



Is Structural and Cultural Iron Cage be a Barrier? A Study on Social Movement in Indonesia Electoral Democracy

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Abstract

This study aims to discuss the social movements within the democratic process in Indonesia in 2024. This movement emerged as a response to injustice political policies in the context of electoral democracy that support president' son be a vice president. His presence on the political arena is perceived by the public as a being laden with political dynasty values. Political dynasty itself is a threat for democracy. This study uses a qualitative approach, where primary data is obtained from observations and various reports revealed by various social media. This study shows that movement in various regions of Indonesia is a respond of public dissatisfaction and suspicion towards the dynastic power system. This study also reveals the dynamics of social movements in criticizing the government regime. Although this movement is massively carried out, there are very strong structural and cultural barriers, refers to Weber's term this is alike an "iron cage", and the social movement carried out have not yielded a significant results as needed by the public. This study concludes that social movements have their own dynamics and it is necessary to examine the structural and cultural aspects.

Keywords: Social movement · Structural and cultural barriers · Electoral democracy

BACKGROUND

Social movement can be classified into old social movement and new social movement. New social movements are characterized by the development of cutting-edge issues experienced by modern society. This movement typology goes beyond the issues of economic inequality and class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie class as a traditional mode in old social movements (Buechler, 2015).

However, actors in the new social movements are diversity. And, the latest trend in social movements is driven by youth with various issues behind their actions (Mei, 202; Earl et al., 2017; Bublitz et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the new social movement is "a biological child" that is born from the democratic system. Democracy promotes equality and freedom. The reformation in 1998 was the foundation for the direction of the formation of democratic traditions in Indonesia (Prasisko, 2016).

In the context of this study youth social movements become a prominent, on the other hand, refer to various movements initiated by young people who are consciously involved in various socio-political movements. This study focuses on the analysis on electoral democracy of the 2024 presidential election. In recent years, youth social

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movements have gained momentum and played an important role in shaping political discourse (Wahyuningroem et al., 2024; Miller et al., 2021). Their involvement shows that the discourse of resistance to power structures demands greater alignment with civil society.

Youth social movements have new characteristics that are identical to technology and social media as tools to mobilize the masses and strengthen discourse on the main issues of the discursive movement. With the presence of media technology, young people present a more innovative perspective in the discourse of socio-political change. This study is intended to discuss social movements in Indonesia's electoral democratic landscape in 2024. This movement, its basic argument, stems from the practice of electoral democracy in 2024, which is conditioned by political dynasties. Political dynasties subtly degrade the democratic system (Ananda, 2023; Meliala & Permana, 2023). Based on this argument, actions in various regions were led by youth to protest. This study is interesting in addition to the breadth of protest movements in various regions, this movement also explains youth activism about the struggle for justice, the radicalization of the democratic system, and the obstacles to the challenges of social movements in the Indonesian landscape.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach, the data was obtained through a series of observations and various social media reports on protests against dynastic political practices conducted by nearly 700 universities spread across different regions in Indonesia. Various data reports from social media were also analyzed using the social movement concept approach, namely framing and repertoire. This study basically focuses on the analysis of new social movements and emphasizes its actors to young people. The term young people in this study is intended to encompass the various identities attached to them as students, millennials, and Z Generation. The existence of youth in the contemporary socio-political arena by engaging in social movement actions is an interesting phenomenon to be noticed. Specifically, this study will be structured into several parts, starting with a literature review on youth social movements, virtual space as a tool for mass mobilization, and protest movements against dynastic politics. Various forms in social movements such as protest actions, framing and repertoire in the protest movements carried out will be discussed in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historically, youth social movements have played an important role in the construction of new social movement typologies. These movements promote social change, bridge the rights of marginalized groups, and utter the current issues experienced in contemporary society. Some studies that support this argument such as the study carried out by Earl et al. (2017) on the presence and participation of young people in the political process. The existence of young people has an important position in the landscape of the concept of social movements, especially with regard to political and democratic issues. Mei (2021) also reveal his study on youth activism in Hong Kong. This study shows that youth social movements in this area are driven by three main factors that are relatively same with youth movements typology in the global landscape, namely threats to collective social identity, the desire to be heard in public spaces, and the rise of online activism.

