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# The Role and Contribution of Political Parties in Determining Policies for Handling COVID-19 in Indonesia

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated every aspect of human life, starting from the economy, education, politics, social, culture, and society. The Indonesian government has carried out various strategies and efforts in dealing with this pandemic so that it does not have a more severe impact on the community. Various policies have been formulated and implemented by the government. However, so far, these policies have not been effective. This can be seen with the increasing number of COVID-19 sufferers; even Indonesia has once broken the record with the highest number of people affected and died in the world. Political parties that government partners in parliament are considered not to have made an optimal contribution to handling the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in analyzing and criticizing the policies taken by the government so far. Therefore, the author is interested in bringing up a research theme on COVID-19 Handling Policies in Indonesia from the perspective of Political Parties. This study uses a qualitative approach using descriptive analysis methods. Then the data collection technique using literature study. This study found that the government's policies so far have not been effective in suppressing the spread of COVID-19, as can be seen from the increasing number of sufferers. The policies that are taken tend to be reactive and independent without involving stakeholders such as political parties, which are government partners through their representatives sitting in parliament. Every policy that the government has taken, such as closing border gates at airports or ports, the PSBB policy tends to be taken alone without involving political parties. This study recommends that political parties take an active role with the government to formulate various pro-community policies and have a sense of crisis. These policies are more targeted and effective in suppressing the spread of COVID-19.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Political Parties, Policy, Lockdown, Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB).

## A. INTRODUCTION

When a disease or epidemic spreads rapidly across national borders, it is called a pandemic; it is a large-scale epidemic (Viner et al., 2020; Santoro, 2021). There have been many viral outbreaks in human history, including the Black Death, Spanish flu, Asian flu and Hong Kong flu; HIV/AIDS; smallpox; cholera; dengue fever; severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS); Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS); avian influenza (H7N9); the influenza (H1N1); Ebola; and Zika (Depoux et al., 2018; Lombardi et al., 2021). In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on economic activity, education, and even society will be felt in almost 160 countries (Rosen, 2020; Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020).

The COVID-19 virus was first discovered in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019. The coronavirus has been declared a worldwide health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) and will be a worry on January 31, 2020. Sohrabi et al., 2020; Hua and Shaw, 2020) It was designated a pandemic two months later, on March 11, 2020. A total of

90,833,894 people were infected with COVID-19 as of January 9, 2021, resulting in 1,942,974 deaths worldwide. Some experts believe the virus may never completely vanish, and it's unclear when the outbreak will be over (Wildan, 2021). <sup>46</sup>

The world's diverse countries have a challenge when it comes to combating the **Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19) Pandemic** has developed into a point of contention between countries. Throughout this pandemic, government transparency serves as a roadmap for attacking the human respiratory system at its core (Li & Mutchler, 2020; Weible et al., 2020). Government measures addressing COVID-19 are intended to safeguard civil society from external actors who, at any time, can detonate a time bomb and jeopardize public safety (Sabat et al., 2020; Anttiroiko, 2021). State policy aimed at ensuring appropriate health care is a nationwide approach for combating COVID-19. It's worth noting that not all countries adhere to the same policies. This is because each region within a country may have a different capability (Wang & Mao, 2021).

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country. The Indonesian government's response to the issue has been glacial, and the country risks becoming the world's epicenter after Wuhan (Wardhana & Timur, 2020; Syarah, 2020). Unresponsive and erroneous policies inevitably jeopardize the lives of millions of Indonesians. This was seen in January and February 2020, when the virus paralyzed numerous cities in China, South Korea, and Italy, among other nations; several governments have implemented measures to restrict transnational human movement. On the other side, the Indonesian government has implemented additional measures aimed at luring tourists and companies from countries that have closed their borders to visitors (Agustino, 2020; Santika, 2020).

Additionally, the narrative produced by Indonesia's political elite has the subtleties of underestimating the coronavirus's seriousness and thinking that the virus can be eradicated via prayer. However, when the first instances of COVID-19 were found, the response shifted slightly. Since then, the government has borrowed measures from more prosperous countries but opposed severe lockdown laws on the grounds that they would destroy the economy and its population (Tuwu, 2020; Yunus & Rezki, 2020). As a result, the number of infected patients increased significantly, from one on March 2 to 1,500 by the end of March, and then to 6,575 on April 20, 2020. (Agustino, 2020).

