



## Production of Fear: The Visual Analysis of Local Lockdown Warning Signs

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### [ *Abstract* ]

During the Covid-19 pandemic's first term of April–June 2020, the general public throughout Indonesia became familiar with the slang term “local lockdown.” This term emerged in response to disorderly implementation of the half-hearted government policy called Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar (PSBB). In villages around the country, people started to build portals to restrict “strangers” or “outsiders” from entering their village areas. These portals were also meant to publicly signal the villagers’ fear of the spread of the virus. This paper will discuss two things: first, how fear was produced, using frameworks drawn from Giorgio Agamben’s notable works *State of Exception* and *Homo Sacer*, and how governance reproduces it; and second, how people come to accept the state of emergency and then publicly express their acceptance of the situation. Critical discourse analysis is applied to read government policy and its reception. The research took place at Rempoah, Kedungmalang, and Pabuwaran villages in Banyumas, the southern regency of Central Java, Indonesia.

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The villagers' responses to the government's policy are visually represented through written warning signs.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, governance policy, lockdown, Banyumas, visual expression.

## I . Introduction

In response to the spread of Covid-19 and its categorization as a global pandemic, the Indonesian Government enacted on March 31, 2020, Law No. 2/2020 on the stipulation of Government Regulations in Lieu of Law No. 1/2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability for Handling the Corona Virus Pandemic Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and/or in the Context of Facing Dangerous Threats. The government has characterized this law as a concrete effort to guarantee the implementation of citizens' rights under any circumstances through implementation of a political-law package.

In the Academic Manuscript of the Law, there are two reasons for the promulgation of such an effort, each operating at different levels of analysis. The first is that implementing political-economic policies through political-law packages has become very prominent, since government, as the ruling institution, is obliged to guarantee the availability of an economic safety net through its political policies to ensure the rights of citizens under any circumstances. The second reason is that based on the Constitutional Court Verdict No. 138/PUU-VII I 2009, the conditions have met the parameters of "compelling urgency" in the context of enacting Government Regulations in Lieu of Law, including the following:

- a. There is an urgent need to resolve legal problems quickly;
- b. The required law does not yet exist, resulting in a legal vacuum; and
- c. This problem cannot be resolved by passing a law through a normal procedure, as this would take a long time, and the situation requires immediate action.

In the context of “compelling urgency,” in accordance with the provisions of Article 22 Paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, the President has the authority to stipulate a Government Regulation in Lieu of a Law.

Law No. 2/2020 provides an explanation of the role of local government as the implementer. In this case, the local government has the right to receive disaster-related management funds from the central government and is obliged to re-plan local budgets to cope with emergencies caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a follow-up plan, the local government of Banyumas Regency enacted Regional Regulation Number 2/2020 concerning Disease Prevention and Management in Banyumas Regency on 21 April, 2020. The promulgation of these two legal products shows that in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Indonesia has applied the logic of a state of emergency. This logic can be interpreted in two ways. The first considers the ambiguity of the boundary between law and political will. This ambiguity manifested, for example, in the change of the name of the policy implemented in Indonesia to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic from PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions) to PPKM (Enforcement of Restrictions on Community Activities). The second interpretation relates to imbalance between public law and political facts (Sudibyo 2019: 114).

States of emergency are most often associated with conditions involving political violence, including civil war, rebellion, or resistance. The Covid-19 pandemic has also triggered a state of emergency, and while its causes are not fundamentally political, the resultant state of emergency has had a similar effect on the nation-state. This effect is called *anomie*. Julius Hatschek classes *anomie* as lawlessness under his topographical dichotomy (Sudibyo 2019: 111). He further divides lawlessness into two categories, each with a distinct cause. The first is the objective emergency theory, which frames any action taken outside the law, even in the context of an emergency, as illegal. The second is a subjective emergency theory, which frames emergency power as a pre-constitutional and constitutional right of the state to defend itself, including by means of violence.

To tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, the enactment of Law No. 2/2020 and the Regional Regulation of Banyumas Regency No. 2/2020, at the central and regional levels, eliminates the pre-existing legal order in response to an emergency, which, by definition, must be handled in immediate ways. The law also constructs a new social group as its object. This object functions as a type of *homo sacer* (in Roman law, both a “sacred” and “accursed” person, someone outside or beyond the law). In the contemporary Indonesian context, the *homo sacer* is anyone who has been exposed to Covid-19 pandemic.

A *homo sacer* is a human being and a legal object, one that is excluded from the political community and becomes a mere physical presence with little to no social agency (Sudibyo 2019: 45). In exercising power, modern democratic states theoretically include all people in the body politic through representative assemblies that agree on various regulations and limitations, which are considered reasonable and acceptable by those represented. However, democratic states do sometimes exercise their power arbitrarily or violently, especially during periods of emergency. Thus, even in the most modern democratic practices, both violence and arbitrariness are appropriated into a normal order (Agamben 1998: 109).

