The Impact of the Public Sphere of Democracy on the Competence of Citizens

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the impact of democratic public sphere presented by representatives of the people to constituents in terms of character development and the maturation of citizens’ understanding of democracy. Democracy and citizenship cannot be separated as the main principles of a democratic system that prioritizes the will of the people (citizens) so that it requires a relationship that has a positive impact on citizens. This research method uses case studies on democratic public sphere activities carried out by representatives of the people for their constituents which are applied to the concept of local wisdom. The results of this study are (1) Democratic public sphere is a place to liberate ideas about contemporary social issues and encourage citizens to take social action or solve social problems, (2) the democratic public sphere is a space to internalize values such as tolerance, mutual cooperation, pluralism, and civility as well as respecting the diversity of citizens. (3) The public sphere is an instrument to foster participation and brotherly values that support a peaceful atmosphere in society.

Keywords: Citizens · Democracy · Publik Sphere

1 Introduction

Mufti stated in his book “Theories of Democracy” democracy strengthens human dignity and provides space for continuous citizenship education (elevating political culture). The existence of a civic education space will make the community more likely to have high cultural values. Lipson in his book “the democratic civilization”, explains that a state that responds to the needs of its people and raises a better standard of living is a form of education to know democracy. Lipson continued in his explanation that the ideal democracy provides space for the people including providing opportunities to mature understanding and raise awareness. This shows that people’s representatives should be able to foster effective citizenship actions (act of citizenship) in order to build awareness and foster citizen participation. State oversight of government.

Efriza’s view in his book “Why Politics is Interesting” [1] emphasizes that the indicators used to see whether a representative is considered representative by the person representing him are divided into 3 things, namely: (1) providing political education that...
can influence character constituents; (2) having the same emotional expression as the constituent emotions; and (3) high intensity of communication with constituents. This theory is very compatible with applied democratic principles governing the relationship between people’s representatives and constituents because as Hoogerwer and Hanim (in Alpha Amirrachman, 2014) stated that the appropriate relationship model in Indonesian democratic principles is a delegation model that wants representatives to act as being governed or the power of attorney who carries out orders from those who represent them so that they must set an example and influence in building the character of citizens.

The condition of Indonesian society has the potential to cause conflict with all the diversity that exists because the concept of democracy requires an educated society. The number of people who have not touched adequate education makes it possible not to get democratic education which has the potential to cause primordial views and it is easy to get propaganda so that differences in democracy can lead to division, hatred and polarization in society that continues to stay away from the value of harmony.

A civilized democratic public space is a hope in a country that adheres to a modern democratic system where the potential for polarization that leads to hatred is enormous, so public awareness is needed and state administrators in their role as solidarity makers are needed. The existence of space for the formation of a participatory and democratic forum through recess as a democratic public space is the focal point of research that examines its implications in the process of democratic character of citizens.

According to Hardiman [2] public space is a forum in terms participation of citizen and public virtue which is formed because of respect for their rights as citizens. In other words, a democratic space for the community to bridge the public interest which includes creating public opinion based on deliberation to reach consensus without interference from personal, group or government interests, which in turn conveys aspirations to the government as the organizer of the government. Therefore, public space is projected to solve the problems of the general public and not for private purposes. Commitment in maintaining the originality of the democratic public space so that it is not used as a mere political tool or used as a tool to mobilize the masses for individual political interests, but as an instrument for channeling aspirations in solving social issues in society.

The presence of a democratic public sphere is an abstraction born of political sensitivity. In a cultural oration, culturalist Radhar Panca Dahana once said that culture has many doors, politics has one door. Therefore, culture is more flexible than politics. The term cultural approach is often believed to be more capable of overcoming the limitations that exist in the political approach so that cultural movements are broader in scope than political movements. Political positions that are able to influence culture so that humans will make decisions will ultimately influence the development of human culture and civilization.