COVID-19 has been the subject of a number of government efforts. This year's first semester <sup>24</sup> seen a flurry of health-related announcements from the federal government. President Decree No. 7 of 2020, creating the Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling, went into effect on March 13th, 2020 (Hasibuan & Ashari, 2020). It also issued a number of directives such as health rules and protocols/guidelines, massive handwashing campaigns, the use of masks, social distancing, and establishing Large-Scale Social Restrictions in various regions prohibiting Eid homecoming, as well as the establishment of laboratories for COVID-19 testing (Mujani & Irvani, 2020; Hasma et al., 2021). The second part of 2020 will be devoted to combating COVID-19. As a result, the government's focus on COVID management has expanded beyond the health sector to the economic sector. According to Presidential Regulation No. 82 of 2020, the COVID-19 Handling Committee and National Economic Recovery were created on July 20, 2020. To accelerate the processing of COVID-19, the committee expanded the task force's scope and duties. The COVID-19 Handling Task Force has a policy committee (STPC-19). Aside from that, there is the Task Force on National Economic Recovery and Transformation. According to presidential decree, COVID-19 task force was renamed STPC-19, although its goal and organization remained the same.

Political parties are critical components of a democracy. One of the roles of political parties is to serve as a political organization charged with educating cadres and the broader society about politics (Dalton et al., 2011; Norris, 2004). In a democratic political system, political parties are the people's preferred vehicle for achieving the nation's and state's objectives. Political parties must effectively carry out their tasks and responsibilities in order to build a democratic nation. Nonetheless, not all of these roles have been fulfilled by established political parties (Pasaribu, 2017). Given the critical role of political parties, their very existence and functioning constitute a barometer of a country's democratic development. Although he is not an executor of government, his presence will have an effect on how and in which direction government is implemented (Meima, 2015).

So far, the policies formulated and implemented by the government in handling COVID-19 have not been effective or as expected (Aldi, 2021). This is because this pandemic is a new and first time faced by Indonesia and even countries globally, so there are no standards and appropriate standards to deal with it. The government formulates policies only based on the results of reactions to current events. Here the government should not work alone in making policies related to this pandemic (Ilmar, 2020). Political parties, as extensions of people's aspirations through their members who sit in parliament, should be able to make a more optimal contribution in handling COVID-19 by proposing, criticizing, or synergizing with the government in making policies related to the government (Ramlah, 2020). The role of political parties is not only in the political process, but their role when natural disasters occur or problems in society such as the one that hit the world, the Covid-19 pandemic, is also needed. Through its members who sit in the legislative and executive institutions represent the people to fight for the people's interests together. On the other hand, political parties should be channels of political participation for citizens to influence government decision-making (Dari & Humau, 2020).

So far, candidates for legislative members before the election have been intensely assisting with party symbols, basic food assistance, and even t-shirts, scarves, headscarves, mukena, money, and many other aids. However, during the pandemic, it turned out that the actions of party symbols, according to initial observations from online media, were still minimal; we could only have certain political parties that also provided assistance and support for the handling of this pandemic. Even though the scale is central, the provinces and regions have not yet touched remote areas, such as the phenomenon ahead of the election for political parties.

Based on this, several questions arise as to why COVID-19 sufferers in Indonesia remain high and even continue to increase. Is this influenced by the policies made so far that are ineffective in reducing and suppressing the growth rate of COVID-19 sufferers? Or actually, the increase in the number of people with COVID-19 is a result of the government's slow response and weak coordination among stakeholders, including the role of political parties through their members who sit in parliament who are government partners. Therefore, in this study, the author wants to raise the theme of COVID-19 Handling Policies in Indonesia Viewed from the perspective of Political Parties.