The existing literature on the *homo sacer*'s role during a state of emergency can be invoked to make sense of events in Banyumas. In response to the technical challenges of implementing Law Number 2/2020 and the Regional Regulation of Banyumas Regency Number 2/2020, all Banyumas residents have been called upon to implement “local lockdowns.” These lockdowns are intended to limit the mobility of people who are not from Banyumas. In implementing these restrictions, portals with visual warnings have been installed at each entrance to each village. These visual warnings reflect the villagers’ fear of being exposed as *homo sacer*.

This paper aims to examine the workings of a law implemented in a modern democracy that has appropriated an emergency in order to produce fear and construct a new type of *homo sacer*. Specifically, it aims to describe the reflection of people’s fear in Banyumas through a visual analysis of local lockdown posters

and banners in three villages of the Banyumas Regency: Rempoah, Kedungmalang, and Pabuwaran. Evidence of the deliberate production of fear can be found in both legal documents and visual warnings put up in public areas throughout the regency, which signal the potential presence of a *homo sacer*. Banyumas has been selected as the locus of the research because it is where the researchers live, yielding better access to primary data and enabling the researchers to draw upon personal observations while analyzing the emergence of a new *homo sacer*.

## II. Methods

In examining states of emergency, fear production, and *homo sacer*, this paper applies critical discourse analysis. First, this paper examines how the law has come to function, in this context, as a monolithic discourse on power, interpreted by only one party. In modern democracies, the law is typically conceptualized as a set of interacting powers. It is not centralized, but rather disparate, involving many different types of equipment, maneuvers, techniques, and mechanisms (Haryatmoko 2002: 12). This means that the law must be interpreted in two directions: by the subject or creator, the state; and by the object or target, the community. In a state of emergency, however, the law loses this disparate, decentralized, and dialectic aspect and becomes unilateral.

Second, in a state of emergency, social cognition cannot yield certainty in any form, and this absence of certainty can easily degenerate into widespread fear. In such a context, the law can no longer work as intended, as a “disciplinary order [that] is linked to a network, is not repressive...is productive, and is attached to the will to know” (Foucault 2008: 39). Third, the production and promulgation of fear establishes the conditions for three community responses to the designated *homo sacer*.

This paper examines two legal documents, Law No. 2/2020 and the Regional Regulation of Banyumas Regency No. 2/2020. The former applies nationally throughout Indonesia, whereas the latter applies only in the Banyumas Regency. Here, they are read both as

texts and as contexts and are related to the local lockdown warning signs found in the three villages. Each warning sign will also be analyzed as a symbol from a semiotic perspective. Through textual and contextual readings of legal documents, this analysis tracks the creation of fear during an emergency and the sociopolitical construction of *homo sacer*. Furthermore, the correlation of the Critical Discourse Analysis method and a semiotic reading reveals how the *homo sacers* themselves have reacted to the legal responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in Banyumas.

Data were collected by means of direct observation and documentation and then analyzed as follows. First, Law No. 2/2020 and the Regional Regulation of Banyumas Regency No. 2/2020 were examined as texts. Next, visual local lockdown warning signs were analyzed using semiotic theory. Finally, these warning signs were situated as the context of the legal texts, and the readings of text and context are synthesized.

### **III. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. The Genesis of Fear**

Indonesia has a democratic government, arguably the most sensible system by which to accommodate the ideals of the state, "To form an Indonesian State Government that protects the entire Indonesian nation and all Indonesian blood and to promote public welfare, educate the nation's life, and participate in implementing world order based on independence, eternal peace and social justice," as expressed in the philosophical foundation of the state, Pancasila, and the 1945 Constitution (Preamble to the 1945 Constitution, paragraph 4).

The ideal of the state is explicated in several articles of the 1945 Constitution, including Chapter XIV of the National Economy and Social Welfare Article 33 and Article 34, which are derivatives of Chapter III of State Government Article 4. Both articles in the 1945 Constitution emphasize that state power, in the form of government power, is made manifest by the President, and that the

exercise of state power must achieve the goal of national welfare.

Implementing national welfare starts with giving the government an active role in the socio-economic life of its people and explicitly tasking it with realizing general welfare (known as *bestuurszorg*), as well as continuing to maintain security and order (Ridwan 2013: 15). A more recently developed concept relating to the implementation of national welfare is *Freies Ermessen* (discretion to decide, act, interpret). This involves granting authority to the implementers of state administration to act on their own initiative. This constitutes a freedom that, in principle, allows the state administration to prioritize the effectiveness of some objectives over others based on changing real-world conditions, rather than rigidly adhering to static legal provisions. In other words, *Freies Ermessen* refers to the right of every government official to make decisions, take actions, and determine strategic policies to overcome urgent concrete problems that require immediate responses. Government policies implemented under the aegis of *Freies Ermessen* are protected by law, so that every government official who acts on behalf of the public interest will have legal protection (Juliani 2020: 331).

