

## Strengthening Social Capital in Indonesia: Options for the Quality Democracy & Steps to Mitigate the Latent Problem of Horizontal Conflict

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### Abstract

Social capital is a set of values or norms embodied in behavior that encourages the ability and capability to work together and coordinate for a significant contribution to sustainable productivity. There are three elements of social capital parameters: trust, norms and networks. Democracy has social capital in the form of freedom, equality and justice. Therefore, working democracy through social capital needs to go hand in hand. In addition, through strong social capital, conflicts between communities can be mitigated through the local wisdom of the region. This research then looks at how strengthening social capital in Indonesia can improve the quality of democracy and reduce the potential dangers of horizontal conflict in society. This research will be carried out using descriptive qualitative methods. The data used in this research comes from a literature study of research results and previous studies that are still relevant to this research. This study then found that a trust is a form of social capital that can improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia. Through a government that can be trusted, people can feel justice in a democracy. In addition, social capital through local wisdom can reduce the occurrence of social conflicts that occur in a society.

**Keywords:** Social Capital, Democracy, Horizontal Conflict.

### Introduction

Social capital provides enormous benefits for society. Social capital can help people realize what is known as civil society. A civil society supported by social capital has the advantage of having better resilience because trust is formed based on honesty and the principle of reciprocity (Bakker et al., 2019).

This good resilience allows civil society, which consists of individuals and organizations, to jointly fight for their respective interests that an authoritarian state may ignore. This civil society also encourages the realization of liberal democracy. Alexis de Tocqueville would undoubtedly agree that without social capital, there can be no civil society, and without civil society, there can be no successful democracy. Liberal democracy can be achieved well in America because social capital is peace. In contrast to European countries whose history revolves around war and peace between powerful countries (Yabanci, 2019).

American-style limited government is based on a peaceful situation which presupposes war as the leading cause of political centralization and bureaucratic expansion. Because of war, the state is the mainstay of society for creating order and security. To create a submission, the state deploys its bureaucracy to collect taxes. In America, this situation does not exist. Political institutions grow in an atmosphere of federalism or decentralization, which increases by adapting local values (Wimmer, 2021).

Because of this limitation, in the end, the local government involves the community in deciding on important matters. This system encourages the high participation of the American people. This increased participation encourages a kind of trust from citizens to other citizens to fight for their interests and desires (Mees et al., 2019).

To be able to explain the workings of social capital for democracy, Robert Putnam argues that the quality of governance related to social capital continues to decline. This is related to his research on a person's closeness to the organization they participate in and the political participation index of the community itself. One of the significant results is the declining political participation of the American people to participate in elections (Mahmud, 2021). One of the reasons for the decline is the public's distrust of the government itself. A lot of distrust arises because no government programs benefit many people, especially those who don't vote for him. If the distrust situation continues to be maintained, the next stage is anarchy. It should be noted that a democracy that goes too far also results in anarchy (Wilkinson et al., 2019).

L.J. Hanifan first used social capital to describe the school community center in the countryside. In her classic work entitled *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs uses the term social capital to explain that a very dense social network on the urban surface with various land uses is a form of social capital to create general peace (Fuentes et al., 2022).

Therefore, strengthening good social capital can improve the quality of democracy in society, especially in Indonesia. Apart from strengthening democracy, good social capital through local wisdom can also reduce horizontal conflicts among fellow citizens (Singgalen, 2020). Through the brief explanation above, the researcher then intends to see how social capital can help improve the quality of democracy and reduce the potential for this horizontal conflict to occur.

### **Method**

This research is qualitative. The analysis used in this research is descriptive. The data that will be used in this research is secondary data obtained through various results of previous studies and studies, which still have similarities with the content of this study through literature studies. Research data that researchers have successfully collected will then be processed immediately so that the results of this research can be found.

### **Result and Discussion**

#### **1. Quality of Democracy Based on Social Capital**

The operation of democratic principles is inseparable from a brief question: whose rules should be obeyed? Rules made by the community, rules made by the community, or rules enforced by the state.

Every society has different degrees of trust, reflected in the norms of cooperation, for example, honesty and the principle of reciprocity. This is arranged together in limited circles and not with other circles in the same society. Honesty and the principle of reciprocity are the embodiment of social capital.

Democracy experiences variants. Almost everyone agrees that the keyword for democracy is the people. Indonesia's long experience as a democratic country proves that the claim to be a democratic country has become a collective commitment among the nation's elite, in fact when it is practiced, it differs from one regime to another. Held stated that democracy which is interpreted as government by the people, contains a main content called political

equality. The social capital of democracy, stated by Held, is freedom, equality and justice. Another capital is connecting and mediating various conflicting issues.

Democracy, as stated by David Held, has social capital in the form of freedom, equality and justice. These three things, if realized, would undoubtedly add to the quality of democracy itself.