According to Delanty that democracy consists of elements namely constitutionalism, pluralism, and citizenship. Of course, as a modern country, the constitution is the most important thing in the continuity of the state as the Indonesian constitution which contains the ideals and ideology of the state, the functions of state institutions as a guide for state administrators, as well as the rights and obligations of its citizens. Pluralism is also the most important thing present in a democracy. As Eck’s view says that pluralism is not a gift but an achievement so it really requires the commitment of citizens, because
competence without commitment will not be possible to create a consistency in realizing harmony. Finally, citizenship is defined as actions of citizenship (civic engagement) that can take part in government policies, both expressing constructive critical thinking, commitment in carrying out rights and obligations, and participation in political, social, and cultural activities.

From Delanty’s view above, it can also be said that democracy and citizenship cannot be separated and are closely related. Democracy is a system that is built that puts the will of the citizen. First, while citizenship actions are needed so that democracy can live, it can even be said that the progress of a country is due to the active involvement of citizens in building their nation. Reinforced by the views of Branson & Quigley (1998) that civic competence is, among other things, first, civic knowledge which relates to citizens’ understanding of all binding rules in terms of their rights and obligations as citizens. Second, civic skills whose emphasis is more on citizen actions or can be said to be participatory actions in terms of society, nation and state as a characteristic of democratic of citizens. Third, the character of citizens. In this case, of course, as a country that has instilled an ideology as a reflection of national identity, it must instill a character according to the distinctive character and style of the Indonesian nation, namely, a commitment to maintain harmony and be able to adapt its national life from all differences as well as characters that support the maintenance and development of the nation. Development of constitutional democracy. From the citizenship competencies above, it can also be categorized as an element in the maturity of the democratic character of citizens because everything leads to the public aspect.

The public sphere has been defined by Jurgen Hubermas [3] as a space for our social life where public opinions can emerge which are formed to guarantee all citizens, such as guarantees of freedom of assembly and association and freedom to express and publish opinions on matters of public interest. Therefore, public space is a potentially very effective means for the growing democracy character of citizens.

2 Method

The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study research strategy. This research examines holistically about the democratic public space implemented by the people’s representatives for the constituents. Researchers examine the impact of public space on changes and the formation of citizen character. In this study, researchers made direct observations during recess activities by the people’s representatives and conducted in-depth interviews with the people’s representatives as the main informants and the community as supporting informants to find out the impact of democratic public space.

Research data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation which were then analyzed using the Milles and Huberman model. Data analysis techniques consist of data reduction or selecting data from the results of interviews with informants and the results of direct observations by researchers, data presentation, and data verification or in other words researchers ensure the correctness of data by confirming the public and political experts.
3 Result of Research

The public space can come with many instruments, the opening of the faucet of democracy allows for activities to gather, associate and express opinions. Constitutionally, the container space in the formation of public space can be implemented through a program to absorb the aspirations of the people’s representatives, known as recess. Recess is one of the vertical aspirations channeling upwards from the people to the government, either through visits by the Regional People’s Representative Council (DPRD) to selected regions (dapils) to their constituents [4].

The existence of facts in the field shows that the implementation of democratic principles is not maximal or in other words it is not in accordance with the existing facts or reality, because many people’s representatives are not transparent in reports on the use of the recess implementation budget and there are even many reports showing that people’s representatives do not carry out recess (fictitious report) so that it does not present a democratic public space even though the main essence in the implementation of democracy is the existence of aspirational space for citizens to be involved in participating in government.

As a room for discussion and a forum for conflict resolution, recess has transformed towards the development of citizen competencies that offer citizen intelligence because they can know the regulations in the state. Another thing is the expertise of citizens because it allows honing creativity in a community that is full of the principles of equality and kinship as well as the growth of the character of citizens because it can foster public trust and distance themselves from parochial characters because they already know that all social problems have solutions that are an obligation for state administrators. And become rights for citizens. As Niall Ferguson put it that “the success of a civilization is measured not only by its aesthetic achievements, but also by the duration and quality of life of its citizens.” (Alfian) In other words, through the recess instrument as a forum for problem solving, it can grow a civilized democratic system.