Then in the context of welfare issues, Bublitz et al. (2024) explores social movements involving young people in advocating for the improvement of individual and collective welfare, which is defined by them as a collective feeling, socially connected, and has a clear goal of a better life. This study explores social movement practices that support well-being issues primarily among young people. Youth is a central generation in the history of social movements. Chock's (2012) corroborates this argument, that young people have been central to many major social movement actions throughout history. Young people, based on Chock argues, are actively involved in mobilizing their peers, families and communities to make social transformations for the better.

The study by López et al. (2022) reviews that youth-led movements are important in society because they have the bravery to speak out against various injustices against both men and women. Furthermore, Lopez's study elaborates that much of the voices are silenced by those who do not want the injustice to end because their self-interest may be affected. Social movements challenge and break this phenomena, and the main relevance of youth-social movements lies in their ability to change a state and create greater opportunities for equality for all. Social movements are driven by idealism and the desire to create a more justice and democratic society.

The literature about youth social movement above explains some important things about issues, directions, and orientations in mobilizing the masses to encourage changes to have a more

positive impact on society. Social movements are collective actions that specifically focus on certain social or political issues with an orientation to resist and or support social change (Zeller, 2022). Social movements involve individuals, groups and or organizations to mobilize, voice issues of basic needs that are considered problematic, framing, intrinsic motivation, individual and collective actions, and related collective identities (Grinspun et al., 2022). It places collective action led by people based on commonality (Asrul, et al. 2024). Social movements are usually manifested in various forms, one of which is in the form of protests. And, in the 2024 electoral democracy process in Indonesia, the protest was driven by the issue of dynastic politics as the main issue.

In the 2024 electoral democracy, dynastic politics is characterized by the presence of the President's family in the power arena along with the Jowoki's government. Mayor of Surakarta Gibran Rakabuming Raka was registered as a vice presidential candidate to accompany Prabowo Subianto on October 25, 2023. Previously, the Constitutional Court or abbreviated as *Mahkamah Konstitusi*, whose the chairman is also from Jokowi's family, made any changes by stipulating the addition of phrases to Article 169 letter "q" regarding the age of threshold requirement for presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the Law Number 7 year of 2017 concerning elections. Based on this decision, it is possible for President Jokowi's son to become vice president.

Then the protests arose because this was considered a form of accumulation of power centralized to one family and involving kinship ties. The accumulation of power to the family will tend to create abuse of authority to pave the way for relatives to gain power. This condition is termed as dynastic politics. Political dynasty is a strategy used to maintain power by passing it on to relatives. Dynastic politics on the one hand is driven by the lack of qualified figures from political parties and support for the status quo (Effendi, 2018). Through the political dynasty system, power is passed down through generations to descendants or families.

Dynastic politics threatens democracy. This threat is based on the value of dynastic politics, which in practice the limits people's rights to participate fairly, because only those from certain families have access and opportunities to hold roles of power. And, this can threaten the basic principles based on the principle of popular sovereignty. Furthermore, dynastic politics is a strong basis for the formation of political oligarchies, where power is only controlled by a small group of people. Meanwhile, the rotation of power cannot run

properly. This dynastic politics causes the election of leaders who do not have adequate competence and capability, which can have negative implications for the process of justice, development and community welfare.

Social media as mobilization tools

In the carried out the social movement against dynastic politics, youth uses the virtual space platform with the use of social media as a means of mobilizing the movement, creating framing, repertoire, and organizing protest actions. Virtual space is an important arena in mobilizing the movement against dynastic politics. This is because the young generation is a generation that is attached to technology and media. Almost the entire life of young people today cannot be separated from gadgets. A study from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2024 stated that the level of Indonesian internet users reached 79.5%, which indicates that there has been a consistent increase in the trend of Indonesian internet users in the last five years since 2018 (64.8%), 2020 (73.7%), 2022 (77.01%), and 2023 (78.19%). The classification of social media users is dominated by Gen Z (born 1997-2012) as much as 34.40%, millennial generation (born 1981-1996) as much as 30.62%, Gen X (born 1965-1980) as much as 18.98%, Post Gen Z (born less than 2023) as much as 9.17%, baby boomers (born 1946-1964) as much as 6.58% and pre boomers (born 1945 as much as 0.24%) (APJII, 2024).

