

Institutional Disaffection: The Role of Political Sophistication in Evaluating Parliament in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to measure the political behavior of internet users when evaluating the DPR-RI, especially in the concept of e-participation. This study uses the institutional disaffection dimension as dependent variable. We offer political sophistication independent variables. From the political sophistication component, which was modified according to the DPR-RI context, we found that only two had a significant impact on the three hypotheses. However, we found that the effect of the exposure to media played a very significant role in the level of disinfection. The political knowledge variable also received significant results and had a significant correlation with the variable level of education and exposure to the media. Meanwhile, the variable of interest in politics has not received significant results. Although some of the variables are confirmed, the phenomenon of institutional disaffection in the DPR-RI required a more comprehensive test, especially separating the citizens' objective point of view from the subjective one

Keywords: institutional disaffection, political sophistication, political trust, parliament, DPR-RI

1. INTRODUCTION

Citizens are increasingly critical against the performance of parliaments in democratic systems as their cognitive resources develop [1]. An open democratic system encourages disaffected citizens to express cynical or critical attitudes towards the elites representing them [2]. The study of "trust in institutions" has been at the forefront of seeing the development of people's behavior towards democratic regimes over time. Putnam (1993) argues that trust is a necessary prerequisite learned through organizational participation. This approach's primary assumption is that effective political institutions and representatives of interests tend to generate positive perceptions on how democracy works among voters [3].

Political scientists are trying to straighten the definition of trust in a growing context. Political disaffection is one of the differences that are more inclined to the specification of citizens in evaluating political institutions [4]. Both of them have consequences to the detachment of relations, which may result in weak election participation.

In Indonesia, the People's Representative Council of the Republic of Indonesia (DPR-RI) has become an institution that has often been the target of regulatory dissatisfaction since the reformation event. In the last few months, the declination against the Bill on the KPK has brought citizens back to the May 1998 riots, where the

autocratic system no longer existed. [5]. The DPR-RI is considered unsatisfactory even though this concept requires clarity in calculating the portion of the dissatisfaction. But what is clear is that this incident has massively encouraged citizens to view the DPR-RI in two forms: subjective and objective perspectives. The subjective point of view often shows a tendency to stigmatize the way the DPR-RI works, generalize members' behavior, express pessimistic attitudes, and have less competent capacities. An objective perspective means seeing the DPR-RI as a quantifiable collective performance output.

Getting both forms of evaluation is indeed full of challenges. The role of political sophistication in evaluation shows that knowledge sets become determinants of how they participate, whether they combine subjectivity principles or they consider objectivity.

Communication technology has changed the way citizens communicate with their representatives and, at the same time, demonstrates changes in how they criticize. They tend to express dissatisfaction more easily. [5]. In Indonesia, an informal evaluation of citizens to the DPR-RI takes place every day on social media, especially in the comments column on Facebook or the official Instagram of the DPR-RI, and there has been only few researches on this behavioral phenomenon in the concept of political disaffection concerning political disaffection.

This article aims to analyze the behavior of citizens, especially internet users, in evaluating the DPR-RI. This article takes a different side from several previous studies,

namely explaining the relationship between political sophistication and disaffection to representative institutions. This research is in a different position from several studies that link political sophistication with the act of shifting choices in elections, [6]–[8] but describes the criticism that rolls around almost every day through the e-participation scheme.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutional disaffection is one out of four dimensions of citizen attitudes towards the regime studied by Linek [9], in addition illegitimacy, individual disaffection, and political discontent. Institutional disaffection characterizes that citizens negatively evaluate the performance of an institution according to program output.

The institutional disaffection study is an independent aspect of the political disaffection concept. Political disaffection contains two other elements; the first one is group attitudes related to the respondents' lack of involvement with the political process. The second consists of beliefs in the lack of response from political authority (representation) and institutional disaffection, which is the focus of this article.