Both *bestuurszorg* and *Freies Ermessen* are understood as methods of law enforcement in normal circumstances, as opposed to *staatsnoodrecht*, or emergency constitutional law. In simple terms, *staatsnoodrecht* refers to state regulations in an emergency (Asshiddiqie 2012: 7). An emergency is defined as an extraordinary situation that requires an extraordinary law. In such situations, which could threaten public order, states can act in unusual ways outside normal legal circumstances (Hasibuan and Ashari 2020: 590). Furthermore, laws implemented during emergencies are equivalent to martial law, even when the source of the emergency is not a military conflict. To qualify as an emergency measure, a law must meet four criteria: it must be promulgated by the authority of the president, as the holder of executive power; regulations enacted during the period of emergency law must undergo judicial review; military courts must be used instead of or in addition to civilian courts; and restrictions must be placed on each individual within the society, or within the territory controlled by the state

(Asshiddiqie 2007: 124).

Despite using the phrase “urgent concrete problems that require immediate treatment,” in reality, these concepts often prove maladaptive when applied to real emergencies. The debate over why this happens is fundamentally epistemological and hinges on deeper competing claims about the nature and definition of “emergency,” the role of the law during periods of emergency, and the need, real or perceived, for a sovereignty that transcends all other authorities and can mobilize a coordinated, effective emergency response (Agamben 1999: 49).

Some legal theories recognize a distinction between normal laws, to be applied in normal circumstances, and extraordinary powers, to be exercised only in extraordinary circumstances. Others do not. The former conceptualize emergencies as abnormal by definition and demand that extraordinary laws be applied. The latter conceptualize emergencies as normal occurrences, insofar as emergencies of one sort or another are bound to occur sooner or later, and demand that the laws that obtain during emergencies be reconcilable with the laws that obtain during normal circumstances (Mcquillan 2010: 105). The debate over sovereignty is more relevant to the former. Sovereignty is typically conceptualized as a single, monolithic legal authority that may achieve its goals by any means, even if this requires applying laws that have not been developed through normal, juridical order, based on legal regulations, or derived from consensus (Agamben 2007: 64).

The result of real-world competition between these two types of legal theories—and, in other words, between legal and extralegal sovereignty—is that the law loses its certainty. This demands further attention, for one of the three main characteristics of the law, in addition to usefulness and justice, is certainty. Legal certainty is a form of protection for justice-seekers against arbitrary actions (Julyano and Sulistyawan 2019: 14). Legal uncertainty, by contrast, is ambiguous and illogical and may eventually lead to violence (Wadi 2020: 618). It may also create opportunities for the state to seize exceptional powers in the event of an emergency, thereby redefining its relation to the populace. In other words, during states of



emergency, the law can take on an enigmatic quality, and can even become an empty vessel waiting to be filled by some form of sovereignty (Sudibyo 2019: 128). During such times, the law's capacity to inhibit violence can be degraded, an effect that only becomes more acute the longer the emergency lasts and the more normalized it becomes (Agamben 1998, 47).

Under such conditions, the law may come to be recognized as little more than an elaborate system of codified languages that extends the power of existing authorities. These codified languages lack the potential to create and express meaning and instead function as modes of coercion in service of those who already hold power. Thus, the law becomes enigmatic and empty, leaving those who obey it in a state of "being in force without significance" (Murray and Whyte 2011: 121).

In *A Che Punto Siamo? L'epidemia Come Politica* (2020) Agamben specifically criticized the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, arguing that the government's handling of the pandemic is based on enigmatic laws. He presents his criticism in two parts. The first characterizes the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic as institutionalizing uncertainty. He identifies a shift in biopolitics to bare life. In other words, the government's response to the Covid-19 pandemic strips human beings of their freedoms and subjects them to constant threats from agents of power. The second part states that during the Covid-19 pandemic, governments around the world have promoted permanent states of exception. This leaves scientific institutions vulnerable to becoming mouthpieces for monarchs and will likely strip citizens of the capacity to contest the authority of empty, enigmatic laws in legitimate, protected ways (Duque Silva and Del Prado Higuera 2021: 503-6).

Agamben's criticisms of government responses to Covid-19 pandemic have drawn attention to his previously developed thoughts on the State of Exception and *Homo Sacer*. The Covid-19 pandemic has made people aware that normalizing haphazard responses to crisis and the application of enigmatic laws threaten to erode individual sovereignty. Worse, the longer such conditions are allowed to persist, the more likely they are to become a permanent

state of exception.

