

Democracy and the COVID-19 Pandemic

A Reflection of the Bali Civil Society
and Media Forum 2020

Editor: **Dinna Prapto Rahardja, Ph.D**



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Foreword

from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia office (FES) felt pleased when the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) invited FES for the third time to become a co-organizer of the “Bali Civil Society and Media Forum” (BCSMF), which was held again as an integral part of the “Bali Democracy Forum” (BDF). In this year, MOFA, FES, Indonesia’s Press Council and the Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) managed to organize two preliminary meetings of BCSMF on 19-20 October 2020 and 3 December 2020, in order to pave the way for the main BDF meeting on 10 December 2020. As one of the integral parts of BDF, the BCSMF has become an important platform for Indonesian, regional and international civil society organizations (CSOs), journalists, academics, researchers, and the other important stakeholders to share experiences, ideas, and to jointly develop recommendations, which are later on handed over to the respective governments of their home countries.

In 2020, countries and their societies were taken by surprise by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related multidimensional repercussions. COVID-19 has caused immense human suffering since then. The health crisis is still not under control since infection numbers are rising globally. But the pandemic has also inflicted a tremendous human cost in many other mutual interlinked ways like a long-term debt cycle, an SMEs recession wave, unemployment, increasing poverty as well as further rising inequality, and by this affecting even more those who are already vulnerable. On the heels of all the mentioned pandemic related challenges - or better the broader context – there have been, in recent years, a slowing trend of globalization, big power competition, a global surge of populism - also one of the main findings of the two previous BCSMF in 2018

and 2019. And finally, the rapid technological transformation is altering the present and future nature of work in ways that offer a multitude of opportunities but also add new levels of risks for social groups worldwide.

Against this background the 13th Bali Democracy Forum was held in a hybrid format with most of the participants participating virtually, while only a very limited number attended physically in Nusa Dua, Bali. Under the overarching topic “Democracy and the COVID-19 Pandemic”, Indonesian, regional and international experts discussed how democracy could be preserved in this unprecedented and challenging times and how democracy could play an important role to assist societies in responding, recovering and building resilience within this multidimensional crisis, which is a challenge and imposition for democratic standards and democratic culture worldwide. All of these are due to democratic governments all around the globe must strike a delicate balance between protecting public health, while ensuring that internationally acknowledged human rights are not permanently restricted. Many CSOs, their representatives as well as their work in any case have been drastically affected by COVID-19, since – apart from the general health risk - the space to manoeuvre has been further limited by legal restrictions, while many CSOs were also struggling to sustain their funding.

The three guiding questions of the two preliminary 2020 BCSMF were therefore: How does democracy work during the COVID-19 pandemic? Does the pandemic contribute to enhance or eliminate the support for democracy all over the world? How does the pandemic influence the endurance of civil society in democratic practices?

The first BCSMF 2020 meeting focused on identifying the changes and challenges of maintaining the civil space of CSOs and media during the pandemic, mapping the “mediatization of the pandemic” and the activism space for civil and media resilience as well as managing elections during the pandemic. The expert panels critically pointed out that health protocols quite often have not been strictly implemented due to the fear of economic depression. Another sensitive issue addressed was the global competition and also discriminative access to vaccine. Another finding was that some populist leaders used the pandemic as an excuse to limit the civil space and freedom of expression of their opponents and the critical experts’ community by, for instance, imposing emergency laws. Experts criticized those students also experienced restrictions to have joint activities on campus. It was mourned that the number of human rights violations has increased during the pandemic which includes the increase of domestic violence and sexual harassment of women and children. Finally, media and CSO experts highlighted the challenges of transparency and accountability because some political decisionmakers have communicated their decisions only reluctantly to the public, while social benefits were not distributed in a just manner. Experts also condemned that civil society was often not sufficiently consulted and involved in the efforts to handle the pandemic but was instead sometimes even attacked by the government for raising questions. In the same spirit some media

outlets also criticized that they experienced pressure from the government to limit information on the pandemic.

Having said this, the experts concluded that civil society and media nevertheless were and are still playing a critical role in safeguarding democratic processes and culture by providing legal support, by organizing online and offline protests as well as by documenting right violations during the pandemic. It is also worth to note in this context that in Indonesia civil society managed to build a collaborative network of activists, academics, and health workers to provide data on COVID-19 cases and even assisted the government COVID-19 task force. Hence, in some cases civil society also managed to offer solutions through collaboration across alliances and by using technology.

The second preliminary BCSMF meeting followed up on these findings and concluded with the following recommendations: a) Back to basics by improving activism among stakeholders, such as CSOs, universities, media, academics also during the pandemic; b) Media and civil society collaboration needs to be further improved to tackle the challenges arising from non-democratic practices; c) Mainstream media as well as social media platform need to do more to limit the spread of disinformation.

The main findings of the two preliminary meetings of BCSMF 2020 were put together into a joint statement which was presented at the 13th BDF main forum on 10 December 2020. Subsequently, as in the past two years, FES produced a book with related papers of distinguished 2020 BCSMF experts. This booklet on “Democracy and COVID-19 Pandemic: Reflection from Bali Democracy Forum 2020”, will be hopefully launched during the 2021 BDF. Our sincere gratitude goes to Dinna Prpto Raharja as the speaker at the 2020 BDF, main editor and contributor of the book as well as to the other following contributors: Arif Susanto, Yvonne Chua, Mireille Marcia and Sylvia Yazid.

We would also like to thank again MOFA for trusting FES to be the co-host for the third time and our partner ministry – the Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture (Kemenko PMK) for the continuous support of FES work in Indonesia. Amidst the current global crisis, it is certainly laudable that the BDF has been continuously strengthened by the Indonesian government and civil society to promote democratization, inclusivity, and media freedom. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is proud, to take part in this endeavour

Jakarta, October 2021

Sergio Grassi

Resident Director (2015 – 2020)

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia Office

Foreword

from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Indonesia

Since 2008, the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) has facilitated dialogues on democracy through sharing experiences and best practices in managing diversity that encourages equality, mutual understanding and respect. Participants from all over the world can independently discuss democracy in a constructive atmosphere to strengthen democratic principles, values and institutions, rule of law and transparency, peace and stability, encourage democratic participation, advance the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as create a balance between economic growth and political development.

A decade later at the 11th BDF in 2018, civil society activists, academicians, media professionals and young people were provided a dedicated forum as an integral part of the BDF through the establishment of the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) and the Bali Democracy Student Conference (BDSC). In this regard, the BDF has continued to evolve in discussing different aspects and development of democracy overtime and ensure it remains a viable forum for various stakeholders.

In 2020, the international community was hit hard by an unprecedented crisis with COVID-19 outbreak, which caused multidimensional impacts. The pandemic not only created a health crisis, but also caused additional economic and social crises partly due to the by-product of measures taken to combat the pandemic.

Moreover, the COVID-19 and its devastating impacts on health, economic and social

dimensions brought new challenges for democracy, among others, discontent towards globalization, problem of democratic decision-making during the pandemic, and the ability of democracies in handling the multi-facet crises. For this reason, the 13th BDF in 2020 focused on the main theme “Democracy and Pandemic: Challenges from COVID-19 Experiences”.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Retno L.P. Marsudi, stated at the opening of the 13th BDF that “this pandemic should not lessen our democracy and also that democracy should not hinder our efforts in overcoming the pandemic.” The Foreign Minister also underscored that although the tasks ahead are far from easy, it is fundamental to ensure that democracy can fully support future efforts in the post-pandemic era.

As an integral segment of the BDF, the 3rd BCSMF in 2020 highlighted the importance of participation in all facets of the democratic society, including civil society, academics, and the media, to ensure democracy continues to strive during the pandemic. In this regard, the 3rd BCSMF focused the discussion on “Civil Resilience: Activisms during the Pandemic COVID-19”.

During the 3rd BCSMF, discussion highlighted the fact that measures taken by the government during COVID-19 pandemic are efforts to control the outbreak and mitigate its adverse impacts. The Forum also underlined the importance of safeguarding freedom of expression, including for the state to provide an enabling environment for civil society and activists.

During the pandemic, disinformation and false narratives surrounding the pandemic spread rapidly, mainly through social media, that created confusion and distrust towards the authorities. The BCSMF highlighted that reliable source of information and strong public communication by the government are essential during the pandemic. The media also plays an increasingly important role to provide actual and reliable information to the public.

Furthermore, the Forum indicated the need to implement elections during the pandemic to prevent the decline of democracy. Elections should be no less universal and equitable for all. In elections, governments must ensure that health protocols are in place and people should comply to the new health regulations to ensure a safe and meaningful election.

As a reflection the 13th BDF and 3rd BCSMF, the book provides an excellent overview and in-depth analysis on some of the most pressing issues and challenges to democracy. To highlight a few salient points, the book reflects on elections in various countries that were held during the pandemic and discusses at length on the issues of political liberalism, hoaxes, and populism in electoral democracy. Another chapter took a more country-specific perspective to see how challenges in civil society activism can be

overcome in times of crisis and the need for solidarity in supporting and sustaining civil space. It also pointed out the role of civic education as a tool to strengthen nationalism and encourage critical thinking and activism, which are both essential in democracy. Most importantly, the book examines how participation from civil society and media can remain relevant and play a pivotal role during the pandemic.

We understand that democracy is not one-size-fits-all nor is it static. Democracy is a journey developed overtime upon the homegrown principles and values of each society. The COVID-19 pandemic has definitely brought new challenges to democracy.

It is therefore my pleasure to take this opportunity to welcome and congratulate on the publication of the book entitled *Democracy and COVID-19 Pandemic: Reflection for Bali Democracy Forum 2020*. The book provides a significant contribution and added value to the discourse on democracy and its contemporary challenges during the pandemic era. The book will also provide us with ways to improve ourselves as well as to further shape our democratic model in face of current and future challenges.

Jakarta, October 2021

Rio Budi Rahmanto, Ph.D.

Director of Center for Policy Analysis and Development on Multilateral Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia

Acronym and Abbreviation

| | |
|---------|--|
| BCSMF | : Bali Civil Society and Media Forum |
| BDF | : Bali Democracy Forum |
| BDSC | : Bali Democracy Student Forum |
| CSOs | : Civil Society Organizations |
| FES | : Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung |
| FOI | : Freedom of Information |
| GDP | : Gross Domestic Product |
| IPD | : Institute for Peace and Democracy |
| MOFA | : Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| NGO | : Non-Governmental Organization |
| NLD | : National League for Democracy |
| NUJP | : National Union of Journalists in the Philippines |
| OECD | : Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PAP | : People's Action Party |
| Pilkada | : Pemilihan Kepala Daerah |
| POFMA | : Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act |
| PPI | : Philippine Press Institute |
| SLPP | : Sri Lankan Podujana Peremuna |
| SMEs | : Small and Medium-sized Enterprises |
| UMNO | : United Malaysia National Organization |
| WHO | : World Health Organization |
| WP | : Workers' Party |

DEMOCRACY AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC:
REFLECTION FROM BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM 2020

The Geopolitics of Democracy and Pandemic:

How Democracy Handles COVID-19 Pandemic

Dinna Prapto Raharja

COVID-19 or coronavirus disease stroke the world without warning in the early 2020. This contagious disease is caused by a new type of influenza virus that could harm the respiratory system of infected people and may turn deadly to segments of world population. There is yet any cure to the virus and its transmission between people to people is fast. Vaccines are developed but quickly the virus mutates, raising questions on the effectiveness of the almost-available vaccines. Worse, not all infected people shows any symptoms to begin with, meaning that it's hard to identify and treat infected people before they transmit the virus to another human being.

When the book manuscript was submitted, it was the mid-year of 2021, over a year since COVID-19 was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a global pandemic in March 2020. This has baffled many who thought that the pandemic would go away after a few months. The reality that the pandemic does not seem to be over soon. When announced as a global pandemic, the rate of infection from human to human was relatively concerning. Unfortunately, the world has seen the virus mutating into newer strains that increase in transmissibility, in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation, and decrease the effectiveness of public health and social measures or available diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics. The WHO labelled the newer strains as the Alpha (sample from United Kingdom in September 2020), Beta (sample from South Africa in May 2020), Gamma (sample from Brazil in November 2020) and Delta (sample from India in October 2020).

When the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) of 2020 was organized in October and December, there was a debate that some countries may have managed the pandemic better than others. The question was whether being a democracy improves the outcomes of the pandemic handling. Sadly, when the transcript of this book was finalized, the global aura on the pandemic has changed. There was a dangerous spike of cases again across the world. The surge of new variants of the virus hit many countries hard, including the so-called disciplined ones. Lockdowns and semi-lockdowns are imposed all over countries again. Vaccinations may have reached more people but there is yet any assurance that it would effectively curb the outbreaks of the new, possibly more deadly variants. Around the world, from Canada, America, to Indonesia, India and the continental Europe are all alert and tense.

It is proper to say that COVID-19 is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century. The fatality, the fast-rising infection, and the mutation of the virus have disrupted the dynamics of societies and decision-making. Analysis suggest that this COVID-19 pandemic have worsened some aspects of international relations and domestic affairs. What the world could learn so far is the worst impacts of late response, the ignorance of health protocol, and the dire consequences of limited state capacity to the virus. We saw how people mourn for the death of family members, got frustrated amid the collapse of the health service system, and turned overwhelmingly sad to accept the necessity of handling the deceased and the sick with the “health protocol”. In Indonesia and elsewhere, there have been conflicts among health professionals and family members trying to take the deceased and the sick to their own hands suggesting that awareness about the danger of the virus tend to grow much slower than the infection, and that distrust to medical procedures remain a challenge.

What this book tries to capture is the socio-political reaction and consequences of COVID-19 to democracies during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, namely between February 2020 and May 2021. We discuss the layer of challenges that democratic countries face in the COVID-19 pandemic era. Does the pandemic shrink civil space? In what way does the civil space have shrunken? What are the forms of shrinking civil space as witnessed, experienced, or perceived by civil society and media activists during the pandemic? Can the roots of this problems be uncovered? How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect the working of the media? Mediatization of the hard times accentuates the existing challenges of media partisanship, of digital attacks (including cyber-attacks) and social polarization. What are the manifestations of these in Asia-Pacific countries? What are the consequences of these to media activism in particular? Also, on the elections during the pandemic. What are the existing challenges experienced in grounding a programmatic election? How do the civil society and media respond to it? How salient is the activism of civil society and media activists?

The context to this reflection was the global struggle to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Suppressing infection have included limiting physical mobility and human-to-human

contacts. Some countries chose to apply full lockdown of their borders, closing out contacts with other countries. Some other countries chose partial lockdown, limiting public activities that could generate crowds, closing non-essential businesses and offices, closing schools, changing schools' learning method online, limiting activities in worship places, restaurants and movements across sub-districts, districts, and provinces. The immediate impacts have included contraction of the economy. Many people lose jobs or income because the malls are quiet, the cinema is closed, the airlines cut down flights, and restaurants are limiting working hours. In some areas the limitations have triggered demonstrations, protests, even conflicts.

This book ponders on what the participants of the 3rd Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF) shared and raised among activists and between the activists and the government authorities (mostly diplomats) attending the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF). There were several overlapping sharing sessions between BCSMF and BDF. The participants discussed the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic to democracy, democratic practices and democratic institutions, particularly the civic space. What is interesting is the part where these civil society and media activists expressed thoughts on their resilience to prevent the shrinking civic space. They identified the key players fighting for democracy to remain functional under the pandemic pressures, including what the media can advance under such circumstance. The perspectives about the role of university and higher education were also discussed.

The book is another series of annual publication on reflections of BCSMF, which has been published by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung with endorsement from the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2019. The 2019 publication was titled *Populism, Identity Politics and the Erosion of Democracies in the 21st Century*, the 2020 publication was titled *Democracy and Inclusivity*. Both publications can be downloaded for free online and are available in two languages: Bahasa Indonesia and English.

The data source of this year's manuscript includes (1) the transcripts of the dialog's series of BCSMF 2020, which was organized as four sessions on 19-20 October 2020 (a hybrid meeting with some participants attending in Ubud, Bali and the others by online platform), another hybrid session from Nusa Dua, Bali on 3 December 2020, and (2) the reflections from the leading figures of civil society about the issues raised during the sessions. The 2020 forums were co-sponsored by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, International IDEA, UNDP, the Indonesian Press Council, the Institute for Peace and Democracy, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the Asia Democracy Network, and the Asia Democracy Research Network. As an editor, I offer a framework to enhance the linkages between chapters. The four sessions on 19-20 October are (1) the shrinking civic space: challenges, changes, and the questions of sustainability, (2) mediatization of the pandemic: the situation of media and politics including issues of digital attacks on freedom of expression and freedom of press, (3) elections

during pandemic: agenda for political resilience, and (4) activism for civil and media resilience: creating connective and collective actions between civil society, media, and the public. The purpose of this combined data sources is to capture the variants of key issues getting attention by country and civil society group representatives while noting the reflections that connect the current issues with the overall trends of democracies and civic space.

I am pleased to secure the support from these leading figures of civil society for this year's publication: Mr. Arif Susanto, a senior journalist from Indonesia, (Ms.) Prof. Yvonne Chua, an academics specializing in media affairs from the Philippines, (Ms.) Assoc. Prof. Sylvia Yazid, and (Ms) Mireille Marcia Karman, both academics dedicated to the issues of democracy and civil society from Indonesia. We thank the support from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia Office, especially Mr. Sergio Grassi, the departing Resident Director and Mr. Hans Mathieu, the incoming Resident Director, also Ms. Mian Manurung and Ms. Elda Claudia.

A brief introduction about BDF and BCSMF is as follows. The BDF was established in 2008 to create a progressive democratic architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. In the past decades, the Forum facilitated dialogues among government representatives through sharing of experiences and best practices in managing diversity that encourages equality, mutual understanding, and respect. In doing so, the BDF has also been active in advocating the principles of democracy, namely that it must be developed based on internal initiatives (home grown); that it upholds the values of pluralism and diversity; and that it must be inclusive. The government of Indonesia consider BDF a central program in making democracy a strategic agenda in the Asia-Pacific. The various themes that have been discussed are aimed at promulgating new ideas for contributing to the region's peace and stability, to the promotion of human rights, and especially to further encourage the healthy balance between economic growth and political development.

BDF is the forum for government-to-government dialog on democracy. Parallel with BDF is the forum for civil society, media professionals and academics called BCSMF. BCSMF is a forum dedicated to welcome input and thoughts from civil society activists, academics, and media professionals on designated issues. BCSMF engages the track one (government) representatives. Since 2018 BCSMF was not just a parallel event to BDF but an integral one. There were overlapping sessions between BDF and BCSMF where the government representatives and civil society and media figures meet and share thoughts on certain designated themes.

Specific about COVID-19, our 2020 publication, titled "Democracy and Inclusivity" already mentioned the unprecedented emergence of COVID-19 pandemic, which I highlighted as "the related multidimensional crisis that may have left deep scars in various parts of the world". All because, by the mid-year of 2020, the virus has surprised the world on its fatality rate and fast-paced infection rate. The virus has debilitated

societies, economies, and political systems due to the need to limit mobility, to ensure strict compliance to health protocols, and to address multiple shocks. The virus has attacked all economies, both the developed and the developing ones, badly. People lose jobs and income. Businesses are typically downsized or going bankrupt. Education and advocacy activities are stalled or severely limited. Journalists also suffered from limited information, change in media business, hoaxes, and disinformation, also threats to freedom of information.

With such pretext, it is timely to reflect on how the pandemic affects democracy. The government of Indonesia mentioned in the concept note of the 13th BDF that even before the pandemic, the state of democracy globally portrays a grim image. In its 2018 report, Freedom House cited that in the last 12 years, democracy has regressed. Between 2005 and 2018, the share of Not Free countries rose to 26 percent, while the share of Free countries declined to 44 percent. The pillars, principles and values of democracy are being challenged in countries traditionally known as champions of democracy. The suspect is that the pandemic would pressure democracies even more. The press may be undermined, while social media is being used to spread hoax and hate speech for narrow political interests, and the authoritarian regimes may further their power by increasing public surveillance, restricting free speech beyond public health protocols. In short, democracies may be at risk to derail from its core principles of respect of civil freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of information and civil activism.

How Democracies Handles COVID-19 Pandemic

Democracy in this book is understood as beyond having procedural regular elections, even if they are multi-party ones. The participants, also I, highlight the importance of having more than a minimal definition of democracy, namely a political system where there are experiences of support and legitimacy from citizens, of witnessing citizens' participation in decision-making, of contesting ideas without fear of oppression. Democracy is expected to create dynamic relations among actors. In short, people operating democracy should expect political mood swings, changes of ideas even policy directions, and tensions between contesting groups as part of the choice for governance.

