

# Pandemic Risks and Social Capital in the Context of COVID-19

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**Abstract:** Having come to the fore intensely with late modernity risk factors have become a phenomenon the whole world has had to go through with the non-stop spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many situations societies had experienced that had generally affected other societies more in the past have radically changed this state in the post-traditional process. These approaches which had been theories before the spread of COVID-19 have become concrete. In this sense, the risk a society experiences in the new world order poses a risk for all societies, and dealing with this risk inevitably becomes the problem of all societies. In this process where risk is on the agenda, a non-linear relationship can be said to exist between risk and social capital, which corresponds to social communication networks, mutual trust, social support, social integration, social cohesion, and social belonging. Pandemic risks have brought people face to face with more intense problems than ever before such as illness, loneliness, and death. Many people have had trouble coping with these anomalies. This study deals with the pandemic risks that have come to the fore with COVID-19 and the phenomenon of social capital. The aims of the study are to draw attention to the effects social capital levels have on coping with risk and to mention their positive and negative aspects. The study has reached the result that the international risk resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant negative effects and results in a short time due to its incalculability and uncertainty. In terms of coping with this situation, the need is seen to cooperate not only intra-nationally but also internationally. The result has also been reached that a non-linear relationship exists between pandemic risks and social capital.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, risk, pandemic risk, social capital, COVID-19.

**Öz:** Yoğun olarak geç modernlikle birlikte gündeme gelen risk faktörü her geçen gün artan COVID-19 salgınıyla bütün dünyanın baş etmek zorunda kaldığı bir olgu haline gelmiştir. Geçmişte toplumların kendi içlerinde yaşadıkları ve diğer toplumların genelde daha çok etkilendiği pek çok durum, gelenek sonrası süreci köklü şekilde değiştirmiştir. Bu tür yaklaşımlar, COVID-19 yayılmadan önce çoğunlukla birer teori niteliğinde iken şimdi somut bir hal almıştır. Bu anlamda, yeni dünya düzeninde bir toplumun yaşadığı risk bütün toplumlar için risk teşkil etmektedir ve bu riskle baş etmek de kaçınılmaz olarak bütün toplumların sorunu olmaktadır. Riskin bu kadar gündemde olduğu bu süreçte sosyal iletişim ağları, karşılıklı güven, sosyal destek, toplumsal bütünleşme, toplumsal uyum, toplumsal aidiyet olarak karşılık bulan sosyal sermaye ile risk arasında doğrusal olmayan bir ilişkiden sözedilebilir. Pandemi risk insanları hastalık, yalnızlık, ölüm gibi pek çok sorunlarla her zamankinden daha yoğun olarak karşı karşıya getirmiştir. Birçok insan bu sorunlarla baş etmede sıkıntı yaşamıştır. Bu çalışma COVID-19 ile gündeme gelen pandemik riski ve sosyal sermaye olgusunu birlikte ele almaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı riskle baş etme noktasında sosyal sermaye düzeyinin etkilerine dikkat çekmek ve olumlu olumsuz yönlerine değinmektir. Bu çalışma COVID 19 pandemisinden kaynaklanan uluslararası riskin hesaplanamazlığı ve belirsizliği nedeniyle kısa sürede önemli olumsuz etkilere ve sonuçlara yol açtığı sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Bu durumla baş edebilme noktasında ülkelerin sadece kendi içlerinde değil, ama aynı zamanda diğer ülkelerle de iş birliği içinde olmaları gerektiği görülmüştür. Pandemi riskleri ile sosyal sermaye arasında doğrusal olmayan bir ilişkinin olduğu sonucuna da ulaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Pandemi, risk, pandemik risk, sosyal sermaye, COVID-19.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of risk has a social feature that has emerged with the modern period. The risk factors that appear alongside fear and anxiety in every period dominate all of society, and its uncertainty coincides with the modern period. Economics is the field where social capital and risk are intensively used and studied together because the concept that comes up against entrepreneurship and the situations that may arise as a result are risk factors. This study subjects risk factors to a sociological analysis alongside social capital. As a reality the world is facing, disease contains various states of risk due to many present and future uncertainties. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have caused global fear, panic and anxiety over a short period of time resulting in pandemic risks. The situations in which the pandemic has affected all societies vary through different factors (e.g., socioeconomic or sociocultural conditions, individual well-being); many things have caused people and societies to overcome this process, sometimes with less harm, sometimes also with greater inconvenience.

