

Transcript of Interview with Anonymous by Fitria Hardono

Interviewee: Anonymous/AN

Interviewer: Fitria Hardono

Date: 03/30/2020

Location (Interviewee): San Diego, California

Location (Interviewer): Balikpapan, Indonesia

Transcriber: Fitria Hardono

Abstract:

Living in military housing with their spouse and two children in California, the narrator chooses to remain anonymous. Throughout the interview, the narrator speaks at length about their COVID-19 pandemic experience. They go on about how they go tackle socialization, especially for their children, as they are not able to travel very far from home. They talk about what precautions they take whenever they leave the house, and how they would not let the pandemic restrictions completely dictate their new norm. Although their children are none the wiser considering their young ages, they continue to create a sense of normalcy that would simulate a pre-pandemic lifestyle. Delving deeper into safety measures, the narrator expresses their thoughts and hopes about how people in their community are taking precautions. This includes how they would hope that everyone is being honest and doing their part in assuring everyone's mutual safety, such as informing them if they or their children are sick.

Fitria Hardono 0:01

Hello. Good evening. My name is Fitria Hardono, and I'm an undergraduate student at ASU [Arizona State University], enrolled in History [HST] 494. The date is March 30th, 2021, and the time is 6:17PM [Arizona Time]. Thank you very much for virtually meeting me for this interview today. Before we get to the questions, I want to let you know that if at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable, please be assured that it is perfectly okay not to answer. Furthermore, if you need some time to recollect your thoughts or take a break, we can schedule another time to continue.

AN 0:50

Okay.

Fitria Hardono 0:52

Great. To start things off, I'd like to ask you about how that pandemic affected your lifestyle. So, if you don't mind me asking, what socio-economic class would you place yourself in?

AN 1:10

What would I place myself in... I'd probably say middle—middle-low. Does that—if that makes sense? We're okay, we live in military housing. So, we have income that provides—this government income, so.

Fitria Hardono 1:31

Oh, okay. So, how would you describe your family's lifestyle now compared to before the pandemic?

AN 1:42

Our lifestyle now is... I guess our social circle a lot smaller. We do a lot more things—we do a lot more outdoor activities. But mostly as a family or with just one family that we—one of our neighbors that we get together with regularly just cause they have children the same age as ours.

But for the most part, things have just gotten a lot smaller, you know, we don't go out to eat, we don't—my husband, because he's in the military, he actually had to sign something that said that he would not go anywhere except for from work to straight home. He's allowed to stop at like the gas station, and he's allowed to get like groceries and stuff. But other than that, we're not allowed to do anything like recreationally. Which I don't even know how long that's lasting for. They made them sign that a while ago. But yeah, that's kind of how things have changed a little bit for us.

Fitria Hardono 3:05

Would you say that these compromises are particularly like difficult challenges?

AN 3:15

Yeah, I find it difficult with—because I have—I'm a stay-at-home parent, and so like, my job is to take care of the kids and stuff. And I have quite young kids that, at this point, it's really important, I feel, like for them to interact with other kids and to socialize and learn how to play with each other and do all that. And throughout the pandemic, we live in a community with lots of playgrounds and stuff like that. And they were all—and we used to frequent them every single day. And for a while there, they were all closed. And so that takes out a big chunk of something that me and my kids did every day. And then also they learned how—they met kids and interacted with kids and stuff there.

Because they're younger, they're not—not in like preschool or anything like that. But they also don't go to daycare, which a lot of young kids, you know, that's how they kind of learn to play with each other and interact and socialize, right? And since I'm home with them, that's kind of how I fulfilled that need for them. And because it was closed, it was a challenge to try to figure out a way for them to still meet people and friends and learn and develop in that way. And I've been really lucky that we do have a neighbor who has kids the same age as us. And so we've gotten very close and so our kids play almost every day on the grass together and that's kind of how we've been able to kind of make that situation work. And still kind of do like a risk assessment where it's like, “okay, we can let our bubble be this big,” you know what I mean? And feel safe with it but take a little bit of risk so that we could still have a little bit of normalcy.

Fitria Hardono 5:24

Oh, this is a really interesting take with how you navigated the socialization part since feeling isolated is a common issue during quarantine.

AN 5:36

Yeah, definitely.

Fitria Hardono 5:39

We understand what's going on and why we should keep our distance from others. However, considering the age of your children, do you think they understand it as well, why we're doing this?

AN 5:51

No, given the age of my children, I don't. You know, I was talking about this with my mom today. And my daughter turned one and three last year when the pandemic started. So, really, like for my—as you know, my daughter turned two yesterday, and I—and part of her birthday present, I got her masks, because she's two now. So, regulation is that she needs to wear a mask. And my daughter, who's three, she's been wearing a mask for a whole year now. And they just don't know any different this is kind of—which is kind of a little bit scary and a little sad. Because this is just their life as they know it, they don't really remember or know of anything different. So, kind of keeping your distance from people is kind of their normal. And not doing a lot of things out in public is kind of normal for them, too. It's kind of a strange thing to try to keep your distance from people, but then also try to encourage social interaction with kids that are so young. It's challenging. [laughs]

Fitria Hardono 7:14

Right. So, as we speak more about children during the pandemic, you said they don't really like, understand it, it's just their norm now, though...

