

Discourse on the Study of Political Leadership and Democracy: Between 'Democratic Welfare State' and 'Shadow Democracy'

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Abstract

The quality of democracy in each country and neighboring countries is contingent upon the political leadership in place. The present literature review aims to provide an overview and analysis of political leadership and its correlation with democracy in developed countries, specifically focusing on Indonesia. Performance democracy is a term used in the intellectual discourse of European and American countries to refer to the preservation of efficient political leadership within the context of a "prosperous, democratic state." The preeminent discussion topics about the deterioration of democratic standards in Indonesia are civil society involvement and populism.

Index Terms— Political Leadership; Democracy; Performance Democracy; Civil Society Participation; Popular Leader.

Introduction

In a country where political leadership is constantly in the news, it is evident that it plays an essential role in the nation's daily operations. Nonetheless, the study of political leadership has yet to become a significant concern in academia, particularly political science. Elgie (2015) explains that The American Political Science Association has 46 sections, but none are devoted to political leadership. Furthermore, The European Consortium for Political Research's 44 research bodies, The International Political Science Association's 52 investigative powers, and the latter's 44 research bodies are absent. However, scholars regard

examining political leadership as a particular facet of their research objectives.

Scholarly literature on leadership tends to overlook the topic of political leadership while placing greater emphasis on various facets of managing administration or leaders, as opposed to analyzing the outcomes of a general election. Leaders are not expected to resolve societal conflicts over values, ideas, and interests; instead, they are only likely to satisfy the needs of the organization or the company's stakeholders (Hartley & Bennington, 2011: 211-21).

Political leadership studies have been the subject of extensive discourse among scholars, who have produced significant literature on the topic. A framework and approach for examining political leadership (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2002; Bennister, 't Hart, & Worthy, 2014; Bennister, 2016; Bennister & Worthy, 2017; Elcock, 2001; Morrell & Hartley, 2006; Rhodes & 't Hart, 2014; Schechter, 2012). The analysis of political leadership is often conducted in tandem with considerations of institutional frameworks, communication strategies, and global affairs (Aaldering & Vliegthart, 2015; Achkasova, Dobrovolska, & Zhuravleva, 2021; Baldersheim & Daloz, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2012; Elzinga, 2009; Gaffney, 1991; Grube, 2013; Krcmaric, Nelson, & Roberts, 2019; Leone, 2015; Morton, 2017; Schechter, 2012); Connecting crisis-related political leadership (Boin, 't Hart, & Esch, 2012); Comparing Leadership in Politics and Gender (Stevens, 2012); and contrast regional armies with political leadership (Steyvers et al. 2012).

Political studies primarily focus on analyzing political leadership and democracy. Contemporary social and political scholars have shifted their focus toward examining the mechanisms of democracy across various global regions and countries. This is evident in the works of Leone (2015), Ufel (2014), Borraz and John (2004), Ruscio (2004), John Dewey (1927), Burns (1978), Heifetz (1994), Hartley and Bennington (2011), and Burns (2010). The examination of democracy's fluctuations under various political leaderships is closely intertwined with Indonesia's status as a democratic nation, as observed and documented by academics. The state of democracy in Indonesia and its potential trajectory has been the subject of significant scholarly attention (McRae, 2013; Menchik, 2019; Power, 2018; Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014; Diprose, McRae & Hadiz, 2019; Hadiz, 2017; Hadiz & Robison, 2013, 2017; Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Grzywacz, 2020). Of particular concern is the perceived decline in the quality of democracy in the country.

Ufel's study (2014) in his book "Political Leadership in Deliberative Democracy" analyzes political leadership, which is divided into three domains: first, political leadership is grouped into kingdoms, party leaders, and significant social issues; second, administrative leadership assigned to manage secular institutions; and third, lay leadership of

actors and roles outside the royal system that oppose the power of the royal elite, starting from superior positions.

The research conducted by Leone (2015) links the phenomenon of democracy, prevalent in many countries, with the political leadership of nations that are not democratic or choose not to be democratic. Leone explains and comprehends the "mechanisms" by which political change can be directed toward a victorious democracy. Leone (2015) and Ufel (2014) posit that a nation's political leadership directly or indirectly impacts its democratic status. It critically emphasizes the relationship between political leadership and democracy in one country.