Social capital is the phenomenon underlying why some individuals and societies have been able to survive the process more strongly and with less damage or to avoid it more powerfully. In addition to economic development, social capital also involves common norms, social relations, social security and corresponds to a social system where family, friendship, neighborhood, and social institutions function well (Aydemir & Tecim, 2012); social capital has been a strong defense mechanism against the pandemic risks. Although some aspects of social capital have increased COVID's rate of transmission (Aydemir, 2020, p. 313), the positive aspects of social capital networks can also be mentioned regarding overcoming the psycho-social process of the disease. In this context, talking about social capital can involve both the positive and negative aspects of health (Eriksson, 2011; Gönç Şavran, 2018). Societies with strong social capital are societies made up of individuals who have been able to produce common values; trust their family members, neighbors, state and social institutions; participate actively in social activities, have a good education; and do not refrain from being and meeting with common stakeholders. Societies of this type are stronger against risk factors such as fear, panic, and anxiety; these societies have the solidarity for overcoming this and have been able to form a collective consciousness.

This study will focus on the relationship between the global risks the COVID-19 outbreak poses and social capital with regard to why some societies have had more painful experiences and other societies have had less painful experiences.

This epidemic has had a global impact and caused negative consequences (e.g., socioeconomic, sociocultural, socio-psychological) in almost every country. As a result of the transportation, communication, and interaction modernity provides, the world has now turned into a global village (McLuhan, 1962, p. 31) where everyone is aware of and affected by one another in some way. In this sense, the risks a society faces in the new world order have the characteristic of being risks for all societies; thus, coping with such risks inevitably has become a problem for every society. The claim that social capital is the way to become less affected by such social problems and to come out stronger from this negative situation is this study's research problem. In this respect, some inferences, assumptions, and suggestions have been made regarding the relationship between social capital and the pandemic risks that emerged with the global outbreak of COVID-19.

## Risk

Risk as a concept can be traced back historically to the first human societies (Bernstein, 2010, p. 129). Risk is defined in Turkish as an economic term meaning danger of loss (Turkish Language Association, 2010), and corresponds in many ways to people's anxieties and fears. Risk has been popularized as a concept, gaining an international feature during late modernity in particular. Many things such as wars, earthquakes, floods, fires, nuclear power plants, global warming, and environmental problems are defined as risks. The history of the concept is very old and is derived from the Latin verb *resegare*, which means to cut short. However, Ulrich Beck (1992) globalized and sociologically made the concept of risk the subject of reflexive modernization (Marshall, 1999, p. 169; Soydemir, 2011, p. 171). Frank Furedi (2014) and Anthony Giddens (2010) also tried to explain the dilemmas of modernity through the concept of risk (Karakaş, 2020, p. 551). Their reason for these explanations was in defense of an endless modernity (i.e., high modernity, late modernity; Esgin, 2013, p. 685). In reflexive modernity, which coincides with Beck's periodization of social change, manufactured uncertainties have emerged as new risks resulting from the proliferation of knowledge due to technological developments. In fact, this approach can be said to coincide with many criticisms of postmodernity, especially Bauman's and Habermas'. According to them, postmodernity has become a source of nothingness and uncertainty against the standards modernity has set (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2003; Habermas, 2012). According to them, postmodernity has also not exceeded modernity: Modernity continues as an unfinished project.