### **3.2. Production of Fear**

The Covid-19 pandemic is an example of a contemporary case that forces the law to work in the realm of an emergency. In Indonesia, the pandemic has been categorized as an extraordinary event, distinct from a natural disaster. To cope with this extraordinary incident, the Indonesian government has enacted Law No. 2/2020.

The promulgation of this law is premised on the government's obligation to maintain an economic safety net and guarantee the protection of citizens' rights under any circumstances. Moreover, according to the Decision of the Constitutional Court Number 138 / PUU-VII I 2009, the conditions have met the parameter of "compelling urgency" in the framework of enacting a Government Regulation in Lieu of a Law due to an urgent need and preventing the occurrence of a legal vacuum.

In practice, however, this law is problematic for three reasons. First, the Act is constitutionally flawed. The establishment of the law should be consistent with Article 20 of the 1945 Constitution, which defines the *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* and *Dewan Perwakilan Daerah* (the Parliament) as the Legislature, and the President as the Executive. According to the article, all laws must be developed from drafts submitted by each chamber of power, even during emergencies (Dalimunthe 2017: 76).

Article 7 Paragraph (1) of Law No. 12/2011 on the Establishment of Legislation places Laws and Government Regulation in Lieu of Laws in the same order. However, this does not mean that Government Regulations in Lieu of Law can be upgraded to Law. Based on the Decision of the Constitutional Court No. 92/2012, even in circumstances considered an emergency, the promulgation of a law that is not included in the National Legislation Program must go through the submission of a Draft; not by raising the status of a Government Regulation in Lieu of Laws to that of a Law. The Decision of the Constitutional Court Number 138/PUU-VII I 2009, which is the basis for the promulgation of Law No. 2/2020, is not in line with the Decision of the Constitutional

Court No. 92/2012.

Second, the law triggers a lack of synchronization between the central government and regional governments. Under normal circumstances, the potential for inconsistency in the implementation of laws and policies by the central and regional governments is quite large. In a unitary state, however, the central government strives to control and coordinate all public affairs (Wijayanti 2016: 194), and the Covid-19 pandemic only increases the potential for such synchronization.

In Indonesia, synchronization has manifested itself as the territorial restriction policy known as a lockdown. Referring to Law No. 2/2020 and Government Regulation No. 21/2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Covid-19, the central government has never explicitly or implicitly implemented a lockdown policy to close regional access completely. The law mandates the temporary closure of schools and workplaces. It also places restrictions on religious activities. Only those carried out at home and attended by a limited number of family members are allowed; all places of worship must be closed to the public; and exceptions are made based on laws, regulations, and *fatwas*, or the views of official religious institutions, recognized by the government. Restrictions are also placed on activities in public places or public facilities. The most common restrictions involve limiting the number of people allowed in a space at a given time and mandating social distancing. Restrictions have been placed on social and cultural activities, too, as well as public transportation, where the number of passengers in each vehicle can be capped and physical distance must be maintained between passengers. However, none of these restrictions apply to activities undertaken with the purpose of upholding state sovereignty, maintaining territorial integrity, protecting the nation from the threat of disturbance, and maintaining security and public order (Kartono 2020: 690).

Before the Large-Scale Social Restrictions could be fully implemented, the government changed course by introducing a new policy, namely PPKM (*Pemberlakuan Pembatasan Kegiatan Masyarakat*, or Public Activity Restriction) through Minister of Home

Affairs Regulation Number 15 of 2021 (Mahadewi 2021: 1881). PPKM has been billed as a revision that will improve Large-Scale Social Restrictions. This revision arises from the claim that Large-Scale Social Restrictions are insufficiently effective in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic because they use a bottom-up logic, where local governments can submit status determinations to the Ministry of Health. Meanwhile, PPKM is considered an improvement because it relies on a top-down method, wherein the central government unilaterally determines when, where, and to what degree to apply restrictions based on differential levels of community spread. The policy change does not, in fact, improve the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. On the contrary, it only creates more confusion due to changing terminology.

This differs markedly from the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in several other countries in Asia. For example, South Korea has implemented several policies drafted by experts and based on research, including quarantine, isolation, social distancing, contact tracing (Anderson, et.al, 2020: 932), and lockdown (Wilder-Smith, et.al, 2020: 8). The South Korean government acted in response to calls from experts to immediately implement massive tests, searches, and isolation measures (Shim, et.al, 2020: 55).