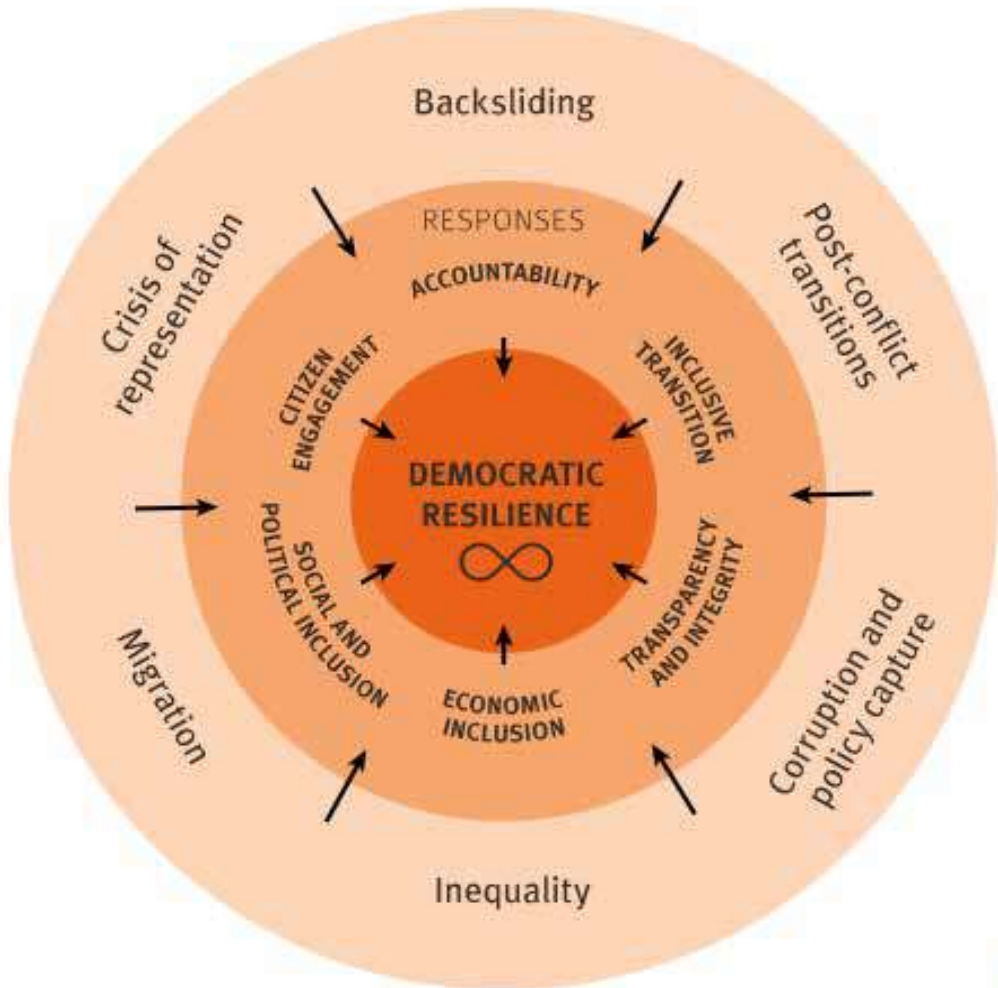
How each activist brings this choice to life may vary. While this can be considered normal, in fact expected, the readers may spot the struggle for any democrats to reconcile the values under democracies and the desire to ensure likable result and certainty of outcomes. To some observers, especially those living under partially-free democracy or non-democracies, this may be misunderstood as the shortage of democracy. When the 13th BDF in Nusa Dua Bali was held, there were more of those kinds of participants attending the forum. They took the floor being very confident that their models of non-democracy are therefore important to consider.

To this, I'd like to bring the framework of democratic erosion into fore. As I mention in the 2019 book, "Populism, Identity Politics, and the Erosion of Democracies in the 21st Century", democracy is a complex concept to practice. It has however been chosen by many countries in the world as national identity. That book showed how democracy needs solidarity from other democracies, the support to nurture democracies because a democracy is fragile too. Having populist leaders may change the narratives of democracy, offering a once-and-for-all solution that may not reflect respect to democratic values. The institutions of democracy may be challenged and undermined for reasons that justify the messages of populist leaders. In the 2018 book, "Democracy and Inclusivity", we noted how expansion of decision-making participation to public sphere can create anxiety to leaders, a choice that one fear may lead to destabilization of certain national order, risking the achievement of "the greater importance" such as economic growth and economic certainty for business to grow and social protection for taxpayers (p. 23). These arguments brought us to the reality that the anxiety about democracy reflects an erosion of democracy.

Resilience is key. I offer the resilience concept in democracy as a framework for our reflection of democracy under COVID-19 pandemic in this book. Burnell & Calvert (1999) noted how "democratization and democratic consolidation is tortuous, strewn with obstacles, thus one should not be surprised if the newest democratic contenders take a wrong turning, or simply fall by the wayside". Boese et.al. (2020) suggest that democratic resilience has become substantially weaker since the end of the Cold War, leading to the unprecedented breakdown of 36 democratic regimes, but also suggest that democracies are more resilient when strong judicial constraints on the executive are present and democratic institutions were strong in the past. This brings the relevance of noting that problems such as conflicts, polemics, failure of policies may not go away in democracies but the fact that ideas for demands would be channeled through political actions and institutions, solutions would be negotiated, and disputes settled through connections across society is in all itself precious.

Looking at the word "resilience" alone is itself multi-interpretation. Resilience has been argued as a complex construct that may be understood differently in the context of individuals, families, organizations, societies, and cultures. In the field of natural science, resilience is linked to surviving or passing a situation of stress, even extreme stress, trauma, even life-threatening trauma, bullying, harassment, dysfunctional or challenging relationships and other external conditions such as extreme weather conditions (Southwick 2014). In the individual level, resilience is a function of many things: from maternal care, upbringing to interaction with environment. But the key findings everywhere are that resilience can be learned.

At the aggregate societal level, resilience is linked to the extent to which various institutions and the people who are involved in the society develop an agreement about the important issues so that they'd be able to recover and "bounce back". International



Source: International IDEA

IDEA has an interesting picturing of democracy under pressure and what resilient responses may mean. I took this picture of circles surrounding democratic resilience from <https://www.idea.int/gsod-2017/>

In the depiction of International IDEA, numerous countries grapple with challenges to democracy, contributing to the perception that democracy is in “decline”, in “reversal”, or in “stagnation” while the challenges such as corruption, money in politics, policy capture, inequality and social exclusion, migration or post-conflict transition to democracy are part of the reality of democracies. When the parliaments and political parties are increasingly viewed by their electorates as unable to cope with complex political problems, we would witness crisis of legitimacy in democratic institutions and processes, which then lead to erosion of public trust, making democracy fragile

and vulnerable. Interestingly, International IDEA saw that mature democracies are not immune to such corrosion from within. With such viewpoint, we are positioned to answer whether we are among the skeptics of democracy or the proponents of democracy.

The bottom line of the 3rd BCSMF is the shared observation that the context for democracy under COVID-19 pandemic may weaken democracy even more. Worse, in some countries where the leaders become very sensitive to critique and opposing comments, the pandemic can threaten democracy through the shrinking of civil space and the disfunctioning of media as platform for public debate and sharing of opinions. In his opening remark, the Acting Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy of Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Teuku Faizasyah, mentioned that democracy is a multi-stakeholder endeavor requiring active participation of every component within society, including civil society, academics, and media. But he noted that it is important for the government to abide by that spirit during this pandemic era. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Nuh from the Indonesian Press Agency shared that to him “the greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence itself, but to act with yesterday’s logic”, that “the true test of leadership is how well you function in a crisis”. In his view media requires public participation, strengthening social empathy on humanity challenges under covid. The media must mobilize public participation, creating emotional bonding among society to alleviate the burdens to survive the pandemic and to recover, to be productive again. To him those who would succeed are those responsive to change. Digital technology is inevitable, the media needs to adept, the key in here is information credibility.

Therefore, resilient democracy must overcome the temptation to do:

1. Information blockade. As one of the participants highlighted the message of Irene Khan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Freedom of Opinion and Expression: “Censorship can kill, by design or by negligence.”
2. Curbing of civic space, violating civic freedom. Things such as detention, harassment, intimidation, attacks of protesters and journalists should be out of the picture.

Resilient democracy must keep civil space and expand civil space from time to time. I understand civil space, or civic space, as a platform on which activists and people can express themselves, to organize, to participate, to communicate with each other freely and without hindrance, and in doing so influence the political and structures around them through advocacy, civic participation, and social accountability. Civil space is centered on the freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, and these freedoms are guaranteed in international human rights laws and standards, also in many national institutions, including in Asia.

Speaking on the panel on civic space and the pandemic was Josef Benedict from Civicus, a global civil society organization of around ten thousand organisations working to strengthen citizen action and civil society around the world shared the impact of the

pandemic on civic space. In its website (monitor.civicus.org), the group has documented and analysed the state of civic space in 196 countries since 2016. In the Civicus monitor platform, out of 25 countries, 4 are rated closed civic space, 8 as repressed and 10 as obstructed. The rating of civic spaces are: open, narrowed, obstructed, repressed, and closed. The percentage of people living in Asian countries where civic space is under attack based on their analysis is nearly 95 percent. That was before the pandemic. With the pandemic, numerous states impose emergency laws, decrees, or regulation to handle the pandemic. Under international human rights laws, including in public health sector, some restrictions can be justified. But they must have legal basis and be strictly necessary; can't be over limited duration, and they must be respectful of human dignity, subject to review, and must be proportionate to achieve the objective and must not involve discrimination and be strictly used by the emergency situation.

According to CIVICUS, there has been numerous violations of fundamental freedoms across most countries in Asia, for instance: (1) some emergency laws or regulations to combat the virus grant certain state some overly broad powers. In Cambodia, for instance, they cited, the emergency law gives broad provision to include unlimited surveillance of telecommunication, control of the media and social media. In the Philippines, the emergency law passed in March 2020 included the provisions to penalize the spread of false news that have been used against journalists, (2) there has been attempt to censor or restrict the information on the pandemic and thus limiting transparency of government actions. For example in Bangladesh, an academic who was researching or conducting a study on COVID-19 was pressured by the government to disown that research. In regions like India administered Kashmir and Myanmar in Rakhine state, the internet shutdown there has directly harmed people's health and lives and undermined efforts to bring the pandemic under control. They have also documented people including activists and journalists who were being threatened or arrested for criticising the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Thailand, activists have been charged under the draconian computer crimes act for a Facebook post criticising the lack of screening at the airport. In Sri Lanka, the Inspector General of Police instructed police officers to take legal action against those who publish post on social media criticising government officials. They have also seen government in this region targeting journalists for reporting on the pandemic and its impact on different groups. Even in Malaysia, Aljazeera came under a massive attack for a documentary on the inhumane treatment of migrant workers. Journalists were questioned and accused of sedition and defamation. A migrant worker who spoke to Aljazeera had his work totally revoked and he was deported. If you look at the Philippines, top broadcaster ABS-CBN was forced off the air during the pandemic, after the Philippines congress refuse to renew its license. In Malaysia, at least 220 people were being investigated and 24 people prosecuted for putting out post around the pandemic. In Singapore, we are seeing the rampant of use of the protection from online falsehood and manipulation act, the POFMA law to arrest online critics during the pandemic. Civil society is also concerned on abruptly arrest, excessive force and inhumane degrading treatment of people by letting lockdown in various countries. For example, in the

Philippines, police and the local officials confine those arrested for violating the lockdown in dog cages and force them to sit in the midday sun. In Pakistan, doctors were arrested and attacked for protesting against the lack of protective equipment. States are also using intrusive surveillance measures to combat the pandemic which could have the long lasting consequences. In Southern Thailand, concerns have been raised about biometric data, DNA data being collected from Malay Moslems in the South under the pretext of COVID-19. And finally we have seen an increase in intolerance and xenophobia against foreigners, particularly migrants, refugees as well as NGOs who are defending them. This has been highlighted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Mr. Ahmed Shaheed.

With this argument came along the discussion how these violations are rooted in weak democratic institutions and oversight in some countries. In many countries there's inadequate check and balance in parliament when laws and regulation are being passed. We also know in some countries there are weak national human rights institutions and oversight mechanism that do not have adequate powers or personnel to hold government into account. Some countries do not even have any living civil society organizations that are independent of the government. It is common to see therefore how civil society in many countries are not being consulted adequately about how to handle the pandemic and are facing even attacks from the government when they raise questions on pandemic handling. And of course, the press is not free in many countries. The pandemic also exposed many media outlets bankruptcy.

The identified forms of violations of civic space in the BCSMF 2020 were:

- (1) the adoption of state of emergency and taking emergency measures to combat infection that allow the state to take drastic measures to curb civil liberties,
- (2) the use of excessive force, harassment, violence to suppress journalists and civil society activism,
- (3) the activists being detained, arrested, or investigated for spreading what is deemed disinformation of the virus,
- (4) putting people to jail without any reason,
- (5) the dispersing of peaceful assembly.

Many participants argued that authoritarianism is getting more and more evident and vivid in Asia-Pacific. They argued that the COVID-19 pandemic systematically is used to roll back human rights protection, to undermine democratic institution, civic freedom and civic participation in politics. The desire of political elites to control information, to consolidate power, have prohibited people from voicing concerns.

What the civil society raised as their desire during the 3rd BCSMF are

- (1) the government emphasizing transparency rather than censorship and criminal sanctions to civil society and media,
- (2) the government protecting media freedom,

- (3) the government avoiding abusive conducts and the use of fear while enforcing lockdowns and investigate those suspected of abuses,
- (4) the assurance that surveillance measures adopted to address the pandemic are lawful, necessary and proportional,
- (5) the assurance that any laws and decrees deployed for responding to the pandemic is implemented in accordance with democratic norms and do not violate human rights principles.

This is what should be noted as the resilience of civil society and media during the 3rd BCSMF. The civil society shared their determination to fight back oppression and shrinking of civil space by:

- (1) documenting violations by government and provide legal supports, especially when it comes to target marginalized groups such as migrants, refugees, indigenous people, the poor and those living rural communities,
- (2) sharing information with international groups and media where local concerns are not addressed,
- (3) organizing creatively both online and offline to demand the government to listen to them,
- (4) targeting specific country such as Indonesia to take lead in pushing the issue within the region.

Shrinking civic space is a long-term problem. Sophia Fernandes from Westminster Foundation on Democracy argued that the pandemic created conditions that push civil society to operate in a new pressing environment: significant funding challenges, changes in government priority programs, recession of support to women. Annika Silva Leander from International IDEA shared how conditions of democracies should be monitored and all can access it through: www.idea.int/gsod-indices. While these speakers noted the pressures to democracies, they noted that the countries that were being most affected by the shrinking civic space were countries that either have been deepening their autocratization, such as Cambodia, or have experienced significant democratic backsliding, for example India and the Philippines.

Further, during the 3rd BCSMF the journalists and media professionals shared the difficulty of handling the COVID-19 pandemic. They all argue that the media need not to cease its function to communicate and inform public about the pandemic and the best response to the situation. Unfortunately, many adjustments need to be made given that the media revenue has declined drastically during the pandemic. The attending media shared the possibility of laying off more workers and being bankrupt. In Indonesia the Press Council supported by five journalist associations and six media companies' associations established a Media Sustainability Task Force to seek state incentives for the mass media industry, following what Australia, New Zealand, and some European countries have done. The Task Force submit proposals for economic incentives for the mass media industry (e.g. elimination of import duty on paper

as raw material for print media production, the elimination of tax on print media products, subsidy on electricity costs, elimination or postponement of payment for Radio Broadcasting Permit and Broadcasting Operational Permit, opening journalism fellowship program for 4,800 journalists covering stories related to the pandemic promoting positive behavioral changes during the pandemic, etc.) and perform lobbies to the government authorities. Not all these demands were heard or fulfilled but this shows how the Press Council is looking at keeping the Indonesian media resilient during the pandemic.

The chapters by Arif Susanto and Yvonne Chua should inspire the readers about the importance of the internal governance of democracy to survive the pandemic. Arif cited Diamond (2011) that it is never the crisis that beat democracy but rather the problem of internal governance. By that Arif highlighted the issue of weakened political liberalism, hoaxes, populism in electoral democracy, and exclusion of public from decision-making. He reflected the elections during pandemic in Vanuatu, Iran, South Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Indonesia, and Myanmar to alert our senses on the pressures on elections of many nations during this pandemic. Yvonne Chua zoomed in the context of the Philippines for us. For those who have lived long enough to witness the “People Power” back in 1986 in the Philippines would find Yvonne’s reflection helpful to see how under such pressing challenge civil society activists such as Yvonne remains determined and confident that what is growing now in the Philippines is another adversity that the nation would overcome. She highlighted the kinds of solidarity and support to sustain civil space in the Philippines.

Meanwhile Mireille Marcia Karman and Sylvia Yazid in their chapter discuss another layer of civil society that people often overlook: the higher education. As academics, Mireille and Sylvia are convinced that democracy is passed from one generation and another through various forms, including through civic education in higher education. For those working in the academic sector, their chapter shed lights on the pressures for lecturers and students in instilling democratic values and spirit.

The Geopolitics of COVID-19 Pandemic

I would also highlight here that the COVID-19 pandemic brought forth the issue of geopolitics within the 3rd BCSMF. Geopolitics is understood here is as the interaction between geographical locations and politics where the same issue may be understood differently given the different context of political geography and the attached history of choices and policies. Perhaps my understanding of geopolitics is closer to the concept of critical geopolitics where it is explained how political actors spatialize international politics and represent it as a “world” characterized by types of places (Kuus 2010).

This dimension of democracy and COVID-19 pandemic should not escape our attention because the “solution” or “recipe for treatment” to the democracy under threat/

pressure cannot be uniform from one place to another. I think it is pertinent for us to discuss the variation of resilience not as a shortage or incapacity in one place, namely the newer democracies, and assume that in more established democracies there are more capacity to counter the threats.

During the discussion I noticed that some participants from the so-called more established democracies were quite determined to showcase the societal and institutional weaknesses of democracies in Asia. This brought my attention to several of these gaps of perspectives among the participants:

1. There are participants seeing that regularization of interaction through institutions is a must for democracy to survive the pandemic pressure, while it has not been discussed that those institutions came into being from social dialogues among actors, which often also include solidarity support from the more established democracies. I cannot ignore the fact that BDF was initiated to distance the view of Indonesia that democracy should be home-grown rather than transplanted from outside; a reminder that advising the adoption of certain kind of institution while bypassing the social process to generate the institution is a violation of democracy values and spirit.
2. There are participants seeing that adopting technology in civic space is the future for stronger democracy, while it has not been discussed that technology has created numerous layers of disinformation and hoaxes that lower the trust of government to civil society. One may need to consider that some groups and segments of society would continue to have challenge in aligning its participation in democracy through technology.

To end this chapter, I'd like to draw the readers' attention to what lie between the lines. The newer democracies in the South, which are sometimes called as illiberal, partially free or transitioning democracy countries, deserve to tell their own story about society and governance. And because the values of democracies are shared by civil society and media activists, one should be brave enough to also disentangle the difficulty of the peers in the South to enlarge their civic space and claim consolidated democracies. It is only through such kinds of process, and more BCSMF meetings, that one can identify the kinds of activities to nurture solidarity among the resilient civil society and media activists.

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Sealed by the Pandemic: The Most Current Challenges to Electoral Democracy in Asia-Pacific

Arif Susanto

Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century can be called a period that is not very friendly to democracy. After the third wave of democratization closed the end of the last century, now threats to democracy are emerging from various directions. While autocracy and militarism remain at the forefront, illiberalism has become increasingly oppressive and has even been abusing freedom itself. A global democratic slump and recession is now brewing, putting nearly 75 percent of the world's population at under the threat of deteriorating freedoms. (Repucci and Slipowitz, 2021).

In the past year or so, the COVID-19 pandemic has claimed millions of lives and reduced the health and economic carrying capacity of countries, including those in the Asia-Pacific. Extraordinary efforts have been made by governments of various countries to overcome this, including imposing strict controls and restrictions on citizens. By lack of accountability, some countries grant their government unlimited authority to deal with crises and emergencies. We are witnessing an excessive expansion of state power just as citizens' dependence on their government increases.

So, how do Asia-Pacific countries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as a challenge to electoral democracy? How do we explain the decline in democracy in the region and what can be done to address it? These questions will be approached by first pointing out the deteriorating trend of global freedom, including by considering a trilemma between health, the economy and freedom. The review is then continued by looking at

the implementation of elections in various countries and their effects on the prospects for democracy.

Sealed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Asia-Pacific countries are facing an unusual and perhaps incomparable challenge. The quality of democracy has also fallen victim to the decline that has occurred, especially in countries that have previously experienced democratization. For health reasons, general elections have been rescheduled, while others have been postponed indefinitely. Concentration of power in some countries has raised concerns about opening the door to authoritarianism, while in others COVID-19 reduces opportunities for political transformation in a society that is uncertain about change.

Emergencies demand proportionality as well as accountability of government authorities in the midst of the ambition to concentrate power that is superimposed on a crisis situation. It takes a strong and credible opposition to have sufficient balancing power in parliament. However, the toughest task is to revitalize civil society, which has previously been weak or weakened. When civil society lacks power, it is much easier for state governments to strangle freedom, even with popular support. This situation clearly demands the hard work of all parties, including the injection of solidarity among democratic countries. The world does not only need to rise from adversity due to COVID-19, but also to end the democratic recession immediately for the sake of a freer and more prosperous order.

Worsening Freedom

Optimism about the future of democracy flared in the late 1980s with the end of the Cold War. The political reforms initiated by Gorbachev in the Soviet Union at that time became part of the energy of the revolution that subsequently triggered the collapse of totalistic regimes in Eastern Europe. Moments before the fall of the Berlin Wall, Fukuyama (1989) emphasized that what we are witnessing is not only the end of the Cold War, but the end of history. With the post-bankruptcy of Fascism and Communism, Fukuyama proclaimed that the evolution of human ideology had reached its end point with the universalization of liberal democracy as the final form of government. Subsequent history saw the roar of change in the 1990s touch South America, Asia, as well as Africa where the idea of freedom had long been frozen by dictatorships.

It took merely a decade to deflate the optimism bubble. The September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States did not only destroy the twin towers of the World Trade Center, but also undermined democracy through the grip of fear. Unfortunately, not only terrorism, but, war and violent approaches in global counter-terrorism policies have also given the wrong picture of the inadequacy of democracy and human rights. As Barber (2004) points out, an effective security strategy should be able to ward off

terrorism without destroying freedom. Fear, unfortunately, has made many countries willing to narrow the space for citizens' freedom and democracy for security reasons.

The next blow came from the 2008 financial crisis, which also exposed the weaknesses of globalization. In addition to the systemic vulnerabilities of the market, the problem of government accountability in many countries has led to economic downturn. Rodrik (2011) even shows a trilemma that it is impossible for us to simultaneously achieve democracy, national determination, and economic globalization. Democracies have the right to protect their social fabric, Rodrik argues, and when that right clashes with the demands of the global economy, it is the latter that should succumb. Even so, Diamond (2011) notes that the collapse of democracy in some countries is more due to their poor internal governance than the blow of the global economic crisis.

