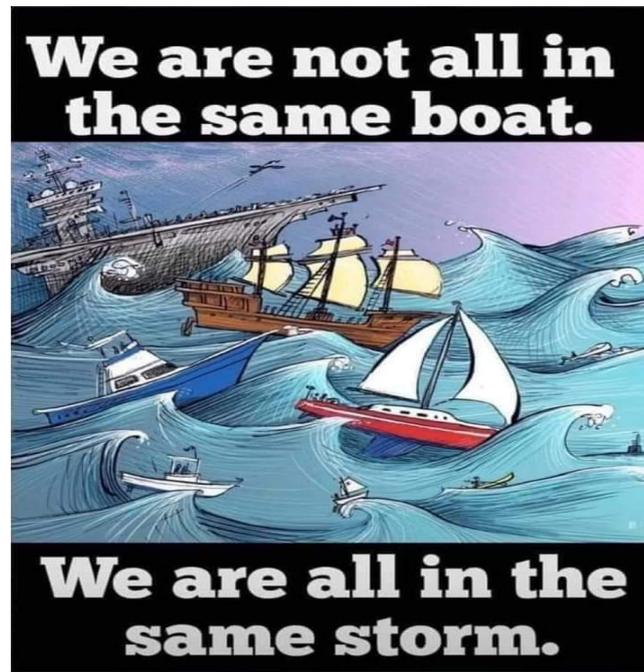


Figure 1. Illustration: Not all in the same boat.

### *Education institution*

For education, universities and schools are also experiencing huge disruption in their teaching and learning activities due to the spread of Covid-19. Previously teaching and learning activities were almost all conducted in the classroom with face-to-face interactions, but now all have been stopped. At IPB University for example, since mid-March 2020 all teaching and learning activities are carried out online. Even colloquia, seminars, and final exams (thesis/dissertation) as well as graduations are also conducted online. As discussed by Suwignyo and Purwanto (2020), "... within only about two months the pandemic has caused a drastic change in the management of higher education institutions. The transformation of higher education due to Covid-19 took place very quickly ... ". The same thing occurred at lower level education, such as junior and senior high school; all teaching and learning activities are carried out online.

### *Religious institutions*

Regular and sacred rituals are also affected by Covid-19; it has disrupted traditional religious practices in Indonesia. For members of Protestant and Catholic churches, for example, Sunday worships can no longer held in church. Likewise, with other services that are usually carried out collectively, both at home and at church, all are now carried out in their respective homes online, both directly in live video streaming as well as pre-recorded videos distributed to church members. Even the Easter services were held in homes, something that has never happened

before. Likewise for Muslims, many mosques have cancelled Friday prayer services. During the month of Ramadan, Muslims could not do *tarawih* (pray) together in the mosque; even at Eid al-Fitr, Muslims in the country were advised to avoid conducting Idul Fitri prayers in large congregations at mosques due to the pandemic.

Moreover, the practice of returning to their hometown for the Eid al-Fitr celebrations, which is an inseparable ritual for the Eid celebrations, was not permitted. As Yulianto said (2011), "Each year, millions of Indonesians return to their ancestral and family homes to celebrate Lebaran, at the end of Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month. Not only Muslims, but all Indonesians have adopted this annual ritual of reconnecting, remembering and recharging with their ancestral homes. This mass homecoming is known as Lebaran homecoming". But in 2020, to prevent Covid-19 transmission, this practice was prohibited. Likewise, the typical Indonesian open house event known as *halal bi halal*, which is an opportunity to forgive one another, could not be conducted in a face to face meetings as usual. This time *halal bi halal* was only held online using media such as Zoom, Google meet and the like. So Covid-19 has caused an extraordinary change in religious rituals. Religious rhythms are deeply embedded in religious people in Indonesia; some might even think of it as something sacred that is not easy to change. But Covid-19 has fundamentally changed such religious rituals.

#### *Family related institutions*

Families are also changing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. If normally the husband (and the wife in many families) goes to work in the office, during the Covid-19 pandemic most of them now work from home (WFH). The same also applies for their children; usually they go to campus or school, but during the pandemic they study from home. Government policy was made to restrict people going out of the home in general, which also makes family members stay at home all day long, everyday. This makes interaction among family members become more intense. In some cases, this phenomenon creates tension among family members, even resulting in family abuse, especially of woman and children. The tension in these family may increase further due to the decline in family income as a consequence of the economic collapse.