## **B. METHOD**

A qualitative approach is used in conjunction with a descriptive analytical technique in the essay's analysis. This approach was chosen because it allows for a thorough, genuine, and fundamental understanding of the occurrences seen. In this case, descriptive analysis is performed since the collected data and information are focused on the genuine occurrence or problem. A qualitative research methodology is a methodological technique that is centered on social phenomena and human concerns. The researcher creates a complicated image, analyses

language, presents comprehensive responses from respondents, and performs experiments in natural settings in this study (Somantri, 2005).

Qualitative research is creative because it is conducted in natural settings. The researcher is the primary tool in qualitative research. As a result, researchers must possess a breadth of theory and understanding in order to formulate pertinent questions, assess data, and build a more understandable object under investigation. This research places a premium on meaning and is value-driven (Gunawan, 2013). The culmination of all of that effort to characterize a circumstance. An objective empirical examination of the phenomena or issue under investigation. However, the author encountered difficulties obtaining direct data sources through interviews because to the COVID-19 epidemic. As a result, the author did a literature search to gather information about the object under study. Library research is a method of gathering in-depth knowledge and data from a variety of sources, including books, notes, periodicals, other references, and relevant prior research findings, in order to acquire solutions and theoretical underpinnings for the problems being investigated.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION COVID-19 pandemic

The coronavirus shocked the world in December of this year (covid-19). Wuhan, China, was the starting point for the race (Hua & Shaw, 2020). Huanan's seafood wholesale market, which sells a huge quantity of live animals, had been blamed for spreading the virus at first. The disease spread quickly throughout China. Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) was treated for five patients between December 18 and December 29, 2019. (ARDS). As seen by the 44 reported cases between December 31, 2019 and January 3, 2020, this case expanded considerably (Sri, 2020).

WHO declared COVID-19 an international public health emergency on January 30 in response to the emergence of 2019-nCoV. According to (Wang et al., 2020), There are more and more cases of COVID-19 popping up around the globe. To far, 192 countries/regions have reported a total of 414,179 confirmed cases, with 18,440 fatalities (CFR 4.4%). According to the latest reports, some health care workers have been affected (Kemenkes RI, 2020).

There has never been an illness like Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) before. COVID-19 is caused by the virus Sars-CoV-2, also known as COVID-2. Zoonotic pathogens include the Coronavirus (transmitted between animals and humans). While this is going on, the source of the COVID-19 is still a mystery. Droplets of COVID-19 can be transmitted from a coughing/sneezing individual to another according to scientific evidence (droplets). COVID-19 is more likely to infect people who have close contact with COVID-19 patients, especially those who care for COVID-19 patients, according to researchers (Kemenkes RI, 2020). Fever, coughing, and shortness of breath are some of the symptoms of COVID-19 infection. The typical incubation period is 5 to 6 days, during which the patient will experience a fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Infection with COVID-19 can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, renal failure, and even death if left untreated (Tosepu et al., 2020).

Indonesia is a developing country and the world's fourth most populated country, and its economy is anticipated to suffer significantly over time. When the new coronavirus SARS-CoV2 struck China the hardest between December 2019 and February 2020. Indonesia imposed travel restrictions from Hubei province, the heart of the worldwide COVID19, on January 27, 2020, while also removing 238 Indonesians from Wuhan. President Joko Widodo stated on March 2, 2020, that he discovered two cases of COVID-19 illness in Indonesia. Patients diagnosed with

COVID-19 in Indonesia began with an incident <sup>16</sup> Jakarta during which the patient came into touch with a foreign national (WNA) from Japan who lives in Malaysia. The patient complained of a fever, cough, and shortness <sup>22</sup> of breath following the encounter (WHO, 2020).

As of March 12, 2020, COVID-19 has been classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). In Indonesia, the number of cases continues to grow. To far, a total of 31,186 cases have been confirmed, with 1851 fatalities as of June 2020 (PHEOC <sup>17</sup> Ministry of Health RI, 2020). DKI Jakarta Province had the most confirmed cases and deaths, with 7,623 confirmed cases and 523 (6.9%) deaths (PHEOC Ministry of Health RI, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the WHO released <sup>5</sup> six priority plans for the government to execute on March 26. These strategies include expanding, training, and deploying health care workers; implementing a system for suspected cases; increasing test production and improving health services; identifying facilities that can be converted into coronavirus health centers; and developing a plan <sup>4</sup> for quarantining cases of coronavirus disease (WHO, 2020).