In Singapore, massive testing helped control the Covid-19 outbreak by enabling contact tracing and, ultimately, proactive containment. Without such large-scale testing, tracing can be difficult, making the Covid-19 pandemic more difficult to control (Lee, et.al, 2020, 8). The Taiwanese government, meanwhile, drew upon lessons learned during the SARS outbreak in 2003 and underscored the importance of mass testing. These methods have been replicated to help control the Covid-19 pandemic in Taiwan (Wang, et.al, 2020: 1342).

It is worth noting that the policy in Law No. 2/2020 has an explicitly economic motive, whereas other laws that are more appropriate for dealing with pandemics, such as Law No. 6/2018 concerning Health Quarantine, have been neglected. In fact, this law clearly defines the responsibilities of the central and local governments, the rights and obligations of citizens, appropriate

methods for implementing and documenting quarantines, appropriate methods for conducting investigations, criminal provisions, and additional resources, information, guidance, and supervision (Chadijah 2020: 864).

Although not implemented simultaneously in all regions, PSBB has had a broad economic impact across Indonesia. The policy was first implemented in DKI Jakarta in April 2020 and then in several areas with high numbers of Covid-19 cases, such as West Java, Central Java, East Java, Bali, and North Sumatra. The effect of this policy has been an increase in job losses, increased cuts in workers' wages, and the collapse of almost all medium, small, and micro-enterprises in Indonesia. According to the Minister of Manpower, the policies implemented to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in 1.7 million new cases of unemployment (Hartini and Setiawan 2021: 1429).

To solve the above problems and protect poor families from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government has focused on developing economic policies and delivering social assistance packages. These have included assistance from both the central government and local governments (Herdiana 2020: 90). However, a great deal of distance exists between the central government and local communities, making it difficult to deliver assistance to the people who need it most. Inconsistencies among the regulatory systems used to aid have also made it impossible to track who has received assistance and who has not (Mufida 2020: 161). Meanwhile, to make matters worse, these policies have not only worsened economic inequality, but have also had the secondary effect of relegating people infected with Covid-19 to the status of *homo sacer*.

Epistemologically, *homo sacer* refers to an imbalance in the dialectic relationship between the aspect of an individual that is free and sovereign, and the aspect of the individual that belongs to an institution. The former precedes the latter and is referred to as *zoe*. The latter emerges when the individual interacts with an institution and is known as *bios*. Both will react when dealing with sovereign power, but whereas *bios* will be recognized as a positive attribute in relation to institutional power, catalyzing the inclusion of the

individual, *zoe* will remain in a state of exclusion, as is cannot be bound by institutions. (Prozorov 2021: 11). In the context of modern life, the term *homo sacer* can refer to anyone who cannot meet the demands of their ambient institutions, and whose *zoe* aspect thus eclipses their *bios* aspect. This can include people who have mental or psychiatric illnesses, refugees, those who are comatose, and those who are in a condition between *zoe* (bare life) and *bios* (qualified life). In other words, the *homo sacer* lacks the capacity to function as a social human being in accordance with the demands of their social groups (Indrajaya 2011: 338).

When people who share a certain attribute or circumstance are systematically excluded from social activities and institutions, new categories of *homo sacer* can emerge. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the emergent categories of *homo sacer* include not only those infected with the virus, but also those who have suffered negative economic impacts, have not been able to access social assistance, and can no longer effectively participate in public life or social institutions. In some cases, human or systemic errors in data collection result in the complete erasure of the individual. In such instances, the analysis is limited, for those who are not represented in the data cannot be accurately classed either as *bios* or as *zoe*.

### **3.3. Reflection to Fear**

When an emergency and a desynchronization at the central level lead to the construction of a new *homo sacer*, the same phenomenon can also be observed at the regional level, as proven by what has happened in Banyumas Regency. The local government responded to the Covid-19 Pandemic by drawing on Law Number 2/2020 while drafting laws and regulations at the regional level. This resulted in the Banyumas regional government promulgating the Banyumas Regional Government Regulation Number 2/2020.

Textually, the Regional Regulation does not directly make Law No. 2/2020 a preamble. Its main references are Law Number 6/2018 concerning Health Quarantine and Presidential Regulation Number 17 2018 concerning Disaster Management in Certain Circumstances. This can be seen in Article 8 paragraph (2), which states that there

are 24 infectious diseases. Twenty-three previously known direct infectious diseases are listed in the Article, and the Regional Regulation adds Covid-19.

Since Banyumas Regency Regional Regulation No. 2/ 2020 directly refers to Law No. 6/2018 concerning Health Quarantine, as opposed to Law No. 2/2020, there have been discrepancies in its implementation. These discrepancies have manifested most notably in the implementation of the restrictions outlined in Law No. 6/2018 concerning Health Quarantine. Article 1 paragraph (6) defines “quarantine” as follows:

[T]he limitation of activities and/or separation of a person who is exposed to an infectious disease as stipulated in the laws and regulations even though he has not shown any symptoms or is in the incubation period, and/or separation of containers, means of transportation, or any items that are suspected to be contaminated from people and/or goods that contain disease-causing or other sources of contamination to prevent the possibility of spreading to people and/or goods around them.

