DOES THE PANDEMIC DECLINE OR MAINTAIN DEMOCRACY? TWO SIDES EFFECTS OF PANDEMIC ON DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates two sides' effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on democracy in Indonesia. Most articles on democracy and pandemics argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has declined democracy in many countries, including Indonesia. This article, on the one hand, agrees with the dominant argument but, on the other hand, argues that the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to maintaining democracy. This paper bases democracy on Beetham's notion, which defined democracy as popular control over public affairs with the principles of equality and participation. To examine the relationship between democracy and pandemics, we use three issues as case studies: the Mineral and Coal Bill, the Omnibus Law, and data transparency issues. This paper uses qualitative methods and data from literature studies regarding civil society's participation and control in public affairs during the last year. Two main findings of this paper show that the pandemic has accelerated democratic decline in two directions: from above and below. The decline from above is due to restrictions on freedom of speech and civil participation in public affairs. At the same time, a decline from below occurred due to people's cleavage in public health issues. In addition, misinformation spread by buzzer redistributing by others has worsened this situation. Otherwise, the pandemic also maintained democracy by strengthening civil society's networks and participation, which was marked by supporting digital activism toward the country's policy and data transparency. It may be concluded that civil society plays a crucial role in maintaining global democracy, especially during the pandemic.
Keywords: pandemic, democracy, civil restriction, social movement networks, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

For eighteen months, countries around the globe have experienced uncertainty due to the global pandemic, including political and economic uncertainty. Uncertainty generates intense contestation about a crisis's meaning and how to resolve it (Abers et al., 2021). Various political scholars' questions related to pandemics' impact on the world life order. What will happen to global (Freedom

House, 2020), regional (Guasti, 2020), national (Abers et al., 2021; Avritzer, 2021), and local democracies? How does the pandemic affect the dynamics of class change (Lay, 2020; Gindin, 2020)? Is the global pandemic making the public support social democrats and welfare states, strengthening the legitimacy of government (Levine, 2020)? This article tried to discuss the effects of the global pandemic on the national democratization process in Indonesia by asking, "does the pandemic cause decline or maintain democracy in Indonesia"? We put forward the proposition that pandemic has caused the decline of democracy, but on the other hand, pandemic also contributed to maintaining democracy. We understand such an opinion is probably too soon to decide on long-term effects on democracy because this uncertainty is still ongoing (Barcena in Abers et al., 2021). However, at least we contribute to determining the dynamics of the pandemic's short-term effects while preparing for the possibility of more comprehensive research in the future.

In general, recent literature on the pandemic's effects on democracy argues that the pandemic has led to the decline of democracy globally. Freedom House, an organization that quantitatively monitored global democracy for decades, reports that the world has experienced a democratic decline over the past 15 years, and 2020 is the worst. In 2020, the decline occurred in 73 countries, and only 28 countries experienced improvement, so the gap reached -45 (the highest in the history of the freedom house). The 2020 V-Dem Institute report found that democracy has ceased to be the majority political regime in the world after dominating for the last two decades (Rapeli, 2020). Luhrmann and Linberg (2019) argue that we currently witness a "third wave of authoritarianism" globally. Then, if autocracy is getting stronger and democracy is regressing even in advanced democracies, how can the pandemic accelerate re-authoritarianism in many countries?

In Brazil, the pandemic has perpetuated the authoritarian efforts of populist conservative President Bolsonaro. Even though their health minister is a doctor and an expert in public health, Bolsonaro has openly spread disinformation and rejected social distancing and the use of masks on social media. Throughout 2020, capitalizing on the fear of crowds, Bolsonaro used military intervention to attack pro-democracy institutions in Brazil (Avritzer, 2020). Meanwhile, in Central European countries, Hungary and Poland, populist leaders took advantage of emergencies to strengthen executive power (Guasti, 2020).

While some literature above argues that the pandemic declined democracy, Mietzner (2020), Paredes et al. (2020), and D'cruz (2020) argues that what is happening is a pseudo-effect of a pandemic. It is not the pandemic that declined democracy, but the pandemic that proves the depravity of the democratic process. Mietzner (2020) mentions that the ineffectiveness, inconsistency, and poor coordination among Indonesian government institutions at the beginning of the pandemic were the effects of the democratic decline in the past few years, which were marked by: the rise of right-wing populism, conservative religious groups, political polarization, the emergence of anti-democratic actors, and fester corruption

behavior. Meanwhile, Paredes et al. (2020) argue that poor prison facilities and governance in the United States, characterized by excessive capacity, are proven by the high rates of infection cases and prisoner deaths in the early days of the pandemic. D'cruz et al. (2020) also argue that the pandemic has caused human rights crisis for vulnerable groups such as the elderly and children due to an imbalance between its impact on health risks and access to health facilities.