Modernity emerged with the claim of a world free from risks and dangers and

promised to bring people together under the umbrella of freedom, equality and justice. However, the dangers, threats, and risks that exist or will occur with the rapid changes brought about by modernity have enabled new readings on modernity. According to Beck, the most important breaking point during reflexive modernity (i.e., advanced modernity) is the end of forms of a collective conscience based on social and political organizations and institutions, with the unknown and indifferent consequences in risk society becoming the dominant forces of history and society (Beck, 1992). In this context, dependence on social classes and traditional support networks provided by families and neighborhoods weakens and even the act of work becomes a way of a conflict and identity focus (Marshall, 1999, p. 170). Separating modernity into different stages, Beck stated the main axis of industrial society to be focused on the distribution of goods and the main axis of risk society to be on the distribution of evil and dangers (Esgin, 2013, p. 687; Günerigök, 2018). The changes that occur with modernization are seen to appear under various names such as globalization, postmodernism, network society, and risk society. The majority of these nomenclatures claim modernity to be over and a new era to have begun. According to Beck, however, this period has become as widespread as postmodern and is a part of modernity that includes radical social change (Beck & Willms, 2004, p. 27).

Unlike the traditional period, the prevalence of transportation, communication, and interaction has led all societies of the world to be interconnected. This process can be interpreted as the internationalization of the local (i.e., globalization) or from the Eurocentric point of view as modernization in other world states and in McLuhan's words (Altay, 2005, p. 17) has transformed the whole world into a global village. This situation has been criticized in many ways and maintains its existence in different forms; however, just as modernization expressed a disengagement with agricultural society in the 19th century, it is now transforming industrial society. Meanwhile, all of these transformations according to Beck proceed as a continuity of modernity. In other words, industrial society continues to modernize just as traditions had modernized. In the words of Beck, actual situations such as wars and diseases have become transnational despite the universality of theories on reflexive modernization or the postmodern period. Beck (1992) used risk society as a term for the concept referring to man-made situations of unnatural origin. This conceptualization can now be shown as proof that the world has entered a new era and a new sociological reading regarding risk.

The concept of risk is seen to have been used extensively during the periods of modernity and advanced modernity (Beck, 1992) or radical modernization

(Giddens, 2010). Giddens declared a new process to be underway and people in need to be replaced by people in anxiety and fear as people's welfare rises. According to Giddens, risk is closely related to welfare society (Giddens, 2010, p. 146), such that while existence determines consciousness in the order of class society, consciousness determines existence in positions of risk (Beck, 1992, p. 23). In summary, no transition has occurred from modernity to any new period other than to a radical modernity where the quality of trust has changed. Risks have occurred in some way in every period, but now they have turned into a global problem accompanied by the loss of support provided by social and political institutions; this can be called security concerns. The risks in risk society cannot be calculated or explained and are infinite (Esgin, 2013, p. 687). This situation is not confined to just one country or society but has taken a different structure affecting the whole world (Soydemir, 2011, p. 171). According to Giddens (as cited in Esgin, 2013, p. 690), what defines life in this time period is the environments of trust and risk, and the most important factor explaining this is globalization.

Unlike the traditional period, the distribution of risks has exceeded the distribution of rich and poor. Risks have passed beyond countries' borders as well as class divisions. In Beck's (1992, p. 36) words, "poverty is hierarchic, smog is democratic." In other words, while the distinction between rich and poor is in regard to poverty, polluted air affects everyone *en masse* equally. Thus, the risks in any one civilization are able to become global risks. Beck explained the boomerang effect as the ability of risks to reach everywhere regardless of nation and class. Manufactured risks will sooner or later seize those who manufacture and profit from risks. In this respect, the world can be said to have entered a process that does not distinguish between rich and poor, black and white, north and south, or east and west (Beck, 1992, pp. 22–27). While risks that affect only certain regions, groups, and classes in a local and limited way correspond to risks from the first modern industrial society, risks that are able to affect everyone regardless of time and space point to the world risk society. In this sense, the entire globe is now a risk society (Beck, 1999). According to the world risk society theory, risks have no spatial, temporal, or social bounds, and globalized risks are delocalized, incalculable, and non-compensable (Beck, 1999, p. 52).

Within this framework, all societies can be said to be at risk and insecure. Risk-centered postindustrial society theories show risk society to be a society of disasters. This society is in danger of emergency states becoming normal (Beck, 1992, p. 24). In other words, the new normal can be presented as the normality of abnormality. With the COVID-19 pandemic, almost all theories about risk society emerge as a

concrete reality society face. A pandemic that emerged in China is currently a problem for the whole world, and its incalculability and uncertainty causes new anxiety and fears every day.