Data from Indonesia's Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling shows that as of February 1, 2021, there were 1,078,314 positive confirmed cases, with a death toll of 29,998. On the basis of these two statistics, the COVID -19-related case fatality or death rate in Indonesia is about 2.8 percent (Covid-19 Task Force, 2021). The <sup>38</sup> case fatality rate is estimated as a percentage of all confirmed and reported positive cases of COVID-19 (Liang et al., 2020). (Liang et al., 2020).

Case fatality rates by age group are as follows: There are 0.79 percent of those aged 0 to 5 years, 0.46 percent of those aged 6 to 18 years, 0.54 percent of those aged 19 to 30 years, 1.21 percent of those ages 31 to 45 years, 4.02 percent of those aged 46 to 59 years, and 12.31 percent of those who are older than 60 years. There were only 0.8 percent of COVID-19 deaths that occurred in children under the age of five, 1.5 percent in children aged six to eighteen, 4.9 percent in children aged nine to thirty, 13 percent in children aged thirty to forty-five, 32.8 percent in children aged forty-five to sixty-five, and 46.9 percent in children aged sixty and older. There were 56.3% males and 43.7% females among COVID-19 patients who died (Spychalski et al., 2020).

Indonesia is now vaccinating its citizens against COVID-19 on a routine basis. Even if vaccination is no longer available, the best approach to avoid infection is to avoid variables that might result in infection, specifically:

- Physically isolate yourself, i.e. keep a minimum of two meters away from other people, and avoid leaving the house unless an emergency arises.
- Wear a mask when performing activities in public or busy areas, such as grocery shopping <sup>18</sup>.
- Wash hands often with soap and water or with a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol, especially after activities outside the house or in public areas.
- Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose until you have washed your hands.
- Improve endurance by maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
- Avoid contact with persons who have COVID-19, are suspected of having COVID-19, or are ill <sup>20</sup> with a fever, cough, or runny nose.
- When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and discard the tissue.
- Keep commonly touched <sup>50</sup> things and the surrounding area clean, including the home..

### **Policies for Handling the COVID-19 Pandemic**

By the year 2020, the globe had been shook by the COVID-19 virus epidemic, which spread swiftly around the planet. This motivates the government to take action and implement measures to combat the COVID-19 virus. The government's initial effort is focused on rigorous monitoring of entrance points into Indonesia from neighboring countries, including airports, ports, and land border crossing points. Additionally, the president directed that the Indonesian embassy in China provide special attention to Indonesian citizens isolated in Wuhan.

As a result of Covid-19's rising mass and extensive distribution in Indonesia, the government must implement regulations to combat it. The policy for dealing with Covid-19 in Indonesia, utilizing PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restrictions), was initiated from April 10, 2020 to April 23, 2020, beginning with several regions, such as DKI Province, and then expanded to provinces and regencies/other cities, such as Banten Province in Tangerang Regency, and Tangerang City—in West Java Province, beginning with Bogor Regency, B.

The PSBB policy itself relates to Health Quarantine Law No. 6 of 2018. To assist in its execution, the government issued two consequential rules, namely Government Regulation No. 21 of 2020 on Large-Scale Social Restriction and Presidential Decree on Health Emergencies. With the present laws in place, the president requested that regional heads refrain from making their own policies and instead communicate with the central government through the Task Force's Chair. The governor/mayor may submit the PSBB to the Minister of Health for consideration, or the Chair of the Task Force may submit it to the Minister of Health. Simultaneously, the public is urged to keep a safe distance in order to disrupt the virus's chain of transmission. Maintaining a safe distance between individuals (social distancing) and limiting all access to, from, and within an area are regarded efficient methods of controlling the spread of Covid-19.