The data above is interesting to understand that the younger generation is the dominant generation in the use of internet media technology. The process of interaction in the real world can be quickly brought into the virtual world. Virtual space becomes a place of interaction and it is easy for various groups to connect, share information, build discourse, and organize protest movements. The presence of internet media technology opens a new space for activities that occur in the real world, can be carried out in virtual space, as well as one of the effective platforms in mobilizing the movement.

Virtual space, through social media, is integral in fueling the growth and spread of social movements (Lee, 2020). Social media is an effective social mobilization tool and this has been done in various countries (Xinyue, 2023). An important aspect of virtual space in mobilizing the masses lies in its accessibility and wide reach to the masses. Individuals can participate without time constraints, geographical boundaries, and even costs.

The main platforms for mobilizing the movement through are twitter, facebook, tiktok, and

instagram. These types of media are most familiar with young people. Through the sharing of hashtags or hashtags of discursive information, information on the rejection of dynastic politics quickly goes viral and encourages the masses to take part in the action. Virtual space allows instant responses to controversial issues about dynastic politics. Young people, one of whom is activated by students, in various regions can collaborate. They support each other, share resources, and reinforce common messages without the need to physically meet. Through various virtual campaigns and organizing, the social movement against dynastic politics was successfully carried out massively.

Social movement against political dynastic issue

Presidential elections as a manifestation of electoral democracy in Indonesia provide various interesting facts. Every transition of power to new government leadership has a tendency for conflict cases and protest movements (Muliono, 2023). In fact, the mass protests carried out face a series of complex dynamics and conditions for violent conflict (Muliono, 2020). In the context of the 2024 presidential election, the action movements carried out were generally initiated by students as young people and were dominated by the issue of dynastic politics. Calls and hashtags rejecting dynastic politics have become a trend both in the nomination process and in the 2024 presidential and vice presidential election process.

Protest movements are collective actions that are common in every social movement. Protest movements are interpreted variously and usually as organized efforts by a large number of people to encourage the achievement of the goals of the social movement itself (Noble, 2015). In the protest movement against dynastic politics in 2024 electoral democracy, there are two approaches taken, namely framing and repertoire. Framing is a complex and dynamic process involving the selection and interpretation of aspects of reality to produce a certain definition of the situation, its nature can be debated and negotiated, by highlighting the role of framing the situation (Ciurel, 2023; Snow et al., 2018).

Some forms of framing used in political protests are such as "Is it OK to be Sedynastic?", "'MK Mahkamah Keluarga", "Lagi Haus Kekuasaan Pakde", "Atasi Korupsi Tinggalkan Dinasti". In addition, various orations, theatrics, poetry readings, and chants criticizing the current state of democracy in Indonesia were also carried out. They demanded that the current government, especially the president, not abuse power to perpetuate dynastic politics and destroy democracy

in Indonesia. Protests in the form of demonstrations were carried out by more than 700 campuses (see Meidyana, 2024; Simarmata, 2024) spread across various provinces in Indonesia.

This movement voiced not only a demand for family domination in the monopoly of power, but also a reflection of the will to preserve democracy. Figures from families and kinship ties who are known as rulers at various levels of government, ranging from the level of mayor, vice president and several other important positions are the main focus of the action movement. The monopoly of power is considered to represent a system that does not represent the interests of the people in a fair and transparent manner.

The actors of the movement against dynastic politics try to influence the public about the negative impact of family domination in government power. They invite the public to be more critical. The protest movement calls for systemic change. The movement against dynastic politics can be said to reflect the spirit of justice and change. This movement did not emerge out of nowhere, but as a result of the cumulation of dissatisfaction with political practices that are considered to hinder the development of the nation. Various actors, with their sensitivity to dynastic issues, mobilize the masses among themselves to reject the hegemony of families that are considered to monopolize power.

In addition to framing, social movements reject dynastic politics by using various repertoires. Repertoire in social movements conceptually refers to the conception put forward by Tilly (2006). Repertoire is defined as a series of ways or strategies used to show resistance to a certain phenomenon and or policy (Tilly, 2006; Porta, 2013). Repertoire refers to an analogy related to the "song" of the movement that is always echoed in every action of the protest movement.