## **The COVID-19 Outbreak and Pandemic Risks**

Unlike in the traditional period, the prevalence of communication, transportation, and interactions in the new world order lay underneath the rapid spread of the pandemic. As a result of this mobilization, the pandemic affected practically the whole world over one or two months. It has been much easier for the risk to causing a global depression has been much easier for the risk with the accelerating effect globalization has had on time and space. As a matter of fact, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been found as health risk humanity as a whole has had to face on a global scale.

All forms of modernity, whether reflexive, late, or radical, have come up against many risks. In particular, the struggle with nature that started with the industrial revolution has brought many risks that people have manufactured without foresight. The process in which risks are placed at the center of human lives coincides with a period in which life has been dominated not by nature but by a science that does not fully serve its purpose. Nuclear disasters, weapons of mass destruction; diseases such as Crimean-Congo, Bird Flu, and ultimately the COVID-19 outbreak; and the uncertainties regarding these have brought the whole world into risk society theory. The most important global risk (i.e., cosmopolitan) the theory indicates, which is also called risk society or world risk society, are health-related risks. The types of health risks in modern risk society involve risk factors such as harmful substances and toxins, nuclear disasters (e.g., Chernobyl), ecological problems, inorganic agriculture, overproduction of toxic substances, and toxic waste (Beck, 1992; 1999).

Risks have now become pandemic (cosmopolitan) due to the dependence of globalization in social, economic, political, and cultural areas as well as the features that increase and spread exchange. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has shown the risks of the globalizing world to have also become globalized, forming the bases for using the concept of pandemic risks. Humans can be said to live in a world where individuals, groups, and nations are now internationally interdependent (Giddens, 2008, p. 84). Beck (2009) explained globalization dialectically based on mutual interaction, not linearly. From this perspective, the dilemmas and risks of every society have the potential to affect one another. In brief, global advantages and gains are open to being shared, with its disadvantages also having a cosmopolitan feature.

A pandemic is a social phenomenon that has social, political, economic, and psychological echoes all over the world (Karataş, 2020, p. 6). 19% of female and 14% of male wage workers, 17% of female and 16% of male self-employed people, and 19% of female and 9% of male employers lost their job during the pandemic in Turkey (UN Women, 2020). In a study conducted on youths in Turkey (Bayhan & Bozkurt, 2021), 33.6% of the participants stated their feelings of loneliness to have increased. The same study observed that, as household income levels decrease, participants were more likely to say, "I do not have enough friends," "My relationships are superficial," and "I am not close with anyone." Another study (Şahin & Nerse, 2021, p. 76) found 28.1% of the participants to state at least one household member had lost their job during COVID-19 and 73.8% to experience economic difficulties in the future if the process continues like this. These reflections have affected people in different ways due to various circumstances and situations. While the rich and powerful are also not safe in this situation, the poor, disabled, elderly, and disadvantaged groups in need of protection should be said to be more affected by this process. As Beck expressed, social risk positions have formed (Beck, 1992, p. 23). Health problems arising due to the pandemic, insufficiency of health services, unavoidable rapid increase in deaths, and despair that the pandemic could have been prevented are day by day expanding the size of risks and damaging the sense of trust.

Questions about whether the source of the pandemic is an external or manufactured risk (Beck, 1992; Leiss, 1994 p. 545; Giddens, 2000, p. 40) have yet to be answered, and discussions continue in this direction. Risks such as famine, epidemics, and natural disasters, which had been regional and limited in the traditional period, now show national and universal characteristics in political and economic fields in the modern and postmodern periods. Any risk affecting a society can now easily turn into a means of global threat (Yıldırım, 2020, p. 1336). Egin (2013, p. 691) pointed out that "manufactured risks have created manufactured uncertainties." The emergence of risk brings along uncertainty, fear, anxiety, and panic and increases the prevalence of risk. Beck's view on the phenomenon of risk varies with the differentiation in the production, domination, and power structures of post-industrial modern societies. The risks that are considered beyond human control in pre-modernity have generally been human-induced in modernity and after. The needs of a class society, which corresponds to industrial modernity, can somehow be met. However, the risks of civilization are "a bottomless barrel of necessity," inexhaustible and endless (Beck, 1992, p. 23).