Problems of insecurity, among others as the result of the successive blows of terrorism and the financial crisis, have turned out to be a breeding ground for identity-based hate politics. Populism, left and right, spread in the political campaigns of various countries and brought victory to the leadership of many demagogues. Intensely triggering political polarization while riding on electoral democracy, populism can have an impact on weakening political liberalism and even the collapse of democracy (Pappas, 2019). The Internet has also become a sophisticated instrument to create distrust, spread false news, and support the success of specifically targeted campaigns, such as the 2016 United States Election and Brexit.

Not quite finished with populism, world democracy has again been hit by the Orwell-style surveillance policies implemented by different governments to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The problem with surveillance regimes is that no one knows how we are monitored, and without adequate controls, data collection and citizen surveillance can have unspeakable consequences (Harari, 2020). The pandemic has hampered mobility and hindered political participation in many countries, but others have shown that democracy gives better hope for solving public health and other common problems.

Beyond all that, traditional threats to global democracy are not necessarily absent. The autocrats still exercise power almost without being challenged, while military councils continue to stand by the emergencies they created after the coup. Nevertheless, the challenges in a democracy are no less difficult. Even in countries with a long history of democracy, illiberalism is a scourge that manipulates freedom to undermine freedom itself. Thus, there is no safe house that can guarantee that democracy stands strong once and for all.

Democracy Versus Pandemic

Since the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in China at the end of 2019, apart from eroding public health, the pandemic has also put democracy at stake. The intimidation

of Chinese government officials against the late doctor Li Wenliang, one of the earliest to identify the 'mysterious pneumonia' in Wuhan, is just an early example. In what Baer (2020) calls 'The Coronavirus Coup', Prime Minister Orban was granted indefinite power by the Hungarian Parliament to impose legal sanctions on anyone obstructing the handling of the pandemic. In the name of public health, attempts to cover up and block media reports or citizen control are becoming commonplace in many countries.

Emergencies during the pandemic are often used as a one-sided justification for actions to threaten citizens' freedom. Similar to a virus that parasitically reproduces on its host, the symptoms of illiberalism ride through legislative procedures and distance governments from the substance of democracy. The trilemma of health, economy and democracy often leads them to abandon the latter in favor of the other two. When the resources of actors outside the government are weakened, this kind of situation gives way to the decline of democracy.

Looking at the facts in part, many people mistakenly perceive that in the face of a pandemic, authoritarianism is more effective than democracy. The most basic representation of this view is that China is the first country to be infected with COVID-19 as well as being able to minimize the crisis earlier. In fact, China imposed a regional quarantine, censored the media and restricted access to information, as well as eliminating public consultation before developing policies. This ugliness seems to be covered up and justified because China will soon be able to cope with the pandemic when many other countries are still struggling even with the new variant of COVID-19 virus.

One should note that there are democratic countries, such as New Zealand, Taiwan, or South Korea, which have been able to better handle the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. However, aside from those countries, there are also non-democratic countries, such as China, Singapore, or even Vietnam, which are considered successful in minimizing the spread of COVID-19, including immediately taking effective steps to avoid the worse effects of the pandemic. On the other hand, the bad record of cases of people contracting and dying from COVID-19 is also inscribed in democratic countries, such as the United States, India, or even Britain. Meanwhile, hybrid regimes, such as Russia or Turkey, are often cited as part of the bad image of the management of public health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A better public health system has the potential to mobilize a country's capability to cope with a pandemic. Beyond that, the level of trust and obedience of citizens to their government also determines the effectiveness of the policy. These things are possible for democratic governments as well as non-democratic ones. Zakaria (2020) is right at pointing out that the ugliness of governance that has plagued countries battered by the pandemic is not a systemic failure inherent in democracy. The core of the problem lies more in the quality of government, and this is the difference between countries that are working effectively against the pandemic and those that are not.

However, Zakaria has not fully managed to see that democracy has a better chance of overcoming the pandemic. Potential advantages such as the quality of government can work more optimally when freedom is guaranteed. The last thing makes a difference because this space allows citizens to maintain control so that the power does not persecute. Sen's study (2000) provides a more comprehensive perspective that welfare depends not only on an economic order, but also on freedom and democracy. With both, power can be criticized and make them act more responsively to avoid worse impacts when disaster strikes.

Sen's perspective of freedom frees us from the trap of the trilemma between health, economy, and democracy. By placing freedom as both a means and an end, democracy cannot be sacrificed in order to make room for the protection of health and economic progress. Democracy even supports better fulfillment of other interests. Democratic power always presupposes control, and effective control requires freedom and adequate information. As reported by *Reporters Sans Frontieres* (2020), if the Chinese press were free, the corona virus might not have spread into a pandemic.

Furthermore, public engagement provides a more complex view as well as the possibility of preventing a situation from getting worse. By considering the options, the public should be invited to discuss policy drafts that will have an impact on their lives. The implications of implementing policies also need to be reconsidered in order to produce better choices. The aspect of public accountability, in turn, also helps to distinguish the quality of policies produced by democratic governments from those of non-democratic ones. Hope always grows better in a democracy.

Election in Times of Pandemic

In what is often referred to as an electoralist view, Schumpeter (2003[1943]) understands the democratic method as "an institutional order to reach political decisions within the horizon of the common good by making citizens decide for themselves various problems through the selection of individuals who then consult to carry out mandate". This view does not reduce democracy to mere elections; People's deliberation is what underlies the operation of democracy, and at a minimum it manifests itself in free and balanced periodic elections.

Powell Jr. (2000) believes that an election can be an instrument of democracy at the level when it empowers citizens to be able to influence decision-making. Citizen involvement in this matter is not limited to a minimum form of participation by voting in elections; a further question is whether their involvement will determine the outcome of the general election and its consequences for public policy. This presupposes that the right to vote may lose its importance when there is no citizen's freedom to control the exercise of power.

During the pandemic, it is not always easy for any country to be able to meet the criteria for a free and balanced election, which is now added to the demands of health protocols for everyone involved. Some of the incompetence is related to limited resources, but others are more due to weak political will. In this regard, the Asia-Pacific region has mixed records.

When the parliamentary elections took place on March 19, 2020, there had been no cases of COVID-19 infection in Vanuatu, although their national economy was still disrupted. With a voter turnout of 51.29%, young people tend to be more politically active and their attention was focused more on issues of economic improvement. The 52 parliamentary seats were distributed without a dominant party. Graon Mo Justis Pati (Land and Justice Party) got 9 seats, another two other parties got 7 seats, while the rest of the seats were divided by 17 parties or other independent members. Repeating the results of the last two elections, none of the 16 female candidates won a parliamentary seat.

Iran's parliamentary election was held on February 21, 2020 with a voter turnout of only 42.32%. The failure of Hassan Rouhani's reformist government has disappointed young people, but they are far more skeptical of the conservatives. After the disqualification of 7,296 candidates by the Guardian Council, a total of 7,148 candidates contested for 279 of the total 290 parliamentary seats. With more than 250 parties involved, the election resulted in a victory for the conservatives who won 221 seats, while the reformists gained 20 seats, and the other 38 seats were held by independents.

South Korea held its parliamentary elections on April 15, 2020. The voter turnout rate of 66.21% was the largest since 1992, with 11.8 million citizens voting early by post. The voting by some 17 million voters, including 11,150 voters who were undergoing home quarantine, took place under strict health protocols. The handling of the pandemic by Moon Jae-In's government that curbed the initial escalation of the virus transmission is seen as strengthening citizens' identification with the ruling Democratic Party. They won 180 of the 300 parliamentary seats, which was the biggest majority victory since the 1987 democratization.

Under the procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Singapore's parliamentary elections was held on July 10, 2020. With the 95.82% turnout rate, most of the young voters expressed their dissatisfaction with the health-related issues that impacted the economic crisis. The People's Action Party (PAP) won 83 of the 93 parliamentary seats, the lowest for the dominant PAP since independence in 1965, and otherwise a triumph for the opposition Workers' Party (WP). This blow may compel Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to recalculate plans for an immediate handover of power to his deputy Heng Swee Keat.

Twice postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sri Lanka's parliamentary election took place peacefully on 5 August 2020 under health protocols. With a participation rate of 75.89%, the General Election involved 7,452 candidates from 54 parties and

independents to compete for the 225 parliamentary seats. Bringing the issue of stability and security, the Sri Lankan Podujana Peremuna (SLPP) party won 145 seats. This result has strengthened the dominance of the Rajapaksa family and smoothed plans for constitutional amendments to concentrate power in the hands of president Gotabaya, who has appointed his brother Mahinda as prime minister.

The New Zealand parliamentary elections were shifted to 17 October 2020. The turnout reached 82.24%, the highest since 1999. After some criticism over the slow pace of social transformation, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's reputation has improved with the success of controlling the spread of COVID-19 and handling the 2019 Christchurch tragedy. Labor got its biggest win in 50 years with 65 seats out of the 120 up for grabs. The New Zealand Parliament is known for being young and inclusive; half of the Labor Party representatives are women, MPs are very colorful with the presence of representatives of Maori and racial or sexual orientation minority groups.

Myanmar's parliamentary election was held on November 8, 2020 under strict health protocols. Voter enthusiasm resulted in a turnout rate of 71.89%, although in some places, such as Rakhine, voters were hindered. Candidates from 93 parties and independent candidates were contesting 476 parliamentary seats. As a result, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party swept 397 seats. Military rule has lasted for 50 years in Myanmar, and a quarter of the parliament's seats are reserved for them. On February 1, 2021 they staged a coup, canceled the election results, and committed other atrocities.

After the 2019 national elections, deteriorating freedom and the problems in the eradication of corruption have undermined Indonesia's democracy. Through delays and polemics, the Simultaneous *Pilkada* in 270 regions was held on December 9, 2020, with a participation rate of 76.09%. Vote buying persisted, while identity-based hate politics weakened. Kinship politics is rife with 158 candidates having family ties to local and national political elites, and 67 of them won the contest. Riots and fraud in a small number of regions forced postponements and re-elections.

There is no single picture that can represent the face of electoral democracy in Asia-Pacific during 2020. However, it is clear that COVID-19 has placed additional burdens, not only on the holding of elections without compromising public health, but also on freedoms that are threatened from different sources. To stop the continuing gloomy situation to prevent us from falling into a reverse wave of democracy is a big challenge.

Lesson-Learned From The Asia-Pacific

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the portrait of democracy in Asia-Pacific was not very bright. Having been an important part of the third wave of democratization, with the rapid growth of transition from authoritarianism especially in the 1990s, the resilience

of democracy in the region has suffered in recent years. While not without flaws, the good performance of democracy persists in countries with a long experience of democracy, such as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. However, the proportion of non-democratic versus democratic regimes has not changed in the last decade, with half of the region's total countries belonging to hybrid and authoritarian regimes (IDEA, 2020).

Recently, with the strengthening of populism and ethno-nationalism, the space for freedom has narrowed and new democracies have become increasingly fragile. Concerns arose especially considering that "the decline in democracy took place gradually, marked by the erosion of democratic norms and institutions" (Przeworski, 2019). This means that the deconsolidation we witnessed in 2020 is owed to earlier attempts to undermine democracy. If democracy collapses one day, it will not happen suddenly and without any reasons preceding the fall.

In Sri Lanka, the experiences of civil war and terrorism provided an important asset for Rajapaksa to inflame ethnic-religious chauvinism and restrictions on the press and civil society circles in the name of security. With the election results confirming the dominance of the Rajapaksa family and the Sri Lankan Podujana Peremuna (SLPP) party, the road to authoritarianism has been opened more widely. After the 2019 national election, which was rumbling by polarization affected by the politics of hate and false news, illiberalism has also made Indonesian democracy gray. The strengthening of oligarchism at the local and national levels after the 2020 Simultaneous Regional Head Elections has placed civil society at one of its weakest points since the 1998 reform..

We can continue the review by looking at the technical aspects of holding elections. Shifting the election schedule gives election management bodies the opportunity to fulfill the rights of voters without compromising their safety. The opportunity to vote early, by post or other mechanisms, helps increase voter turnout as what we have seen in South Korea and New Zealand. In Singapore, where voting is mandatory, concessions for COVID-19 patients provide an unusual choice. However, this does not mean that there are no disturbances that affect the quality of the general election.

Physical imprisonment as part of the health protocols, obviously, has had no trivial impact. In addition to limiting marches and face-to-face discussions during the campaign period, monitoring for possible fraud was not optimal. The gap in access to the internet in several countries has hampered the dissemination of information while online campaigns have not worked well. Meanwhile, in a place where literacy of internet users is still low, the 'infodemic' is not an easy challenge. The disconnection of citizens from all processes with regard to the implementation of the General Election, to a certain extent, exacerbates the tendency of the declining quality of democracy in this region (Dali, 2021).

In Vanuatu and Iran, the COVID-19 pandemic has created barriers to voter participation and ambiguity, which hindered political transformation. Meanwhile, better public health services have the effect of strengthening support for the ruling parties in South Korea and New Zealand. On the other hand, although voter disillusionment did reduce support for the government, it was still too weak to counter the People's Action Party's dominance in Singapore. Elsewhere, the election underscores the growing dependence of citizens on the government in the midst of dwindling resources and the weakening power of non-state actors.

Broadening the horizon in looking at the political situation of countries in the Asia-Pacific shows that a hard blow to freedom can occur both in authoritarian countries as well as in countries that have previously experienced democratization. As stated by Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018), since the end of the Cold War, most of the failures of democracy have been caused not by soldiers, but by elected governments. The tragic paradox in the electoral route to authoritarianism is, they continue, that democracy is snatched away using the institutional tools of democracy itself.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we find not only the postponement of meetings in parliament; in countries with strong populism, the role of parliamentary control is weakened and power tends to be concentrated in the hands of the head of government. In the Philippines, for example, Congress passed a bill giving President Duterte special authority to declare a state of emergency. In March 2020, the government declared a state of emergency, allowing the police and military to enforce health protocols. After ordering quarantine in certain areas, Duterte even threatened to impose martial law if citizens continued to violate restrictions.

The fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected public health has also been used as an instrument to marginalize opposition and secure dominance. In Hong Kong, COVID-19 was the reason Carrie Lam's government postponed the Hong Kong parliamentary election, which were supposed to be held in September 2020, until a year later. The pause was used to disqualify Beijing's unwanted candidates and quell protests against the repressive National Security Act. In Malaysia, Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin postponed a parliamentary session and said the fight against COVID-19 was more important than the opposition's vote of no confidence.

Amnesty International (2021) notes that the global pandemic has exposed policies that are both divisive and devastating. For decades, some governments in the world have maintained inequality, discrimination, and oppression that are now paving the way for destruction through the spread of COVID-19. In the midst of rampant ethnic-religious chauvinism, especially voiced by political parties and groups in power, the COVID-19 pandemic has also been used to echo hatred and discrimination, including violence against marginalized minorities, as happened in India, Sri Lanka, and others.

Surveillance regimes were set up, such as in China, Cambodia and many others, whose aim is not simply to monitor the spread of COVID-19, but instead, to use the pandemic to spy on citizens, as well as intimidate critical voices with the excuse of interfering with the government's measures to contain the spread of the virus. Together with pressures on the media, as we have seen for example in Bangladesh, Cambodia, or Vietnam, monitoring of infodemic symptoms has not only succeeded in minimizing the spread of false news, but has also led to an intrusive impact on citizens' freedom of communication via the internet.

Observing the above conditions, COVID-19 has put additional pressures on democracy in the Asia-Pacific. Democracy is still working well in some places, but many governments are responding to the need to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic with centralization and abuse of power. Beyond that, democracy still has to deal with traditional sources of threats such as militarism in Thailand or Myanmar, as well as single-party domination such as in Laos and Vietnam. No less sad, democracy is difficult to shine in Central Asia in the trap of many hybrid regimes that are taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to further assert dominance.

Hopes For Change

Power without control is impossible to exercise democratically. Democracy presupposes a balance of power and a critical attitude in order that power can be monitored. This supervision, among other things, keeps the power willing to maintain an orientation to the common good. The decline of democracy in many countries is marked, among other things, by the weakness or even the absence of a credible opposition, a critical mass media, and an independent civil society. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation and exposed the fact that unequal access to resources has made people's dependence on the state even more dominant.

In emergencies, it is important to ensure that there is no concentration of power let alone unlimited control in the hands of the government. It is recognized that the government may need more authority to deal with unusual situations. Restrictions on mobility, strict supervision, and enforcement of rules with regard to health protocols are some of the exceptions needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, the exception that is needed during times of emergency is not unlimited power that can be abused to the extent that it even takes away citizens' freedom. Together with proportionality, accountability is a condition that inseparable from extra power for the sake of dealing with the pandemic.

The fact that legislation has even been misused to provide a basis for the illiberal moves of leaders shows that parliament needs a balancing power. When an opposition fails to gain sufficient number of parliamentary seats, it can develop pressure through mobilizing public opinion. The latter becomes more effective when there is sufficient

space for freedom and the literacy level of the citizens. The presence of a free and independent mass media will be an advantage. Together with trade unions, student and educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations can form a critical alliance to keep emergencies from turning into dictatorships.

The intensifying and chronic scale of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost every aspect of life. This should be a political gamble in the election. Voters will punish incumbents that fail to deal with the spread of COVID-19, while those who manage to overcome it can renew their legitimacy. However, the pandemic sometimes makes voters tend to be ambiguous or even worried about speculation and change. Encouraging change in countries with acute inequality and dependency may be much more difficult, but elections provide an opportunity to accelerate it.

Within the framework of control, reduced physical monitoring of elections during the COVID-19 pandemic also requires new breakthroughs. Utilization of information technology provides the opportunity to accelerate the pace of transformation in the implementation of a more efficient and transparent election. Apart from the need to solve the problem of the internet gap, the same thing also demands political education among citizens to increase the quality of their involvement as their knowledge increases. Only then the people's deliberation will not stop at participation in the general election.

Even when freedom is available, better opportunities to engage in discourse and influence policy belong to those with better knowledge and awareness. Unfortunately, the wave of the infodemic, marked by misinformation as well as disinformation, has deflated the bubble of optimism that the internet was helping democratize. In addition to the literacy movement, misinformation may be resisted through the presence of trusted mass media and law enforcement. However, the latter is difficult to do when laws are applied selectively by the state and when the authorities are the very sources of misinformation.

Perhaps nothing is more difficult to do in the current situation than to revitalize the civil society. Especially in countries that have previously experienced a gradual decline in democracy, strengthening democracy may be faced with two fundamental problems. The first is the strengthening of citizens' dependence on the government during the pandemic, and the second is the difficulty of mobilizing in mass gatherings or protests as part of the pressure force. While the first problem demands the ability to find alternative resources, the second is easier to overcome if the potential for digital engagement has grown.

The mass media also provide alternative power. In crises and disasters, media freedom helps social control to ensure that governments are serious about solving problems. However, in addition to government repression, the mass media are often weakened by the concentration of ownership and sensationalism within the framework of the pursuit

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of profit. Disruption due to technological leaps and bounds requires a strategy that is not easy in managing the media business, but it is important for actors to maintain the spirit of the media as the fourth power in a democratic order.

Finally, preserving freedom and democracy is a collective work. We cannot allow those who are repressed to pursue their own realization of freedom. A global solidarity may help to strengthen the power of the marginalized and put additional pressure on dictators and demagogues. Realizing that freedom is both an instrument and a goal, getting out of the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic clearly requires, among other things, the capital of freedom. The same capital, among other important ones, can empower people to realize what is valuable in their lives. Hope, again, always grows better in a democracy.

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Media, Democracy and the Pandemic in the Philippines

Yvonne Chua

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacted a heavy toll on free and independent media, arguably an essential component and barometer of democracy. The public health emergency has triggered lockdowns and restrictions, upending media routines and business models, inflicting untold economic damage on newsrooms, and endangering the physical and mental well-being of journalists. Challenges in countering offline and online disinformation persist, aggravated by a “disinfodemic” amplified by social media. In various parts of the world, governments have used the urgency of curbing the global crisis as a pretext to further tilt the balance against media freedom.

The year 2020 closed with at least 577 press freedom violations worldwide linked to COVID-19 (International Press Institute, n.d.). At least 91 countries were found to have imposed restrictions on the news media as a response to the pandemic (Freedom House, 2020). Press freedom violations encompassed arrests, detentions, civil lawsuits and criminal investigations against journalists and media organizations; restrictions on access to information; physical or verbal attacks, including online intimidation or smear; and censorship. Eighteen countries passed “fake news” laws targeting the disinfodemic but which autocrats have conveniently parlayed into censorship tools. (UNESCO coined the term “disinfodemic” to refer to COVID-19 disinformation which it said “more toxic and more deadly” than disinformation about other subjects [Posetti & Bontcheva, 2020].)

By May of 2021, the count of countries where journalism had been blocked or constrained, for reasons related to the pandemic or not, had climbed to 132, characterized by a

“dramatic deterioration in people’s access to information and an increase in obstacles to news coverage” (Reporters Without Borders, 2021). The Asia-Pacific region was a record holder: the world’s biggest prisons for journalists and bloggers, the world’s deadliest countries for journalists and bloggers, and the biggest number of so-called “predators of press freedom.”

Illiberal Democracy

The Philippines offers a good case study of how the pandemic has, as it was rightly observed in last year’s Bali Civil Society and Media Forum, “exacerbated” the already “preexisting” downward spiral of media freedom in many democracies.

Notwithstanding the restoration of democracy in 1986, journalists continue to be killed in the line of duty, turning the Philippines into one of the world’s most dangerous places for media practitioners. Months ahead of the 2010 elections, 34 media workers in southern Philippines were massacred in what has become known as the world’s single deadliest event for journalists in history. A court would convict the murderers, including members of a powerful political clan, a decade later. In a country where many journalist murders remain unsolved, the decision was certainly one for the books.

Beyond the killings, other forms of attacks on the media have occurred, including a raft of lawsuits filed by the husband of a former president—albeit not in the nature and on the scale seen since Rodrigo Duterte’s ascent to the presidency in 2016. The escalating assault on the media is but one of the manifestations of the descent of Southeast Asia’s oldest democracy to an “illiberal democracy.”