Because of this, the PSBB program was created to stop Covid-19 transmissions from spreading throughout the United States. Covid-19, a regulation approved by the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia on guidelines for large-scale social restraint in the context of accelerating Corona Virus disease management, contains technical specifications and standards for PSBB. People in a region suspected of being infected with the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) are prohibited from doing specific activities in order to prevent the virus's spread. There are several conditions that must be met by each region in order to calculate the PSBB. A large number of cases and deaths were reported, and the disease quickly spread to other parts of the country. Epidemiological studies show a link between this incidence and similar ones in other regions or countries. If PSBB is installed at a certain location, what will happen? For example, schools and workplaces may be closed, religious activities restricted, and activities in public facilities restricted (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020). Some services, such as food, health, and money, are free from holidays and restrictions. There are also no limitations on the use of health services, shops, retailers, supermarkets, and health facilities. There is a 14-day incubation period for the Covid-19 virus, although it may be extended if evidence of viral transmission is found.

As a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, the government then implemented a PSBB strategy. To assist in its implementation, the government issued several derivative regulations, namely Government Regulation No. 21 of 2020 on Large-Scale Social Restriction in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) and then Presidential Decree No. 11 of 2020 on Determination of Public Health Emergency Corona Virus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) (Covid-19). The president requested that regional leaders refrain from making their own policies and instead work with the central government through the Chair of the Task

Force. The governor/mayor may submit the PSBB to the Minister of Health for consideration, or the Chair of the Task Force may submit it to the Minister of Health.

Covid-19 has an influence not just on the health industry, but also on a variety of other sectors, most notably economics. The disadvantages of Covid-19 are worsened by government policies that are unavoidably implemented (Hanoatubun, 2020). Because economic activities will be significantly impacted by the adoption of physical distance, social distancing, and eventually, the PSBB in some places, economic activities will be significantly impacted. The government must address the policy's consequences as an example of anticipatory governance as one of the available government types. To address the repercussions of the Covid-19 response strategy, the government implemented a series of initiatives, most notably in the economic sector:

- Regulation No. 23/Pmk.03/2020 of the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia on Tax Incentives for Taxpayers Affected by the Corona Virus Outbreak;
- Regulation No. 11/POJK.03/2020 of the Financial Services Authority of the Republic of Indonesia on National Economic Stimulus as a Countercyclical Policy for the Impact of Corona Virus Disease 2019; (Covid-19).

In addition to these steps through policymaking, the private sector must also assist the government, especially regarding the implementation of credit relaxation/credit restructuring for sectors affected by the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak as regulated in POJK Number 11/POJK.03/2020 about the economic stimulus as a countercyclical policy. In addition to these steps, the government has made efforts to minimize the economic impact by not implementing a regional quarantine. Some of the economic impacts are that many sectors, both trade, informal, and tourism, suffer losses. The cycle of money circulation is chaotic due to the large number of losses experienced by entrepreneurs. However, it is undeniable that some commodities are profitable, especially those that provide medical equipment or anything related to the eradication or prevention of Covid-19 (Yamali & Putri, 2020).

In addition, the government has also issued several policies as a form of assistance to the community as follows:

1. Easing electricity costs As a form of assistance to the community, the government is freeing electricity costs for PLN consumers with a power of 450 VA for the next three months, namely for April, May, and June costs. Meanwhile, users who subscribe to a subsidy of 900 kWh of power will receive a 50 percent discount or discount for the same period. This means paying only half for April, May, and June 2020.
2. Credit relief Several groups, such as online motorcycle taxi drivers, fishers, and taxi drivers, will certainly get a motor vehicle loan concession for one year starting April 1, 2020. Interest payments or installments are given leeway for one year. Not only that, but the government will also provide relief for small and medium sector entrepreneurs who make loans under Rp. 10 billion. They will be given a one-year postponement of installments and reduced interest.
3. Spend Rp. 405, 1 Trillion in budget The Central Government allocated Rp. 405.1 trillion from the 2020 State Budget to cover a variety of requirements during the Covid-19 epidemic (APBN). During the Covid-19 Pandemic, this strategy was established by a Government Regulation rather than a Law (Peru) on Economic Stability. The health sector's budget will be prioritized for worker protection, including the acquisition of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical equipment such as test kits, reagents, and ventilators. Additionally, the referral hospital will be upgraded to include an athlete's homestead, incentives for physicians, nurses, and hospital staff, compensation for

medical personnel fatalities, and the management of various health issues. At least Rp. 75 trillion will be spent on health care, Rp. 70.1 trillion on tax advantages and stimulus for small businesses, and Rp. 110 trillion on social protection. Others will be utilized to fund the country's economic recovery efforts and reserve funds.