These two academics agree that political leadership can change a country with an undemocratic system into a democracy or vice versa (Leone 2015; Ufel 2014). Ufel (2014) argues that the capacity of political leaders to establish a democratic state is inadequate, as they must possess the competence to execute a deliberative democratic framework. The dominant form of democracy entails the extensive involvement and endorsement of the citizenry. Ruscio (2004) argues that active political leaders are crucial in realizing and sustaining a nation's democratic process (Ruscio 2004 quoted from Hartley & Benington 2011: 211).

Ronald Heifetz (1994), Robert Burns (1978), and John Dewey (1927) all outlined the critical function of political leadership in democratic government, which includes assisting the populace in pursuing their common interests and realizing their aspirations for a collective voice. Hartley and Benington (2011) state that the group's primary objectives are to promote justice, welfare, social harmony, and ecological sustainability. It aligns with the views expressed by Dewey (1927), Burns (1978), and Heifetz (1994). Hence, it is possible to alleviate the crisis of trust and political leadership legitimacy by having political leaders actively seek and express the collective societal voice and formulate it based on the relevant foundations.

Hartley and Benington (2011) have expounded that the foremost challenge confronting present-day political leadership is a drastic transformation in the populace's outlook toward politics, which impedes the integration of conventional politics. The connections of the public to the state, its parliamentary representatives, and its unofficial civil society leaders have all changed (Hartley & Benington 2011: 206). There is a general expectation among individuals that political experts will facilitate the process of fulfilling their requirements. In actuality, the state imposed additional difficulties on their livelihoods. This discontentment plays a role in developing public animosity toward political governance.

Cheibub (2012) argues that the public's strong disapproval and discontent towards political leaders and their leadership in the public

domain highlight the pivotal role of political leadership in the success of political regimes and their interrelations with other political regimes. In the current context, political leadership assumes heightened importance by furnishing direction, counsel, and remedies to collectively encountered issues. Put differently, and individuals persist in holding their political representatives responsible for fulfilling the predetermined objectives of governmental establishments. Consequently, there has been a notable increase in the extent and intensity of public censure directed toward political leaders.

The present article will concentrate on the correlation between political leadership and democracy in Indonesia, as discerned by several scholars. The primary focus of Mietzner's (2020) work is centered on democracy within the context of Indonesia. Throughout the previous half-decade, Mietzner has produced a substantial body of literature regarding the deterioration or insufficiency of democratic progress in Indonesia. One of the remarks pertains to the movement's inadequacy and civil society's involvement. As per his analysis, the safeguarding of democratic principles in Indonesia is most likely to be accomplished by civil society. However, the current polarization state has resulted in fragmentation within the civil society movement. Mietzner's analysis highlights the inadequacy of the Indonesian government's COVID-19 response alongside a fragmented and feeble civil society. Mietzner (2021) posits that the failure to manage the COVID-19 pandemic effectively is intricately connected to the decline of democracy in Indonesia.

The current pandemic has proven to be a formidable challenge for the government, society, and business world due to the leadership's tendencies towards populism, corruption, clientelism, and polarization. Aspinall and Mietzner (2019) assert that the decline in Indonesia's democratic standards can be attributed to the rise of anti-democratic elements within the nation, with the executive leader playing a significant role in this trend. According to Mietzner's (2015) analysis, the perception of a deteriorating democracy in Indonesia is linked to the malfunctioning of the system, which unresolved corruption issues, dysfunctional political parties, and a flawed campaign finance system characterize. Ganie-Rochman and Achwan (2016) argue that the correlation between race and the deterioration of democratic standards in Indonesia is inextricably linked to a social development outlook. The presence of corruption in Indonesia has resulted in the inaccessibility and lack of creation of equal opportunities for all individuals. Co-optation and dominance are commonly observed in diverse sectors, leading to limitations in the accessibility of state institutions.