What happens if we reverse the logical relationship between pandemic and democracy? Several articles argue that autocratic regimes are more effective in dealing with pandemics because only autocrats can execute difficult choices to stem the virus spread, such as in China, Vietnam, and Malaysia (Mietzner, 2020; Vadlamanati et al., 2021). We realize that arguments deserve a lot of support because the powerful government will be able to pass response policies quickly and effectively (without complicated political pros and cons in parliament) to adapt to the uncertainty of virus containment methods. However, this argument is not entirely valid. Several democratic countries in the Asia Pacific, such as South Korea, Taiwan, and New Zealand, are also very effective in stemming the virus's spread (Mietzner, 2020). An egalitarian and inclusive democracy can create more comprehensive health, social and welfare services access than autocratic governments (Vadlamanati et al., 2021). Therefore, the effectiveness of overcoming the virus cannot be justified by moving away from democratic practices.

In the context of Indonesia, what happened to the pandemic and democracy? The literature on pandemics and democracy in Indonesia is dominated by 2020 regional elections issues (Habibi, 2020; Rosanti, 2020) which unfortunately is not our focus in this article. We only analyze the effects of substantive democracy, which relates to the space for public participation to control government policies and public affairs and uphold human rights (Pascarina et al., 2015). We found two articles analyzing pandemic effects on this substantive democratic backsliding. First, using indicators from the freedom house, Abhipraya et al. (2020) found three signs of democratic decline during the pandemic, namely Indonesian government's policies did not pay attention to the transparency of the state budget, increasing the threat to critics of the government policies, and the emergence of disinformation about the pandemic conspiracy caused community polarization (Abhipraya, 2020). At the same time, Primandani (2021) predicts that it will be challenging to maintain democracy in the long term due to the country's political environment moving away from democracy and the threat to the enforcement of human rights due to repressive ways in response to demands (Primandani, 2021).

After explaining such literature on the regressive effects of pandemics on democracy, we offered the question 'do all case studies only show that pandemics impact the democratic decline? or are pandemics proving and accelerating democratic decline?' We found a few articles that argued about how democracy was able to survive during the pandemic. Guasti (2020) found that democracy in the Czech Republic and Slovakia survived because of the vital contribution of non-

governmental actors in maintaining democracy. Executive leaders in these two countries - both led by populist leaders - are moving away from democracy by ignoring opposition and the public under "state emergency law." Fortunately, civil society, mass media, resistance, and the judiciary have collaborated to prevent repressive state actions against any violation of health regulations. In Brazil, when populist leaders threaten democracy, efforts to defend democracy are led by social movement networks (SMOs). These social movement networks (SMOs) are actively fighting disinformation spread by President Bolsonaro about the pandemic threat. Social movements are essential in pandemic politics because they protest and put forward ideas for overcoming the pandemic and building coalition networks among them (Abers et al., 2021).

Based on the literature review above, we conclude that all threats to democracy come from above (the government). Little evidence shows that democracy has been strengthened by actors outside the state, particularly civil society. Through this article, we examine what happened to democracy in Indonesia during the pandemic. We put forward the proposition by agreeing with the mainstream argument that democracy has suffered a more significant backsliding after the pandemic. However, suppose the entire article above argues that the decline of democracy comes from above. In that case, we offer a new argument by arguing that the decline of democracy also comes from below (civil society) due to the cleavage of society over public health issues and the increasing disinfodemic (disinformation about the pandemic). At the same time, we also argue that the pandemic has strengthened the network of civil society organizations that play an essential role in maintaining democracy amid the pandemic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SUBSTANTIVE DEMOCRACY, DISINFORMATION, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS NETWORKS

To analyze the effects of pandemics on democracy in Indonesia, we use the concept of democracy as the central concept and lay democracy on David Beetham's notion of "democracy as popular control over public affairs." Second, we are assisted by the concept of *disinfodemic* (disinformation about pandemics) to explain how the disinformation has created cleavage in society that has fatal consequences for democratic response to pandemics. Third, we use the concept of social movement networks to explain the critical contribution of social movement networks in Indonesia in dealing with the pandemic and maintaining democracy.

Definition of substantive democracy, according to David Beetham, is popular control over public issues based on participation and equal rights for all people (Beetham in Paskarina, 2015). Democracy means disclosure space for the public to influence and oversee the governance of public affairs, including the process and implementation of government policies. Therefore, spaces for aspirations must be standardized and heard in every policy formulation and implementation. In addition, democracy also means the equal treatment of the state towards the people fairly and

equally. Therefore, the right to control offered by Beetham guarantees that people are ensured to have: guaranteed civil rights, political freedoms, and democratic civil society (Madubun, 2015). So how does the pandemic threaten substantive democracy?

The pandemic is a challenge for democracy when "emergency policy" can be the government's justification for overriding public inputs in policy formulation and triggering abuse of power (Abhipraya et al., 2020). Speed and uncertainty are the main reasons for limiting public input. The quality of democracy during the pandemic is also threatened when the government uses "social restrictions" policies to restrict public participation. In fact, at the same time, the government passed several vital bills and regulations, such as Perppu No. 1 of 2020 concerning State Financial Policy and Financial System Stability, Law no. 3 of 2020 concerning Mineral and Coal, Law no. 6 of 2020 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors, and Law no. 11 of 2020 concerning Job Creation (Omnibus Law). Restrictions on participation become even more urgent when the public has to deal with buzzers who create biased information to justify their clients' data. This buzzer job can potentially make people lose their correct information orientation to the point of being disinfodemic and cause non-substantive polarization in society (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021).