The study of institutional disaffection is different from other types of distrust, such as political alienation or the dimension of legitimacy, often associated with democratic crises. The assumptions made in the study of political disaffection arise because of the performance of an institution. Disaffection studies are not related to short-term fluctuations in the assessment of government action. Therefore, the political disaffection dimension consists of two things that may not influence political disaffection and political support for a democratic regime.

Montero distinguishes the concept of disaffection from political distrust as a specification of different dimensions. The distrusted citizens reflect evaluations outside of political life and release its objective state. For example, Pharo and Putnam (2000) operationalize political disaffection as a set of beliefs and lack of trust in politicians, lack of trust in political institutions, and low internal and external political efficacy. In a comparative context, they produce a very similar distribution of political disaffection to social trust. Still, the drawback of this study is that even though trust and disaffection are closely related, the relationship between political disaffection and civic participation is not significant. In general, public participation shows unclear patterns when plotted against disaffection. This also illustrates that the concept of trust in politics is not straightforward and difficult to define [3].

Furthermore, the study conducted by Torcal and Montero attempted to specify that institutional disaffection has similarities to distrust. However, what distinguishes it from distrust is the condition that may not be mixed. Political disaffection requires knowledge as the basis for judging government actions, decisions, or popularity. Therefore individual analysis has a closer role in mapping individual modalities.

The urgency of the study of political disaffection is to understand the relationship between citizens and policymakers who do not appear to merely attempt to describe the decline in democratic values in a country. The high institutional disaffection has a clear consequence to the estrangement of relations between citizens and political institutions. In developed democracies, this situation inhibits any political participation, becoming the force driving a more intimate relationship between citizens and the ruler. In a more traditional democratic country, institutional disaffection aims to encourage a more democratic government inclusive and participatory.

Because institutional disaffection is very close to the attitude of evaluating the performance of a political institution [9], the concept of political sophistication makes it possible to determine the level of institutional disaffection. Political sophistication is a specification that a citizen has towards politics, which contains variables: interest in politics, education, exposure, intelligence, and occupation [10].

Dassonneville linked the concept of political sophistication with citizens who evaluate political parties to become a factor that changes their choices during elections [6]. Meanwhile, Turper and Arts found that political sophistication, both low and high, has a weak relationship with political trust [11]. Also, in an evaluation study of the parliament, Lachat argued that political knowledge is the best single indicator in political sophistication where a person's knowledge can significantly influence behavior. [12]. Apart from the effect on performance evaluation, voters who have a high level of interest in politics and political knowledge also tend to understand the workings of the coalition government including the composition and distribution of power among member parties, and thus are more likely to show the relationship between their partisan affinities. This closeness is what proves a citizen understands the political system [13].

H1: High institutional disaffection occurs in citizens with a high interest in politics.

H2: Citizens with political knowledge on the DPR-RI functions tend to have high disaffection scores.

H3: Citizens with a high intensity of news in the DPR-RI tend to have high disaffection scores.

3. METHODS

We surveyed 433 internet users on early mid-January- June 2020 period, wherein the survey took place Indonesia was hit by the COVID-19 outbreak, making it possible to change the way citizens perceive the government and their representatives. Respondents are citizens aged 18-40 years who are active on social media, most of which claim to have filled out online petitions related to legislation issues. The analysis in this study used a multiple regression with SPSS software to produce the score effect of independent variables on the level of disaffection.

To measure the dependent variable, we directed the question explicitly about the institutional disaffection level

codified as 0 disagree to 5 strongly agree. We borrow four questions to mark institutional disaffection from the concept of external political efficacy and internal efficacy, adjusted with the specific context of the DPR RI's performance. This individual analysis makes it possible to distinguish the categories of distrusting citizens by subjectivity because this survey avoids a subjective perspective as much as possible. Survey questions include: "Has the DPR RI been working according to its functions until today?", "Does the legislative function of DPR represent the aspirations of people?", "Is the development of democracy in the DPR RI stagnant?", "Do the DPR's accountability and function of channeling aspirations needs to be evaluated?". The Cronbach Alpha for the first set of questions for this variable is 0.7. The question for internal efficacy focuses on individual modalities: "I am an individual who does not understand the function of the DPR RI", "my voice is not useful to the democratic process in the DPR-RI," "I am not sure that the DPR RI listens to my criticism" We rounded the total answers to a scale of 1- 10, with the highest number being the most disaffected individual.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistic of Dependent Variable

Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Respondent
5.043	.118	2.45	433

Source: primary data.