The existence of a democratic public space provided by members of the legislature to meet their constituents, which is termed the recess period, is utilized as best as possible, even though there are no specific guidelines or technical guidelines in the law on recess itself so that the democratic public space is developed by members of the Makassar City DPRD themselves. In selecting a sample from the population of Makassar City DPRD members, researchers chose DPRD members who had served more than 1 period to become informants in this study with consideration of maturity in carrying out their duties and functions as legislators at the regional level. All of the informants generally emphasized that the goals of opening democratic public spaces are in order to accommodate the aspirations of the community, preserve the value of local wisdom, resolve social problems, and strengthen the emotional relationship between DPRD members and constituents (consecutive district residents) as well as relationships between fellow communities so that harmony remains. Protected from all differences in political choices and also a peaceful path for all disputes and arguments.

From extracting information by researchers, it can be categorized that if the recess is transformed into a democratic public space, it can provide political education to the community in order to realize a civilized democracy free from hatred or in other words become a mediation path in solving social problems, fostering trust in state administrators.
and become a catalyst in supporting the acceleration of positive development which is a mutual agreement.

Some indicators of the success of the democratic public space program in the growth of democratic maturation of citizens are as follows (Table 1):

**Table 1. Result of Observations and interview of Researchers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge level</td>
<td>Increased knowledge of citizens in the recess program due to the presence of experts in terms of political education and democracy so as to increase understanding of the duties and rights as citizens, the authority of legislators, the existence of an understanding by the public about the practices and benefits of ethical politics, as well as more processes in understanding services in the Makassar City People’s Representative Office (DPRD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of attitude</td>
<td>Changes in citizen behavior, namely the stimulation of thinking about social issues and the growth and development of social sensitivity in terms of dealing with problems in the community environment, awareness of the importance of creating democratic public space to solve small problems in society, including discussing matters of religion or worship, security, as well as improving commitment to fostering a culture of mutual cooperation in the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in behavior</td>
<td>Changes in the behavior of residents, namely the stimulation of thoughts about social issues, the emergence of social sensitivity in terms of dealing with common problems in society, the tendency to always open up public spaces in the form of friendship in the mosque after Isha prayer time, increasing the spirit of mutual cooperation in the community, Environmental Security Posts (Poskamling) is more crowded than before, and it is not awkward for people to invite DPRD members to family parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maturation of Citizen Democracy</td>
<td>Increasing democratic activities and not being easily influenced by news or information circulating without seeing and questioning the evidence in the democratic public sphere as well as growing competence, commitment, and confidence in association, gathering, and expressing opinions for common needs in society, nation and state.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 Freedom of Thought on Social Issue

In a journal [5] Socio-cultural competence offers national insight which is measured by the presence of a nursery between a pluralistic society (religion, ethnicity, and culture) with democratic civility. The importance of efforts to build social and cultural capital in order to bring life together through understanding socio-cultural values. So that with increasing social competence, citizenship plays an important role in growing democratic maturity and animates social sensitivity.

The process of maturation of democracy cannot run without room for citizen involvement. Civic engagement developed by Thomas Ehrlich [6] as a process of believing that a person can and should make a difference in improving his or her community requires knowledge, skills, and values to make a difference. In other journals, civic engagement is defined by the conception of a good society and beliefs about how individuals should behave in order to increase the social capital of youth and reduce the shortage of skilled labor, thereby increasing the demographic bonus [7]. Therefore, through the instrument of public space democracy can foster social sensitivity about issues and problems that exist in society.

From the two views above, the author considers that there is a mutual connection which places civic involvement as very important because it matures humans in acting and improves skills by building communication in the community so that public space is a process of maturation of democracy and can increase the demographic bonus. As noted by Ramaley, that civic engagement depends on perspectives and interests as the concept of civic engagement is much broader, as follows: [8].

a. Civic engagement as community service, namely the role of citizens who are active and committed in terms of citizenship status so that they are full of responsibility and participation and are able to invite others to get involved in social movements.

b. Civic engagement as collective action, namely citizen actions that arise as a result of awareness of their role as citizens so that together they take collective action in order to influence other communities to be involved.

c. Civic engagement as political involvement, namely the existence of the role of citizens is defined as the efforts of citizens to solve problems through political channels or in other words solving public problems by involving elites or the participation of political figures.

d. Civic engagement as social change, is the role of citizens who can be categorized as participatory because they have a mission in order to provide social change and organize the future according to plan.