In the Freedom House Report, Indonesia is categorized as a partly free country. The Indonesian Democracy Index in 2016 shows the number 70.66. This figure is not much different from Freedom House's calculation of 65. What has caused freedom in Indonesia not to be free at all, even though every day we see people freely having opinions, associations and beliefs according to their respective religions as long as they do not break the law?

The leading cause is the measure of freedom from the democratic index itself, including freedom of assembly and association, freedom of expression, freedom of belief, freedom from discrimination, the right to vote and be elected, and political participation in decision-making and oversight. To measure freedom to actual freedom, of course, is still lacking. Freedoms that are commonplace in Western countries have not been recognized in Indonesia, for example, the freedom to choose a partner despite being of the same sex, the freedom to determine sexual orientation, freedom to change beliefs.

If related to social capital, this freedom factor will always be connected to informal norms, which, although not written, are institutionalized in the minds and views of society. Such a value of freedom will affect the realization of social capital because there is no social tolerance. One way to measure social intolerance is "On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out anything that you would not like to have as neighbors?". Of course, this would be the same if we were asked, for example, do you agree to have a sibling who is homosexual, do you agree to have a neighbor who has same-sex marriage, do you agree if your child changes his faith because he is going to marry someone else.

The results of Pippa Norris' research show "The results confirmed that societies rich in social capital proved generally more tolerant of diverse lifestyles than poor countries in social capital". That is if a person's economic condition is so advanced. The person will be more tolerant. This is very suitable for the situation in developed countries. Of course, this condition is more contradictory when compared to Indonesia, which is still a developing country.

The equity index in Indonesia is often expressed in terms of the Gini index. The current Gini index in Indonesia ranges from 0.37 to 0.39. In the last two decades, in Indonesia, the gap between the richest and the other groups has increased more rapidly than in other countries in Southeast Asia. The four richest people in Indonesia have a wealth of more than 100 million of the poorest people. This inequality not only slows down poverty reduction but also slows down economic growth and threatens social cohesion.

Inequality is contrary to the essence of Indonesian political culture, namely social justice for all Indonesian people. In other words, it has become a norm in Indonesia that everyone has the right to access equal opportunities. Recently, more attention has been paid to the link between inequality and conflict. A study examining the relationship between economic inequality and violence, ethnic violence and crime in Indonesia found a positive correlation between inequality and the frequent incidents of routine violence. The research also found that higher inequality between the rich and the rest was associated with increased violent crime. Another study found districts with higher levels of inequality than the average in Indonesia had conflict rates 1.6 times higher than districts with lower levels of inequality.

This situation is related to social capital, trust and networks. Conflicts are formed because there is no longer any public trust in the government and groups that benefit from networks of individuals and groups based on this distrust. This network grows because they want to demand social justice in the economic field, and they also want to be included in a participatory development process.

The imbalance of power that results in a wide gap between the rich and other groups further perpetuates inequality because those at the top have privileged access and influence over the decision-making process that is used so that the economy and various policies can serve their interests while the interests of those at the bottom tend to be ignored. This results in social instability because political and economic space is used to serve a few's interests rather than the many's interests.

## **2. Social Capital in Resolving Social Conflicts Through Local Wisdom**

Conflicts between tribes, youth, and classes are common in Indonesia because of differences. This considerably shook the defense of the Indonesian people. The uniqueness of the Indonesian nation itself, apart from the beauty of the differences in art, is also the beauty of the mindset and differences in how to live each other's lives. One example is local wisdom produced by each traditional community group in resolving social conflicts.

Actually, since long ago, the Indonesian people have had one way of resolving conflicts: using local wisdom. Developing local wisdom-oriented insights can introduce conflict resolution with local understanding. In addition to providing a viable option to dispute resolution, local knowledge preserves and upholds national identity.

The four phases of conflict resolution outlined in the conceptual framework must be viewed as a unit that cannot be executed independently. Despite the fact that not everything can be accomplished with the use of indigenous knowledge, these steps demonstrate that conflict resolution positions peace as an ongoing, open process. All parties participating in resolving social issues through the application of local wisdom are accountable for both the settlement process and its implementation.

The frequent occurrence of multidimensional conflicts in Indonesia is a result of public dissatisfaction with the implementation of policies that are viewed as failing to position rights and responsibilities as they should. Its use is problematic due to the unpredictability of numerous aspects, including values, culture, geographical conditions, and the evolving local context. Conflict can be defined as friction between two or more camps resulting from differences in values, status, power, shortage of resources, and unequal distribution, which finally leads to inequities in various spheres of life.

In human life, conflict cannot be separated. This is due to the fact that humans often engage in a variety of activities to achieve their basic needs, which are in constant conflict with various rights and responsibilities. If rights and responsibilities are properly distributed, there is less likelihood of conflict, and vice versa. Consequently, every region in Indonesia has a tremendous potential for war.

