



Soedjatmoko and His Democracy

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Abstract. This paper discusses the idea of Soedjatmoko on democracy. In the late 1950s, Soedjatmoko and Soekarno had different vision on how to establish democratic society. If Soekarno proposed guided democracy, Soedjatmoko critized Soekarno's guided democracy and founded the democratic league. His league attempted to promote the ideal democracy in Indonesia. However, Soekarno repressed his movement, but he continually sounded the truly democracy by his papers. Using digital library research of membacasuedjatmoko.com, we could revisit Soedjatmoko's democracy. It is believed that his vision could be an alternative to reconceptualize and reactualize democratic practice in Indonesia. Indonesian democracy, in practice, encountered a whicked problem in term of exclusivism. This exclusivism is represented by some practices of passive participation, mal succession in political party, the loose of opposition, money politics in election, hoax and fake news, and intolerance problem. Those problems have stimulated social disparity and inequality. It is worth to revisit Soedjatmoko's democracy and reflect his vision to sustain Indonesian inclusivism and welfare.

Keywords: authoritarianism, guided democracy, democratic league, inclusivism

1 Introduction

Indonesia had two experiments to implement democracy after gaining their independence. They had constitutional and guided democracy. If the constitutional system was under the prime ministers, the guided democracy was under Soekarno. In their application, these two democracies are considered failures because they cannot establish and implement the essence of democracy itself. In a parliamentary or constitutional democracy, weakness can be seen from weak foundations, which ultimately only lead to party conflicts. Then if in a guided democracy, the fatal flaw is the understanding that democracy is a form of authoritarian government. Democracy is essentially freedom and equality. Therefore, this democracy eventually collapsed and was considered to fail to realize the roots and keys of democracy itself.

Both democracies had its weaknesses and led the nations into its upheavals. Soedjatmoko evaluated both democratic practices. He attempted to return Indonesian democracy into its ideal. For him, between constitutional and guided democracy could not guarantee the spirit of democratization, freedom. Freedom along with autonomy are two auxiliary concepts to better understand Soedjatmoko's democracy.

Previous studies have studied the thought of Soedjatmoko in any aspect of life [1]–[8]. However, they did not focus on Soedjatmoko's democracy. Therefore, this paper attempts to narrate Soedjatmoko's democracy, especially the political life of Soedjatmoko, the failure of two Indonesian democratic experiments, and establishment of the ideal democracy. The availability of Soedjatmoko's works in the website of membacasoedjatmoko.com increase the feasibility to conduct this study.

2 Method

This study used historical method and collected some data from both primary and secondary literature. For the primary sources, the authors could exploit all Soedjatmoko's books, mainly *Etika Pembebasan* (The Ethics of Freedom) and *Asia di Mata Soedjatmoko* (Asia in the Eyes of Soedjatmoko) and papers which are available in the website of membacasoedjatmoko.com. The authors used historical hermeneutics to understand the social world and the historical context of Soedjatmoko's thinking. Therefore, we could elaborate our data in a proper context.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 The Political Life of Soedjatmoko

Soedjatmoko is known as humanist and development thinker. People also recognize him when we discuss Indonesian political culture and modernization. He was born in Minangkabau in 1922, however, he lived in the Javanese family. He entered medical school but he was interested to read political philosophy. Along with Subadio Sastrosatomo and Subandrio, he joined study group founded by Sutan Sjahrir. Sjahrir's study group transformed him as a critical thinker, author, and journalist. From 1947 to 1951, he was sent to the United States of America. In America, he campaigned and supported Indonesian decolonization politically and economically. He made a journey to Europe for nine months between 1951 and 1952. He visited socialist-communist countries to see the impact of socialism to social and economic transformation. He critically decided that people should make a gap from all political ideologies. For him, those ideologies did not change and lead people to their dream.

After going back to Indonesia, he joined PSI (*Partai Sosialis Indonesia* or Indonesian Socialist Party) to be promoted to be its representative in the constituent board in 1955. However, PSI failed to have people's support and led Soedjatmoko to re-think the nature of Indonesian political culture. He claimed that anti-colonial base and Indonesia party tradition uniformed Indonesian political culture. Public would support political candidate if the candidate gained traditional and charismatic authority. He realized that cultural power and irrationality had determined Indonesian life. He concluded he should befriend rather than confront the rivals directly in the political arena.

Triangle power of Soekarno, military forces, and Indonesian Communist Party dominated Indonesian politics during the guided democracy. For Sjahrir and Soedjatmoko, national government under Soekarno was much better than military and

communist order. However, Soedjatmoko resisted to Soekarno's democracy and established the democratic league but he still supported his government. In 1963, the government asked Soedjatmoko to compose economic declaration. This new policy tried to find the middle way between economic nationalism and integration of global market to fasten Indonesian growth. However, this policy was abandoned because of political confrontation to Malaysia, but he succeeded to promote PSI's intellectuals in the Indonesian bureaucracy from the late of Soekarno's reign to Soeharto's new order.

3.2 The Failure of Constitutional and Guided Democracy

The failure of these two democracies results from the absence of unified political leadership and a power structure that can be used as a basis for national leadership. In the aftermath of the revolution, Sukarno wanted to form a multi-party political system. This is very different from other countries that have also recently experienced revolutions, which generally only use mono parties [9]. However, in its implementation, the multi-party political system experienced various obstacles. Then over time Sukarno wanted to implement a one-party political system which began with the change of the National Committee from an executive to a legislative institution. A quasi-parliamentary system was established, in which the cabinet had responsibilities to the National Committee.