The political sophistication variable as an independent variable consists of three controllers. First, we asked an interest in politics with a single question, 1= not interested to 10= very interested in the legislative process in the DPR RI. Second, the level of education variable is expected to have an indirect effect 1 = graduated from elementary school, 2 = graduated from junior high school 3 = graduated from senior high school, and 4 = tertiary education). Third, political institution knowledge uses three questions regarding the specific functions of the DPR RI. The measurement of political knowledge is based on the ability of individuals to rank correct answers to correct answers. A score of 3 is the best. This variable validation is conducted by narrowing the context [14]. The 4th variable is the intensity of the exposure to legislation news with the highest score of 4 = very intense.

We also control for age. We hope that young people will play a significant role in substantive criticism against work performance by using social media rather than looking at the DPR cynically and subjectively.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

We tested three hypotheses using multiple regression analysis. The advantages of the report include making it easier to understand the level of political disaffection at the individual stage. The political sophistication variable in this study acts as an individual modality leading to whether or not the phenomenon of disaffection involves knowledge and objectivity. The modification of questions in this study has and advantage of avoiding biased results.

The regression results are presented in table 2, and the results of the correlation test are not explained in the table. Out of four variables of political sophistication, only the intensity of media exposure has a powerful effect. Thus, H1 was well answered. The education level variable influences the high disaffection to the DPR ($p < 0.01$). The result of regression on political interest is not significant in the context of internet users. The political knowledge variable has a significant impact on high institutional disaffection ($p < 0.05$).

Unlike the measurement of distrust in political institutions, the study on the dimensions of institutional disaffection not merely explains the increasingly negative phenomena such as legislating power or changing political systems [13]. But also it shows a negative evaluation seeming to mix the subjective and objective natures of the state- citizen-citizen relationship [9]. Therefore, the political sophistication position in this study explains the modalities of citizens in evaluating institutional performance as well as describing the life condition where the people are an essential part of democratic component.

The political interest variable in this study does not significantly affect and must receive the most appropriate criticism. Starting from the definition, where political interest in the context of institutions describes a person's attitude towards politics to further understand politics as part of supporting preferences or rationality problems, it is necessary to include the issue of partiality into the concept of preferences [15]. From this definition, however, there are differences in behavior between citizens interested in digesting information on parliamentary performance outputs and executive work output. Citizens' interest in the political process in the DPR-RI should involve themes related to preferences and participation because citizens' greatest expectation from the concept of representation is the channeling of their aspirations to problems. Since political interest is also closely related to their pragmatic attitude towards DPR output, citizens using the internet seem to find it easier to address issues outside the discussion of social media legislation. The most crucial part of supporting internet user participation is that social media's communication system still tends to have a one-way communication pattern. Also, the multiparty system design influences this variable's success in explaining disaffection because political support and individual ideology are inherent to citizens.