Disinformation departs from the excessive supply of news digital media era, which poses a threat of digital technology to democracy (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). Lewandowsky et al. (2013) define disinformation as a deliberate lie in the form of misleading statements disseminated to the public. Disinformation is widespread by leveraging digital technologies that enable the decentralized publication and distribution of information in the public arena. So that each individual can produce content without scrutiny or control as is done in mainstream media (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). In Indonesia, disinformation has become a medium for the threat of political polarization in the last few years due to high exposure to disinformation. According to the Mastel (Masyarakat Telekomunikasi), a non-profit organization in the telecommunications sector, 43 percent of Indonesians receive fake news every day (Andranto, 2020).

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has created new fears about the spread of disinformation in digital media. The Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia (Kominfo RI) recorded 2,632 fake news related to the COVID-19 pandemic from January 2020 to April 2021. Among them, 177 fake information about the COVID-19 vaccination (katadata.co.id, April 13, 2021). Social media Facebook accounted for 2,139 cases, Twitter 438 cases, YouTube 45 cases, and Instagram 20 cases. These findings only come from findings that the Kominfo RI has followed up. We suspect the actual data is much larger than the recorded one. The data above does not include fake news that spreads through messaging platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram. Disinformation circulating

freely in the public arena seriously threatens the effectiveness of pandemic response in Indonesia.

The public arena has changed significantly since the advent of digital technology. Previously, the public arena was limited to stakeholders related to a particular issue. Recently, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Instagram have become inseparable parts of the public arena because they provide opportunities to distribute information freely and without control (Jungherr & Schroeder, 2021). Therefore, we want to analyze the consequences of democracy quality in Indonesia during the pandemic. In the discussion section, we will describe the forms of fake news related to the pandemic -and its minor issues- which have gone viral in the last eighteen months and their effects on community cleavage in Indonesia.

If we use the two concepts above to analyze the decline of democracy, then we use the concept of Social Movement Networks to analyze democracy resilience amid this pandemic. Social movements play an essential role in maintaining democracy by overseeing the government's work to overcome the pandemic and solve social problems with the government (Abers, 2021). Due to restrictions on street activities, social movements have transformed by focusing their activities on online formats (Habler, 2021). Social media sites are a practical medium to facilitate their activities in real-time with unlimited reach. The implication is that social media can empower civil society movements to mobilize protests, build networks, and articulate discourse based on relevant themes (Poell & van Dijk in Habler et al., 2021). Social media has two functions. First, a platform for direct interaction with their followers. Second, it provokes the attention of the mainstream media to be reported later (Habler et al., 2021). Thus, we will use mainstream media and social media as data sources.

This article defines a social movement as a network of actors engaging in collective action based on concerns and demands (Abers, 2021). Therefore, we call it a social movement network. The term social movement network in Indonesia is used to identify the convergence of issues in social movements in Indonesia in response to the pandemic. Since 2020, the anti-corruption movement, environment, gender justice, human rights, marginalized communities, students, and movements related to natural resources have moved to focus on the pandemic issue. In addition, temporary humanitarian actions have also emerged to respond to health, social and economic crises (kompas.id, July 2021). In identifying movement networks, we focus on two main issues: overseeing government policies and data transparency.

In this regard, we recognize the difficulty of identifying all the social movements that support democracy in Indonesia. Therefore, we limit it to specific activities. Hopefully, they are representative enough to illustrate the resilience of democracy. First, in overseeing state policies issue, we use three collective actions networks, namely the online people's assembly movement (Sidang Rakyat) initiated by academics and pro-democracy activists to protest the Minerba Law Bill in 2020, Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia) led by an alliance of

environment, human rights, anti-corruption, and working-class movement to protest Omnibus Law Bill in 2020, and the movement initiated by the University Student Council (BEM) the University of Indonesia to criticize the President which BEM from other universities then followed. Second, on the issue of data transparency, we use the volunteer network kawalCOVID19.co.id and laporCOVID19.org as case studies.

RESEARCH METHODS

We use a qualitative-descriptive design with the concept of literature study research as a data collection method to explain the case "Does the Pandemic Declined or Maintained Democracy? Two Sides Effects of Pandemic on Democracy in Indonesia. The study of literature used in this study aimed to obtain various relevant sources and the process of collecting all data on the problems studied. This method is also used as a guide in getting a theoretical basis. In addition, the use of literature studies in this paper aims to facilitate us in the process of reading, analyzing, and minimizing the difficulty of finding research gaps with research has been carried out (Danial & Wasriah, 2009).

In the analysis process, we firstly construct theories relevant to democracy. Theoretical construction is carried out as a concept of thinking combined with the reality and existence of democracy amid a pandemic in Indonesia. Furthermore, the decline of democracy occurred due to disagreement between the central and regional governments in implementing the PSBB and PPKM policy. We also observe that pandemic has significantly strengthened the solidarity of social movement networks and organized community volunteers, which is evidence of maintaining democracy in Indonesia. Several phenomena were observed, such as the emergence of social movement networks in overseeing the government's performance, especially in updating and displaying data on the development of victims of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia and raising funds.