As a result of social change, new normals have spontaneously emerged as necessities alongside the pandemic; these have changed many of the habits, values,

and norms belonging to the pre-pandemic and offered people their new normality. In fact, the rapid change, inequalities, and risks emerging with modernity have imposed new norms on societies and led to large-scale changes (Karakas, 2020, p. 551). Societies have now had to normalize by complying with these new norms. This can actually be read as a way of dealing with the pandemic. The longer the duration of this pandemic, which has been in our lives for a long time and caused serious fractures, the more its effects increase. In this process, traditional support networks have been broken and forms of collective consciousness have been terminated. However, as with many breaks, this pandemic has had and likely will continue to have its positive aspects. For example, this process has brought spiritual and modern values to the fore as well as traditional values in place of material values, bringing the importance of family, relatives, and neighborly relations back to the agenda.

Many practices such as educational interruptions, curfews, lockdowns, long-term isolation (all the measures taken against the pandemic), and quarantines (keeping individuals with source or contact risk away from others) have caused negative psychosocial effects and social depressions. This situation results in loneliness, fear, panic, hopelessness, and anxiety for people and turns the world into an atmosphere of risks (Karakas, 2020, p. 551; Bayhan and Bozkurt, 2021, pp. 61–62). Overcoming these risks is just not possible with only economic and healthcare services. In addition to these, social solidarity and cooperation are considered important ways for coping with this process (Karakas, 2020, p. 553; Yildirim, 2020, p. 1340). Societies that have managed this kind of solidarity are more successful in eliminating risks (Karakas, 2020, p. 553). Risks not only affect the process they are undergoing but also damage the sense of hope and confidence for the future (Beck, 1992; Karakas, 2020). A study conducted in Turkey (Karatas, 2020) shows belief in the influence of modern medicine to have decreased by 18.3% and trust in state institutions to have decreased by 14.6% during the pandemic. The same research revealed 67.5% of the participants to have more concerns about the future and to question the meaning of life (Karatas, 2020, pp. 14–15).

Risks that affect everyone regardless of border, class, and friend-enemy distinctions also constitute a cosmopolitan power. This power additionally has the potential to create a cosmopolitan moral and political area of responsibility transcending borders and conflicts (Çelik, 2014, p. 86). In a world where risk is globalized, the need for trust and its derivatives naturally increases and becomes global (Giddens, 1994, p. 32). For this reason, studies on the trust index have an important place all over the world. Among these, trust in family members, neighbors, and government agencies

is the most important value in the World Values Survey (2015-2017) and European Social Survey (2018), which are conducted regularly over five years. This may be an indication of the need for a sense of trust as well as for the concept of social capital in a world that has become complex and uncertain in terms of risks. Social capital is the phenomenon that comes to the fore in traditional support networks such as social networks, good families and neighborhoods, social trust, and friendships regarding creating a conscious society.

### **The Relationship between Social Capital and Pandemic Risks**

Generally known as social trust, relationship networks, and common norms, social capital can be defined as the basic principles that bring societies together over common values. Strong societies have social institutions that are able to fulfill their functions. People's ability to overcome their adversities can be associated with coping power. However, human beings are not independent from their environment. Individuals with close ties to those around them create a world for themselves within the framework of common norms using a sense of trust and a network of relationships, and this becomes the determinant of social capital. In the literature, social capital is an intensely interesting concept in all social sciences, especially economics, sociology, and political science. Therefore, social capital has been given very different meanings. Put briefly, social capital can be defined as the missing link in the chain formed for arriving at a welfare society. Social capital, which comes to the fore with its functions rather than any agreed definition (Coleman, 1990, p. 302; Harriss & Renzi, 2010, p. 10; Fukuyama, 2010, p. 143), has been used in many ways such as in education, social values, family, norms, civic engagement, social networking, and social trust (Putnam, 2010, p. 122; Fukuyama, 2002, p. 27; 2009; 2010, pp. 143-144).