Furthermore, in Article 1 point (10), it is stated that the area of quarantine is “the restriction of the population in an area including the entrance area and its contents that are suspected of being infected with disease and/or contaminated in such a way as to prevent the possibility of spreading disease or contamination.” Meanwhile, article 1-point (11) states that Large-Scale Social Restrictions are “restrictions on certain activities of residents in an area suspected of being infected with a disease and/or contamination in such a way as to prevent the possibility of spreading disease or contamination.”

These three meanings ultimately relegated the people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic to the status of *homo sacer*. The lockdowns implemented in response to Covid-19 involve the closure of access not only from outside the country, but also from one municipality to the next (Zahrotunimmah et. Al. 2020: 896). This interpretation does not lack precedent. Several regions of Indonesia preceded Banyumas Regency in imposing lockdowns in response to Covid-19 pandemic. DKI Jakarta, the capital city, has maintained a

lockdown policy since the promulgation of the Governor's Call Number 5/2020 on the Temporary Elimination of Worship and Religious Activities in Houses of Worship in Order to Prevent the Spread of the Corona virus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak (Yunus and Rezki 2020: 231). Similar actions have also been taken in other areas, such as Tegal, Aceh, and Papua (Zahrotunimmah, et al. 2020: 897).

In addition to these policies which have been articulated in the rather confusing terminology of the PSBB and PPKM, there is also the *Jogo Tonggo* policy. This policy was first introduced by the Governor of Central Java, Ganjar Pranowo, as an effort to accelerate the response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the Central Java region. In its implementation, the policy relies on two elements: people and policy. The human element in the policy consists of 10 (ten) parties: Youth Organizations, *Dasa Wisma* ("Ten Households"), *Posyandu* (Integrated Service Post), PKH Facilitators (Family Hope Program), Agricultural PPL ("Young People Care about the Environment"), Village Facilitators, other organizations, citizens, village midwives, and *Linmas* (Civilian Neighborhood Guards). Their working principles are as follows: humanity, non-permanent work, and in the event of an emergency, mutual cooperation, transparency, and involvement of all parties (Sulistiani and Kaslam 2020: 38).

The *Jogo Tonggo* policy covers four areas: health, economy, social security, and entertainment. Health and economic policy are the most important, as the Covid-19 pandemic is an emergency that directly affects both areas. Regarding health, the *Jogo Tonggo* policy includes the following:

- a. Recording everyone who goes in and out of the village.
- b. Preventing the spread and transmission of Covid-19 by bringing people identified as PDP (patient under monitoring) to a referral hospital.
- c. Ensuring and updating the data of anyone with OTG (asymptomatic people), ODP (people under supervision) and PDP (patient under monitoring) status.
- d. Striving for 14-day self-quarantine for ODP (people under supervision and OTG (asymptomatic people).
- e. Ensuring strategic locations are available for hand-washing, regular



spraying of disinfectants, orderly residents leaving the house wearing masks, and maintaining a distance of 1.5-2 meters between residents.

- f. Providing health services: checking body temperature, checking Covid-19 symptoms, checking hand-washing facilities.
- g. Encouraging clean and healthy living practices, balanced eating and drinking, exercise, regular bathing, adequate rest, and a clean environment.
- h. Coordinating with village health officers for further checks in case of an emergency.

The economic policy includes:

- a. Listing the basic needs of the community.
- b. Registering residents who are unable to afford their basic needs.
- c. Making as much effort as possible to ensure that residents are assisted.
- d. Ensuring assistance is on target.
- e. Ensuring that farming, gardening, and trading activities continue to be run by following health protocols.
- f. Serving the daily food needs of residents who are self-quarantining.
- g. Encouraging the construction of food barns (Sulistiani and Kaslam 2020: 38).

In Banyumas, the two policies were enacted differently. The health policy was implemented with the establishment of Covid-19 Task Forces in each neighborhood unit (RT) as the lowest level in the Banyumas community. Meanwhile, in the economic field, no new agencies or institutions were formed because assistance packages had been provided by the central government in the form of Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) and the regions were only the implementers.

The *Jogo Tonggo* policy faced many problems in its implementation because no clear distinction was drawn between the total lockdown, PSBB, and PPKM. This is evidenced in the implementation of curfews, school holidays, restrictions on working hours, and the closure of traditional markets. It created confusion in the community, and throughout Banyumas, people began to feel that they were living under local lockdowns. Restrictions were

implemented everywhere, even in the smallest neighborhoods (*Rukun Tetangga*), which were further subdivided by the installation of portals and road-dividers. In addition to physically blocking access, these measures also materially reflected the residents' fear of Covid-19, which has been intensified by the establishment of an emergency and the inconsistencies in central and regional regulations.