Furthermore, in data analysis, we qualitative approach analysis by recording phenomena, collecting data, selecting data, reducing data, and synthesizing with existing theoretical foundations. In this case, we carried out several stages, namely books, journals, and publications from mainstream media websites and social media. Furthermore, we selected data that is adjusted to the study. Finally, we conclude all data analysis combined with theories and phenomena of democracy in Indonesia as a step of verification and configuration of this research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Key Moments of Indonesian Democracy During the Pandemic

Since it emerged, many scholars have predicted that pandemics will significantly change all aspects of the world's people's lives, including democratic practices (Abhipraya, 2020). The pandemic is a challenge for democracy because it triggers the abuse of government authority through the policy of "emergency law." In the context of democracy in Indonesia, the freedom house records several key moments, whether democracy developed or declined during the pandemic, through indicators of political rights and civil liberties.

First, political rights. Electorally, Indonesia gained the maximum score after successfully organizing simultaneous regional elections amid a pandemic in 9 provinces, 224 regencies, and 37 cities. Although there were schedule changes to finalize preparations, the 2020 simultaneous regional elections were successful with a high participation rate, and no significant increase in fraud problems was found. This means that the pandemic does not significantly reduce the quality of elections in Indonesia. Nevertheless, elections in Indonesia are still accompanied by classic problems such as money politics and political dynasties (Freedom house, 2021).

Second, civil liberties. In this section, Indonesia gets many notes as in previous years. Indonesia's freedom index also dropped two points to 59/100, with the "partly free" status. Non-transparent pandemic data caused the record of deteriorating civil liberties in 2020, the arrest of 51 journalists critical of pandemic policies, digital attacks on critical media, restrictions on civilian participation in the formulation of two crucial bills, namely the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law, and the use of repressive means - arrests, tear gas and water cannons - in responding to demonstrations (Freedom house, 2021). Then, what is the relationship between the pandemic and democracy? Has the pandemic contributed to the accelerating democratic decline in Indonesia? Or, conversely, maintain democracy? The following two sections will review the relationship between democracy and pandemics.

PANDEMIC ACCELERATING DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

From Above: Top-down Government and Restriction of Participation

The impact of the exponential acceleration and negative celebrations of the COVID-19 pandemic raises various problems that have not been predicted so far. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only targeted immunity. Still, it has penetrated, destroying the human auto centrum from all aspects of human life regarding social, economic, and government systems. In the context of Indonesian democracy, the

acceleration and celebration of the COVID-19 pandemic raise questions as well as problems in the government sector, namely related to governance, especially regarding the relationship between the central government and regional governments in dealing with this situation. the spread of COVID-19 associated with the decentralization of health affairs.

Problems also arise when the implementation of the regional quarantine policy is carried out. The relationship between the center and the regions seems to have yet to find a clear point of direction in building slick cooperation and intense communication designs to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this issue is one of the unique dynamics in the context of Indonesian democracy. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia has exposed the vulnerability and fragility of how the decentralization design has been implemented so far (Ariyanto, 2020)—at the same time, burying hope in the substantive democracy in Indonesia, which has been aspired to so far (Chadijah, 2021).

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its relation to democracy in Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic was tested directly on how to design a command between the center and the regions. The differences in attitudes shown by the center and the regions were seen; even before the local quarantine was established last March, they were not united. The command system in local government is out of sync with orders from the central government. As a result, the command system became volatile in several provincial governments. Several regions had undergone a lockdown before the central government, and even several regional heads did not comply with the rules.

The management relations between central and regions are becoming increasingly unclear, prompting several regions to take preventive actions. There are various forms of prevention. Some areas have taken a policy of closing access in and out of the city for four months, the inauguration of the area as an Extraordinary Event (Kejadian Luar Biasa -KLB), and closing flight routes and sea routes. However, this preventive action is not directly proportional to the central government's policy.

This form of attraction is seen when the local government first takes steps to anticipate and deal with a pandemic. For example, the local lockdown policy was taken by the Regent of Tegal on March 23, 2020, by closing city access with a movable concrete barrier (MBC). Papua Governor policy to close access ports, airports, land, and the National Border Post since March 26, 2020. Since March 27, 2020, the Bali Governor policy has emphasized that the public should not gather, work, study, and worship from home. Likewise, with several other regions, the Central Government has just issued Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the

Handling of COVID-19 on March 31, 2020. This raises the issue of how to regulate the authority of the central and regional governments in dealing with the pandemic.

Then, we analyze the democratic decline through the government's restriction of civil society participation in public affairs. At the beginning of the pandemic, some non-democratic countries such as Vietnam and Singapore - with centralized powers - seemed faster and more effective in tackling the pandemic. All countries do not yet have a role model; the governments are required to carry out a "trial and error" policy. This means that one policy can change in a short time. Therefore, "criticism" is seen as counter-productive and slows down their work. This is what supports why non-democratic countries seem effective in tackling the pandemic.