As explained in the description above, providing references to the concept of citizen involvement focuses more on the collectivity of society in realizing more positive social change. The involvement of citizens in the public space is an act of citizenship in resolving conflicts or public challenges which are resolved through the media of discussion or what is known as a democratic public space so that it becomes an instrument in educating citizens so that they do not remain silent on social problems and create shared sensitivity in overcoming them.

Citizen participation in democracy is defined as an activism which in Perez’s definition (in Perez et al., 2010) is mentioned as an action that leads to solving a public
problem. This is reinforced by Boulianne’s view [9]. Which states that civic engagement cannot be defined as a social campaign or a campaign, but instead voices several problems of social injustice and offers solutions to solutions that are discussed collectively. In another definition expressed by Verba that awareness in contributing mind and energy voluntarily in social life is part of improving the quality of civic engagement. Therefore, democratic public space is an excess in freeing thinking about social issues and fostering collective sensitivity in solving them.

3.2 Character Development of Civil Society

According to Azyumardi Azra in [10], civil society means more than just a pro-democracy movement, because it also refers to the formation of a quality and civilized society. Therefore, civil society leads to advanced or modern living conditions that remain embedded in social values that lead to wisdom in acting, which according to Nurcholish Nadjid’s character implies tolerance, the willingness of individuals to accept various kinds of political views and social behavior.

In the character of democratic participation, there are 5 positive values [11] that grow in individuals as a result of citizen involvement in democratic public spaces namely, trust values, competency values, caring values, connection values and character values or behaviors that are wise. From positive values or characters that grow in a democratic society, it can create civility for citizens because the character that is grown is in line with the spirit of nationalism and the distinctive character of society which is in line with cultural values, especially the Indonesian nation, which is known as a nation that prioritizes humanism and religious values and prioritizes the value of togetherness so that very compatible with the character of an ideal citizen who has an indicator, namely the intelligence of citizens who are able to balance emotional, social and spiritual. Another indicator is having a sense of nationalism and responsibility as well as a participative attitude in the affairs of society, nation and water state.

From the description above, it shows that the involvement of citizens through democratic public spaces is more directed to character building that supports the conceptualization of a country in the form of participation in maintaining harmony over all differences and fostering a national spirit that has the character of gotong royong as a reflection of civil society.

From interviews with informants as public figures explained that the holding of democratic public spaces is sometimes carried out with the concept of a semi-formal event because it has become a tradition of the people of Makassar City in fostering the spirit of local wisdom, namely sipakalebbi (mutual respect), sibawange (reminding each other), and sipakatau (mutual respect). Humanize each other. Therefore, according to the definition of civil society, it is a civilized society with all the local wisdom attached to itself and a nation that can interpret its life with all the diversity in society. Values such as sipakatau, sipakalebbi, and sikapale are believed to foster moral commitment within oneself. In addition, it provides the concept of the Prophet’s example, namely Amanah, Fatonah, Tabligh, and Siddiq. If we follow our political commitment, Rasulullah certainly aspires to a civil society life.

In Habermas’s explanation [12]. That the democratic public space is a media liaison for citizens to fulfill human rights in channeling their public aspirations without pressure
and full of ethical, idealistic and normative principles. In line with the concept developed by Bjur and Estman that civil society has the main character of independence in order to foster the spirit and principles of civil society so that it can be said that democratic society is the main foundation for the realization of civil character or society. Civilized. Therefore, democratic public sphere offers characteristics that support the creation of civil society because it can foster a spirit of citizen participation without heeding cultural values that are full of customs or civility.

In a journal [13] it is explained that the background of civil society is the concept of the divine city, the city of civilization or the city community. On the other hand, the meaning of civil society is also based on the concept of al Mujtama ‘al-Madani introduced by Prof. Naquib al-Attas explained that the principle of civil society is a community order that puts forward the value of tolerance, democratic or participatory citizens, civility with full wisdom and respect for diversity so that the value of wisdom is built through democratic public spaces such as mutual respect, reminding each other, and humanizing each other is a form of democracy that leads to the characteristics of civil society.