The study conducted by Aspinall and Mietzner (2019) examines the prevalence of the democratic phenomenon in Indonesia. The upcoming General Election exhibits a detectable level of competitiveness. However, the state of democracy in Indonesia is undergoing a decline.

The election's result and subsequent campaign have yielded a novel political leadership while engendering societal polarization and posing a threat to the longevity of democratic institutions. Grzywacz (2020) investigates the deterioration of democratic quality in Indonesia by analyzing the constructed or revitalized narrative of democracy. The study revealed that the strategic narrative of democracy, as produced and promoted, exhibited imperfections in its internal and incoherent dimensions. According to Mietzner (2020), the deterioration of democracy in Indonesia can be attributed to the inadequacy of civil society. Menchik (2019) has established that the two primary constituents of civil society in Indonesia, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, are not only consistent with democratic values but also align with the Indonesian shading system.

Power (2018) discovered that under President Joko Widodo, Indonesia's democracy has institutionally deteriorated. The deduction above can be inferred from the escalating oppression and vulnerability of the president's adversaries, the restricted democratic alternatives, and the declining level of royal responsibility. According to Hadiz (2017), the rise of fundamentalist Islamic organizations has resulted in a decline in Indonesia's democracy quality during the gubernatorial election in DKI. Jakarta, Hadiz undertook a case that involved a highly polarized situation between disability advocates and applicants.

According to Robison and Hadiz (2017), the anticipated progress of democracy and the economy in Indonesia has not been realized due to significant challenges arising from adopting unsuitable economic and social trajectories. The oligarchic class's vested interests and unchecked authority determine the trajectory, which exerts significant influence over various domains, notably politics and economics. Hadiz and Robison (2017) conducted an independent investigation and corroborated earlier research results, which suggest that the decline of democracy in Indonesia is attributable to the oligarchic control of the country's political and economic domains. The utilization of research on populist leadership competition has emerged as a means for oligarchs to reinforce their position and authority across various domains, including the political arena.

It is imperative to comprehend the evolution of discourse surrounding democracy and political leadership across the globe, as well as its manifestation in the research conducted by Indonesian experts and scholars, as outlined in the initial literature review. This study aims to provide insights into leadership and political democracy, both of which have been extensively debated in academic circles and those that have yet to receive significant scholarly scrutiny.

Methods

The research method used in this study is a literature review. Practical literature analysis as a research method provides a solid foundation for knowledge generation and theory development (Webster, J., & Watson, 2002). By comprehensively understanding the existing literature, literature studies can better answer research questions (Snyder, 2019).

The method employed for conducting the literature review is integrative. This approach aims to amalgamate and evaluate the body of literature on the central theme of "political leadership and democracy." The methodology for conducting the literature search lacks a systematic approach, and the sources of literature utilized do not adhere to specific typologies. The present study will employ a rigorous selection process to identify and incorporate relevant scholarly articles, books, and other publications that align with the research inquiries. The utilization of integrative techniques has led to the development of this particular approach. The present investigation yielded a greater quantity of articles published in indexed journals than books, as reported by the authors.

The current literature review employs integrative methodologies to categorize the themes as per the research queries. The primary objective of this study is to showcase the leadership and political democracy concerns that scholars have extensively discussed, with a particular focus on Indonesia. The category of political leadership and democracy issues, as written by scholars, regarding this phenomenon across diverse nations, with a specific focus on Indonesia, has been categorized for subsequent analysis and interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Leading the "Democratic Welfare State"

In the study of political leadership, progress and the number of approaches utilized by scholars interested in political leadership in developed nations will inevitably increase. Various approaches are investigated in European nations to explain the phenomena and dynamics of political leadership. The various scientific backgrounds or areas of expertise possessed by scholars who study political leadership demonstrate the diversity and advancement of the field in European nations. However, despite their scarcity, studies on political leadership in developing nations such as Africa, Latin America, and Asia are still available.

Studies on the formal leadership of the political leaders of the Prime Minister and President dominate the study of political leadership, as compared to studies on the informal political leadership of leaders and influential members of society. Specifically, the study of the political leadership of Prime Ministers in developed European countries is the topic that receives the most attention from academics. The

achievements of democracy, state institutions, leader communication, international relations, and political leadership in times of crisis are topics associated with political leadership.