The Indonesian government also began to centralize pandemic policy. For example, the central government fully controls the PSBB policy, transparency of COVID-19 data, and information related to the pandemic. The impact of this pandemic data control is apparent when the government issued directives to the police to combat alleged pandemic disinformation -by reputable and critical media- and criticism of the president and government. Pandemic data becomes "state secret" data protected by law so that it is not leaked to the public. As a result, in June, the government arrested 51 people for criticism of the government and the media for releasing information different from that released by the government (Freedom House, 2021)

The Freedom House report also notes that the Indonesian government used pandemics to restrict critical journalists. Besides arresting 51 critics, several Indonesian media have also experienced digital attacks such as hacking, doxing, and distributed denial-of-service (DDOS) after publishing critical articles addressing government policies during the pandemic. The Alliance of Indonesian Independent Journalists (AJI) report noted that violence against journalists was the highest in 2020, with a total of 84 reports of violent incidents in the form of intimidation, physical violence, and detention of journalists covering mass demonstrations against the Omnibus Law Bill.

Restrictions also occur in the context of two bills formulation, namely the Mineral and Coal Bill and Omnibus Law Bill. Although spaces for participation are still available, the discussion of two critical laws in 2020 is carried out quietly and quickly without inviting relevant stakeholders. As a result, the two laws received a massive rejection from civil society after passing. Then, restrictions also occurred when the civil society movement held street demonstrations to reject the Omnibus Law in October 2020 by thousand people in 18 provinces in Indonesia. Inevitably, according to the direction of the central government, the police arrested hundreds of demonstrators and fired tear gas and water cannons that injured dozens of people (Freedom house, 2021).

From Below: Disinformation and Its Effects on Communities Cleavage

The COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to plague the entire world community, produces human life with uncertainty which at the same time creates fundamental problems for all aspects of human life, including the disinformation issue of a pandemic. Media news about the COVID-19 pandemic, which is increasingly massive, is often shrouded in misinformation or referred to as disinformation, which is currently one of the discourses in democracy.

Disinformation reduces public trust in government and scientists. According to a study report from the American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene (10/8/2020), deaths from disinformation have spread throughout the world, even in the United States, which even killed 800 victims and 5000 were hospitalized. In addition, the impact of massive disinformation has circulated on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and other websites.

The problem of disinformation also occurred in Indonesia. The impact of disinformation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic on various social media platforms was 2,000 sources divided into three categories: conspiracies, fraud, and health news regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Humpretch based on Research Pew (2020), disinformation from the conspiracy category reached 71% in the United States (BBC News Indonesia, 2021), while in Indonesia, from January 2020 to June 23, 2021, classifying as many as 1,885 hoaxes and disinformation regarding COVID-19 and vaccinations (Antara News, 20221). About democracy in Indonesia, the impact of disinformation causes a decline in democracy in the aspect of community collective awareness in handling pandemics.

Among disinformation narratives circulating pandemics and vaccination issues, they are: "pandemic is a conspiracy," "plandemics," "endorsed by COVID," and "pandemic is globalists' plans to control human population." It became worse when experts disseminated disinformation with broad influence, such as Mardigu (plandemic), dr. Lois (body-medicine interactions cause COVID patient deaths), Jerinx (endorsed by COVID), Ichsanudin Norsy (the guy behind why body temperature checks are transferred from forehead to palms). Meanwhile, globalists' plan to implant chips to monitor human behavior is disinformation about vaccination issues, such as vaccines containing magnets and metals, side effects that are harmful to the body, and vaccination. New York Times magazine report that one pioneer of the anti-vaccine movement is an osteopathic physician in Cape Coral, USA, Dr. Mercola. He used unscientific and unproven arguments to reject vaccination while offering his traditional treatment model. Since 2017, his profits from the disinformation business have been more than US$ 100 billion (New York Times, July 26, 2021).

The impact of disinformation caused communities to cleavage and threatened human rights to life. Helmi Hendra, a private worker in Java, shared the story lost his

father after being exposed to disinformation. After being positive for COVID, his father refused to be hospitalized because he believed he would be infected (di-COVID-kan). When his condition worsened, he finally accepted to be taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, he died due to late treatment. Here is Helmi's status on Twitter:

"Hoax played a big role in making dad lose the fight against COVID. My father died because he believed in the hoax news spread on social media. My father also did not want to be vaccinated because he believed in this hoax. Even when exposed, he does not want to take medicine because he believes in hoaxes that drug interactions can kill humans (liputan6.com, July 18, 2021).

Through the above analysis, it was believed that the disinformation has led to the decline of democracy by lowering public trust in government, threats to community unity, and threats to human rights.

Pandemic Maintaining Democracy: Important Role of Social Movements Networks

In line with the decline of democracy in Indonesia over the last few years, the network of civil society movements - the heart of democracy - has been actively consolidating and building solidarity, both institutionally and in terms of issues. During this pandemic, where street activity has been restricted, fears have arisen about the regress of civil movement. Fortunately, they adapted quickly by leveraging internet technology, mainly social media, and online meeting platforms. In this section, we analyze how pandemics helped to accelerate the adaptation of civil movements' struggles from offline to online without reducing the power of pressure. As we have said in the theoretical framework section, to examine how the pandemic maintains democracy, we use two crucial issues: controlling state policies and data transparency.