For the purposes of this study, examples of visual rhetoric reflecting the residents' fears have been drawn from three regions. The first example is a visual warning in Kedungmalang, located in the administrative area of the Sumbang District. Based on data from the *Peduli Lindungi* (tracing, tracking, and fencing) app, between April and June 2020, this region never showed a trend of entering the red zone, meaning it was not considered an area of high risk. However, this does not mean that there were no signs of local lockdown. In practice, there was a visual warning (see figure 1).



<Figure 1> local lockdown warning in Kedungmalang (Source: Personal Documentation)

The banner depicted in the Figure announces that, in addition to people who do not have masks, debt collectors and creditors are also prohibited from entering the area (*Debt Collector and Tukang Kredit atau sejenisnya dilarang masuk*). Neither the debt collector nor the warning pertain to the spread of Covid-19 when viewed from an independent economic and health perspective. However, based on an interview conducted with Wanto (28) and Iwan (19), the residents who were on guard at the portal, the two are closely related. They argued that for the residents of district 2 Kedungmalang Village who mostly worked as daily freelance workers, Covid-19 drastically reduced their economic livelihoods. On the other hand, they have been accustomed to borrowing capital using the daily instalment method. So, when their income decreased due to Covid-19, the increased presence of debt collectors or collection agencies, which often came when collection problems arose (Rohman and Sesung 2017: 305), would raise the risk of Covid-19 transmission (interview conducted on April 18, 2020).

Rokhimah (56) and her spouse Rujito (59) were residents of Dusun 2 Kedungmalang who were directly affected by the inconsistency and lack of clarity in the implementation of the PSBB policy in Banyumas. The closure of the Kedungmalang market from 30 April 2020 to 1 June 2020 made it impossible for them to sell meatballs during that time. Consequently, they were forced to use the money they had saved from 27 years of selling. They also felt that the Direct Cash Assistance (BLT) they received from the Ministry of Social Welfare did not help much because they had only received Rp. 200,000 per month since June 2020 (interview conducted on June 5, 2021).

The second example is a visual warning in Pabuwaran Village, located in the administrative area of North Purwokerto District. Based on data taken from the *Peduli Lindungi* application, this area was categorized as a green zone (an area with no Covid-19 affected residents) in April 2020. However, it changed into a red zone in May–June 2020 when several residents in the southern area (nearest to Grendeng neighborhood) were infected by the virus.



<Figure 2> Local lockdown warning in Pabuwaran village, which is directly adjacent to the eastern area of Kedungmalang Village (Source: personal documentation)

Figure 2 depicts the entrance to a residential area completely sealed off by a portal. This contrasts with several other regions, where portals could be opened or closed depending on necessity. Nor did the warnings specifically convey fear. What was written/displayed on the warnings is the implementation of a meeting of the *Pemuda Pancasila* branch in Kedungmalang Village, the neighboring district of Pabuwaran Village (*Musyawaharah Ranting Pemuda Pancasila Desa Kedungmalang Kecamatan Sumang Rabu 1 Desember 2019*).

*Pemuda Pancasila* is a social organization with its regional management spread throughout Indonesia. This organization often assists the unemployed “street people” in gaining access to economic niches. This organization is the official patron of the *Pemuda Pancasila* (Singarimbun et al. 2019: 1). Because of their status, they often feel entitled to make decisions and take actions with the goal of providing local residents access to economic niches. In Pabuwaran Village, *Pemuda Pancasila* essentially appointed themselves to serve as representatives of local residents.

However, they were unable to provide effective support to local residents due to issues with data collection and indexing.

Sugeng (47), the head of the *Rukun Tetangga/RT* (neighborhood unit) 04, *Rukun Warga/RW* (community unit) 06 of Pabuwaran, reported that of about 87 heads of families (KK), 59 heads should have been included in the category of beneficiaries. However some recipients received multiple aid packages due to redundancies in the data maintained by multiple pre-pandemic aid programs such as the Family Hope Program (PKH), as well as post-pandemic assistance programs from the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Villages, whose data were mixed up and confusing. Meanwhile, other recipients who qualified for aid likely received none. As the head of the neighborhood unit, Sugeng could not resolve these problems. He only conveyed the data he received and had no authority to make corrections, even if he was aware of discrepancies (Interview conducted on 7 June, 2021).

The third example is a visual warning in Rempoah Village, in the administrative area of Baturraden District. Based on data taken from the *Peduli Lindungi* application, between April and June 2020, this area was categorized as a red zone.