Exposure to the media in the study plays an important role in the high institutional disaffection because basically, the evaluation of performance is related to the simultaneous comparisons of information. This finding is in line with Luskin (1990) finding that the higher the intensity of consuming information, the more understanding of these political institutions' functions is because they are related to the political knowledge they have [10]. The results of the Pearson's correlation analysis on the relationship between the political knowledge and the level of education variables showed significant results ($p \leq 0.05$) so that there was an explanation of substantive criticism from residents supporting the DPR by circulating information. On the other hand, democracy and press

freedom have provided a great opportunity for the public to consume news about scandals or legislative process. Moreover, social media provides citizens with much access to real information on DPR RI. Mainstream and non-mainstream media openly question the DPR RI's performance with various themes of existing legislative conflicts, thus enabling the transfer of knowledge and ideology, which indirectly increases political disaffection. Every citizen may be affected by his preferences only, but the role of information transparency in civil society and the lack of personal forms of communication between the DPR RI and citizens on an informal basis make their way of criticizing more expressive.

In line with some literature on the theory of the political knowledge measuring function, specific and contextual critiques show positive democratization. Political knowledge indirectly classifies a disaffected person into the one who evaluates the performance of the parliament or subjectively. In this contextual study, knowledge of the functions, processes, and flow of procedures allows citizens to let go the subjective side and criticize according to practices. Shaker (2012) suggested

this contextual nature by narrowing the dimensions of knowledge according to the competence of citizens [16]. The research's significant results are following the thesis put forward by Luskin (1990) that political knowledge can be motivation, ability, and openness, allowing citizens to express themselves in democracy [10].

We argue that some of the political participation of internet users in Indonesia is motivated by their civic awareness. The level of education in political sophistication serves as a supporting variable that is indirectly related to the way they criticize, although, in various countries, the results are not always consistent. But at least this ever-developing education illustrates the younger generation's transition in increasing their political knowledge and interests. [4]. Meanwhile, age and gender are still challenging to understand as determinants of high disaffection to the DPR, because in this study, the concept of competence should not be influenced by the socio-cultural dimension. Firstly, information about the scandal in the DPR-RI can be accessed by various ages. Secondly, the growing interest in politics has promoted gender equality in parliament.

Table 2 The results of a multiple regression on political disaffection with independent variables

	Coef.	Std.error
<i>Political Sophistication</i>		
Interest in Politics	.011	.377
Education	.223*	.033
Media Exposure	1.554***	.065
Political Knowledge	.189**	.065
<i>Socio-structural</i>		
Age	.002	.05
Gender	.111	.11
R2	.44	

Significance *p<0,05, **p<0,01, ***p<0,001 Source: primary source

5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to measure the level of institutional internet user disaffection on parliamentary performance. The challenge in this study is that it is difficult to remove the dimension of citizen subjectivity in viewing the DPR-RI performance. After all, the news of the scandal made DPR-RI members is still the most highlighted topic of the media, rather than seeing institutional performance output. Political sophistication, because of its nature measuring individual competence in political life, helps to clarify the institutional definition of disaffection, that evaluation which confirms evaluation is objective.

This study concludes that the political sophistication variable partially confirms the hypothesis. The level of exposure to the media explains that the news about DPR-

RI on the internet plays a role in shaping their perceptions and knowledge to realize what Dalton calls cognitive mobilization [17]. This phenomenon shows that the critical attitude of citizens comes from the closest news source. Political knowledge about the DPR-RI affects disaffection because it is a component of competence possessed by individuals. Meanwhile, education level has a positive effect because it supports political knowledge and variable exposure to the media.

The institutional disaffection dimension in further research must consider a straightforward instrument of measuring the separation of subjectivity from objectivity. This experiment aims to remove the bias meaning of trust and disaffection. In general, the next research is to let respondents focus on performance only, and avoid their sentiment from supporting political ideologies, individual cases, and forgetting issues beyond performance. The

challenges regarding the disaffection test in Indonesia can also be seen in the DPR-RI output, which is different from the executive regime. DPR output is difficult to explain with economic statistics.

Meanwhile, the disaffection test at the DPR-RI still focused on the community's psychological condition, inseparable from the historical context of the DPR-RI and the evaluation of the party system. Because political sophistication is not a variable perfectly explaining the institutional disaffection ($R^2 = .44$), further research needs to consider the variables of accountability, level of openness, and tolerance to corruption.

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