Controlling to Government Policy Issue: Cases of Mineral and Coal Bill, Omnibus Law Bill, and Criticism of BEM Universities Network in Indonesia

In this section, we used three social movement networks as case studies, namely: #BersihkanIndonesia, which led to the criticism of the Mineral and Coal Bill in 2020, and the Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia), which led to the objection to Omnibus Law Bill in 2020, and the solidarity network of BEM Universities throughout Indonesia when criticizing the Government in June 2021.

Clean Indonesia, or #Bersihkanndonesia, is an alliance of 30 civil society organizations to campaign for Indonesia to move towards energy, economic and environmental policy changes. DPR RI has officially passed the Mineral and Coal Bill (RUU Minerba) into Law Number 3 of 2020 on May 12, 2020. The process

occurred quickly. Several chapters in the bill still reap rejection from many stakeholders. One of them is Chapter 160A which allows the mining company to extend KK and PKP2B without an auction (kompas.com, May 2020). Activists in many regions also highlighted the withdrawal of permits from the provinces to the central government. They suspected mining re-centralization would bring Indonesia back to the new order era (authoritarianism).

The Clean Indonesia Alliance led the protest of the Minerba Law and involved 30 networks of anti-corruption organizations, environmental human rights, animal protection, and others. This movement network also involves fishers, farmers, and communities around mining areas who are victims of mining practices. At that time, the form of an effective health protocol for warding off the pandemic was still trial and error, so street demonstrations were impossible. Therefore, this movement network chose virtual demonstrations through social media and online video conferencing. Soon, the hashtag #TolakUUMinerba spread on Twitter, then retweeted by hundreds of thousands of accounts.

At its peak, this alliance initiated a no-confidence motion against DPR RI, known as the "People's Session (Sidang Rakyat)." The People's Session involved a network of activists, mining victims from Aceh to Papua, and academics in law, political economy, and environment. It was conducted for three days (May 30 – June 1, 2020) virtually through the Zoom meeting platform and broadcast live via YouTube. The participants who attended the Zoom meeting were 50, while those who watched live on YouTube reached hundreds of people. Besides that, several activists also submitted a formal and material review to the Constitutional Court.

The second case study is the protest of the Omnibus Law Bill led by the Indonesian People's Faction (Fraksi Rakyat Indonesia). The Indonesian People's Fraction (FRI) is a network of civil society movements as a result of the consolidation of 40 NGOs representing issues of anti-corruption (ICW), the environment (WALHI and Greenpeace, Human Rights (YLBHI), trade unions (KASBI and KPBI) and student affairs (GMNI KPBI, and LMND) to demand the rejection to Omnibus Law Bill. Partial rejection began in early 2020 when DPR RI put the Omnibus Law Bill into Prolegnas 2020. Through FRI, released on March 31, 2020, the main reason for rejecting Omnibus Law Bill is that the formulation of the Omnibus Law Bill during the pandemic will prevent people and stakeholders from controlling the discussion. A few months later, ignoring people's aspirations, the Omnibus Law was passed quietly on October 5, 2020, without much debate in the Indonesian Parliament. Immediately, online rejections are voiced through social media platforms, movement organizations accounts, and individual accounts of academics, activists, public figures, and ordinary people who reject the Omnibus Law. In just two days, millions of people have tweeted with the hashtags

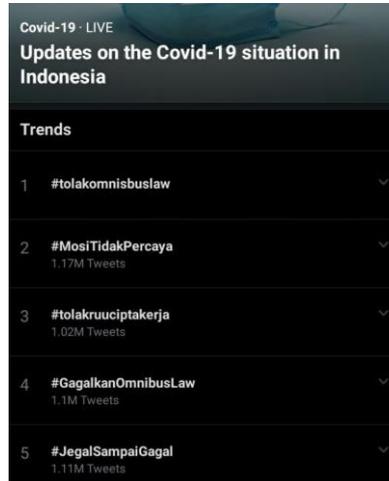#MosiTidakPercaya, and #GagalkanOmnibusLaw, which became trending on Twitter.

Figure 2: Twitter Trending Screenshot on October 5, 2020

Online demonstrations continue as the government does not respond clearly to their demands. On October 19, through its Twitter account, FRI voiced an online protest that read, "to prevent the danger of an oligarchic pandemic from spreading due to Job Creation Law, an Oligarchy State Code, it is hereby the Indonesian people need to enforce PSBB: Large-Scale Civil Resistance."

Figure 3: Online Guerrilla Rejection to Omnibus Law

They voiced their protest through social media using hashtags #CabutOmnibusLaw, #KitaBelumMenang, #StopBrutitasAparat, and an English

hashtag #WhatsHappeninginIndonesia. This massive online demonstration caused the rejection of Omnibus Law and gained attention from international media and the public.