The most striking aspect of the concept of social capital these days can be said to be the emphasis on social trust. In addition to the benefits of the new world order, its disadvantages include distrust in family, neighbors, colleagues, and political and social institutions (Bostan et al., 2020, p. 2). By including anxiety and fear of uncertainties, complex relationships, unpredictable economic inequalities, increasing crime rates, and epidemic diseases, insecurity and risk now become a reality of life (Giddens, 1994; Okumuş, 2017). In this sense, the feeling of trust can be interpreted as the antithesis of risk. In social capital studies, social capital mostly corresponds to the level of social trust (Putnam, 1993; Tecim, 2011, p. 34). In other words, no matter how modernity, late modernization, radicalized modernity, or postmodernity are conceptualized, the important haven against the unpredictable risks they bring

can be said to be social capital, which includes civil society, good neighborliness, friendship, justice, and social trust.

Social capital provides both individual and collective gains in this context (Ağcasulu, 2017). While social capital helps individuals cope with fears and anxieties, it also helps increase social welfare and socio-economic development (Grootaert, 2010, p. 228; Kılınç, 2010, p. 3; Aydemir & Özşahin, 2011, p. 43; Yarcı, 2011, p. 125). In this case, societies with strong social capital can be said to cope more strongly with problems compared to societies with weak social capital. Societies with strong social capital can be concluded to be successful in creating common values and norms and in taking the necessary measures from the very beginning to prevent small-scale events from turning into polarizations and conflicts (Fukuyama, 2009). For the individual who is a social entity unable to live independently from those around them in this regard, the family, friendships, neighborhoods, and social networks that will emerge and on which they depend create common values and can open spaces for people to feel safe. In the World Values Survey (2017, 2018, 2019, 2020), countries with a high sense of trust in people and families were listed as countries with strong social capital (e.g., Austria, Finland, New Zealand, Norway) in the literature.

COVID-19 has brought about a process in which social and political institutions, friendships, and neighborhoods (i.e., traditional support) have been seriously damaged. An environment in which all areas and all people are suspicious and unreliable has seriously affected the sense of trust that connects people to life and makes them look to the future with hope. Symptoms such as increased depression, anger, stress, health anxiety, loneliness, social isolation, trauma, stigmatization (i.e., judgment, blame, doubt, exclusion), and financial difficulties are intense negativities seen to have resulted from this process (Sher, 2020; Kıran & Bölükbaşı, 2021; Enli Tuncay et al., 2020). The outbreak of COVID-19 has resulted in a process dominated by uncertainty and fear, causing values to be questioned and seriously shaking the sense of trust (Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 305). This process has required people to be alone and to struggle with all kinds of negativity on their own. This process has seriously affected social capital negatively (Bostan et al., 2020, p. 4).

COVID-19 has negatively affected all societies, regardless of whether they are developed, underdeveloped, or developing, and caused global fear and panic. The decrease in access to consumption tools due to illness, insufficient safety, housing and nutrition, or unemployment; significant increases in deaths; inadequacy of health services; uncertainties; and disruptions in vaccine development and distribution have globalized the risk, and each state has sought different ways to deal with it. Healthily

getting out of this situation will bring economic capital to the agenda. Perhaps more importantly, social capital has crucial importance in this period because social capital is accepted as a prerequisite for economic development and contributes to eliminating countries' impasses by overcoming the problems arising from collective action and externality when interacting with human and physical capital (Özcan & Zeren, 2013). This pandemic has not only negatively affected people's physical health and economy but also their psychology. In order to confront such difficulties, having societies possess common values, act collectively and have strong social capital is important. As a matter of fact, countries that have demonstrations, denial (one of the means of coping with the disease), conspiracies, looting, anti-vaccination ideologies, and stigmatizations that are carried out by those who do not trust political institutions seem to be the behavioral patterns of societies with weak social capital.