Covid-19 also has a very significant impact on weddings, which is part of a family institution. Weddings involve a ceremony where two people are united in marriage, and it is a very important ritual. It is not only important for the bride and groom but also for the whole family from both sides. In Indonesia, the reception is generally an inseparable part of a wedding. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic many prospective couples have had to postpone their weddings. For those who still hold their weddings, it must be conducted in a very simple way, mostly without a reception. A colleague whose child got married in Germany was forced to attend the wedding only online (Zoom). He was unable to attend due to the travel restrictions applied by both Indonesia and Germany. Likewise, the parents of the bride were also unable to attend in person, even though they had bought plane tickets and paid for hotels in Germany.

Close relatives and friends who were invited to "attend" the wedding were only present via Zoom. Of course there was no wedding reception like normal. However, there are positive outcomes, namely that weddings are cheaper and the wedding can be "attended" by families and friends from all continents. This event is very different from the customary marriage rituals prevailing in Indonesian society. So, Covid-19 has fundamentally changed marriage rituals as well.

#### *Government institutions*

The government has also experienced significant changes as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Structurally, at the national level the Government formed a new organisation specifically assigned to handle Covid-19, namely the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19, led by the Head of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB), Lt. Gen. Doni Monardo. This task force was formed based on the Presidential Decree (Keppres) No. 7 of 2020, which was signed in March 2020. This Covid-19 handling unit was also formed at lower levels of government, namely the Province and Regency/City. In July 2020 this institution was later changed to the Committee for Handling Covid-19 and the National Economic Recovery. Thus, the task was expanded to include the recovery of the national economy. This committee was formed based on the Presidential Regulation (Perpres) No.82 of 2020. The Chair of this Committee is the Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Erlangga Hartarto.

Another aspect which is also very important is the budget allocation for social assistance provided to people affected by Covid-19. The response to Covid-19 has also received priority in the use of funds for villages. For example, until 18 October 2020, the use of village funds in the "Covid-19 Response Village" program was more than IDR 3 trillion. Meanwhile, until early November 2020 the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia has distributed IDR 112 trillion for the recovery of the national economy (Ministry of Social Press Release, Wednesday, November 4, 2020)

#### *Death rituals and social interaction*

Rituals associated with death have experienced a radical change as well, even producing heartbreaking outcomes. As explained earlier, a Covid-19 patient must be isolated and cannot be visited by family. When patients die, they have to be buried immediately, even if they died in a hospital, their body has to be immediately taken to the cemetery, cannot be taken to a house or a funeral home. Funeral services are carried out simply and may not be attended by many people. The bodies cannot be buried according to the deceased families' wishes during this Covid-19 pandemic. Usually for non-Muslims, when someone dies, the family will take care of the body at home or bring it into a funeral home for up to two or three days. It is a time that family and friends can pay their final respects, and to express their sorrow and grief. For Christians, as long as they not yet buried, there is usually a consolation service attended by relatives and friends. However the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted these much-needed

mourning rituals. When my beloved sister died in Palangka Raya in April, I was unable to attend the funeral; so was her son who lives in Surabaya. We could not go to Palangka Raya because of the rules about quarantine for those entering the area from red zones. We only followed the funeral procession online (Zoom). The same thing happened to our colleague when his mother passed away in Jakarta recently. Her children and their families who live in Australia, mostly “attended” the funeral virtually through Zoom.

As previously mentioned, another issue is the dispute about the bodies of the deceased, between the family and the hospital. This has occurred in several hospitals, for example in Bekasi, Surabaya and Makassar. This happened because the family refused to follow the protocol for the burial of Covid-19 victims, so they took the body by force in order to bury it themselves. This problem was due to the family's opinion that the deceased did not die from Covid-19, as stated by the hospital. There have also been residents (in Mataram) who took suspected Covid patients (PDP) from the hospital by force.

On the other hand, there have also been incidents of rejection of the funeral of Covid-19 victims by local residents, for example in Central Java and in the city of Pare-pare. Meanwhile, in North Minahasa, the body of a Covid-19 patient had to be buried by the police because he was abandoned by his family and the local residents. It seems that this occurred because residents were worried that Covid-19 could be transmitted to local residents. So Covid-19 has caused enormous disruption to the processes related to death rituals.