Cast in the same mold as populist Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a proponent of illiberal democracy, Duterte fits the description of a populist illiberal democratic leader: “a legitimately elected leader who has not yet formally curbed freedom of speech or limited powers of branches of government—yet whose rule is marked by systematic violations of civil liberties” (Thompson, 2019). In his five years in office, Duterte has targeted and considerably weakened judicial oversight, a pluralistic political system, a flourishing civil society and an independent media that are designed to frustrate “executive aggrandizement” (Thompson, 2021). He and his supporters have fomented disinformation that has eroded not only the public’s trust in the media but also its capacity for critical discourse and enlightened decision making.

To be sure, Duterte has never concealed his disdain and hostility toward the media, especially mainstream media. His solution to what he considers as the “journalist problem,” to which he includes “the crusaders telling the truth, baring it all to the public,” was to “kill journalism, stop journalism.”

Short of the use of force or outright intimidation of journalists, illiberal leaders have been observed to deploy the “illiberal toolbox” or a collection of economic, legal and extralegal strategies to cow, control or co-opt the media (Csaky, 2019). For example, critical journalists are slapped with arbitrary tax investigations and financially draining lawsuits as part of the economic tactic. Legal tools consist of selective enforcement of laws and abuse of regulatory and licensing practices. Extralegal tools come in the form of verbal harassment, smears by proxies and permitting impunity for threats against journalists. Csaky says:

“The illiberal toolbox is particularly effective because it exploits the weaknesses of today’s media environment, including the decline of trust in the press, and the crisis of the old business model. It takes place gradually and stealthily, and after a point it is difficult to reverse. This makes the media in many countries vulnerable — and by extension, threatens the very basis of democracy by undermining an essential check on unbridled government power.”

Years before the pandemic struck, President Duterte was already using such illiberal tools against leading media organizations and journalists that have been critical of his brutal war on drugs or against whom he simply holds a grudge. His government pursued tax evasion charges against the businesses of the owners of the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, a leading newspaper. The Philippine president openly threatened to block the congressional franchise of ABS-CBN, the country’s biggest and oldest radio and television network. Veteran journalist Maria Ressa and her news website Rappler would face a string of lawsuits that alleged violation of foreign ownership rules (its license to operate was revoked), tax offenses and libel. Media groups were linked to a supposed plot to oust the president. Journalists were relentlessly “red-tagged” or branded as communists, subversives and terrorists, putting their lives in danger.

Duterte’s animosity toward the media would spread among government officials at all levels like a “contagion”; they, too, adopted a bullying stance and initiated actions against journalists (De Jesus, 2021). His legion of well-coordinated trolls, or “keyboard warriors,” skillfully amplified his tirade against the media, putting disinformation tactics to full use. Ressa, who has received press freedom awards from various international groups amid her systematic persecution by the government, has become a “novel case study” of online violence and disinformation tactics against a journalist (Posetti, Maynard, and Bontcheva, 2021). The study concluded that the online reputation-based and personal attacks against her bear the marks of “state-led disinformation fueled by Duterte’s public statements demonizing her and Rappler as criminal.” In early March 2020, as the Philippines began feeling the weight of the the pandemic, Reporters Without Borders (2020) already named him among the 20 “worst digital predators of press freedom.”

The Philippine president has indeed weaponized government institutions, the law and the internet against the media, demonstrating the adverse consequences an illiberal toolbox could have on media freedom and independence. In his first year in office alone, “the intimidation of media, particularly of their owners, set in, instilling an almost visceral fear, a deep-seated terror at being made a target of unfounded charges” (De Jesus, 2021).

Continuing Downward Spiral

Thus, when the pandemic struck, the Philippine media not only had to confront new challenges but also continuing realities besieging the sector. The economic impact of the lockdowns and restrictions on the very survival of the media around the world is only too real. Revenue losses, especially from advertising and sales, have forced news organizations to downsize, suspend or close for good, the latter a clear case of a “media extinction event” that creates news deserts.

Like elsewhere, newspapers in the Philippines have taken the hardest hit, especially community publications. At least a dozen of them suspended operations at the peak of the lockdowns last year and went digital. Of late, a few have resumed publishing, but with reduced frequency, pages and personnel; those without the wherewithal remain digital—or have folded up.

Restrictions on access to information further curtailed news coverage. In the initial months of the lockdown, journalists were subjected to accreditation, which could be denied or withdrawn. To date, virtual press briefings remain the norm, even by the presidential spokesperson and health officials. Duterte himself has hardly interacted with journalists, even virtually, since he first imposed the lockdown in March 2020. COVID-19 also exacerbated challenges to the safety of journalists, including at checkpoints.

Because government offices are not in full operation, many routine requests for information have gone unprocessed. The Philippines is among many governments in the world that had to suspend the processing of freedom of information (FOI) requests due to the pandemic (Bernadas and Ilagan, 2020).

Government also used the crisis as an opportunity to insert a vaguely worded anti-fake news provisions in a law that granted Duterte emergency powers to respond to the pandemic. The *ad hoc* law has since expired, but not before leading to the arrest of at least 60 individuals. Some of them were charged not only with the law, but also with other laws such as a 90-year-old provision on false news, libel and online libel. A few were even warned that they could be punished for rumor-mongering under a draconian law that has long been repealed.

The fallout from Duterte's threats against ABS-CBN and Ressa would, meanwhile, be felt as the pandemic was raging.

In May 2020, ABS-CBN shut down its free-to-air stations after the National Telecommunications Commission, threatened with graft charges by the solicitor general, reneged on its promise to issue the network a provisional authority to operate while awaiting renewal of its congressional franchise; instead, it released a cease and desist order against it. In July, Congress, packed with Duterte allies, sounded the death knell for the network. Its closure left journalists and citizens alike shaken: If this could happen to ABS-CBN, it could happen to others.

Earlier in June, Ressa and a former colleague were convicted of cyber libel and sentenced to up to six years in prison. At least eight active cases against her and Rappler are being tried in court for which she has posted bail more than former first lady Imelda Marcos and faces possible jail time totaling 100 years.

Alongside all this, killings of Filipino journalists persist amid the pandemic and despite existence of a government task force to solve media killings. Four were murdered in retaliation for their work in 2020. In addition, the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, a media monitoring group, has tracked an increase in other types of attacks on journalists during the pandemic. In all, there were 22 incidents of intimidation (red-tagging, surveillance, threats to file cases against journalists, doxxing and extortion, among others) and 20 cases of libel or oral defamation. State agents, from both the national and local government, the military and the police, were behind many of the incidents. The center also noted takedowns or modifications of original reports, or what it calls "self-censorship of the most open kind" (De Jesus 2021).

Like Ressa, a number of female journalists in the Philippines have experienced the brunt of government attacks against journalists, a stark reminder of the need to ensure the safety of women journalists. Red-tagging, undertaken mostly by the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict chaired by Duterte himself, led to the arrest of a female reporter in Central Philippines in February 2020 and to a female online news editor in December, both on charges of illegal possession of firearms. The editor was subsequently cleared of the charges and released months later. The two female journalists belong to the alternative media that have had to endure government attacks, especially red-tagging, even during the pandemic. Neither have campus journalists been spared.

Not surprisingly, the Philippines continues to slide down the annual World Press Freedom Index, tumbling from 127th in the global rankings in 2017 to 138th in 2021 out of 180 countries. Its Freedom in the World score declined three points to 56 (out of 100) on account chiefly of its aggressive use of emergency powers to step up harassment and arrests of citizens who express dissent on social media during the pandemic and the

shutdown of ABS-CBN which, Freedom House said, “drastically reduced public access to independent reporting.”

Pushing Back

Historically, the Philippine media have proved their resilience in times of adversities—through colonial regimes and martial rule. Now, amidst the rise of illiberal democracy and the onslaught of a pandemic, they are pushing back to recapture lost democratic space, often with support from other sectors of society.

By the time the pandemic hit, the Philippine Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists was already in place. Its launching in November 2019 capped months of nationwide collaboration of stakeholders in civil society, government, media, business, and the academe. A first in Asia, the Philippine action plan is anchored on the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. The national framework addresses not only safety and protection mechanisms for the media, but also seeks to raise the integrity and professionalism and improve the working conditions of journalists, as well as strengthen criminal justice system and increase public awareness and knowledge about the role of media in a democracy through public information, journalism education and research. The Journalist Safety Advisory Group, consisting of six media organizations, was established to provide strategic advice and guidance on the plan. As part of the plan, the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines received support in 2020 to expand to five its regional media safety offices as well as to build the capacity of its quick response teams and prepare risk assessment reports. A recent project expanded the scope of the plan to include human rights defenders and other content producers to help them hold decision makers to account, as well as provide the public with the information needed for making informed decisions and participating in democratic processes. A capacity building program for journalists on professional and ethical conduct in time for the 2022 national elections is also under way.

Attacks on the Philippines media have also fostered solidarity among journalists at home and across the world. In July 2020, 60 press freedom groups and civil society organizations, journalism institutions, filmmakers and other supporters in different parts of the world launched the global campaign #HoldTheLine to support Ressa and independent media in the Philippines. The campaign, which takes off from Ressa’s remark to “hold the line” in response to sustained state attacks and online violence, has been calling on the Philippine government to drop all charges and cases against Ressa, Santos and Rappler, and end pressure on independent media in the Philippines. #HoldTheLine underscores the urgency of the media, civil society and other sectors within and outside a country to coalesce and to succor fellow journalists under constant siege. Ressa and Rappler are also assisted by international lawyers Amal Clooney and Caoilfhionn Gallagher QC whose chief task is to look into how best to protect her and Rappler under international laws. A year earlier, 41 journalists from competing

Philippine media organizations joined the case Rappler had filed against Duterte before the Supreme Court seeking to declare the coverage ban he had imposed on Rappler a violation of the constitutional guarantees of a free press, free speech, equal protection and due process

ABS-CBN's controversial shutdown provided another occasion for its audiences, journalists and citizens to close ranks. Despite pandemic restrictions, rallies and noise barrages were held in parts of the country. Hashtags such as #westandwithabscbn, #notoabscbnshutdown, #defendpressfreedom and #holdtheline trended. By far, one of the most ambitious and untested initiative to get the network back on the air is spearheaded by lawyers, volunteers and the private sector. The goal of Pirma Kapamilya (short for the People's Initiative for Reforms and Movement for Action Kapamilya) is to gather the signatures of roughly seven million registered voters from all legislative districts, or a tenth of the total registered voters, to grant ABS-CBN a "people's franchise." Under the people's initiative process provided under the Constitution, the Commission on Elections, after verifying the signatures, will schedule a referendum in which people can vote to approve or reject a measure, in this case the renewal of ABS-CBN's franchise. If approved, the measure becomes a law. The pandemic has set back the signature campaign, but the first batch from a legislative district in southern Luzon has been turned over to the electoral body.

Countering disinformation has also brought multiple sectors together under one umbrella. The five-year Initiative for Media Freedom run by the media NGO Internews with funding from the United States Agency for International Development has academe, journalists and content producers working side by side to bolster capacity of media and other organizations nationwide to address disinformation, as well as improve the environment for a free press and strengthen media self-regulation. Since 2018 a loose coalition of journalists, bloggers, academics and civil society representatives have been driving the Consortium for Democracy and Disinformation whose work involves capacity building of various communities and research on disinformation, among others. It has tapped selected universities to be regional hubs.

Unlike many other countries, the Philippines has no industry-wide or intersectoral press council to lobby for economic relief from the government for the media. There is no such thing as a scrapping of import duty on paper as raw material for print media production, a 12-month suspension of social security remittances and a fellowship program for journalists that Indonesia's Press Council has successfully negotiated from its government. Media organizations and journalists in the Philippines have been largely left to fend for themselves.

But out of a crisis, they say, comes opportunity. Despite closure of its free-to-air stations, ABS-CBN continues to operate in other businesses that don't require a franchise, including on cable, satellite, and online. Although its presence on social media

platforms—Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram—surpasses rival GMA News, now the leading free-to-air network, revenues from these digital platforms are nowhere close to airtime revenues, the reason it has discontinued its current affairs programs. In Bacolod in Central Philippines, journalists from the shuttered ABS-CBN's regional station and the city's 38-year-old community paper joined hands to start a digital news platform called Digicast. It now has its own daily newscast, a weekly lifestyle show and a daily email newsletter.

Press associations have also been the sources of support for beleaguered journalists, limited through it may be at times. Since the March 2020 lockdown, the 60-member newspaper association Philippine Press Institute has been supporting struggling community papers, especially those that temporarily stopped printing, by paying some of the stories they post on its website, PPI News Commons. The initiative is supported by a German foundation and a mining company. The NUJP updated its safety guide and organized peer support networks in different parts of the country critical to help journalists who reported about and during COVID-19 cope with stress and trauma. At the same time, it sold masks to raise money for a defense fund to support journalists who have been arrested or sued for libel. In the face of dwindling advertising and circulation revenues and in keeping with the growing subscription model worldwide, the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* launched a digital subscription package, partnering with eight long-running local newspapers across the country.

What Now?

These admirable efforts, however, also lead to such questions as how to scale up these initiatives and keep them going and, more important, sustain independent media.

The pandemic, which has laid bare the vulnerability of the media in the face of demagoguery and disinformation, has fortunately also triggered discourses on how to strengthen and safeguard the media. Recommendations emanating from various groups such as UNESCO (2020) and the International Press Institute (Prasad, 2020) are worth heeding by sectors they are directed toward. They include but are not limited to:

- Support for media through technical assistance, skills training and mentoring
- Provision of financial assistance, including emergency and medium-term funding and use of public funds
- Revocation on restrictions imposed on reporting and access to public officials and information
- A stop to any form of intimidation and attacks against journalists
- Prompt investigation of attacks on journalists
- Repeal of disproportionate legal or administrative measures supposedly aimed at limiting the spread of disinformation

- Collaboration among journalists, including joint actions by journalists to push back against capture
- Regulation of tech platforms to suppress misinformation by their own means and to support public service journalism

The bottom line is society, especially the state, should recognize the essential role of independent journalism in a democracy.

A range of studies have established the link of a free media to increased political participation, increased government accountability, and better social outcomes. A recent longitudinal study of 97 countries found that a decline in press freedom also jeopardizes the economic standards of living, resulting in a 1 to 2% drop in real GDP (Nguyen, Valadkhani, Nguyen, & Wake, 2021). Warned the study's authors: "The negative economic effects of deteriorating press freedom cannot be easily reversed by subsequent recoveries in press freedom."

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CIVIC EDUCATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE

Mireille Marcia Karman & Sylvia Yazid

Introduction

Breeding and nurturing democracy among future generations is a major part of the effort to preserve democracy as our political system. These efforts need to be long term and started as early as possible because democracy is not merely a procedure but more importantly a culture and knowledge. It is our belief that the younger generations in every democratic country need to instill democratic culture and knowledge which would commonly manifest in the form of civic education.

In the higher education system such as university, civic education would transfer and help exchanges of knowledge in classes and encourage direct exposure to democratic experience (Miguez & Hernández, 2018, p. 145; Sundström & Fernández, 2013, pp. 111-115; McCowan, 2009, pp. 55-59). These 2 learning methods are equally important since the former serves as a theoretical foundation for democratic understanding while the latter serves as practical lesson on democratic conduct. In terms of adult education, exposing students to practical situation where they can learn from each other as well from other adults would assist them in adapting self as citizens and change makers.

In particular, civic education in higher education should ideally be designed not only as an education for adult, but as education for 'full' citizens as well. First and foremost, the method of teaching civic education in higher education needs to be different from teaching civic education during school years because the former takes place in the context of relations between 2 adults while the latter takes place in the context of

relations between children and adult. Moreover, the civic education in higher education also takes place in the context of teaching fellow citizens who have equal standing in the political sphere, as opposed to teaching civic education at school where the teacher as a citizen introduces the political sphere to the students as soon-to-be citizens. While the condition of the latter can naturally produce hierarchical structure between the teacher as 'full' citizen and students as 'half' citizens, the former does not and should not naturally produce similar hierarchy. Although the embedded design of education both at school and higher education still promotes hierarchical structure at class, during the class on civic education, the lecturers need to be mindful on the political and citizenship status of the students as their equals. Thus, the hierarchical nature of the class should be balanced with the content of the democratic civic education which emphasizes on the value of equality. Bearing this in mind, civic education at higher education should be aimed more at empowering the young citizens and equipping them with necessary skills to translate their political ideals into concrete political action, rather than telling them which ideals are correct and which are not. Thus, beyond a mere rote-learning or knowledge transferring, civic education would provide room for discussion and exposure about current social and political challenges. By doing so, the lecturer does not claim that his or her political opinions is the truth or the most ideal ones because he or she needs to present her/himself in a more equal position with the students as fellow citizens.

However, in several countries, including Indonesia, the method of civic education in higher education still relies heavily on a one-way knowledge transfer. For example, according to the official handbook of civic education for higher education in Indonesia, the aim of civic education for higher education is to shape and instill nationalism for the students (Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016, p. 8). However, within the book, there is no effort to distinguish between the school students and varsity students which show that there is no apparent method differentiation between teaching civic education to the soon-to-be citizens and teaching civic education to the young citizens. While there seem to be no differentiation on civic education for schools and higher education at class, the most apparent differentiation occurs outside the formal curriculum. Varsity students could be immediately exposed to the more practical democratic experience and political action in the form of allowing them to actively involve in organizations and extracurricular activities within the campus. This experience may then be extended in the form of their involvement in social, and probably rather political, organizations outside the campus. Some of these organizations and activities give them space to practice activism such as writing political opinions in mass media, developing social action project, and even participating in peaceful rallies or protests (Ghaliya, Afrizal, & Gunawan, 2020). While these activities are not part of the formal curriculum, some academics explicitly endorse the involvement of their students in such activities (Dzulfikar, 2019; Oktavianti, 2020). At the same time, it is quite common to find that some forms of activism, particularly students' participation in rallies, tend to be discouraged by universities (CNN Indonesia, 2019).

This opposing views of “acceptable” activities in students’ activism may be rooted from different perspectives about the relations between education and politics and how to teach civic education to these young generations. Some would emphasize on the importance of civic education in instilling nationalism to the young generations while others would focus more on the needs to ensure democratic political literacy and to strengthen their agency¹ which could enable them to think critically and become agents of change. In the search of ideal form of democratic activism for varsity students, this chapter focuses on how civic education for higher education have been designed, particularly given the more restrictive environment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Importance of Civic Education: Interests of State Vs the Interests of Civil Society

The designing of civic education is basically an interaction between the interests of both the state and the civil society. For the state, education, particularly civic education, is the introduction of state’s presence to its citizens. Specifically, it introduces the history and development of social, economic, cultural, and political institutions within the state up to the present. In this sense, civic education is inherently conservative because it seeks to preserve norms and institutions which have been established in the past (Gordon, 2001, p. 38). The norms and institutions preservation effort are done through a mixture of persuasion and repression targeted at younger generations so that they build a sense of attachment to the past (Mayo, 2014, p. 388). In a simple term, we call this instilling nationalism. Building this sense of nationalism is essential to preserve the existence of the state while also maintaining stability of the political sphere. Although a democratic political system maintains and respects individual differences, any working political sphere needs a minimum sense of similarity and unity among citizens which manifest in the form of nationalism.

Besides the state, civil society also has the interest in ensuring that political literacy for the young generation is taught through civic education. In a democratic political system, citizens’ political literacy includes instilling the culture of democracy where every opinion is put to the test and every consensus can be revised in the future (Pring, 2001, p. 83). Moreover, the young generations need to also learn about discipline by evidence and good argument instead of brute force or mere ideological rhetoric. Those are important set of skills for entering the democratic public sphere which uphold the belief of solving disagreement through compromise and deliberation instead of violence. Hence, it is important to note that instilling such culture is not only a matter of content formulation, but also a matter of pedagogy or method of teaching. The pedagogy of civic education needs to ensure that any knowledge which is transferred at class need to always be linked with the democratic culture and to familiarize the

1 Agency here refers to the capacity of an individual to continuously act freely and consciously according to their personal intention, motivation, and reasons. See Giddens (1979), pp. 55-59.

students with practice of deliberation by conducting class discussion (Pring, 2001, pp. 85-86). Frequent exposure to discussion encourages students to explore disagreements and differing ideas, articulate opinions, research and build evidence-based arguments, and tolerate as well as respect diversity. Furthermore, civic education can also be seen as enabling 'conscientization,' a term coined by Paulo Freire which refers to the process where the oppressed individuals gain the skill of thinking critically which give them the opportunity to transform their conditions for the better (McCowan, 2009, p. 47). Hence, civil society has the interest to ensure that civic education can liberate and strengthen individuals' agency which enable them to raise their own political interests instead of merely become an object or tool for others' political agenda.

It is quite clear that in the context of formal education, civic education bears the expectations of both the state and the civil society. Nevertheless, on many occasions the interests of the state and civil society intermingle within the formulation and provision of civic education and the means to realize some of these interests seem to be incompatible with one another. For example, the state's interest to instill nationalism through indoctrination is incompatible with civil society's interest to instill political literacy through deliberation and class discussion. This incompatibility may lead to perennial debate on how to ideally conduct civic education. We argue that in Indonesia, the tension around this debate becomes even higher when we are talking about civic education in higher education because of 2 interrelated factors. First, most higher education students are considered as inexperienced citizens because they are newly eligible for formal political activities. The status of inexperienced citizens makes them more vulnerable against political manipulation and indoctrination posed by the more experienced citizens (McCowan, 2009, p. 54). Second, lecturers at Indonesia's higher education institutions are commonly regarded as figures of authority who have great influence over students' mind. These two factors, the vulnerable condition of students and the authority of lecturers, combined with the principle of academic freedom, may be viewed as essentials in establishing vibrant environment to nurture democracy among the younger generations. However, at the same time, the setting may also make any higher education institution in Indonesia a fertile ground both for concealed political indoctrination and growing alternative critical aspirations. To appease this tension, the next section discusses ways to design a balanced civic education which cater to both interests.

The Struggle to Design an Ideal Civic Education for Higher Education Institutions

The first important step to design an ideal civic education for varsity students is to not only recognize the tension between different interests of educating young generations, but to also recognize that both interests have their own justified virtues. By doing so, we can find the proper balance to fulfil both interests. It is important to remember that education does not only serve the purpose of making a man and woman, but also making a citizen (Dewey, 2001, p. 98). With this, it means that education is not solely aimed to improve

humanity as an individual, but to also prepare new citizens who enters political sphere. The repressive element of civic education is expected to ensure that these new citizens do not negatively affect the stability and unity of the political sphere.