Tilly's repertoire has conceptually evolved over time, from focusing on repeated forms of action in different types of social movements to a relational and interactionist concept that emphasizes people's experiences in conflicting interactions, such as opposing unjust public policies (Alonso, 2012; Porta, 2013). Different repertoires are also practiced across different political regimes (Tilly, 2006). This development of thought reflects Tilly's shift from a structuralist and rationalist approach to a focus on agency and interpretation in protest actions. Repertoires in this study are verbal and non-verbal actions that show collective resistance in protests (demonstrations) carried out to demand an end to dynastic political practices. In the action, students used a form of repertoire by

using the "Guy Fawkes" mask. The "Guy Fawkes" mask became a symbol of resistance to power that was considered to have oppressed freedom of democracy and violated the state constitution. This repertoire movement is one of the strategies used in building a discourse of political preferences and refers to a variety of actions to influence people's views on electoral democracy in 2024 which is conditioned by family domination.

The protest movement is carried out through social media information technology to voice to the public about the dangers of dynastic politics, explaining its negative impact on democratic progress and its implications for people's welfare. The role of young people in this movement is not only limited to the public sphere, but also in shaping public opinion, demanding accountability from those in power and fighting for more equitable structural reforms. In this movement, various actors emphasize that the future of Indonesia must be built on the basis of integrity and justice, not family and kinship interests. However, in practice, this movement is not free from challenges and obstacles. The anti-political dynasty movement, which is seen as threatening democratic life, has not yet produced any best results that can influence policies in the 2024 electoral democratic process. This is evidenced by the continuation of Gibran as the president's son as vice president year of 2024-2029.

Structural and cultural barriers

Why hasn't the youth social movement had a significant effect? The analysis of this study explains that there are significant structural and cultural barriers. Historically, Indonesia basically has a royal political culture in the construction of power. This system has grown sociologically long before the Indonesian nation-state was formed. The system influenced and shaped Indonesia's political culture. Although this idea requires further research, Anderson's (1972) point of view can at least be used as a basis for building arguments. Almost all parts of Indonesia have power dynasties that manifest in the form of kingdoms (Faslah & Yanti, 2020; Vlekke & Berlian, 2008). Although formally this royal value system no longer exists, the construct of thinking, the sociology of knowledge, is more of a dynastic system that prioritizes kinship or family in the practice of power. This political culture is a challenge and an opportunity for democracy and social movements. On the one hand, the dynastic political culture system will be a space for various social movements to try to change it, and on the other hand it is a

challenge because of the strong cultural system that has been formed over a long period of time.

In the context of structural aspect, the power of political regime has strong political will that perpetuating the president's son into qualify as a presidential candidate. This context strengthens the power system that is centralized in a handful of groups in making policies without paying attention to the ethics of power itself. This is in accordance with the concept put forward by Louis & Montiel (2018) about steps towards understanding the challenges and breakthroughs of social change. In so far, the studies that discuss emphasizes structural challenges in social movements (such as Ferguson, et al., 2018; Soares, et al., 2018; Kiguwa & Ally, 2018). However, in addition to complementing the existing such studies above, the study revealed in this research emphasizes the other aspect that is cultural aspect which has significant role that is invisible in the form of values pattern and can be symbolically interpreted.

CONCLUSION

The youth protest movement in the 2024 electoral democracy process is driven by various situations related to the issue of dynastic politics. Dynastic politics on the one hand is a system that was born and grew from a long history in Indonesia. The practice of dynastic politics is a challenge and threat to the existence of democracy because the system of sovereignty or accumulation of power is more centralized to a group of families. This condition presents a sense of injustice and at the same time a threat to the existence of democracy. This study shows that the protest movement was carried out by more than 700 universities spread across various regions in Indonesia. The protest movement on the streets was dominated by young people, especially students at university. The social movements carried out involved various framings and repertoires in building narratives rejecting dynastic politics and demanding systemic changes. As young people who live in the era of media and information technology development, the actors in this social movement use social media as a mass mobilization tool. This study also concluded that the social movement faced challenges, namely the strong power culture system and complex democratic dynamics. Through these two challenges, the protest movement against dynastic politics has not been so strong in influencing and changing the political system desired by the masses or the protesters.

However, the research conducted in this study has its limitations. This study is limited to the

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framing and repertoire perspectives in social movement studies. A comprehensive understanding of the main challenges of social movements concerning the power culture system that influences the practice of power in Indonesia in the current democratic era is still needed for further research. In the study of democracy, political culture plays an important role in shaping the concept of power. In line with this, the influence and at the same time as challenges and or obstacles from the power cultural system require further research more in-depth.

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