AN 7:28

Yeah.

Fitria Hardono 7:30

They aren't of school age yet. Rather than formal education, what do you consider to be the most challenging part of your children's development during this time?

AN 7:43

The most challenging part I would probably say is making feeling safe with them also, reaching out—like now our parks are open, and now they're private parks, because we live in a military housing. So, they're not really for the whole community—they're not public parks, but they're still a lot of kids that go to them. And so I'm at the point where I feel like, it's time for them to—it's okay for us to go and maybe go to a park when it's not so busy and stuff like that.

So, I think it's hard, even though they're not in school, it's like, “okay, how far do we open our circle? How do we still keep them safe, you know what I mean?” And I'm sure a lot of people who have school-aged kids... That's kind of the same thing where it's like, “okay, we've got to get them back to doing things that are normal for kids,” you know? But then how do you still keep them safe at the same time, like, I've got wet wipes and sanitizer, and we wash your hands as soon as we come inside. And I still get a little worried when, you know—or like, my kids got the sniffles, like [laughs] I had to test my kids twice just to be on the safe side, because you don't know the difference between things now, it's like, “do I have to quarantine them and keep them

away from other people or children?” Or I think—now it's difficult to try to navigate—how do you like, widen your circle and still keep them safe at the same time?

Fitria Hardono 9:28

Do you think there's anything other people can do to help you feel safer?

AN 9:36

Well, I think—well this is the thing where it's hard to know how other people are gauging it. I think you kind of assume sometimes that other people are taking precautionary measures, too, and other people are keeping their kids home if they're sick. You hope that people—or that other people would tell you if their kids or not feeling well, or if they're not feeling well. But I think that that's kind of—it might be a naive assumption. It probably—you would hope that other people—it would help if other people would be honest and transparent about if they're not doing well, or if they're not feeling well and just like keep their kids home if they're not, and that's what I do. So, I would hope that other people would do the same. But I don't think that's necessarily the case.

I think some people have different opinions on it. Some people are like, oh, my kid just has like a cough, and it's fine, and it's just a regular cough. But you don't know if it's a cough or a regular cough. A regular cough, or if it's COVID. And kids don't show symptoms the same way adults do. And so, you'd hope that people would be responsible in those type of situations. But it's hard to trust it'd be the same way, it's actually they—nobody will be the same way. Everybody's got different opinions and thoughts and beliefs on it, you know?

Fitria Hardono 11:19

Yes. Since you seem to put emphasis on like, getting back to normal. And, like doing stuff that what you would normally do if there weren't—If there wasn't a pandemic. What kind of thoughts do you have with how California is trying to open back up now?

AN 11:50

My thoughts on it... It's tough, I think that it's a really hard situation to navigate. Because we don't really know what the right thing to do is. A lot of times like we want to try to keep people safe. But we also—there are consequences no matter what we do, right? So, we could stay close for longer, but that has consequences. And we can open up faster, but that has consequences, too. So, I kind of have the mind of—I give a little grace to how people are managing it, because I think it's a really tough spot to be in.

To be honest with you, my life has not really been affected by a lot of the regulations due to the fact that I'm not in like the food or service industry or anything like that, I feel really grateful that I haven't been really impacted economically or financially in the way that a lot of other people have. And so I probably would have more of a stance on it if I was in one of those situations, but I'm not. I've been happy to—if I have to wear a mask, I'll wear mask. If I can't go out to eat, I don't mind it. That's what they say is best. But there are some wacky things when they were doing like—when they were doing curfews and stuff. That was a little strange. But I think that for the most part that they're trying to do with—the best that they can with the information that they've been given. And I'm sure it's not perfect. It's obviously not perfect. But I'm not exactly-

Fitria Hardono 13:38

Yeah, trying to do the best you can.

AN 13:38

-Yeah, trying to I'm not mad about it, and I'm also not—Yeah, I'm not mad about it, and I'm also not singing praises. [laughs] I'm somewhere in the middle of being like, I hope that—hope that we're all—I hope that we're all doing the right thing, and I hope that the people are telling us do the right thing. And it seems like, even though this is a long road, and maybe if we had had better policies, maybe it wouldn't have been such a long road. I don't know, but—or maybe if people were more compliant. It's a really complicated issue. So, I'm not too upset about California—about how they're going about it. I thought I wasn't, but then again, I'm going to emphasize that I wasn't as affected as some other people are—as some other people were. So, I'm sure that there's some different opinions on that.

Fitria Hardono 14:16

That was great insight. Lastly, is there anything I didn't ask about that you'd like to talk about?

AN 14:36

Not necessarily, not unless you have anything you're interested in—anything in particular that you would like to ask or know about? No, I think I'm good. [laughs]

Fitria Hardono 14:49

Okay, with that, this concludes the interview. Thank you very much for your time today.

AN 14:56

Right. Awesome. Well, thank you for interviewing me, and I wish you all the best of luck with your research.

Fitria Hardono 15:02

Thank you. I hope you have a wonderful rest of your day.

AN 15:07

You too. Thanks.

Fitria Hardono 15:10

Bye.

AN 15:11

Bye. Bye.