Like many epidemics, this disease has caused significant social, economic, political, and cultural ruptures (Şavran & Suğur, 2021, p. 4). For many societies and people, the post-disease process will differ significantly from the pre-disease one, at least for a while (Afacan & Avcı, 2020, p. 11; Karataş, 2020, pp. 7, 15; Karakaş, 2000). Throughout the pandemic, people's habits, living standards, basic needs, social relations, and their world values most importantly have changed. This situation has affected people of all nationalities, religions, genders, and ages; however, this influence can be said to have manifested in different ways because socio-cultural and individual characteristics, socio-economic conditions, and situations such as individual well-being may differ when dealing these situational risks (Bozkurt et al. 2020, p. 309). A study conducted in China during the pandemic (Tian et al. 2020, as cited in Bozkurt et al., 2020, p. 309) stated that, among people under the age of 18 and over the age of 50, those with less than a university degree, the divorced or widowed, agricultural workers, and minorities are seen to have more obsessive-compulsive symptoms, phobic anxieties, and psychotic symptoms.

The fact that the most effective way to eliminate the pandemic is through isolation has also taken people away from their social networks. Because social networks are a significant indicator of social capital, this process of isolating can be said to actually work against social capital by weakening cities' vibrant public lives (Karakaş, 2020, p. 556; Bölükbaşı & Kıran, 2021). The emphasis on the safest place being at home with the motto "Stay at Home" has led to mandatory isolation for more than a year with the COVID-19 pandemic; therefore, many things that everyone had been familiar with have transformed. While people were moving away from risks, where they took shelter in became their trusted institutions, and safe areas differed significantly

than what they had been before the pandemic. Even though relations with family, neighbors, and friends had to be physically distanced during the pandemic, social networks have been maintained even more effectively. Despite the pandemic causing mass fear, panic, and anxiety, it also caused positive results such as helping others, solidarity, and increased awareness. During the epidemic period, family members and relatives are who people have most commonly contacted. While this situation developed in favor of social capital, suicides were also observed to have intensified due to domestic violence, as well as higher rates of divorce, anxiety, and panic (Emiral et al., 2020; Hocaoğlu & Erdoğan, 2020; Humphreys et al., 2020).

The cooperation and communication that social capital provides among people and community groups has a feature that bridges social capital through interaction, solidarity and mutual trust among community groups (Putnam, 2010, p. 125). A society that is integrated through communication, social networks, civic participation, and social trust produces common values and can be regarded as a strong society in regard to dealing with all kinds of fear, panic, anxiety, and risk. However, social capital has both positive and negative aspects. In other words, places may be found where social capital has a dark side (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 225; Fukuyama, 2002, p. 29; Fine, 2010, pp. 315–316; Beşer & Hira, 2017). For example, excessive trust in family members or any organization may be accompanied by distrust toward other members of society.

## Conclusion

As a result of the globalized COVID-19 pandemic, the risks that have emerged through fear, anxiety, and panic have also turned into a pandemic and increasingly impacted social life. The situation of being affected by this pandemic differs due to socio-cultural and individual characteristics, socio-economic conditions, and individual well-being. However, unlike the industrial society, the risks of the new era have become cosmopolitan, affecting everyone without distinction between rich and poor. This problem has emerged as a health problem and has adversely affected all societies psycho-socially and socio-economically. Seeking a solution to this has also been a global pursuit, and as the problem is not just a health issue, the solution has also brought different means to the agenda. The elements thought to constitute social capital such as civil society, good neighborliness, friendship, justice, social tolerance, and social trust seem to be the most important means of dealing with such risks. In this sense, social capital can contribute positively to situational well-being (e.g., coping with difficulties, recovering after negative situations, and overcoming fear

and anxiety with hope). As such, social capital is a phenomenon that significantly contributes to risk control and risk management. This pandemic has also significantly contributed to social capital by bringing social institutions and social values and norms to an agenda about to be resolved. Because the pandemic has had a global impact, it requires people and societies to act together to fight it. The global nature of the risks and solutions unites nations and states that otherwise would polarize and disagree in different ways regarding the same purpose. Pandemic risks not only bring social solidarity but also intercommunal cooperation. This situation clearly gives the message to all humanity that at least common goals and objectives can be met by means of certain basic values. However, as with many other pandemics and epidemics, COVID-19 may cause more psychological and sociological breakdowns. Within the framework of new normalities, behavioral patterns, and habits, new values and norms will emerge. However, these extraordinary situations are the new normal of societies. People have a bad habit of getting used to every situation, and sometimes this also applies to negative situations. This can be said to possibly also apply to social capital and the elements making it up.

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