The last case study is critics of BEM universities network throughout Indonesia to President Jokowi, Vice President Ma'ruf Amin, Chairman of the Indonesian Parliament Puan Maharani, and other public officials. This action began on June 26, 2021, when BEM UI criticized President Jokowi as the King of Lip Service due to many inconsistencies between the President's words and policies. In a short time, BEM UI action received a response from media and the public on social media, including reactions from politicians. One day later, UI Chancellor summoned President BEM to ask for information. The people considered this summons as a form of effort to silence student voices.

This triggered support and solidarity from BEM SI (All Indonesia) to form the Solidarity for Silencing Democratic Spaces on the UI Campus, which was signed by around 25 BEMs throughout Indonesia and civil organizations who also linked to the movement rejected the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law such as FRI, Clean Indonesia, YLBHI, AJI, Jatamnas, and Greenpeace Indonesia. This solidarity action was carried out by spreading the hashtags #KamiBersamaBemUI and #KrisisDemokrasiKampus on the Twitter platform.

Another kind of solidarity appeared when BEM KM UNNES Semarang criticized Vice President Ma'ruf Amin as King of Silent because he was always silent and did nothing as long as he was Vice President except as a religious legitimacy reinforcer of every government policy. BEM UNNES also criticized the Chairman of DPR RI, Puan Maharani, as the Queen of Ghosting because students thought that the DPR RI failed to represent the public interest, especially during the pandemic. Other BEMs throughout Indonesia also carried out this kind of solidarities and criticized the governors in their respective regions.

Figure 4: pamphlet BEM UI and BEM KM UNNES criticism of the Government

The three movements above can not be separated from one another because all coalition members are involved in the abovementioned movements. We argue that the COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened online media (social media and virtual meeting platforms) as a medium for social movements' struggle, which has been developing since the expansion of internet technology a few years ago.

In addition, the pandemic has also led to issues convergence of civil society movements. Movements that have their respective struggle areas to focus on overseeing public health issues and ensuring that people get their right to protection from the impact of the virus fairly. For example, they criticize the government after focusing on terms, not on substantive. They differ from PSBB, PPKM, Micro PPKM, Emergency PPKM, to PPKM Level 4. This movement alliance argued the reason behind government plays with terms is to avoid the consequences of the Health Quarantine Law in Article 8, which said that "during the regional quarantine, the basic living needs of people and food for livestock that are in the quarantine area are the responsibility of the central government." They also constantly criticize the portion of the pandemic response budget, which they consider to be not transparent and accountable, sluggish, and very inclined towards economic recovery rather than public health.

Data Transparency Issues: kawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID19.org

Transparency data is one indicator of the government's performance in tackling pandemics. Although the government has emphasized openness to all data, some data problems have been found in the field. For example, the difference between central and local governments or the death data between the government and the Indonesian Doctors Association. Data accuracy is crucial to reducing the curve and becoming a basis for policy-making (Valerisha, 2020). Data issues brought

public skepticism about accurate pandemic data in Indonesia. In this section, we present the critical role of social movement networks in controlling pandemic data in Indonesia through two reputable data volunteer platforms, namely kawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID.org.

KawalCOVID19.id and laporCOVID.org are two volunteer networks platform whose main job is to collect data related to pandemics using various sources, namely central government, provincial government, and community reports. Yusuf et al. (2021) refer to this volunteer as e-participation to tackle the pandemic. Regarding data transparency, the KawalCOVID19.id platform has three types of content: information, verification, and education. Information analyzes evidence-based information and facts (they avoid hypotheses, opinions, and assumptions). Verification works to clarify rumors and disinformation and explain them clearly. They work closely with the Indonesian Anti-Hoax Community. Lastly, they educate the public about what to do or avoid during the pandemic, including health information at schools, workplaces, and other public facilities.

Meanwhile, LaporCOVID-19 is a citizen reporting platform related to COVID-19 cases found by communities but out of the government's reach. In collecting and curating data, this platform uses a crowdsourcing approach by involving community participation to record COVID-19 numbers and report issues around COVID-19 around them (website laporCOVID19.org). In addition, this platform also provides a platform for reporting cases of social assistance distribution abuse. These two platforms are supported by social movement networks connected to movements we mentioned before, such as ICW, AJI, YLBHI, LOKATARU, and several platforms that focus on human rights and data transparency, such as hakasasi.id, Transparency International, and Jabar Digital Service.

An essential finding of this platform is the 19,000 death data gap between the government version and their findings based on reports in each province. On July 23, 2021, from May-July 2021 data, the number of positive COVID-19 deaths per province collected by the LaporCOVID19.id team reached 100,436, while the death data released by the central government showed only 80,598 people. From the perspective of human rights groups, 19,000 deaths cannot only be interpreted as statistics because there are stories and sorrows for every death.

Figure 5: data gap version between Ministry of Health and laporCOVID19.org

The COVID-19 report also focuses on the issue of distributing social assistance. This issue became a significant concern after Juliari Batu Bara, the Indonesian Minister of Social Affairs corruption case, was revealed. In addition, control of social assistance distribution becomes crucial as a guarantee of the public right to life during this mobility restricting policy. From March 2020 – February 2021, LaporCOVID19.org received 411 incoming reports and 327 verified reports related to the problem of social assistance distribution. The issues of social assistance include people who died but are still registered as beneficiaries; people who are recorded in the Social Welfare Integrated Data (DTKS) but do not receive assistance; residents who self-isolate but do not receive social assistance; as well as problems related to resident administration, especially for urban marginal groups such as homeless (Riana, 17th July 2021).