### *Social solidarity*

The Covid-19 pandemic constitutes an unprecedented challenge with very severe socio-economic consequences. There has been a positive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, namely the emergence of social solidarity among Indonesian citizens. This social solidarity is manifested through various forms activities both in small and large scales. Many organisations, groups, and even individuals facilitate citizens' participation which encourages more people to make donations. They have opened bank accounts to collect donations and distribute them to various parties who are in need. For example, *Yayasan Dana Kemanusiaan Kompas* (the Kompas Humanitarian Fund Foundation) channelled its aids from *Kompas* readers to various groups of people in need (*Kompas*, May 12, 2020 p. 1). Another charity foundation that raises funds, namely *Kitabisa.com*, managed to raise funds amounted to around IDR 140 billion for the handling of Covid-19, which came from around 2 million donors (*Kompas*, May 18, 2020 p. 1). The funds were channelled to hospitals and *puskesmas* to provide equipment such as masks, personal protective equipment and so on. *Dompot Kemanusiaan* (Humanity Wallet) from the Media Group, has raised more than IDR 17 billion up to May 29, 2020. Meanwhile, the noted late singer, "Didi Kempot" through a "Charity Concert from Home" managed to collect donations amounting to around IDR 7.6 billion which has been channelled to a number of social institutions and volunteer communities (*Kompas TV Online*, 25 April 2020).

Social solidarity is also carried out by various institutions/actors such as universities, students, alumni, churches, mosques, and so on. In Bogor, a group of young people called themselves *Komunitas Bogor Rise Against Corona* (BORAC - Bogor Rise Against Corona Community) and has been active in helping residents in several Bogor' villages, in providing health education and assistance for farming. Basically they do this voluntarily.

Indeed, the growing Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened social capital; many people are willing to step up and volunteer to fight against Covid-19. Supriyati (2020), for example, has shown that in the recruitment processes conducted by UGM last March 2020, in just a few days, they received 650 volunteers. Furthermore, an initiative has been launched in helping other residents to get along with each other, for example by distributing groceries for those who lost their jobs or who were infected with Covid-19. In some areas, including Jakarta, for example, some people (especially mothers) put basic necessities or vegetables in public places, so that people in need could take them freely.

In fact, Indonesia has long been known as a nation that has strong social solidarity, as reflected in the concept of mutual cooperation or “*gotong royong*”. Unfortunately, as Indonesian increasingly become more individualistic and materialistic, especially in the urban regions, “*gotong royong*” has almost disappeared from everyday life. However, Covid-19 has shown that actually the seed of social solidarity is not totally dead. The Covid-19 pandemic has revived mutual cooperation among Indonesian society. As a social capital, social solidarity in Indonesia in the pandemic era is realised through various forms of mutual assistance between citizens. This is in line with the findings of Kustiningsih and Nurhadi (2020:180), who concluded from responses of a Yogyakarta community in handling Covid-19 that it was “strengthening social capital through social solidarity actions”. Strengthened social capital is certainly encouraging, but it must be managed in such a way to avoid a “fragmented social capital”. Increased social capital should not be limited by the bounds of certain social groups only. Hence, universal social solidarity must be encouraged, and must be enjoyed by all social groups.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

This sociological reflection on the Covid-19 pandemic phenomenon has shown that the outbreak of Covid-19 has caused fundamental social changes in Indonesia. The fundamental social changes are seen in the deconstruction of social interaction through the regulation of physical distance in order to control the spread of Covid-19.

These social changes encompass patterns of social interaction in everyday life and social practices, as well as the “five basic social institutions” (Brinkerhoff et al, 2011) namely the family, the economy, government, education, and religion. In addition, other important institutions, namely health as well as death rituals have also changed significantly. In the economic institution, both formal and informal sectors have been almost totally stopped,



especially in the early stages. On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic has also triggered the resurgence of social solidarity both at the micro as well as macro levels. Many social organisations as well as groups and even individuals have been involved in helping others financially, and in doing so are attempting to combat the virus and to overcome its negative impacts.

The covid-19 pandemic phenomenon demonstrates that the foundations of the present socioeconomic system in the societies of the world is face-to-face and direct social interactions. Thus, when this foundation is deconstructed, the established life and social order of the society will also change. Referring to Marx's "two layers" model of society (Singer, 1989; Wallace and Wolf, 2006) these empirical facts show that in this "society 5.0", it can be said that the face-to-face of direct social interactions is the "social base of society".

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