The issues that explicitly examine political leadership and democracy tend to take the context of countries in the European region. This region's democracy is a democracy with strong liberal values. In addition, the democracy run by European countries is democracy in the context of a parliamentary system. In most European nations, the Prime Minister heads the political leadership. It indicates that the elaboration of political leadership and democracy issues in Europe differs significantly from the elaboration of leadership and democracy issues in countries outside Europe.

In Europe, the United States, and Australia, public attention on the dimensions of political leadership in parliamentary government systems tends to focus on the democratic performance aspect from one prime minister's leadership to the next. In particular, debates and discussions evaluate the effectiveness of political leadership in fostering democracy. However, the desired achievement of democracy is the achievement of democracy in maintaining a welfare democratic state, not the inherent values of democracy, such as freedom and equality.

Beginning with a liberal democratic tradition affects the inherent democratic values rarely discussed in most developed nations in public spaces. The primary concern of the issues that accompany and shape the relationship between political leadership and democracy is, therefore, the discourse on the effectiveness of democracy in maintaining the welfare state.

In other regions, such as Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, discourses surrounding the central issues of political leadership and democracy are more likely to focus on the capacity of political leaders to protect, uphold, and respect the fundamental values of democracy. Thus, democracy performance is measured primarily by the advancement or regression of the quality of democracy in the region's countries. Political leadership is associated with protecting human rights, freedom, equality, enforcement, and protection before the law; housing, employment, life assurance, and health are the majority of the factors that characterize political leadership studies in African, Middle Eastern, and Asian nations.

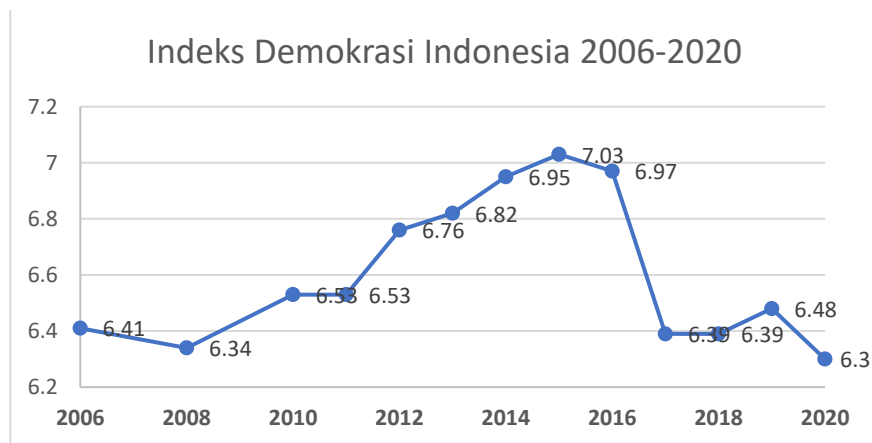
Preside over the "Shadow Democracy"

Indonesia was designated a democracy until President Jokowi took office (second half of 2019-2024). Subsequently, it began to experience fluctuations, although, generally, the variations in the Indonesian democracy index from one perspective to another are not so pronounced. It is abundantly clear that the change in the democracy index in Indonesia over the past 15 years has only been in the six areas,

indicating that there has been no significant shift in the factors or indicators of democracy in general. The data published by "The Economist Intelligence Unit" (EIU) from 2006 to 2020, as depicted in Figure 1, reveal more specific fluctuations in the "Indonesian Democracy Index" over the past 15 years. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2021).

leadership. Expertise is required to evaluate each instance of political leadership in Indonesia to explain why a single political leadership can consistently strengthen democracy in Indonesia. However, other political leaders in the same position as the president have been unable to strengthen the resilience of democracy in Indonesia.