Based on the analysis above, we found that social movement networks have significantly contributed to maintaining democracy during this pandemic. Differently, the pandemic has contributed to maintaining democracy in Indonesia. This contribution was created in two ways: strengthening solidarity through the convergence of issues and strengthening internet technology as a medium for action.

First, strengthening solidity through the convergence of issues. #BersihkanIndonesia movement network, the Indonesian People's Faction (FRI), the BEM solidarity network, kawalCOVID19.co.id, and laporCOVID19.org were formed by movements with different focuses and issues. Although we see above that movements have begun to consolidate and support each other on every issue, the pandemic has strengthened its solidity through convergence pandemic mitigation. We have witnessed the pandemic crisis that has raised downstream problems such as corruption, human rights violations, freedom of expression, and participation restrictions. Therefore, the movement networks can help each other solve the partial problems of their respective movements by jointly overseeing the upstream issue, the

COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it can be concluded that by building a solid network of movements in controlling pandemic policies, the network also controls policies on anti-corruption, human rights, environment, natural resource management, and freedom of participation.

Second, strengthening internet technology as a medium for action. Before the pandemic, we had witnessed the rise of online activism networks through social media and specialized platforms such as change.org (Kurniawan & Rye, 2013). However, collective action -to suppress state policies- is still dominated by collective actions on the ground. They accept that technology is beneficial for building networking, communicating, and mobilizing. However, technology is not strong enough to put pressure. Since the pandemic, when all face-to-face activities have turned virtual, online meeting platforms such as Zoom Meetings, Skype, and Google Meet, have become very helpful in conducting long and in-depth discussions without mobilizing people. In addition, video-sharing platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook Video significantly contribute to disseminating movement information. Finally, through the "hashtag" feature, the Twitter social media platform also greatly contributes to mobilizing support for specific issues with a much wider reach, up to the international level.

CONCLUSION

Through the analysis above, we tried to answer the question, "does the pandemic decline or maintain democracy in Indonesia? We realized that the current conclusions might not be strong enough to justify the long-term effects of pandemics on democracy. However, we seek to go into short-term literature debate while preparing for the possibility of more comprehensive research in the future.

We agree with the majority argument that the pandemic has accelerated democratic decline in many countries, mainly due to restrictions on participation and transparency of data and budgets (Avritzer, 2020; Rapeli, 2020; Abers, 2021). In the Indonesian case, we found that the pandemic has accelerated the decline of democracy in two ways, namely from above and below. First, from above, the government has restricted public participation in several important policies and laws making processes, such as the Mineral and Coal Bill and the Omnibus Law Bill. Public control over state policies is the key to democracy, according to Beetham (1993). The pandemic also confirmed the re-centralization of power between central and regional governments. The central government determines policies to overcome the pandemic, such as PSBB and PPKM, based on their indicators, even though the employed data as reference is problematic. This centralization led to minor resistance from local governments.

Second, from below, disinformation is the root cause of community polarization due to non-substantive debates, for example, pandemic conspiracies and hoaxes about vaccination issues. Social media has become a new public arena where all discourses are debated without limits. At the same time, social media has perpetuated the spread of disinformation due to the absence of 'fact check' or control features in mainstream media. One of the disinformation's fatal effects is when people die because of the virus. However, because he does not believe in viruses, a guy refused treatment in hospitals and refused to get vaccines after being exposed to severe hoaxes on social media. Disinformation that occurred during the pandemic not only caused communities cleavage but also threatened human rights (right to life), which human rights is a critical indicator of democracy, according to Beetham (1993).

Social media has a paradoxical characteristic to democracy, especially in pandemics. On the one hand, social media undermined democracy through the spread of disinformation. However, on the other hand, social media has also maintained democracy by reinforcing social movement networks' solidity and a medium for movement activities (Abers, 2021; Habler, 2021). This argument is our second finding in this article. We found that the pandemic also contributed to strengthening the solidarity of social movement networks. This strengthening of solidarity is due to two things: the convergence of issues and the strengthening of the internet as a medium for movement.

Regarding convergence of issues, movement networks represent various background issues, such as anti-corruption, natural resource sovereignty, environment, data transparency, and human rights. A chain of shared solidarity binds the whole movement through the pandemic issue, which is upstream of new crises in each of the problems they have struggled with. Next, the pandemic has also contributed to strengthening the internet as a medium of movement. We see that online-based social movements have indeed emerged in recent years (Kurniawan & Rye, 2013). When the pandemic limits street actions, thus, the movement network must adapt to the use of internet technology as an alternative medium. The advantage is that demonstration can be carried out without mobilization, allowing increased participation without reducing the substance of pressure. In closing, this article's overall analysis confirmed that civil society's role is crucial to maintaining democratic practices in Indonesia, especially during the pandemic.

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