While persuasion and discussion serve as process-oriented element which maintain the quality of delivering nationalist values at class, repression is a result-oriented element which control the outcome of the class so that those who pass the class are truly prepared to join the political sphere. Hence, instead of rejecting the repressive element entirely, it is wiser to control the level of repression. For example, a multiple-choice testing system to measure the level of nationalism or democratic understanding create a rigid concept of nationalism and democracy. Such level of repression is unnecessary since the political sphere can tolerate certain level of diversity in the concept of nationalism and democracy. Instead, the testing system can be modified into an open question so that the new citizens can have more freedom in interpreting both concepts according to their experiences and identities. In an open question system, the students may still fail when their understanding of those concepts are starkly different or even contradict existing norms. By doing so, the state still fulfils its interest by instilling necessary values for entering political sphere to the young generations but without curbing students' rights to develop critical thinking. Besides, the interests of the civil society bear the virtues of equipping students with skills to exercise their freedom and communicate their aspirations. These virtues are realized through political literacy and conscientization. By doing so, their understanding on identity and nationalism is expanded to include minority rights, existing debates within the political sphere, and their potential power to transform the state for the better (Sundström & Fernández, 2013, p. 113).

In teaching the students, Freire notes that the institutional structure of the higher education institution matters too. Rigid hierarchical and oppressive education is not compatible to teaching politics to the young citizens. In this sense, oppressive education is defined as an act of objectifying students and placing the lecturers as the only living subject. This kind of education perceives students as empty containers to be filled by the lecturer and, since it is a one-way-only communication or a monologue, the content of the education is detached from the reality and experience of the students (Freire, 2005, p. 71). Instead of cultivating critical thinking, this method of education creates children who have a constant duty to memorize and repeat without having any depth of understanding or capability of relating the teaching content to the actual world. Rather than receiving an introduction to the world, the students are filled with abstract theoretical values which are often unrelated to the reality in which they live. He calls it the 'banking' concept of education which sees the education system as a method of transferring knowledge from the knowledgeable lecturer to the students who know nothing (Freire, 2005, p. 72). The students, despite their status as eligible citizens, are perceived as beings who are 'half' human and must be filled with the lecturer's knowledge to be 'full' citizens and to integrate with the society. However, instead of making 'full' citizens, this educational space becomes a factory-like place,

transforming students into easily controlled beings who have absolute obedience to the lecturer. He believes that this system aims to protect the world from young citizens' critical consciousness, which can destroy and change the 'perfect' existing political sphere (Freire, 2005, p. 73). This way of thinking takes away students' political rights to intervene or modify the political sphere because the new members are seen as threats instead of opportunity to improve the current political condition. Hence, instead of equipping them with political literacy, the lecturer becomes the guard or technician of the world who decides what part of the society should be filled by and preserved by the students as well as ensuring that students who enter the political sphere have been 'standardized' to adapt to the existing society.

To have a liberating and critical education, civic education for varsity students need to focus on dialogical communication which equalize the relations between lecturer and students at class. Both lecturer and students are exchanging knowledge and experience, as well as critically analyzing and reflecting on certain topics of discussion so that they can produce agreeable conclusion. The role of lecturer at class differs from the students only in the condition that he or she is the one who starts the topic of discussion by presenting existing conditions and his or her opinion (Freire, 2005, p. 81) and, at certain points, moderates the discussion. During the discussion, the students will also express their opinion after reflecting about others' opinions and the lecturer then needs to reconsider his or her former opinion. Such ideal civic education needs to also equip the lecturer with the awareness that his or her opinion is always biased towards certain political belief so that he or she needs to carefully distinguish between his or her bias opinion and the fact (McCowan, 2009, p. 65). In so doing, the lecturer can also make the students aware of their biases and cultivate the virtue of respect and tolerance towards opposing believes.

Furthermore, since the students are young citizens, the civic education needs to also be put into practice in the form of student activism. The democratic culture and critical thinking which have been trained at classroom can be refined by exposing them to the real democratic experience such as writing political opinion in mass media, developing social action project, and even participating in peaceful rallies or protests. Writing in mass media trains the students to convey their critical thoughts to the public in a systematic method while at the same time, giving them the real public experience by letting them be scrutinized by the media editor and the general public. Besides, developing social action projects and participating in peaceful rallies encourage them to critically think about social issues around them, put such thoughts into practice, and cultivate their potential to collectively change the community for the better. When these practices are put inside the curriculum of civic education, the higher education institutions can serve as a safe zone for these young citizens who are still exploring the political sphere. The result of their experience as student activists can be openly discussed and analyzed at class. The class serves as the reflection zone where the students' opinions are affirmed, contested, and realign so that it does not stray too far from the existing foundation of

the political sphere. Hence, the students can still be protected from the harsher reality of politics while at the same time, the political sphere is also protected from the possible instability which comes from radical views of the young citizens (Arendt, 1961, p. 186).

Considering the eternal tension in designing civic education for higher education institutions, we offer an idea to use higher education as a bridge between cultivating nationalism and cultivating critical thinking and conscientization. To serve as a bridge, the higher education institutions need to be aware of 4 conditions and responsibilities. First, we cannot deny the existing hierarchy at educational institutions between the lecturers and students. The lecturer has a traditional authority within the class since he or she has the power to manage the class and grade the students. However, in teaching civic education, the ultimate authority of the lecturer should come from the students' belief on the lecturer's political experience, superior knowledge, and moral integrity to teach the civic and political life (Gordon, 2001, p. 41). Therefore, the traditionally and institutionally established authority needs to be enriched with reputationally built one.

Second, the lecturers must be aware of their moral responsibility to help students make sense of the current social and political condition of the state, including the shared belief on national values and norms, its challenges, and weaknesses. This responsibility entails them to also encourage students to cultivate critical thinking, find solutions of existing social and political problems, and prevent them from forming wild political aspirations that come from a lack of evidence or comprehensive understanding of the sociopolitical problems. The decision for university academics to support their students' political actions must be accompanied by the willingness to protect them from any result following such actions. At the same time, the decision to discourage any form of student activism must be accompanied by the obligation to give persuasive arguments or at least logical reasonings which can be accepted by the students. Moreover, the reasoning and arguments should be followed by a dialogue about what could be done as an alternative for exercising their democratic rights.

Third and related to the second condition, higher education institutions need to be aware that most of the students are 'full' citizens. While the institutions cannot deny them the rights to form their own political opinions and actions, the institutions have the responsibility to cultivate evidence-based critical thinking and responsible young citizens. Hence, it is important that besides the civic education, higher education institutions need to create a learning environment which reflect the democratic values as close as possible. For example, creating students' organizational bodies within the university which can have the power to influence certain university policies. Given time and experience, this initiative can of course be expanded to support and acknowledge students' participation in institutions outside the university.

Fourth, higher education institution needs to be aware of its role as a safe place for students to practice political activism. While they can learn and reflect on their

political activities within the institution, they also have the freedom to join the political activities in the real political sphere. However, the safe space of the institution needs to be insulated from the real political sphere. In other words, the institution cannot serve as the real political battleground for the students. There is a chance that the political contestation within the university reflects the existing political contestation in the political sphere, but the contesting actors in the political sphere cannot directly influence the activities within the institution. Ideally, no political parties, ideological groups, or interest groups should be able to penetrate university's "safe" environment and directly control organizations within the university.

Beside these 4 points that they need to be aware of, higher education institutions also need to be aware of the current social, political, and economic context which affect the content and delivery of civic education. Hence the next discussion on the challenges in nurturing democracy among youths during pandemic. Like in other contexts, the spread of COVID-19 has brought changes to higher education institutions. In particular, the pandemic affects the modes of interaction in the institutions and the change the method of delivering education. Thus, the next part will look into how the changes in context have affected the delivery of civic education.

Challenges in Teaching Civic Education during COVID-19 Era

The COVID-19 pandemic affects all form of human interaction, including the activities within the political sphere. While political activism is severely constrained due to the restriction of physical assembly, activists from all over the world have continuously been seeking new outlets for advocacy and organizing themselves to have their voices heard. Nevertheless, there has not been a perfect formula for the most effective method to replace physical assembly. In several places, including Indonesia, public rally is still seen as the most effective outlet to criticize and protest government's policies and bills (Karmini & Jatmiko, 2021). So far, it has been a tough choice between exercising political rights and ensuring health. Since the real political sphere still needs time to adapt to the situation, it creates a difficulty for the young citizens to have a proper exposure to the real democratic experience.

Moreover, although the cultivation of nationalism and development of critical thinking can still be taught in the (now virtual) classroom, there is a question of effectiveness in doing so through online means. Civic education has its abstract dimension such as studying history, national interests, and constitution which serve as the foundation of the political sphere. They can also learn about current political debates from mass media. However, the young citizens need to also be able to relate those lessons with their own experience and activities. Considering that their activities have been limited for more than a year which therefore limit their direct exposure to social, economic, and political issues, there is a question of the effectiveness of solely relying on the civic education from classroom lessons. The lecturers' efforts to bring the "real world" into

the virtual classroom are very much appreciated. However, it cannot entirely replace the hands-on experience enabled through direct contacts. There is a possibility that any discussion solely relies on their old or limited experience of being in the political sphere.

To get over such situations, there seems to be a solution in the form of digital activism. The digital activism fits with the young citizens who are considered as digital generation, a term which refers to the people who were born in the era of interconnectedness and fast development of digital technologies. This generation quickly adapt to the fast changes of technologies and can process numerous information available on internet. However, the digital activism is not without any challenge. One of the challenges is brought by Merlyna Lim (2013) who analyzes digital activism in Indonesia and concludes that the use of social media is mostly for social activity, which means it is not political and instead, dominated by entertainment and popular culture content (p. 18). Thus, the digital activism could not cater complex political issues which require lengthy focus and comprehensive understanding of certain issue. For the digital activism to be popular in social media, the political narrative must be simplified and at times, exaggerated. Oftentimes, this requirement creates misleading information or inaccuracies which make the political issue lost its main essence in the digital world. For example, the 2014 photo of a boy widely circulated in Twitter and Facebook to garner supports to end conflict in Syria was proven to be fake (Hooton, 2014). The conflict is real, the victims need support, and the aspiration to end such conflict is justified. However, the need to popularize such aspiration in social media led to such false information and in turn, hurt the main essence of the advocacy.

Besides, there is also a concern over equality in the digital world. As Schradie mentioned, the digital activism gap creates problem in moving the supposedly equal political sphere into the digital world. Successful digital activism often requires more money, power, and high-level organizational and technological skill (Schradie, 2019, p. 269). These requirements are hard to be fulfilled by voluntary-based civil society with horizontally structured organization. With these challenges, using the digital world as the new practice field for student activism must be proceeded with caution.

On the other hand, the digital arrangement has opened possibilities for wider coverage of activism. While this can be celebrated as a condition that need to be embraced to create wider impact, it also exposes the young citizens to wider no-man land of digital world. Prior to the pandemic, students' activisms were more planned and tangible because they are usually planned, prepared, and conducted in the form of an easily observed event. With interactions transferred to digital sphere, the "control" element has been weakened because activism tend to become more individual.

Another challenge for universities is whether to consider the escape to the digital sphere as a temporary escape or more permanent. Education sector is a field which traditionally serves as a place to maintain and improve community's way of life through teaching

the young generations about the wisdom of the past. Hence, educational institutions, including universities, are inherently conservative. In most cases, institutional changes in universities take longer compared to other sectors in responding to the external dynamics. Any changes in the way things are conducted, will involve consultations, deliberations, and other long bureaucratic processes. Unfortunately, activism may not be able to wait. What to do then? Considering that the current condition of COVID-19 Pandemic brings a rather fast and substantial change in our way of life, universities need to seek for creative and impactful ways to facilitate students' activism. Since options and movement are limited, the efforts should be focused on keeping the spirit of activism alive. Some may see digital activism or campaign as less impactful but at least for now it sustains the continuation of political activism. Seeking partners who can assist this facilitation will benefit the universities and it should go beyond joining webinars which has rapidly reached its boiling point. Several civil society organizations, particularly those run by the younger generations, have initiated political education for younger generations in the digital world. Hence, universities may consider involving such civil society organizations in their civic education so that the students can still have the exposure and experience of political activism.

Conclusion

Generally, civic education needs to be designed based on the consideration that it bears two missions which are strengthening nationalism and encouraging critical thinking and activism. Both missions are essential in democratic country and although those two missions may seem to conflict with one another, the achievement of both missions in civic education needs to be sensibly balanced. Moreover, in the case of civic education for higher education institution, the formulation needs to also consider that the education is for adult learners who are also young citizens. This is no easy task because it requires a perfect balance of control and freedom. The limitation of movement and interaction caused by the pandemic has also created further challenges. Such limitation has postponed a great number of efforts to give the students a more practical experience of the democracy and to learn from such exposure to democratic experience. In order to overcome this challenge, universities need to quickly find alternatives to ensure that the students still have outlets to practice and experience political activism. One of the possible alternatives is to adapt into modes of activism in the digital world outside the traditional classroom setting. While there are some challenges posed by digital activism in the form of problems of misleading and simplified information, inequality in digital advocacy, and individualization of activism, digital activism still offers the most feasible solution to keep the spirit of activism alive. The negative experience caused by those challenges can be minimized by involving civil society organizations which have real experience in dealing with those challenges and hence, the universities can improve the quality of their civic education by partnering with civil society organizations and incorporating the digital activism within their civic education.

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Way Forward

Dinna Prpto Raharja

When this manuscript was almost completed, a journalist called and asked about the possible negative impacts of the so-called “politicization” of COVID-19 handling. He pointed to the case of Malaysian Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin who was urged by the United Malaysia National Organizations (UMNO) to make a way for a new leader, and that the party will withdraw support for him. I wondered what “politicization” means and he said something about a way in which the opposition may destabilize politics and the society.

If our mindset is to promote democracy, having different opinions on handling the pandemic or proposing different means for dealing with the challenges under the pandemic should not be of concern. That was my spontaneous reaction to the journalist question. Freedom of opinion, freedom of speech, and most importantly dialogs should continue under the pandemic era. The civic space should be maintained. What is dangerous, which the journalist may have referred to, is the disinformation and hoaxes, which is produced at fast pace through social media, leading to loss of trust and confidence at the expense of an effective handling of the pandemic.

Indeed, the democrats must be very careful in handling the pandemic. As our chapters have raised, the pandemic does invoke a crisis and thus a high sense of uncertainty. What cannot be justified, however, are arbitrary decisions, exclusive dialogs, the imposing of will, and the shutting down of voices. If there are resistance from the public, it is important to look back at the 2020 books on BCSMF (Raharja 2020). Democracy should walk hand in hand with inclusivity. In chapter 1 of that book (p. 21-22), I raised

how “Inclusivity as deliberation to maximize cognitive diversity...and it is therefore important to maximize representation rather than selecting representation” and from the human rights perspective, “Every different individual deserves attention because one victim is too many for any human rights activists”. This is to say that the crisis invoked by the pandemic may justify uncertainty, making decision-making tougher and challenging for those in power, but this is exactly how a democracy is tested.

One of the keys to handle the pandemic is to focus on the kinds of problems that usually worsen inclusivity and dialogs among groups: the disinformation and hoaxes. Dwifatma (2020, 66) noted the echo chamber effect where users of social media connect and interact only with other users with shared values and world views, so she called for a new media literacy. It is important to highlight what is implied which is that such literacy should be two-ways: not just for the citizens to be more careful and cautious when consuming media content but also for the government and the political parties to promote knowledge building and persuasion to advance messages on pandemic handling. Johan (2020) called for social media as the democratic leveller where the state no longer has the monopoly on “truth” or “falsehood”. Wahid (2020, 73-81) also noted that election time is especially critical to disinformation situation where polarization among constituents tend to grow stronger causing dichotomic thinking that poses a threat to democracy.

This enforces what writers in this book have highlighted on the importance of revitalizing civil society when democracy is under the pandemic pressures rather than suppressing it. Engagement of civil society is precious for mapping ideas on solution that would respond to different needs of different segments of society. It is relatively “safer” for democracy to engage civil society rather than to engage and nurture influencers because one can then push for knowledge debates or group and institutional track records, something that influencers are not capable of providing.

Making Democracy Great Again

It is rather obvious that the longer the COVID-19 pandemic stays, the more restless people would become on many things. First and foremost, people would worry about their health, their wellbeing, their pocketbook economy, and the overall recovery of the connectivity and production. The OECD warned in its May 2021 Outlook that the recovery would be no ordinary recovery. The key is the different levels of severity to sectors and population around the world. Access to vaccinations is the hope for bridging recovery but there are still barriers for many countries and people to access vaccinations. COVAX, the global vaccine distribution initiative, have experienced severe shortages in the first half of 2021. Not all countries can afford buying vaccines for the populace. Some countries have political problems with vaccine suppliers. Problematic ruling powers such as the military junta in Myanmar denied access to vaccine and medicines to its populace.

Meanwhile, the medical and financial resources for recovery remain scarce to many parts of nations. The United Nations noted that the pandemic has weighed heavily on public finances. Some countries suffered from increased government debt-to-GDP ratio. Some sectors have been bleeding so badly they may need “ICU” care to recover from their debts. This is the case with the aviation, tourism, logistic, and fishery sector. The poor segments of population, the low-income workers, and the unemployed have cried too long for relief but they may not get much if the virus continue to mutate and remain fatal.

Relevant to democracies here, I argue, is the principle of “empowerment” and “effective communication”. This is another word to say that to survive the pandemic pressures, countries need to look beyond the governance and economic challenges. Governance and economic challenges put too much emphasis on the state or the government as the duty bearer in alleviating the pandemic pressures while the resources, the experience, and the knowledge of the state or the government is limited or may be drained at one point or another during the crisis. It is critical that a democracy always looks beyond the state and the government for its resilience under the pandemic crisis, or any crisis for that matter.

First, empowerment. Empowerment should be multi-sectoral. It is insufficient to look at empowerment solely from the economic perspective, which is typically understood as stimulating people through financial incentives. Empowerment as a principle is the opposite of alienation, of exclusion, and of stifling ideas. The very basic of empowerment mindset is that of involvement, participation, and empathy. Empowerment at theoretical level gives “full scope to the full range of human abilities and potential” (Rowlands 1995) where:

- At the personal level it is about developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity and undoing the effects of internalized oppression.
- At close relationship it is about developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions made within it.
- At the collective level it is about individuals working together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone. Here it may cover collective action based on cooperation rather than competition.

Those points suggest that overlooking the variety of sectoral potentials in providing relief to the pandemic is a mistake. This shed lights to us that most of the phenomenon discussed by authors in the previous chapters (the imposition of will, the violence, the tensions) are the consequences of presuming (or even judging) the populace as mainly interested in deviating and violating the rules or orders from the state and the government. Empowerment is when one shifts from such mindset into asking the question to the public on “what is your idea to provide relief from the pandemic without causing harm to public health?”

Empowerment requires people from different backgrounds of knowledge and experience to speak up about formulation of relief from the pandemic without causing harm to public health. What does the medical doctors say? What does the entrepreneurs say? What does small-scale vendors on the street say? What does teachers say? Because the pandemic lasted longer than expected the deployment of idea-absorbers from the state becomes urgent. A generic solution for all populaces would no longer satisfy everyone as more and more people reflect on what they think would work better. This is a moment for democracy to be great again, to be alive again through opening the windows for smart dialogs.

Second, effective communication. Communication is the basis for any reactions and actions from people. Communication is the basis for relations among people. Communication is critical in the peaceful time but even more important during crisis time. Covello (2003) noted the best practices in public health risk and crisis communication where stakeholders need to be accepted and involved as legitimate partner; people must be listened to; be truthful; coordinate, collaborate and partner with other credible sources; meet the needs of the media; communicate clearly and with compassion; plan thoroughly and carefully. Covello noted that the language used should be clear, avoiding non-technical language that the target audience may have difficulty understanding. Use graphic and pictorial material to clarify messages is also another key. Most importantly, Covello added that the message should not exclude discussion of actions and should be sensitive to local norms. In other words, resistance, questions, concerns from the public should be anticipated rather than shut.

Furthermore, existing literature on public health crisis suggest that the content of the message as well as the way the message is presented are just as important as any other measures to handle the public health crisis. Since public health crisis usually imply a lack of information on the danger or the disease or the effective way of preventing infection, the rooms for questions and questioning become critical. Or else people may be fueled by rumors and myths (Quinn 2018).

At the government-to-government level, it is impossible to imagine a democracy surviving the pandemic without working together with other democracies. The restriction of mobility, the vaccine nationality, the limit of financial resources and the severity of COVID-19 infections may have alienated one country from another, but it is now time to ponder that the virus may have another side effect to global interaction. For too long we perceived the virus as barriers to global interaction and cooperation while in fact, when the virus is seen as a factor for enhancing cooperation, the sense of solidarity could have grown stronger because no countries is proven more superior than others in isolating the virus. How to nurture our democracy is always up to us. I would end this book by suggesting that this is a critical time to make democracy great again.

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graphic recorder

ONLINE

BALI CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA FORUM 2020



🦠 Activisms during the COVID-19 Pandemic 🦠

19 - 20 OCTOBER 2020

UBUD - BALI - INDONESIA

H.E. TEUKU FAIZASYAH



THE **COVID-19** PANDEMIC HAS SHAKEN OUR

DEMOCRACY

BCSMF 2020

AT THIS EVENT, LET'S FURTHER DISCUSS THE **CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES** OF CIVIL RESILIENCE: ACTIVISMS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC "



- THE WORLD NEEDS MORE **TRANSPARENCY !!**
- CSO, & MEDIA** IS CRUCIAL ...
- STRENGTHENING ACCESS TO INFORMATION
- BUILDING THE NATION'S STAKEHOLDERS PARTICIPATIONS

H.E. Prof. Dr. MUHAMMAD NUH



"NEW BREAKTHROUGHS NEED TO RESOLVE NEW PROBLEMS."