In conflict resolution, local knowledge is regarded as an alternate method of problem-solving. Because the community quickly adopts local policies that are deeply rooted and revered, their execution is more efficient and effective. People's desire to live in harmony and peace can be bolstered by indigenous wisdom. Generally speaking, local customs and culture instill a sense of tranquility and harmony with one's social milieu. This is consistent with I

Ketut Gobyah's view that local wisdom has been passed down through the generations. It teaches societal cohesion and harmony through its guiding principles.

One region cannot be compared to another with the local knowledge method. Nonetheless, local knowledge is still oriented on a cultural framework by employing local values and culture that the community already possesses. According to S. Swarsi Geriya, local wisdom consists of historically institutionalized values, ethics, and behavior. This suggests that individuals who live together under the supervision of a value system will supplement their norms with a variety of firmly established local policies. Obviously, the objective is to foresee misunderstanding-related issues.

The most effective means of resolving conflicts is the utilization of indigenous knowledge. This criterion is met by inviting the conflicting parties to talk and negotiate their respective desires toward the other side. This will have an effect on the resolution deemed feasible and appropriate, and it can be utilized as an early warning system for conflicts (conflict early warning system).

The application of local wisdom is not easy because there are so many external values that many Indonesian people currently adopt. However, there are still opportunities to increase local conflict resolution comprehension. This is in accordance with the opinion of Moendardjito, who stated that regional cultural aspects have the potential to become local wisdom because their ability to endure has been demonstrated up to this point. The five characteristics of local wisdom exemplified by him are potential strengths for conflict resolution.

a. Local Wisdom Can Survive Foreign Cultures

One uniqueness of local wisdom is its ability to deal with foreign cultures. In addition to not being easily influenced by outside cultures, local wisdom tends to maintain and keep members of the group in compliance with applicable rules. Various binding local rules are not seen as restrictive but as a form of respect for their ancestral noble values.

b. Local Wisdom Has the Ability to Accommodate Foreign Cultural Elements

Local wisdom does not reject outside culture but seeks to accommodate it to be in harmony with local culture. The goal is to keep local values growing, especially for the next generation. This is done so that the next generation will further strengthen local policies, which are intended to maintain national unity and unity. Accommodation results from foreign cultures enrich local wisdom values that have been owned.

c. Local Wisdom Has the Ability to Integrate Foreign Cultural Elements into Indigenous Culture

Foreign culture, which is increasingly entering Indonesian territory, should be adapted to local culture so as not to damage the way of life of the Indonesian people. The tendency is that many community groups adopt it, even though it would be better to adapt it so it doesn't conflict with the local culture. Because adoption can be interpreted as fully accepting the arrival of the foreign culture, not adjusting and integrating it into one's own culture.

d. Local wisdom can control

Aside from protecting its group members, local wisdom can also be used to control destructive desires. The patterns formed in local wisdom point to the values of togetherness, kinship, cooperation and a willingness to solve problems through deliberation. This pattern has the potential to prevent, reduce and even overcome social conflicts that are happening at this time. Returning to local wisdom means showing the nation's strength in solving its problems.

e. Local Wisdom Can Give Direction to Cultural Development

The condition of the Indonesian nation, which is increasingly losing its identity, makes it necessary to strengthen local wisdom. Because local wisdom can redirect Indonesian identity following its cultural diversity. The existence of local wisdom can not only be used to resolve conflicts but also provide enrichment to noble cultural values.

Even though it has several advantages for resolving social conflicts, local wisdom can only be used when conflict resolution has reached the problem-solving or peace-building stage. Besides being utterly neutral in mediating the two warring parties, local wisdom will not be implemented efficiently if the social conflict still involves political and military forces. Local wisdom at both stages can be achieved by reviving and rebuilding social relations in the regions, according to their respective cultures, down to the smallest unit, the village.

Social relations in the village will have a vertical impact on its members, namely relationships that are hierarchical and absolute power for members. This aims to build a collaborative network between communities as a place for discussion, and exchange of experience and knowledge, which can be carried out at the local, national and international levels.

### Conclusion

Social capital is an asset because it has fostered mutual trust in working together, so it plays an essential role in realizing a model of good governance and civil society. During this time in community life, various activities are based on social capital. Therefore, transforming leadership is needed, in the sense that in Indonesia, it is anti-corruption, collusion and nepotism. This attitude of the leader encourages the creation of social capital of public trust in the government so that democratic social capital can be realized. In addition, Indonesia has the potential for quite a latent conflict, if not managed wisely, it can lead to disintegration, namely the potential for conflict between ethnic groups, religions, races and groups. Patterns of conflict resolution in one region may not be applied in other areas. Therefore, in determining the steps to resolve various conflict incidents, it is necessary to observe and analyze, not only based on universal conflict theory but also to use a local paradigm so that objectivity remains within the framework of local conditions, values and life order. Therefore, strengthening social capital through local wisdom can be implemented to reduce horizontal conflicts in society.

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