### **The Role of Political Parties in Policies for Handling COVID-19 in Indonesia**

The Indonesian people have not forgotten about the frenetic democratic party in the 2019 Simultaneous Elections, when they are now confronted with difficult times that put their solidarity, humanitarianism, and even national unity to the test, as a result of the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak. Not just in Indonesia, but this pandemic has become a global issue of discussion. Since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was revealed in early March 2020, the government has proceeded to develop different measures aimed at controlling the virus's spread, including declaring COVID-19 a national emergency. Even more recently, the government implemented a strategy of Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) to halt the virus's spread.

However, the government's various efforts to cope with non-natural disasters are not free from the political drama, which is full tug-of-war between political actors. Since the initial announcement of COVID-19 cases in the world and the World Health Organization (WHO) establishing this virus as a global pandemic, various confusing information and policy blunders in handling COVID-19 in Indonesia have emerged. At the same time, the status as a global pandemic means that the transmission and threat of this virus have exceeded the boundaries between countries. The implication is that the vigilance of various countries and the international community is increasing. Panic and anxiety naturally characterize the international community, including in Indonesia. In this condition, a firm stance from the government and support from all elites and political actors becomes important as a solution that is awaited by the community.

Several government policies are contradictory and inconsistent, for example, related to differences in central and regional attitudes regarding the need for regional quarantine (lockdown). A clear example is when the central government stated that regional quarantine was not yet fully necessary. At the same time, some regions took the initiative to lock down and close access in and out of their regions. In addition, several clashes of attitudes between the central and regional governments that are often the highlight of media coverage have also not escaped the public's attention. The recommendation to wear masks only for those who are sick, put forward by the Minister of Health, has become another topic during this pandemic. Confusion and inconsistencies in genuine data on COVID-19 cases in Indonesia between those provided by the Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Case Handling and those issued by the BNPB further tainted the news regarding COVID-19 in Indonesia. The community is currently debating the policy and the president's remark on the prohibition on returning home, although returning home is permitted.

The ambiguity, ambiguous comments, and lack of clarity in the government's attitude outlined above can undoubtedly harm Indonesia's handling of COVID-19. For instance, when it comes to the accuracy of data on COVID-19 patients, this data misunderstanding makes it extremely difficult for epidemiologists to do more study on this virus. This situation has the potential to destabilize and undermine community cooperation in the battle to overcome this tragedy. Additionally, the administration's incoherent approach might erode public faith in the government.

Politics does discuss power, but at some point, the human side should take precedence above power and its qualities. This electoral ambition is a natural explanation for the political

elite's attractiveness, as they will constantly seek the finest political investment in order to preserve sympathy and win the hearts of their new constituent candidates. Additionally, this period is between the post-concurrent elections in 2019 and the elections scheduled for 2020. Apart from being a political investment, mistakes can arise as a result of coalition and non-coalition parties competing to demonstrate who is the greatest. Even though Indonesia does not have a legislative system in which coalition and anti-coalition views are prominent, this duality holds true under a presidential system. All of this is done to ensure that each side maintains its position.

During the sitting duck situation or being silent and cornered in Indonesia <sup>14</sup> due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the bias in the government's attitude above is certainly not expected. This non-natural disaster should not be a new political marketing stage for the political elite. This situation should allow the political elite to realize their political promises made during the campaign ahead of the election. In this case, the public is waiting for a firm stance from political parties who are the bridge between the community and the government to mediate and provide solutions to some of the blunders. It doesn't feel right if political parties become the parties that echo the noise in dealing with this epidemic, especially if it comes to only being the party that takes advantage of electoral investment from this epidemic.