INCLUDING IN TIME OF THIS COVID 19 PANDEMIC



DANGER: IF WE ARE FACING **TURBULANCE** WITH YESTERDAY'S **LOGIC !!**



GOES **WELL** OR NOT ??

New Time (New Normal)

US AS A NATION HAS NEW NEEDS AND NEW SOLUTIONS :

ON NOT ONLY TO SURVIVE, BUT ALSO TO FULLY RECOVER - AND TO **THRIVE !!!**

WE NEED TO **CHANGE!**



THE PANDEMIC CRISIS SHOULD NOT AND CAN NOT BE RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNMENT **ALONE...**

STRENGTHEN AND MOBILIZE



HAS A PROMINENT & UNIQUE FUNCTION

NOT ONLY WE ARE GATHERING SENSE OF CARING (SYMPATHY), WE ALSO NEED CONCRETE ACTIONS ON HOW TO HELP EACH OTHER

→ **SOCIAL EMPATHY**

ONE OF MAIN SOLUTIONS



ME TRANSFORM INTO THE POWER OF **WE !!!**

BALI CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA FORUM 2020

CIVIL RESILIENCE

I KETUT PUTRA ERAWAN



SESSION 1



EMERGENCE
&
SALIENCE
OF



SHRINKING
of
CIVIL SPACE

IN
ASIA-PACIFIC
COUNTRIES

THIS SESSION DISCUSSES
CHALLENGES, CHANGES AND
SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES
SHAPING THE EXISTING AND
FUTURE OF CIVIL SPACE

THE SHRINKING CIVIL SPACE: FORMS, ROOTS
AND CONSEQUENCES

PANDEMIC AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN CHANGING

CIVIL SOCIETY'S SHAKY PILLARS:
FINANCE, LEGAL FOUNDATIONS, AND NETWORKS

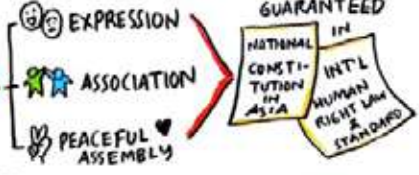
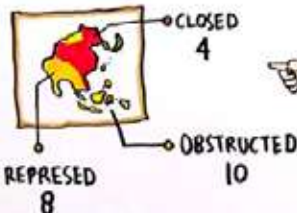
Session 1

The Shrinking Civil Space: Challenges, Changes and the Questions of Sustainability

JOSEF BENEDICT



IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON CIVIC SPACE



PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC, THE STATE OF THE CIVIC SPACE IN THIS REGION HAS BEEN QUITE **DIRE!!!**

95% PEOPLE LIVING IN ASIAN COUNTRIES WHERE CIVIC SPACE IS UNDER ATTACKED.

IN THE LAST 6 MONTHS...

- OVERBROAD AND VAGUE EMERGENCY POWER
- THREATS OR ARRESTS FOR CRITICIZING RESPONSE
- USE OF RESTRICTIVE LAW TO COMBAT MISINFORMATION/FAKE NEWS
- SURVEILLANCE AND THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY
- CENSORSHIP OR RESTRICTION ON INFORMATION ON THE PANDEMIC
- RESTRICTION ON THE MEDIA
- CRIMINALIZATION OF JOURNALISTS
- POLICE ABUSES DURING THE LOCKDOWN - CRUEL, INHUMANE AND DEGRADING TREATMENT
- INCREASE IN INTOLERANCE AND XENOPHOBIA

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- SAFEGUARD THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN ALL FORMS
- RESPECT AND PROTECT MEDIA FREEDOM
- ENSURE THAT SURVEILLANCE MEASURES ADOPTED TO ADDRESS THE PANDEMIC ARE LAWFUL, NECESSARY AND PROPORTIONATE.
- APPROACHES TO MISINFORMATION MUST EMPHASIS TRANSPARENCY
- ENSURE THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS RESPECT THE LAW AND AVOID ABUSIVE CONDUCT
- LAWS AND DECREES DEPLOYED TO COMBAT THE PANDEMIC ARE IMPLEMENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH DEMOCRATIC NORMS

SOPHIA FERNANDES



RECOVERING FROM THE PANDEMIC
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE : THE PICTURE DURING THE PANDEMIC



CIVIL SOCIETY TAKING ON FRONTLINE SERVICE PROVISION



RESPONDING TO INCREASE IN DOMESTIC AND INTIMATE VIOLENCE



FACING SIGNIFICANT FUNDING CHALLENGES



(LITERATURE REVIEW)



WOMEN POLITICAL CAREER DIFFER FROM THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS

BUT IT IS PROVEN THAT THEY WORK HARDER FOR THEIR CONSTITUENTS.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND POLICY OUTCOMES

MADE MORE CARING SOCIETIES



APPLYING COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP STYLE



WHAT ARE THESE ALL MEANS ?



HIGHER LEVELS OF ELECTED WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER LEVEL CORRUPTION...



HIGHER LEVELS OF ELECTED WOMEN ASSOCIATED WITH GREATER RESPONSIVENESS TO CITIZEN'S NEEDS...



WOMEN IN POLITICS ARE SHIFTING AND EXPANDING AREAS WHICH POLICY IS BEING MADE.

KEY COMPONENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY

TO REMOVE BARRIERS FOR WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATIONS

ANNIKA SILVA-LEANDER



36% of COUNTRIES IN ASIA & THE PACIFIC SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN AT LEAST ONE OF THE INDICATORS MEASURING CIVIC SPACE.

CIVIC SPACE AS THE AGGREGATION OF THREE ASPECTS

CIVIC SPACE IN ASIA & THE PACIFIC BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

20%

SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN MEDIA INTEGRITY

20%

SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN CIVIL LIBERTIES

23%

SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION



INDONESIA : HAD SIGNIFICANT DECLINES IN CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION !

ASIA PACIFIC **40%** COUNTRIES DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO COVID-19

47% DEMOCRACY REGIME DECLARE STATE OF EMERGENCY

67% (20) OF COUNTRIES IN THE REGION HAVE IMPLEMENTED MEASURES TO CURB COVID-19 THAT ARE OF CONCERN FROM A DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

CONCERNING DEVELOPMENTS IN PERSONAL INTEGRITY & SECURITY...

 MILITARY AS LAW ENFORCES

 EXCESSIVE POLICE FORCE

 CRIMINALIZATION

 USE OF CONTACT TRACING APPS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

70% OF COUNTRIES (A TOTAL OF 21) HAVE PASSED LAWS OR TAKEN ACTIONS TO RESTRICT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN RELATION TO COVID-19

53% OF DEMOCRACIES **83%** OF HYBRID REGIMES **89%** OF AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

CHARLES SANTIAGO

 IN AN OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVE OF THE REGION...

ASIA ASIAN REGION IS... A REGION OF CONFLICTS

SOME HIGHLIGHT OF THE CURRENT CONDITIONS

 ROLL BACK THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROTECTION


 POLITICAL ELITES BECOMING AUTHORITARIAN > CRIMINALIZATION

 1,1 MILLION MYANMAR CITIZENS (ROHINGYAS) ARE NOT ALLOWED TO VOTE AT THE ELECTION FOR SECURITY REASONS

CIVIC SOCIETY IN ASIA ARE PROBLEMATIC

COVID 19 BRINGS SIGNIFICANT SHRINKING TO CIVIC SOCIETY

⇒ IMPACT OF ALL THESE : ARE MOVING TO A WRONG DIRECTION ???



BALI CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA FORUM 2020

CIVIL RESILIENCE

DINNA PRAPTO RAHARJA



2018 BCSMF
TOPIC:
ALREADY DISCUSS
THE POTENTIAL
OF FURTHER
EROSION OF
DEMOCRACIES

OUR CONCERN



TENDENCIES
OF LEADERS
TO USE

DECLINING
CIVIL
SPACE

BOTH
CIVIL SOCIETY
MEDIA

2019

2020

IT'S EXACTLY
WHAT WE HAVE BEEN
EXPECTED 2 YEARS AGO
WHICH IS UNFORTUNATE..

DISCUSS
THE SOLUTION
↓
INCREASE
INCLUSIVITY

TO ENSURE
TRANSPARENCIES
PARTICIPANTS
↓
IS CONTINUOUSLY
SUPPORTED

CONTESTATION AT
POLITICAL LEVEL IMPROVED

- ▷ ELECTIVES
- ▷ REPRESENTATIVES
- ▷ ACTIVE VOTERS
- ▷ ACTIVIES
- ▷ MEDIA
- ▷ BUSINESS TYCOONS

SESSION 2



- THE SITUATION
- PROCESSES
- DISCOURSE
OF POLITICAL
COMMUNICATION
& POLITY
IN ASIA-PACIFIC

THE EFFECTS
OF PANDEMIC
COVID-19

ON THE WORKING
OF MEDIA

MEDIA LITATION

EXISTING CHALLENGES

MEDIA PARTNER
SHIP



SOCIAL MEDIA
&
POLARIZATION

Session 2

Mediatization of the Pandemic



AGUS SUDIBJO

RECIPROCAL SUPPORT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND MASS MEDIA FACING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

INFORMATION IS THE KEY

PEOPLE ARE RELYING ON THE PRESS

THE SUCCESS IN BATTLING COVID-19 PANDEMIC RELIES HEAVILY ON...

HANDLING MASS PUBLICATION (PUBLIC)

MEDIA CARRY OUT VITAL ROLE: FULFIL PUBLIC NEEDS OF INFORMATION

MEDIA PROVEN TO BE ONE OF RESILIENT SECTOR!

MASS MEDIA IS ALSO THE VICTIM OF ECONOMIC CRISIS

MEDIA REVENUE DECLINE DRASTICALLY

RISK OF DOWNSIZING AND KICKED-OUT OF THE BUSINESS...

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE CONCRETE ACTION TO HELP MEDIA INDUSTRY.

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY TASK FORCE

TO SEEK STATE INCENTIVES FOR THE MASS MEDIA INDUSTRY

- INITIATED BY:
- PRESS COUNCIL
 - 5 JOURNALIST ASSOCIATION
 - 6 MEDIA COMPANIES OF NATIONAL PRESS

- ACTIVITIES
- FORMULATE & PREPARE POINTS OF ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR MASS MEDIA INDUSTRY

- SUBMIT PROPOSAL AND PERFORM LOBBIES
- INITIATED MEETINGS WITH INDONESIA'S PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT AND RELATED MINISTRIES.

MADAM BOONRAT

2020 PANDEMIC YEAR MORE COMPLICATED YEAR...

HEALTH CRISIS

INFORMATION CRISIS

MOSTLY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

CREATING CONFUSION AND PUBLIC DISTRUST

PROLONG RECOVERY FROM THE PANDEMIC

MAINSTREAM MEDIA COMPANIES IN THAILAND ARE FORCED TO DOWNSIZED



COOPERATION AMONGST BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS AND THE MEDIA ARE NEEDED!

MING-KUOK LIM



IT IS PART OF

UNESCO
MANDATES

TO ENSURE



THE SAFETY
OF
MEDIA



JOURNALISM IS CONSIDERED
AS AN ESSENTIAL SECTOR

MEDIA AND
ACCESS TO
VERIFIED
INFORMATION

YET, THE ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS
AND JOURNALISM ARE STILL INCREASING

THERE ARE 3 KEY POINTS:

1) SAFETY LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

80 COUNTRIES ARE CURRENTLY
IMPLEMENTING EMERGENCIES
MEASURES...

... THE FACT ARE:



LIMITATION &
RESTRICTION
ARE PLACED NOT
PROPORTIONATELY



MEDIA
FREEDOM
VIOLATIONS



REDUCED ACCESS
TO INFORMATION

2) DIGITAL ATTACKS AND DIGITAL SAFETY



PRIVATE INFORMATION
- ADDITIONAL LAYER OF
DANGER



SOCIAL MEDIA SHUTDOWNS
→ IT'S MORE USED FOR
MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION



MORE HARASSMENT ON
DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR
WOMAN JOURNALISTS



SOURCE OF DISINFORMATION

3) NEED TO LOOK ON WIDER CONTEXT OF THE JOURNALIST SAFETY ISSUES

70%

JOURNALISTS
EXPERIENCES

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS

413

JOURNALIST DIED
DURING THE PANDEMIC



FREELANCES GOT
LESS BENEFIT & SECURITIES

IMPUNITY ARE STILL VERY HIGH

PROF. JUNG KIM



IN SOUTH KOREA,
MEDIA ARE DEVIDED
AS IN TRADITIONAL
MEDIA & SOCIAL MEDIA



THE MEDIA ARE NOT
GIVING A
NEGATIVE
IMPACT, IT IS
NEUTRALIZING-
TENDS TO MARGINALIZED.

WHY?

IS THIS EXCEPTIONAL
SITUATION OCCUR
DURING THE 10 MONTHS OF
PANDEMIC CRISIS IN
SOUTH KOREA?

HOT NEWS



IN TERM OF
DEATH:
5 PER MILLION



10% MOBILITY
DECLINE
ONLY

SOUTH KOREA IS VERY EXCELLED IN
CURBING THE PANDEMIC

LEVEL OF CITIZEN TRUST

BLUE HOUSE 52% → MINISTRY OF HEALTH 70%

LOCAL GOV. 49% → MEDIA 27%

SOUTH KOREA IS HAVING
A VERY HIGH CONTAINMENT
OF MISINFORMATION

ROLE OF MEDIA HAS BEEN
MARGINALIZED IN THIS PERIOD
OF PANDEMIC

CONCLUSION:



SOUTH KOREA IS
HAVING A VERY
HIGH PERFORMANCE
OF GOVERNMENT &
CSOs COLLABORATION



PARTISAN EFFECTS
OF TRADITIONAL AND
SOCIAL MEDIA ROLE
HAVE BEEN MARGINALIZED



THERE IS SYNERGETIC EFFECT
OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC ON
INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

FIRGILIO GUTERZ



IN TIMOR LESTE,
IN TERMS OF COVID 19
PROPAGATIONS:

"WE ARE AT BEST
CONDITIONS
COMPARED TO OTHER
COUNTRIES..."



29 INFECTED
28 HAVE RECOVERED
CASES



ABOUT MEDIA, WE ALSO
HAVE BETTER CONDITIONS:
THE MEDIA HAVE ENJOYED
ALOT OF PUBLIC
APPRECIATION BECAUSE OF
THEIR ROLE IN PANDEMIC PROPAGATION
THEY ARE PROVIDING NEWS FROM
THE BORDER



SADLY, JOURNALIST
ARE NOT INCLUDED
IN THE ECONOMY
RECOVERY PLANS

WE ARE STILL
TRYING TO WORK
FOR SOLUTIONS
ON THIS WITH
RELATED MINISTRY



RANGA KALANSOORIYA



INT'L MEDIA SUPPORT
WE ARE CURRENTLY
FOCUSING ON
MEDIA INDUSTRY



CASHFLOW IN MEDIA HOUSES HAS
AFFECTED VERY BADLY:

IN EFFORT FOR
THE JOURNALIST
TO SURVIVE !!!



JOB SAFETY
OF
JOURNALISTS
IS
AT THE BRINK



THERE
WILL BE
A LOT OF
JOBLESS
OF
JOURNALISTS



IN SOME COUNTRIS
WE HAVE CHALLENGES
IN REPORTING THE COVID 19



PROTECTING
THE
PRIVACY
OF
AFFECTED PEOPLE

ON JOURNALISTS' SAFETY CONDITION:



THERE IS UN
PLAN OF ACTION
ON JOURNALIST ACTION



THE MEDIA CAN'T
DO IT ALONE...
MULTI STAKEHOLDERS ACTION
NEEDED (INCLUDING GOV.)

ON THE MEDIA COMPANY CASHFLOW...



SPACE FOR
THE MEDIA
IS
SHRINKING

ROUND TABLE
80% REVENUE
GOES TO



THE MEDIA
INDUSTRY
IS DYING
AGAINST THE
MASSIVE MEDIA
GIANT

DAY 2

SESSION 3

Elections during Pandemic : Agenda for Political Resilience

LEENA RIKKILA TAMANG



MANY COUNTRIES IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC ARE **POSTPONING THE ELECTIONS**

MANY **INITIATIVES** ARE ALSO BEEN CONDUCTED ADDRESSING THE CASE AND THE RISKS OF COVID-19

YET IN THE REGION WE ARE ALSO SEEING **OLD DYING PRACTICES** SUCH AS POLITICAL PARTY CAPACITIES TO PROVIDE POLICIES OPTION TO THE VOTERS.

IN THIS SESSION WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO DISCUSS WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED AND WHAT WE CAN DO TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE AGENDA FOR POLITICAL RESILIENCE..



ADHY AMAN



COVID-19 ELECTIONS IN THE WORLD

THERE ARE...
73 POSTPONED ELECTIONS
COMPARED TO-
79 ELECTIONS HELD

VOTER TURNOUT TRENDS SHOWING **10% DECLINE** IN MEDIAN DATA FROM 40 COUNTRIES

SOUTH KOREA ELECTIONS IN APRIL 2020, A LANDMARK HIGHLIGHT:

VOTERS REALLY MOTIVATED TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT WHO IS CONSIDERED VERY WELL IN HANDLING THE PANDEMIC.

THIS IS ALSO SHOWING THAT THE CONFIDENCE LEVEL RISEN.

WHAT IS THE **IDEAL** ELECTIONS ?

ELECTIONS WITH **INTEGRITY**



LIMITATIONS ON CAMPAIGNING



LIMITATIONS ON VOTER ACCESS

CHALLENGES :



IMPEDIMENTS ON TRANSPARENCY



RISKS TOWARDS LEGITIMACY



ADDED FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PRESURES

WHAT NEED TO BE DONE ?



1. ENSURE THE CURVE IS FLAT.



2. ENSURE ADEQUATE VOTER INFORMATION CAMPAIGN



3. ENSURE CONTESTANTS COMPLY



4. IMPLEMENT SPECIAL VOTING ARRANGEMENTS

CSO AND MEDIA CAN CONTRIBUTE TO CONDUCT **SAFE ELECTIONS**, AS WELL IN REJECTING AN **UNSAFE ELECTIONS**

ANDREAS UFEN



"WHAT ARE THE EXISTING CHALLENGES AND WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES?"

TOWARD PROGRAMATIC ELECTIONS

EXPERIENCES OF ASIA

LINKAGES AND PARTY TYPES

H. KITSCHALT DISTINGUISHES...
CHARISMATIC CLIENTELIST

PROGRAMMATIC LINKAGE
1045
□ = □ = □ = □ = □ =

POLITICAL PARTIES IDEAL

EUROPE

WELL-INSTITUTIONALIZED PARTIES
INTERNALLY DEMOCRATIC
ACTIVE BRANCHES
DETAILED PLATFORMS

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

PARTIES ARE WEAK
RIDDEN BY MONEY POLITICS & CLIENTELISM

STILL DIFFERENCES

POLITICAL PARTIES ROOTED IN SOCIAL MILIEUX AND FORMED BY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS ARE BETTER INSTITUTIONALIZED.

CAUSES AND RESULTS OF PARTY WEAKNESS

ORIGINS OF A PARTY

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS
> PRESIDENTIALISM
> OPEN LIST CANDIDATE SELECTION
> ETC.

COMMERCIALIZATION OF POLITICS
OCCUR IN INDONESIA & PHILIPPINES...

IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA
POLITICS DOMINATED BY SMALLER ELITE
LAW MAKING IS NOT TRANS-PARENT

THE WIDER PUBLIC...
SCANDALS, COALITIONS, PERSONALITIES
BUT SELDOM ABOUT POLICY!

CHIN HUAT WONG

"HOW TO MAKE THE ELECTIONS NOT ONLY SAFE BUT ALSO MOVING FORWARD"



CASE STUDY
SABAH ELECTION

FACT FIGURES:

10 SPORADIC CASES NATIONWIDE DETECTED IN SABAH DAILY SINCE THE START OF OCTOBER.

171 SPORADIC CASES NATIONWIDE AVERAGE

THE ARE 2 MAIN PROBLEMS:

- 1 Inequality IN SOCIETY & POLITICS
- 2 POLITICS ARE SEPARATED FROM THE DAILY LIFE
> SERVING ONLY ELITE INTERESTS



PARTIES AS A POLICY MACHINES, NOT JUST ELECTORAL MACHINES.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

MAKE POLICIES COMPREHENSIBLE

POLITICS NOT DIFFICULT...

DITCH CYNICISM ON POLITICS

POLITICS NOT DIRTY...
> CIVIL SYSTEM IN POLITICS

CHECK PARTISANSHIP

THEIR POLITICIANS ARE NOT EVIL!!