Another informant added in his explanation that the public space that is built must be based on wise values, especially now that the democratic system is more open which can instill the value of capitalism which is all because of money (materialistic). Therefore, the concept of public space must include religious elements because those values can make people understand the essence of politics, such as alluding to the history of Islam, both Sayyidina Umar and the Prophet Muhammad SAW. What is more important is teaching the value of Siri’ or shame because in meetings in public spaces always make political contracts according to the wishes of the people so that in carrying out their positions they must fulfill promises and the growth of other values built is trust.

3.3 Peace Instrument

According to a member of the Makassar City DPRD as an informant, he acknowledged that public space is the center of life because through the implementation of democratic public spaces communication can be built and if communication is built there is a better life because of friendship so that values of brotherhood and a sense of tolerance are created between people. He added regarding the urgency of the public space, that in the middle of an urban area like Makassar City, it is very necessary because sometimes they do not know each other, so it is important to have a public space. Through that communication and intimate relationships can be built properly so that they can take care of each other in the sense of maintaining mutual security so that social justice can be realized. As Arkinson’s view in [14] that peace will not exist in society if there is no justice, “No Peace Without Justice”. The informant continued that the meaning of public space is a place to carry out moral obligations as politicians. Therefore, the public sphere of democracy is an education of peace that can foster a sense of brotherhood or in other words foster a sense of love for the homeland.

Tillman explains in [15] about the points of reflection of the character of tolerance that will lead to an atmosphere of peace in society, namely making a sense of peace as a goal, being open and receptive to differences, respect for individuals and each other, courage and sensitivity, the growth of love and affection, the ability to face difficult situations and
be able to survive against conditions that are not liked. Therefore, communication that is built through a democratic and participatory space fosters the value of brotherhood and the character of tolerance that leads to an atmosphere of peace in society, nation and state.

Through communication that is also built between the community and people’s representatives, it becomes a bridge for the birth of educational policies that are more futuristic and anticipatory and able to consider aspects of the heterogeneity of Indonesian society so that the recess program or democratic public space becomes the right place or means to foster and instill values of peace and values. The noble values of living together in all differences in society [14].

In the view of John J. Patrick provides an explanation that the act of citizenship (act of citizenship) in the common interest is an indicator of citizens who have good character or character in a democratic country including respecting and protecting the right of everyone, to participate responsibly in political life, always to set an example of democratic citizenship morals in society and to promote the common good. Therefore, it is very important to hold a meeting or public space in the community because it creates an atmosphere of harmony and a sense of peace due to the emergence of a spirit of protecting the rights of fellow citizens and being committed to maintaining moral values in society.

4 Conclusions

The process of growing the character of democracy cannot run without room for citizen involvement. Civic engagement which was developed as an effort to foster a participatory and democratic character. The democratic public sphere is a forum for freeing ideas about contemporary social issues and encouraging citizens to take social action or solve social problems. He realized the importance of building social and cultural capital in order to bring life together through understanding socio-cultural values. So that with increasing social competence, citizenship plays an important role in growing democratic maturity and animates social sensitivity.

A democratic public space is a space in the process of internalizing civil society values such as tolerance, mutual cooperation, pluralism, and civility as well as respect for diversity. As the principle of civil society is a community order that prioritizes the value of tolerance, democratic or participatory citizens, civilized with full wisdom and respect for diversity so that the value of wisdom is built such as mutual respect, reminding each other, and humanizing each other is a form of democratic civility that leads to characteristics of civil society that can give meaning to their lives both individually and in the community.

Through communication that is also built between the community and people’s representatives, it becomes a public space, a space for political communication between the community and people’s representatives and becomes a bridge for the birth of educational policies that are more futuristic and anticipatory and able to consider the heterogeneity of Indonesian society. Therefore, the democratic public space can foster the value of brotherhood and the character of tolerance that leads to an atmosphere of peace in society, nation and state.
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