It is true that, although it is a little late, several political parties have contributed to the handling of this epidemic. It can be seen from several social media accounts of politicians, official accounts of political parties, and several <sup>43</sup>ia reports that political parties have assisted in the procurement and distribution of logistics and personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers in the wider community. However, in connection with the emergence of some confusing attitudes and government data, parties should play a role that goes further than just distributing PPE with the attributes of party identity and the identity of certain politicians.

As is known, political parties in a democratic country have several functions. However, public attention is often only focused on party functions related to electoral mechanisms, such as political recruitment, political communication, and political socialization. Whereas political parties also have a function and an obligation to exercise control over the government and as a means of regulating conflict. At a time like this, parties are required to appear before the public as a party that bridges the interests of the community, conveys them to the government, and reduces differences in interests that occur in the government for the benefit of the community. This function needs to be actualized by the party to create a sense of calm and security for the Indonesian people, who are almost entirely affected by the COVID-19 non-natural disaster.

The function of political parties as parties that exercise control over the government needs to be urged to help remind and straighten government policies. In determining every political decision, of course, conflicts of interest and political power can occur. Errors or mistakes that are not in the interests of the community are also very likely to occur. Therefore, this is where political parties need to be present as representatives of the community who control the government's performance and limit abuse of authority that can harm the community. Supervision of implementing the resulting policies is also the responsibility of political parties that should not be forgotten.

<sup>23</sup> In addition, it is undeniable that the confusion and lack of clarity on policies for handling COVID-19 issued by the government can trigger chaos at the community level. This is where political parties are also required to regulate conflict so that some political factions at the elite level do not trickle down to the community, reducing solidity and solidarity between communities. It is still quite clear how the condition of society is increasingly divided due to

elite political interests from the 2014 Presidential Election until the 2019 Simultaneous Election. For humanitarian interests and the safety of the Indonesian people, various tug-of-war political interests at the elite level should be regulated by the party through its constituent network so that society is not divided during this precarious condition.

Therefore, in a disaster emergency like this, the presence of political parties is very necessary not only materially with the distribution of logistics carried out but also morally to create a conducive political situation. By carrying out the function of controlling the government and managing conflict, it is hoped that a sense of security and comfort in the community can be created. It is also hoped that blunders and noise related to the confusion of policies to handle COVID-19 can be suppressed. All these things need to be done immediately by the party as a bridge between the community and the government, considering that what is more important is the solidarity of all elements to help deal with COVID-19.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

<sup>12</sup> The first non-natural extraordinary event in the world made countries <sup>15</sup> formulate various policies to protect the public from the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia, which is the country with the fourth-largest population globally, can become the epicenter of this epidemic after China and India. So far, the author considers the response given by the Indonesian government to be very slow and tends to be wrong. While other countries close their borders outside, the Indonesian government opens their borders to tourists from outside. This unresponsive and wrong policy can certainly endanger hundreds of millions of Indonesian people who should be protected. Then when other countries implemented a lock<sup>1</sup>down policy, the Indonesian government refused it because it would paralyze the economy. As a result, the number of COVID-19 sufferers in Indonesia has increased drastically. The policies taken by the government tend to be wrong and a bit rushed and reactive to the existing conditions; this can be because this is the first time this event has occurred, so that each country does not yet have the right policy standards in dealing with it. However, even so, the government should also be more careful and careful in taking policies related to this pandemic.

The government in making policies should not be alone but should involve other stakeholders, such as involving political parties which are extensions of the people. In a democratic country, political parties have several functions, namely political functions such as political recruitment, political communication, and political socialization. However, in addition to the political function, political parties also have a function as control over the government, especially through their representatives in parliament. In a pandemic situation like the current one, it is hoped that political parties will be more involved in bridging the community's interests and reducing conflicts of interest between the government and the community. With the control function carried out by political parties, it is hoped that they can monitor, remind and straighten any policies taken by the government related to the government. Political parties are also asked to play a more active role in making any policies needed by the people affected by this pandemic, both from the economic, health, social and cultural education sectors. It is no longer time for political parties only to be involved ceremonially in dealing with these extraordinary non-natural events such as distributing necessities, providing free medical treatment, and distributing masks, where these activities have a specific purpose, such as to increase electoral status and prestige in the eyes of the public.

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