"IF PEOPLE ARE STILL SEEING POLITICS AS A DANGER, WE WILL NOT HAVE MEANINGFUL DEMOCRACY"

SESSION 4

Activisms for Civil and Media Resilience

I KETUT PUTRA ERAWAN



THE PROBLEM THAT WE ARE FACING NOW IS NOT NORMAL

IT HAS PUSH AS TO THE CORE FUNCTION OF ACTIVISM;



ABLE TO MANAGE IMBALANCE WORLD

HOW TO ANTICIPATE ADAPT

WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICS ECONOMY THE PANDEMIC

IN THIS SESSION, WE ALSO VISIT THE CONTEXT OF ELECTIONS:

RESILIENCE

HOW CSO & MEDIA ABLE TO RESPOND TO RESILIENCE ISSUE

HOW THE MEDIA CONNECT AND MOBILIZED THE COLLECTIVE ACTIONS

ROOT OF ACTIVISM

HOW THE PEDAGOGY APPROACH WILL RESULT TO THE CONTINUANCE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT

ICHAL SUPRIADI



STRUGGLES AND MOVEMENTS ARE HAPPENING IN ASIA

ALARMING CONDITIONS IN 2019:

PROSECUTION AND LIFE RISK ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOs AND MEDIA



MEDIA OWNERSHIP AFFILIATED WITH POLITICS



MANIPULATION OF DEMOCRACY (INSTITUTION AND PROCESS)



TECH IMPACT; DISHARMONY IN SOCIETY TO RESTRICTION



WEAKENING DEMOCRACY SUPPORT

CSOs LAUNCHED THE YEAR OF 2020 AS:

A YEAR OF **PUSHBACK**

PANDEMI IMPACT



• THE POOR
• THE INFORMAL SECTOR
• MIGRANT

• MINORITIES
• MARGINALIZED GROUP

THE MOST VULNERABLE



CSOs & NGOs REACHED THE VICTIM EARLIER THAN THE STATE



ACCELERATION OF POWER CAPTURE

STRENGTHENING OF AUTHORITARIAN GRIPS

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE PANDEMIC

UNDERMINING HUMAN RIGHTS OR DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES



FUNCTION CHECK AND BALANCE AND PUSH-BACK EFFECTIVELY

CSOs & MEDIA SLOW COPING SITUATION, UNABLE TO



WORSENING SITUATION IN MANY HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY SECTORS

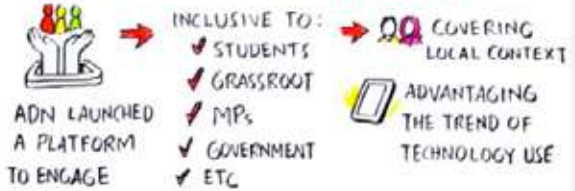


GOT HIT & AFFECTED BY PANDEMI





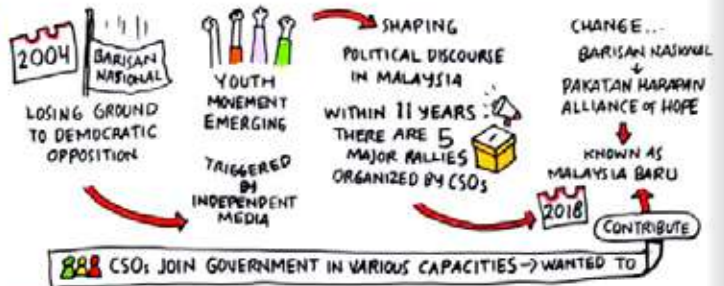
ENGAGING WITH THE NEXT GENERATION
WILL LEAD US TO INCREASE **POWER**:



WE CAN FIGHT THIS AS **UNITY**:



SYAHREDZAN JOHAN



WRAP UP

ROLE



REGENERATION OF YOUNG ACTIVISTS
CONSTANTLY NEEDED

ONCE THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INFORMATION OPENED, WILL NOT BE FULLY SHUT DOWN...

REGIME
WILL TRY TO USE PANDEMIC TO RESTRICT THE DEMOCRACY ACTION

IN TIME OF CRISIS, POPULATION WILL SIDE WITH



PANDEMIC PROVIDE CHALLENGE
ON HOW TO SCRUTINIZE THE GOVERNMENT

DEVASTATING EFFECT ON ECONOMY

AFFECT THE CSOs & MEDIA PERFORMANCE

LESSEN ACTIVISM WHEN THE PEOPLE ARE OUT AND ABOUT TO SEE ENDS MEET.

DAMAR JUNIARTO

"DIGITAL SPACE NOW BECOMES A NEW BATTLEFIELD"

ECONOMY-POLITIC-NATIONAL SECURITY

CHALLENGES SO FAR...

- DIGITAL DEVICE
- THE UNDERPRIVILEGED PEOPLE
- ONLINE CENSORSHIP
- INTERNET SHUTDOWN
- PROBLEMATIC INTERNET REGULATIONS
- REPRESSION TO LEGAL EXPRESSION
- POLARIZED COMMUNICATION
- UNDEMOCRATIC CIRCUMSTANCES
- MASS-SURVEILLANCE
- UNLAWFUL INTERCEPTION
- DATA BREACH (PRIVACY ISSUE)
- ABSENT OF PRIVACY REGULATIONS

THE STRENGTHENING ROLE OF THE STATE IN CONTROLLING THE INTERNET

NO SIGNAL? INTERNET SHUTDOWN

SPYWARE CYBER SURVEILLANCE

ACCESS DENIED? ONLINE CENSORSHIP

THESE THREE ARE KEYS INGREDIENT OF DIGITAL AUTHORITARIAN...

WEAPONIZING

SOCIAL MEDIA... LAW... TECHNOLOGY

PUSHBACK AGENDA → DIGITAL LITERACY → DIGITAL SECURITY EDUCATION → JUDICIAL REVIEW

DINDIN WAHYUDIN

BCSMF 2020 300 PARTICIPANT FROM 18 COUNTRIES...

SPREADING DEMOCRACY IS A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER WORK

THIS YEAR WE TRY TO INCREASE THE INVOLVEMENT OF CSOs AND MEDIA

FROM HERE, THE CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE INPUT TO BDF DISCUSSION IN DEC 2020

SEVERAL HIGHLIGHT FROM THE LAST TWO DAYS DISCUSSION:

THE PANDEMIC CRISIS SHOWN US THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY...

HEALTH & INFORMATION

ELECTION DEMOCRACY

INNOVATION TO CONTAIN FURTHER EXCESS

LEGITIMACY

TRANSPARENCY

IS SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES → DURING THE PANDEMIC

THE GOVERNMENT MAKES EFFORT TO COUNTER THE OUTBREAK AND MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC WHILE WE SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

ADAPT CSOs MEDIA CHECK BALANCE

REGENERATION OF ACTIVISM

STRENGTHEN RESILIENCE

SIGNIFICANCE IN PUBLIC DISCOURSE WILL NOT BE REDUCED

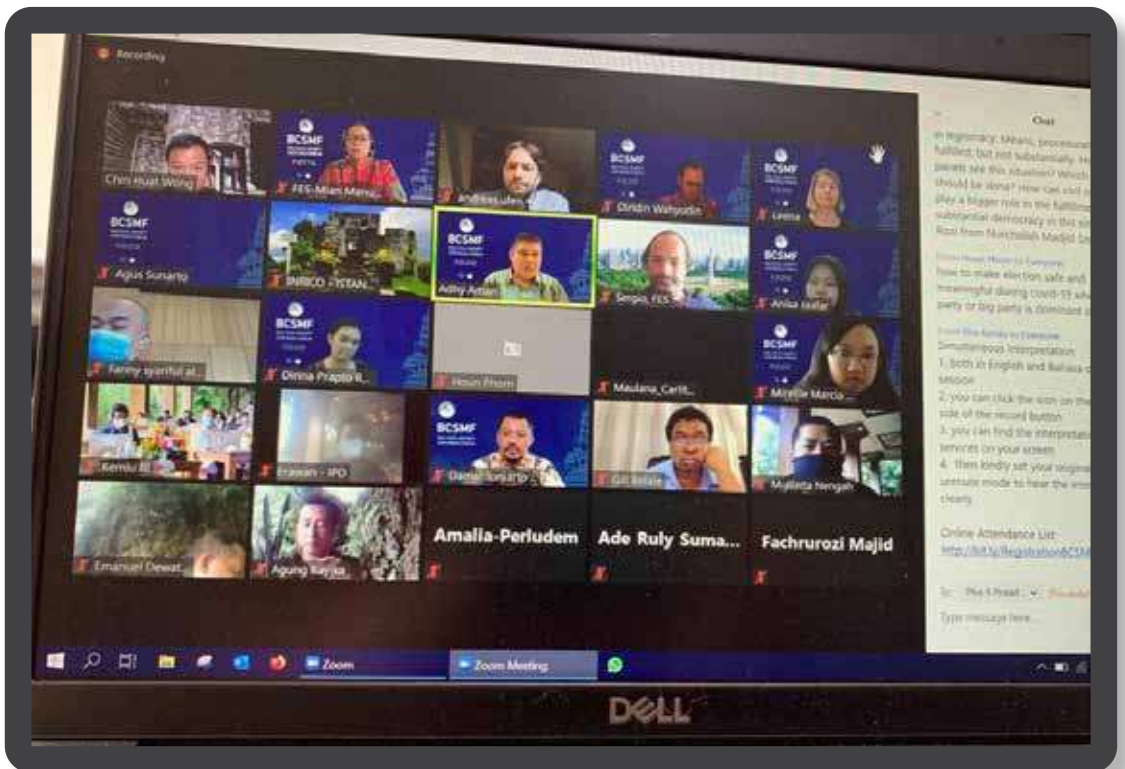
BALI CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA FORUM 2020

CIVIL RESILIENCE: Activisms during the Pandemic Covid-19

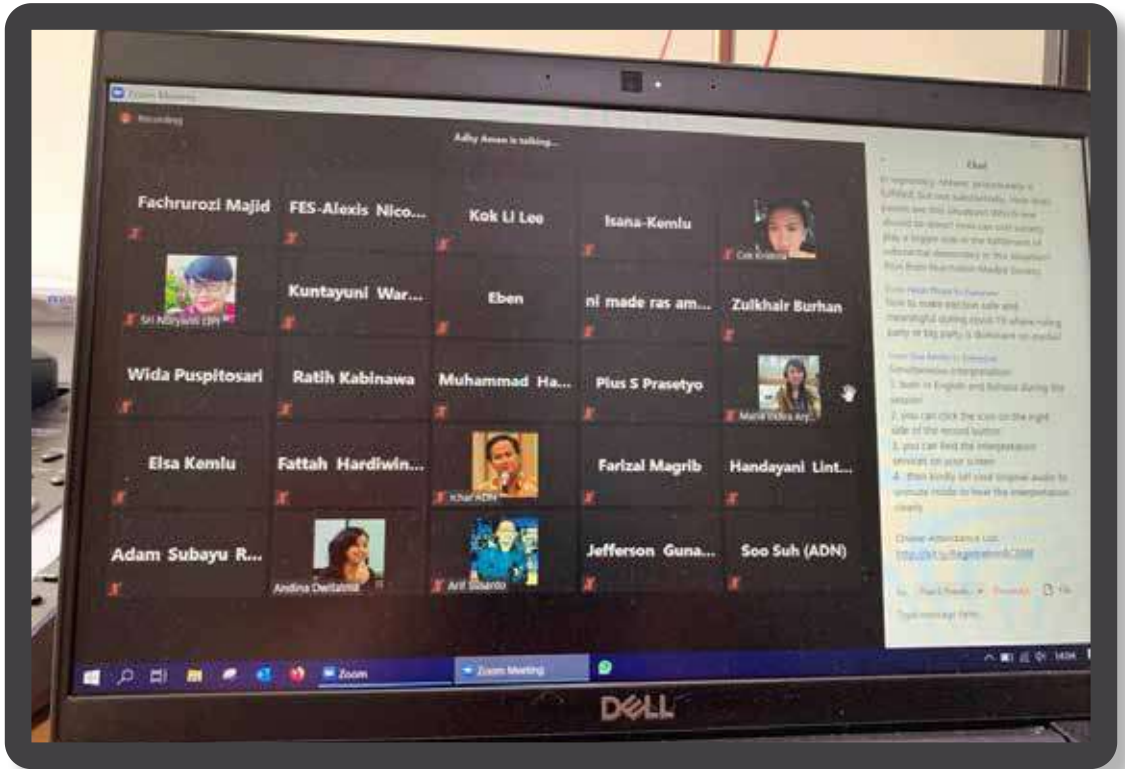
| Program | |
|--|---|
| Monday , 19 October 2020 | |
| <p>Opening Session 12:30 – 13.00 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teuku Faizasyah, Director General for Information and Public Diplomacy • Prof. Dr. Mohammad Nuh, Head of Indonesian Press Council • H.E. Dr. N. Hassan Wirajuda, Founder of Bali Democracy Forum |
| <p>Session 1 The Shrinking Civil Space: Challenges, Changes, and the Questions of Sustainability 13:00 - 14:30 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00)</p> | <p>Chair: I Ketut Putra Erawan, IPD</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Santiago, chairperson of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights, Member of Malaysian Parliament • Josef Benedict, CIVICUS Asia (ADN) • Sophia Fernandes, Senior Adviser on Political Inclusion of Westminster Foundation on Democracy (WFD) • Annika Silva-Leander, Head of Democracy Assessments and Policy Analysis, International IDEA |
| <p>Session 2 Mediatization of the Pandemic 14:40 - 16:10 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00)</p> | <p>Chair : Dinna Prapto Rahardja, Phd.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Agus Sudibjo, Chairman of the Commission on Inter-Institutional and International Relations of the Indonesian Press Council • Professor Jung Kim, University of North Korean Studies • Boonrat Apichattisorn, Chair of International Affair Committee, National Press Council of Thailand • Dr. Ming-Kuok Lim, Advisor for Communication and Information for UNESCO Jakarta Office |

| Program | |
|---|--|
| Tuesday, 20 October 2020 | |
| <p>Session 3 Elections during Pandemic: Agenda for Political Resilience 09:00 - 10:30 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00)</p> | <p>Chair : Leena Rikkilä Tamang, Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific of International IDEA</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Wong Chin Huan, Professor at Jeffrey Sachs Center on Sustainable Development Sunway University Malaysia • Dr. Andreas Ufen, GIGA, Germany • Adhy Aman, Senior Programme Manager of the Asia and the Pacific, International IDEA |
| <p>Session 4 Activisms for Civil and Media Resilience 10:40 -12:10 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00)</p> | <p>Chair: I Ketut Putra Erawan, IPD</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damar Juniarto, Executive Director at Safenet. • Syahredzan Johan, Chair of the Information Technology and Communications Committee of the Kuala Lumpur Bar Malaysia • Ichal Supriadi, Secretary General of Asia Democracy Network ADN |
| <p>Wrap Up Session 12:10 – 13:10 Central Indonesian Time (UTC + 08:00) Human</p> | <p>Speaker: Dindin Wahyudin, Head of Centre for Policy Analysis and Development, MFA RI</p> |

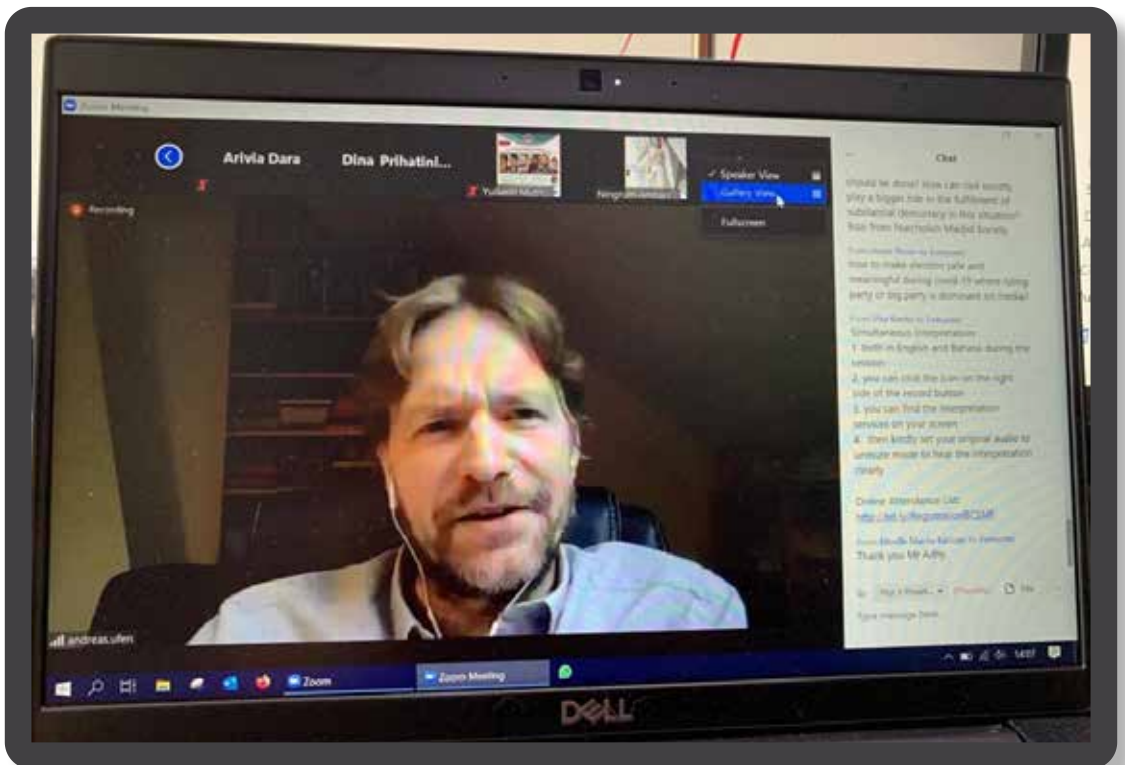
Appendix 3: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 19 - 20 October 2020



Appendix 3: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 19 - 20 October 2020



Appendix 3: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 19 - 20 October 2020



Appendix 3: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 19 - 20 October 2020







EDMUND BON

DYNAMIC OF GEOPOLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

CIVIL SOCIETY IN MALAYSIA IS HAVING EXISTENTIAL QUESTIONS

HOW DO WE DO OUR CAMPAIGNING?

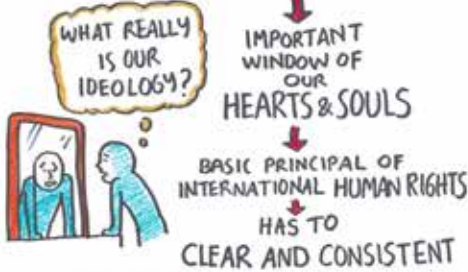
HOW DO WE MOVE ON?

HOW DO WE DEAL WITH THE HARASSMENT?

HOW DO WE DEAL THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT USING THE NAME OF COVID-19 OR SECURITY MEASURES..

The Answer is really GO BACK TO THE 5 KEY ELEMENTS

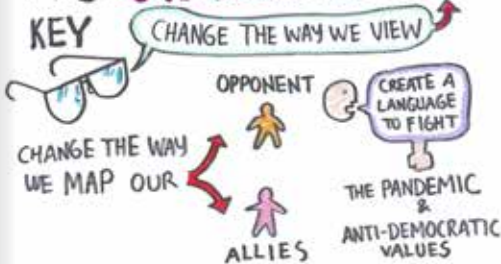
#1 KEY: IDEOLOGY



#2 KEY: RESOURCES MOBILIZATION



#3: STAKEHOLDERS



#4: STRATEGY



#5 KEY: HOW TO HUMANIZE ACTIVISTS





SESSION 2

TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA

MARDIYAH CHAMIM



SADLY, THE LANDSCAPE OF DEMOCRACY IS DECLINING ... NOT ONLY IN INDONESIA BUT ALSO GLOBALLY!



CIVIC SPACE IS SHRINKING: EVERYWHERE

IDEALLY..



THE FACT..



THERE IS SILVER-LINING IN THIS TIME OF CRISIS

COLLABORATION

BETWEEN MEDIA
THAT IS CURRENTLY HAPPENING
GLOBALLY

WAHYU DHYATMIKA

WE HAVE SEEN WORRYING TRENDS FOR THE LAST ONE TO TWO YEARS...

"WORSENING SINCE THE PANDEMIC HITS"

PERSECUTION TOWARDS CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS



BIGGER CONCERN IN DIGITAL SECURITY

SINCE MOST OF ACTIVITIES SHIFTED ONLINE

BECAUSE OF STRUCTURAL CHANGE



STRENGTHENING

OLIGARCHY

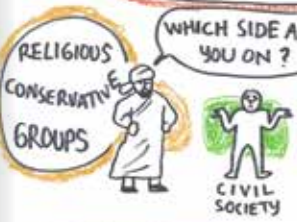


POLARIZATION

CYBER ATTACK TO CIVIL SOCIETY
GOVERNMENT TENDENT TO REDUCE HOURS OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION

IT HAS BEEN 20 YEARS...

THE RISE OF POPULISM



NATIONALIST ILLIBERAL GROUPS

INDONESIA'S FAILURE TO BREAK FROM BRUTAL PAST OF NEW ORDER



CREATING THE MINDSET

IMPUNITY OF PEOPLE OF POWER

NO HUMAN RIGHTS TRIBUNAL FOR ALL THE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION



WHY THE MEDIA FAILED TO INFORM THE PUBLIC PROPERLY ?



OPPORTUNITIES



YOVANTRA ARIEF



REMOTIVI
WORKS AT
THE INTERSECTION



CIVIL SOCIETY MASS COMMUNICATION
CAN BE DEVIDED INTO :

1 MAINSTREAM MEDIA

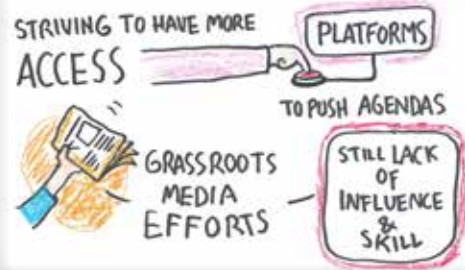


2 SIDE-STREAMING MEDIA



TO CHALLENGE THE DOMINANT,
BE DOMINANT!

PUSHING MAINSTREAM MEDIA INDEPENDENCE & QUALITY AS DOMINANT EFFORT OF CSOs.



POTENTIAL



CLOSING REMARKS

I KETUT PUTRA ERAWAN



I WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE THE SESSIONS WITH FOCUSING ON SEVERAL ISSUES..