The failure of constitutional democracy can be seen from the various conflicts of pros and cons on the leadership of the National Committee, which has much dissent. For example, the National Committee, especially the youth, wants a leadership change. However, this is also a form of political interest, where these young people occupy important positions such as becoming chairman and deputy chairman of the National Committee, which will later be handed over to Sutan Syahrir and Amin Syarifudin [9]. As a result, it will make leadership power fragile and easily shaken. In addition, the political elite was considered incapable of setting a new set of national goals. This will lead to a loss of momentum for unity and unity at the national level.

Ultimately, the absence of new national goals made the multi-party system focus only on toppling each other and jockeying for power. The ruling cabinet ultimately fell not because of parliamentary conflicts but the struggle and alliance of opposition parties [9], [10]. This proves that parliament does not hold absolute power but is controlled by the party oligarchy.

Another factor that causes the failure of parliamentary democracy is the essence of political parties' presence. In a parliamentary political system, a political party should be a body that can balance the problems and needs of its supporters and its goals and duties in government. However, in reality, political parties are only a struggle for the power of the party elite. If the party elite wins power, they will be beholden to group interests and certain primordial allegiances. So this will impact the ruling party's loyalty to its group, no longer focusing on forming new national goals. Constitutional democracy should be a democracy that can limit power. However, in its application, the government and parliament need clarity about absolute power. Ultimately, this democracy was considered a failure and replaced with guided democracy which ultimately failed.

When guided democracy was enacted, Sukarno as president, conveyed new national goals. In addition, implementing the NASAKOM system provided a new

foundation for Soekarno's politics [10]. Three aspects, namely nationalism, religion, and communism, became a foundation for strengthening political support for him. Then these three foundations are also a form of political stability that can produce a stable and effective coalition.

However, it must be known that at this time, there is a need to show the existence of two parties, namely the Communist Party and the Army. Then over time, these two camps could no longer coexist, mainly during September 1965. In addition, guided democracy is also formed with neo-traditional concepts that cannot meet economic development problems. This made this democracy finally waver and made the people's trust decline so much that they wanted revolution.

3.3 The Establishment of Democratic Society

Democracy is essentially a form of majority voting in a country. Modern democracy is much more than just a majority system of government. The majority misunderstands democracy and authoritarianism as a form of dictatorship rather than a collective decision [11], [12]. Even under ideal conditions, democracy is a complicated form of government. It is even more difficult in a state where the society's economy is relatively fragile, a thriving society. There are even other individuals, groups, and actors within and influencing societies who feel threatened by the new and want to return to the old system, avoid the new, or refuse to adapt to it because it threatens their status, privileges, and opportunities.

Democracy is a system that upholds civil society dialogue, allowing people to live their daily lives with complete freedom, including interacting with their environment. Democratic behavior is when people engage with their neighbors in pleasing ways without considering their ethnicity, race, or religion [13], [14]. Because democracy gives individuals the opportunity to become subjects of life, it is considered a respected system. In addition, democracy helps transform ideology in various fields, including politics, law, economics, and even everyday life.

Essential principles of democracy include equality, social and political engagement, the right to vote, and the abolition of power in achieving social and political goals. Not only does democracy include the fundamental ideal of treating all people equally, but it also provides a free environment to uphold these ideals. The values of freedom of thought and tolerance of cultural diversity also influence the principles of democracy. This follows what is happening in Indonesia, where the country stands in various diversity and needs equality to achieve national goals.

The goal of a democratic society is the establishment of logical consensus through a process of appropriate deliberation to produce judgments that represent an equally impartial point of view for the benefit of all [15]. All those who doubt the possibility of rational agreement of democracy and claim that politics is a field in which one should always hope logically to find disagreement are considered to undermine democracy. In other words, even when consensus is needed, disagreement will still accompany it. There must be agreement on democratic institutions and ethical-political principles that guide political organizations. However, there will never be unanimity about the decision on this democracy [15]. Such dissent should be considered legitimate and even welcome in a pluralist democracy. They contribute to democratic politics and offer diverse forms of civic identification.

Democracy indicates the existence of a government that is elected by the people and offers various benefits to its citizens [14], [15]. A democratic government gives its people the most opportunities, freedom, and opportunity to live happily and prosperously. Everyone wants freedom and security; only a democratic atmosphere can provide for both. Therefore, Indonesia, which has a variety of diversity, needs freedom with equality. A democratic society will be formed if all aspects are considered equal, even though there are still many practices and differences of opinion.

4 Conclusion

It is believed that his vision could be an alternative to reconceptualize and reactualize democratic practice in Indonesia. Indonesian democracy, in practice, encountered a whicked problem in term of exclusivism. This exclusivism is represented by some practices of passive participation, malsuccession in political party, the loose of oposition, money politics in election, hoax and fake news, and intolerance problem. Those problems have stimulated social disparity and unequality. It is worth to revisit Soedjatmoko's democracy and reflect his vision to sustain Indonesian inclusivism and welfare.

In this case, a concept is needed that can be taken from the concept of democracy desired by Soedjatmoko. Where there is unity and a strong foundation for leaders in implementing a democratic political system. In addition, it requires an apparent strengthening of national goals and national ideals so that they are not easily fragile and faltering. In addition, in forming a democratic society, there is a need for equality in forming a decision, even though there are still disagreements. The concept of exclusivity can be minimized by prioritizing the democratic system itself. This can be done with efforts to decentralize power which is expected to represent all regions and the interests of citizens.

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