<Figure 3> Local lockdown warning in Rempoah (Source: Personal Documentation)

As seen in figure 3, at one of the entry points to Rempoah Village, there is a portal and a warning. The poster also displays a photo of the village head. It can be concluded that the

implementation of the local lockdown in the village has received legitimacy from the regional leader. Edi (48), an administrative officer at the Rempoah Village office, stated that the policy to implement a local lockdown was a discretionary action taken by the Rempoah Village government as a means of implementing the PSBB. He stated that the local lockdown was necessary because the Banyumas Regency government had never explicated how the implementation of the PSBB would be implemented locally. This policy was implemented to ensure the safety of the people from Covid-19 (interview conducted on June 7, 2021).

By analyzing these three examples of visual rhetoric, it can be deduced that the *homo sacer*, a human who has been directly exposed to Covid-19, is dealing with three distinct but overlapping issues: power discourse, social cognition, and community reception (van Dijk 2008: 16). The first derives from the legal regulations stipulated in Law No. 2/2020 on The Stipulation of Government Regulations in Lieu of Law Number 1/2020 and Banyumas Regional Government Regulation Number 2/2020. Both regulations are examples of power exercised in an emergency, ostensibly to guarantee the safety of people affected by Covid-19, but which instead produced confusion due to inconsistencies between statutory regulations that come from the state and laws promulgated by the regions.

The second is social cognition. Because of the confusion, clear, accurate, and actionable knowledge is not being delivered to the community that is the object of the discourse. Ideally, discourse should encourage the creation of social cognition. The two documents promulgated by the central and local governments should provide knowledge to the public at the local level to deal with the impact of Covid-19 in a balanced manner on the economic health impacts. However, these documents have failed to produce coherent social cognition.

The third is community reception. In the absence of coherent and well-informed social cognition, people at the local level, including those who have been designated *homo sacer*, must resort to conducting their own critical discourses on the legal regulations,

which are not synchronized and do not provide them with knowledge of how to deal with Covid-19. Failure to comply with these three points confirms that legal regulations, whether promulgated in an emergency or in a normal state, have the character of making society as their object in a state of “being in force without significance” (Murray and Whyte 2011: 121).

Furthermore, the three visual warnings above indicate critical discourse patterns carried out by the community. Each is different. The first, carried out by residents of Kedungmalang, is a communal critical discourse. It does not involve any official institutions, only community members. The next category, as demonstrated by the residents of Pabuwaran, is representative critical discourse. It is not carried out directly by the community, but rather through representatives, in this case, *Pemuda Pancasila*. The third category from Rempoah is institutional critical discourse, presented by communal residents and legitimized officially by the village government.

These visual warning signs can also be interpreted through symbol analysis, or semiotics. Culturally, symbols are close to connotations (Barthes 2007: 26). When examined in a Barthesian way, the symbols in the three villages thus connote the message that the *homo sacers* who live there wish to convey. The signage posted in Kedungmalang indicates that the people who live there have been economically hit directly by the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the signage in Pabuwaran indicates that the people who live there may not care very much about the Covid-19 pandemic per se, but trust a local authority to make decisions on their behalf. The organization has closed the roads without conveying any explicit message regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, suggesting that they do not feel obligated to explain their reasoning to the people whom they represent. Finally, the sign in Rempoah symbolizes an understanding between the community affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the village government.

The symbol analysis complements the discourse analysis by further elucidating the role of warning signs in these three villages in relation to the central and regional governments’ handling of the

Covid-19 pandemic. This method, conveyed through warning signs, must be understood as the maximum effort of a group of *homo sacers* in overcoming the state of exception and its consequences, because only such things can be done. It is also impossible to expect a group of *homo sacers* in Banyumas to carry out, for example, a Judicial Review to the Constitutional Court on the legal regulations governing the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

From the above discussion, two things can be concluded. First, Law Number 2 /2020 and Banyumas Regional Government Regulation Number 2/2020, promulgated in an emergency, failed in providing protection to the community affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, the disorderly promulgation of the two legal regulations, both administratively and substantively, support the creation of a state of exception through the “normalization” of an emergency. Instead of providing protection from the crisis at hand, these regulations exposed have merely succeeded in constructing a new *homo sacer*.

Second, due to these failures, the *homo sacer* of Kedungmalang, Pabuwaran and Rempoah Villages have been exposed to various threats and stressors. This is the sociological result of two legal regulations for handling the Covid-19 pandemic. As a group directly affected, the poor in Kedungmalang, Pabuwaran, and Rempoah carried out a critical discourse by implementing local lockdowns and expressing fear of emergencies through visual warning signs posted on local portals. Even though efforts have been made to deal with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic through economic assistance this has not had much effect and has actually led to more inclusion and exclusion of people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.



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