Figure 1. Democracy Index in Indonesia 2006 – 2020



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit 2021

In addition, it was stated at the outset of this study that Indonesia's democracy has been relatively stable over the past 15 years. During these 15 years, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, Indonesia has been among the nations with a flawed democracy (Flawed Democracy) (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2021). In addition, EIU (2000) reports that Indonesia is ranked 64th globally. Indonesia ranks 11th for the continents of Asia and Australia, with a score of 6.48. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2021). From 2006 to 2020, Figure 1 illustrates the fluctuations in Indonesia's democracy index. It can be seen that during the two political leadership periods of President Yudhoyono (2004-2014) and President Jokowi (2014-present), it has rarely exceeded the six mark for more than 15 years (2014 - present).

The stretches outlined by EIU 2021 correspond to the data published by the "Bertelsmann Stiftung Index" (BTI) on its website, which includes Indonesia in the category of "Defective Democracies" with a total score of 6.5 (Bertelsmann Stiftung Team, 2020). BTI has implemented this democracy index for 15 years, from 2006 to 2020. The evaluation period is identical to that of the 'EIU.' Indonesia was categorized as a "Flawed

Democracy" by the "EIU" and a "Defective Democracy" by the "BTI" based on measurements conducted by two distinct international organizations during the same period.

The two results of monitoring and evaluation by international institutions explain and provide sufficient support for the conclusion that fundamental issues plague Indonesia's political leadership. The Issue of political leadership cannot be viewed and explained solely from a standpoint that emphasizes the personality or character of political leaders (agents). Similarly, this Issue cannot be described by institutional or structural dimensions but by comprehending the situation and conditions (context) in which political leadership operates or exists (interactionism). In other words, the political leadership problem in Indonesia is systemic and deeply rooted in the political system.

The literature review results explain the various causes for the relationship between political leadership and democracy in Indonesia, contributing to the deterioration of democracy's quality first, the weak civil society movement and participation. The polarization of society in the last five to seven years is an easily identifiable phenomenon. Strengthening polarization and weak cohesion are the root causes of the powerless movement and civil society's active engagement with the state. There is a great deal of speculation that the choice made by the government in managing the country contributes to the societal polarization that occurs. The choice of polarization as a strategy for achieving stability has justifications.

Stability is essential to forming a controlled, secure, orderly economic, investment, social, and political climate for the state. As a result, social movements and the participation of elements of society in monitoring and criticizing the government have increased (watchdog). It must be substantially 'controlled' via polarization.

Second, populist leaders (populism). It is necessary to be careful in viewing and assessing the phenomenon of populist leaders. It gives the impression of being democratic because the leader is the favorite, the people's choice. According to studies on populism, famous leaders are typically instruments of the oligarchy. Political oligarchs, particularly economic oligarchs, benefit most from famous leaders.

Corruption, collusion, and nepotism are symptoms that cannot be avoided in the leadership of a populist regime. The cult of the president or the head of state is an additional symptom equally destructive to democracy. The cult of the individual eliminates all public spaces for criticizing the president, as doing so implies contempt for and opposition to the president.

For a comprehensive understanding of President Joko Widodo's political leadership concerning the decline in the quality of democracy in Indonesia, it is crucial to consider the two findings mentioned above

regarding the deterioration of democracy. The government has issued two regulations in place of laws (Perpu), namely Perpu for Mass Organizations (Perpu Ormas) and, more recently, Perpu on Job Creation. It is sufficient to explain the relative weakness of civil society and its components compared to the state.

The function or substance of existing democratic procedures and institutions has been altered under the desires of the ruling regime. Thus, the appearance of a democratic state is maintained, but in reality, it is only a "shadow democracy." As a recommendation for those interested in "political leadership and democracy," it is essential to examine the essential characteristics of political leadership in a democratic system. Positively, the substance of a country's political leadership will preserve its democracy.

Conclusion

In Europe, the United States, and other developed nations, the discourse on leadership and democracy is replete with discussions on strengthening "performance democracy" by achieving the goals of the "welfare democratic state." It is essential to measure the success of one political leadership against another in maintaining, sustaining, and strengthening the welfare democratic state that has been operating.

The decline in the quality of democracy in Indonesia, with the weak movement and involvement of civil society as the main topic of discussion, and the emergence of populist leaders dominate the relationship between political leadership and democracy in Indonesia.

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