1. HOW TO EXPAND AND FILL THE CIVIC SPACE ? WE NEED TO GO TO THE BASICS!



DEEPEN ON WHAT ACTIVISM MEANS



BUILD THE PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE



LISTEN LEARN FROM GESTALT EXPERIENCES

2. RE-INTERPRETING THE CONCEPTS OF:



ACTIVISM



TECHNOLOGY



IT'S POLITICAL ENDEAVOUR

3. TRY FINDING THE ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN THE DIVIDE



GLOBAL ORDER



4. RE-VISIT THE DEEPER STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS

UNCOVER IT

FIND COLLECTIVE ACTIONS TO DIS-ENTANGLE THEIR INTERESTS



GIVE ALTERNATIVE POWER TO BE CONTAINED

5. PROVIDING SPACE FOR THE MEDIA



6. GIVING THE VOICE OF THE VOICELESS



ALLOWING THEM TO OWN THEIR MEDIA

THE VOICELESS

7. Collaboration BETWEEN CSO AND MEDIA



COLLABORATING IN SIMILAR CHALLENGES

OLIGARCHY LANDSCAPE

STIMULATING AND DEEPEN COLLABORATION

SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

1 DELIVERING SUGGESTION INTO



2 DEMOCRATIZING THE FORUM



3 ENGAGING CSOs





BALI CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA FORUM 2020
Civil Resilience : Activisms during the Pandemic Covid-19
Concept for follow-up discussion BCSMF 2020

Thursday, 3 Dec 2020, 14.00 – 18.00 Jakarta time (2 sessions with 15 minutes break)

Aims: *To deepen the result of discussion from BCSMF 2020 held on 19-20 October 2020, to start drafting recommendation for BDF in December 2020 and to start discussing action plan for BCSMF ahead.*

Based on the 4 sessions of discussions held on 19-20 October, it becomes clear that democracy around the world is generally facing serious challenges to the point of erosion of democratic practices. Suffocation and the weakening of civil society and media as pillars of democracy was voiced. While the attending civil society and media activists remain confident that civil society and media would adapt to the new circumstance, we do need to reflect on ways to enlarge the civic space and increase the bargaining leverage of civil society and media in the digital era.

In this Road to BCSMF 2020, we look for sharing of experience and knowledge that would be helpful at strategic or practical levels on how civil society and media activists from various democracy context enlarge the civic space and interact with the state to improve its bargaining leverage in the digital era. We are aware that the experience in newer democracies of the South differ from those in the older Western democracies. We look forward to hearing how speakers describe the differences and how to use these differences to enhance cooperation between democracies.

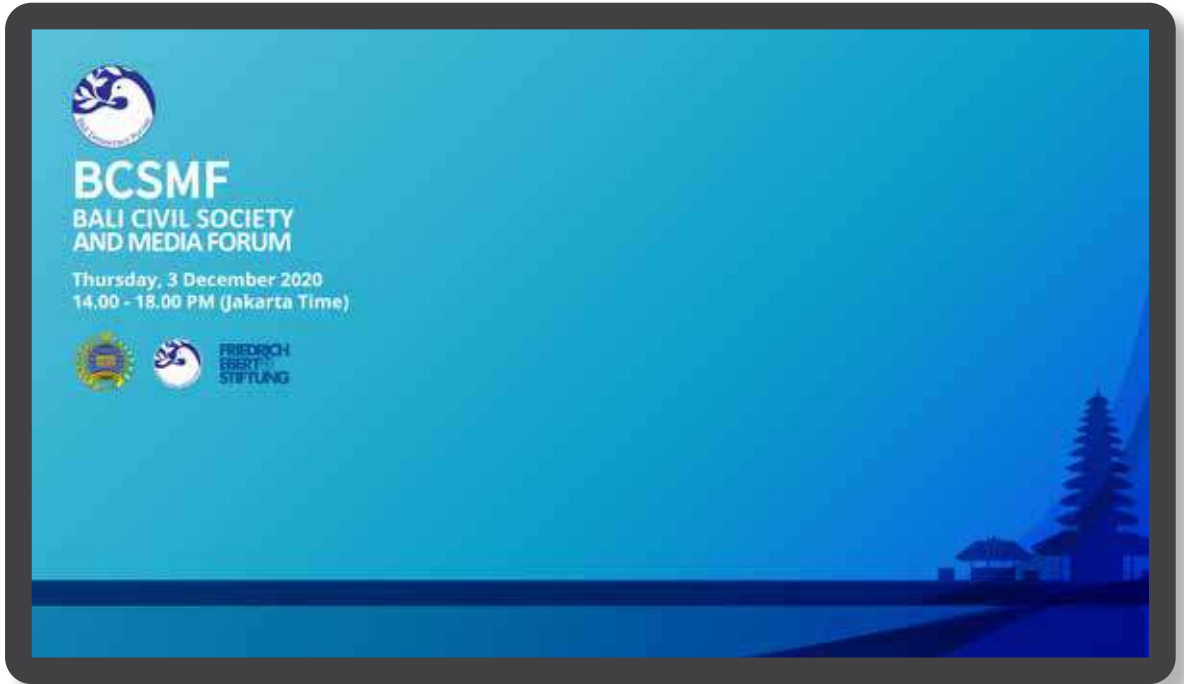
Theme: *Shrinking Civil Space: Responding to challenges in domestic, geopolitical pressure, economic competition, and disinformation*

AGENDA

| | |
|---------------|--|
| 13.55 – 14.00 | Registration via link zoom |
| 14.00 – 14.10 | Opening Session: 1. Sergio Grassi, Resident Director Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Indonesia Office 2. Yusron B. Ambarly, Direktur Diplomasi Publik Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (KEMLU) |
| 14.10 – 15.45 | Session 1: Responding to the shrinking of civil space: dynamic of geopolitics and civil society Chairperson : Dinna Prapto Raharja, Ph.D Speakers: 1. Edmund Bon, Representative AICHR – Malaysia (2016-2018) |

Appendix 5: **Concept and Agenda Program**
BCSMF 3 December 2020

| | |
|---------------|---|
| | <p>2. Usman Hamid, the Director of Amnesty International Indonesia</p> <p>Key Question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can the grass root/civil society fill or expand the civil space? 2. What kind of experiences are worth to share from the South? Why do those South experiences need to be heard? 3. In terms of north-south cooperation, how can such cooperation be conducted in appreciation of each other's experience and based on democracy, not patronage? 4. What is the implication of the upcoming geopolitical change (the new US administration) to the civil space, especially from the power perspective? |
| 15.45 – 16.00 | Break |
| 16.00 – 17.45 | <p>Session 2: Responding to the shrinking of civil space: technology and media</p> <p>Chairperson: Ms. Mardiyah Chamim, Journalist and Founder of Puan Indonesia</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wahyu Dhyatmika, Chief Editor TEMPO Magazine 2. Yovantra Arief, Executive Director REMOTIVI - Center for Media & Communication Studies <p>Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the bargaining power of civil society to ensure that their concerns would be heard and considered by the states? Is there any example from the Western experiences? 2. With the impact of technology in the era of Covid-19 pandemic, how can civil society in the South seize the opportunity and create new space for their activism? 3. How does the civil society/media in the region develop the network for social activism and media alliance? |
| 17.45 – 18.00 | <p>Closing Remarks:</p> <p>I Ketut Putra Erawan, Ph.D, Executive Director Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD)</p> |



The slide features a blue background with a white bird logo in the top left. The text on the left side reads: 'BCSMF BALI CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA FORUM Thursday, 3 December 2020 14.00 - 18.00 PM (Jakarta Time)'. Below this are logos for the University of Bali and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The main content is a white box with a blue border containing session details.

1st Session **RESPONDING TO THE SHRINKING OF CIVIL SPACE: DYNAMIC OF GEOPOLITICS AND CIVIL SOCIETY**

Chairperson

 **Assoc Prof. Dinna Prapto Raharja, Ph.D**
Senior Advisor on Diplomacy, Social Protection and Human Rights

Speakers

 **Edmund Bon**
Representative AICHR - Malaysia (2016-2018)

 **Usman Hamid**
Director of Amnesty International Indonesia

The slide features a blue background with a white bird logo in the top left. The text on the left side reads: 'BCSMF BALI CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA FORUM Thursday, 3 December 2020 14.00 - 18.00 PM (Jakarta Time)'. Below this are logos for the University of Bali and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. The main content is a white box with a blue border containing session details.

2nd Session **RESPONDING TO THE SHRINKING OF CIVIL SPACE: TECHNOLOGY AND MEDIA**

Chairperson

 **Mardiyah Chamim**
Journalist and Founder of Puan Indonesia

Speakers

 **Wahyu Dhyatmika**
Chief Editor TEMPO Magazine

 **Yovantra Arief**

Closing Remarks

 **I Ketut Putra Erawan, Ph.D.**
Executive Director Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD)

Appendix 6: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 3 December 2020



Appendix 6: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 3 December 2020



Concept Paper

**The 13th BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM
DEMOCRACY AND PANDEMIC:
CHALLENGES FROM COVID-19 EXPERIENCES**

Bali, Indonesia, 3 December 2020

Background

The Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) was established in 2008 to create a progressive democratic architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. In the past decades, the Forum facilitated dialogues through sharing experiences and best practices in managing diversity that encourages equality, mutual understanding and respect. Throughout the years, this has become the foundation of the Forum. In doing so, the BDF has also been active in advocating the principles of democracy – namely that it must be developed based on internal initiatives (home-grown); that it upholds the values of pluralism and diversity; and that it must be inclusive.

Over the years, the BDF has succeeded in making democracy a strategic agenda in the Asia-Pacific. It has encouraged countries to establish a balance between economic and political development, between creating peace and security, and promoting human rights and fundamental freedom as well as respecting humanitarian values. All of which is reflected in the three founding pillars of the United Nations Charter.

The various themes that have been discussed in the BDF have resulted in new ideas being further promulgated and shared amongst countries. Thus, in its second decade, the BDF is expected to continue contributing to the region's peace and stability, to the promotion of human rights, and especially to further encourage the healthy balance between economic growth and political development.

Theme

The 13th BDF of 2020 will address the theme of “Democracy and Pandemic: Challenges from COVID-19 Experiences”. The theme is derived from the following endeavors:

1. Democracy faces challenges, recession and growing skepticism even before the pandemic
2. Pandemic leads to multi-aspects crises and puts the test on already backsliding democracy to prove its resilience and effectiveness in dealing with the crises.
3. To some extent, during the early response to the pandemic, countries which exercised centralized, strong control and surveillance seemed more capable of containing the outbreak. The effectiveness of democracy in dealing with emergency situations is being doubted.

Pandemic brings multi-layered crises to the world and threatens the lives and livelihood of people, destroying public health and economic structures. Political aspects are also not an

exception, disrupting already-under-threat democracy and potentially exacerbating its backsliding.

Even before the pandemic, the state of democracy globally portrays a different image. In its 2018 report, Freedom House cites that in the last 12 years, democracy has regressed. Between 2005 and 2018, the share of Not Free countries rose to 26 percent, while the share of Free countries declined to 44 percent. The pillars, principles, and values of democracy are being challenged in countries traditionally known as champions of democracy.

The press is being undermined, while social media is being used to spread hoax and hate speeches for narrow political interests. Restrictive COVID-19 policies in various countries have deepened the existing inequality gap. Among the populations suffering disproportionate effects from COVID-19 are women, prisoners, students, and racial or ethnic minorities. More alarmingly, democracy and democratic institutions are being misused to spread anti-democratic values, making a shift towards Illiberal Democracy.

It is no secret that authoritarian regimes have been taking advantage of the pandemic to further their power by increasing public surveillance, restricting free speech beyond public health protocols. But even the democracies are also at risk to derail from its core principles during the outbreak by exercising excessive restriction and surveillance on its people and put democracy itself in peril consequences in the long term even after the pandemic recedes.

The spirit of democratic decision-making lies in transparency, accountability, and support from those it represents. But the pandemic likely will change the course of democracy itself by altering the electoral process, civic mobilization, government control upon its people/centralization, the transformation of the role of non-state actors, socio-political cohesion, etc.

Over-restriction on freedom of speech and transparency will not help to control the crises and only will generate backlash to the effectiveness of the government and societies to respond to contain the crises. It is proven that a self-motivated and well-informed population is far more powerful and effective than a controlled, ignorant population. Based on John Hopkins University and International IDEA study shows that Resilience to the pandemic not solely depends on enforcement capacity but greatly affected by civil society participation:

International IDEA analysis indicates both engagement of citizens in civil society organizations and the involvement of civil society in public policy-making are associated with better performance on a crucial indicator of public health. Citizens experiencing that their voice matters in the public sphere are likely to trust more in government and behave responsibly.

Pandemic shows that the world needs more transparency, civil society participation, free speech/press, inclusivity, close cooperation between government and its people, which means that the world needs democracy even more during and after crises. This is in line with the results of a survey conducted by *Dalia Research* and *the Alliance for Democracy* which shows that in the global average 78% of people believe that democracy is important.

On economic aspects, based on data from the World Bank and International IDEA, between democracy, hybrid-democracy and non-democracy countries face the same challenges.

(Economic growth contraction on 2019-2020 (forecast) between 1% - 8%). However, political and social structures' trajectory between the three would likely differentiate on its way to the end of the crises. Strong support and participation of the public to the government is one of the determining factors.

Democracy enables society to build social trust, empowering them, giving free speech to the media to do its role, protect individual liberties, maintain sustainable balances of societies, and create accountable governments. Inclusivity for civil society to partake a role (in combating the outbreak), inclusivity to access information, or inclusivity to receive (health) treatment will strengthen public-government cohesion, which allow the government to exercise accountable measures and provided public with spaces to support the government. In this context, the importance of inclusivity as recommended by 12th BDF in 2019 is even profound during this hard time.

Democracy does not guarantee competent leadership and effective governance, but it is enabled for self-correction. Through democracy, citizens and their elected leaders can learn and grow. And crises provide the best timing to do just that.

It left us with one more question, **where or how democracy will evolve after the crises.**

Outline of the Forum

The main objective of the Forum is providing platform for sharing experiences among state actors and invited stakeholders to identifying the possibility of the shift in public preference towards governance caused by the pandemic, to understand better the sequent move by stakeholders and the possible consequences of the crisis, as well as to seek answers on questions about future of democracy in the age of global crisis.

Continuing the previous Forum, the 13th BDF will be convened together with its three main pillars as an attempt to discuss the issues in democracy inclusively, namely the Bali Civil Society and Media Forum (BCSMF), the Bali Democracy Students Conference (BDSC), and the Panel of Inclusive Economy.

The BCSMF is intended to optimize the participation of the civil society and media, as they are also part of public policy making. The Forum will be attended by around 100 participants from various backgrounds, such as community leaders, NGO activists, academicians, researchers, journalists, and public figures. The Forum will be convened parallel to the main event of the BDF.

The BDSC is where around 150 students, both locals and internationals from various universities in Indonesia and overseas, will have the opportunity to deliberate and express their views about multiform topics relevant to the theme of this year's Forum. The Conference will also be conducted in parallel with the BDF and the BCSMF.

The Panel of Inclusive Economy was introduced as part of the BDF main pillar since last year. As the key elements highlighted the significance of the participation of all stakeholders, particularly the private sectors. In this case, the private sector also plays a vital role as

government partner in development. The collaboration between the public and the private sector are believed to enable strengthening of the democratic system and to promote beneficial conditions to all.

The 13th BDF Opening Session will be attended by the participants and observers of the BDF, the BCSMF and the BDSC as well as the Panel of Inclusive Economy participants. The Session will consist of the presentation of the reports by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the host country and remarks by attending Head of States/Governments.

Following the Opening Session, there will be a Ministerial Panel to signify the sub-theme of **“Upholding Democracy amid Pandemic”**, derived from the general theme of **“Democracy in the Hard Times: Early Lesson Learned from Responses to Covid-19 Pandemic”**.

This Ministerial Panel focuses on the good practices of countries in managing the Covid-19 pandemic. As human civilization has never been tested by such immense pandemic since the black plague, the novel Covid-19 is like no other. It is a threat to global health that needs to be addressed by all, through international solidarity of countries and other international actors. At this juncture, the crucial role of relevant international organizations, in particular the WHO, is paramount in coordinating the international responses to the Covid-19 pandemic. These responses include the protection of front-line healthcare workers and the delivery of medical supplies, especially diagnostic tools, personal protective equipment, treatments, medicines, and vaccines, in a timely and effective manner.

The Ministerial Panel will also be a platform to share a set of policies of countries to prevent and maintain the pandemic, in which have been enacted according to each country's assessment. The daunting questions include the following: maintaining transparency and accountability around decision making and evolving response and recovery in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic; ensuring participatory engagement of the civil societies in addressing the issue; efforts on how to strengthen international solidarity; and on recovery approaches to embrace the direct impacts of Covid-19 to the aspects of politics, economy, socio-culture and security.

Following the Ministerial Panel, there will be four focused group dialogues with special theme engaging various groups of participants of the BDF. (1) Dialogue on the Roles of State and Policy Maker with the theme of **“How Democracy will Survive Covid-19 Pandemic”**; (2) The Forum of civil societies and media will discuss **“Civil Resilience: Civil Society during and post Pandemic”**; (3) the activity of students conference will around the theme of **“Boost Youth Participation during Covid-19”**; and (4) dialogue on business and economy will focus on the theme of **“Pandemic, Democracy and the Impact on Economy”**.

After engaging participants in separate and focused group discussion to represent various elements of democracy, the Forum will assemble on the second day for the discussion panel on **International Cooperation during Covid-19 Pandemic**, followed by closing session where representatives of each focused sessions would be panelists to report and share the main insights and tentative summaries of each dialogue. Dialogue engaging all participants will share ideas and experiences to **“Agenda Setting for Democracy in Global Crisis”**.

Jakarta, Juli 2020



13th BALI DEMOCRACY FORUM

Nusa Dua, Bali, 10 December 2020

TENTATIVE PROGRAM OF WORK

Thursday, 10 December 2020

***Agenda on Central Indonesia Time UTC/GMT+8**

- 08.00 Link for Virtual Meeting Opened
- 08.25 – 08.50 Balinese Traditional Dance Performance by Samarandana
Live from Munggu, Bali
- 09.00 – 09.20 **OPENING SESSION**
Venue: Gamelan Meeting Hall
- Opening Remarks**
by The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia
- H.E. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi
- Pre-recorded Messages**
- WHO Director General
 - United Nations Secretary General

MINISTERIAL SESSION : PERSPECTIVE FROM THE WORLD

Sub theme:

“UPHOLDING DEMOCRACY AMIDST PANDEMIC”

- Moderator : Timothy Marbun (Journalist – Kompas TV)
- Venue : Gamelan Meeting Hall
- Note : Chatham House Rules

09.20 – 10.35

Session I

Pre-recorded Video Messages:

- Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates
- New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Local Government, and Associate Minister for Māori
- Spain Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation
- Thailand Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Ecuador Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility
- The Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs
- ASEAN Secretary General

INTERMISSION

10.40 – 11.55

Session II

Pre-recorded Video Messages:

- Australia Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Qatar State Minister for Foreign Affairs
- Sri Lanka State Minister of Regional Cooperation
- Myanmar Union Minister for International Cooperation

Appendix 8: **Agenda**
BCSMF 10 December 2020

Draft As of 10 December 2020, 9:11 AM

- Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs
- European Commission, Vice President for Democracy and Demography

12.00 – 13.00

LUNCHEON

(Hosted by Minister for Foreign Affairs)
Venue: Jewel Box Sofitel

13.15 – 14.45

HIGH LEVEL PANEL

Sub theme:

“THE ROLE OF STATES AND POLICY MAKERS IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC”

Moderator : Marissa Anita

(Lead Editor in Greatmind.id and a news anchor at SEA Today)

Venue : Gamelan Meeting Hall

Note: Chatham House Rules

Panelists:

- Ambassador of India
- Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates
- Ambassador of the Kingdom of The Netherlands
- Ambassador of the Republic of Colombia
- Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
- Ambassador of Hungary

14.45 – 15.15

BREAK

15.15 – 16.15

CROSS PANEL PLENARY

Moderator: Timothy Marbun (Journalist – Kompas TV)

Venue : Gamelan Meeting Hall

Note : Chatham House Rules

Panelists :

- **Government Pillar Representative**
Executive Director Institute for Peace and Democracy - IPD
- **Civil Society and Media Pillar Representative**
Senior Advisor on Diplomacy, Social Protection and Human Rights
- **Youth Pillar Representative**
Head of ASEAN and International Studies Centre
- **Economy & Business Pillar Representative**
Representative of Economy & Business Pillar

Discussant

Director of Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific UNWTO

16.20 – 16.35

CLOSING SESSION

Director General of Information and Public Diplomacy

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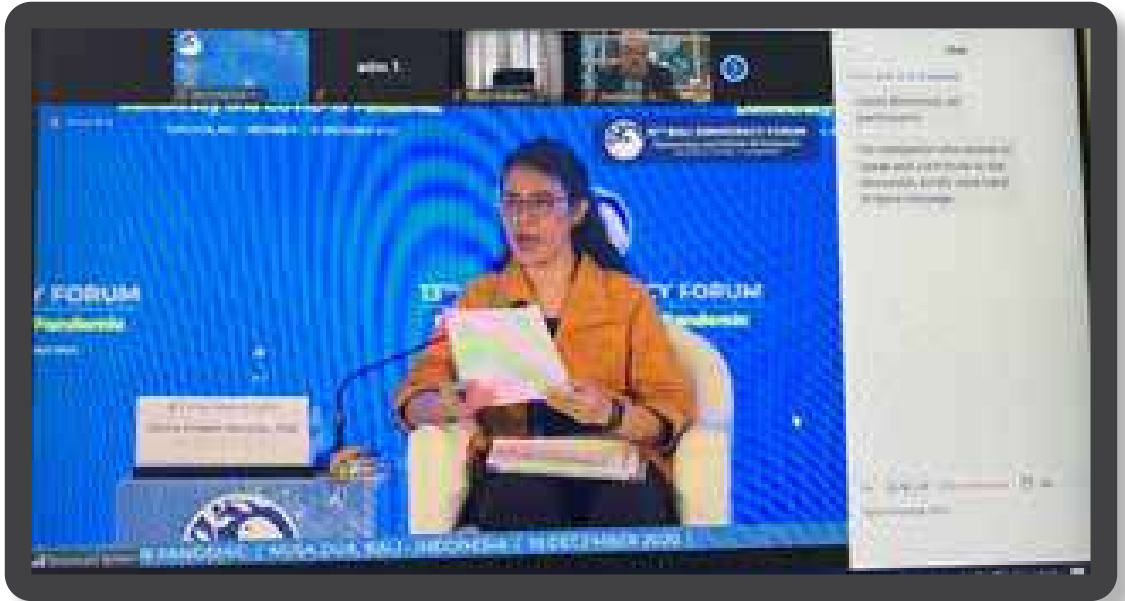
Screenshot Photos of 13th Bali Democracy Forum, 10th December 2021



Appendix 9: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 10 December 2020



Appendix 9: Pictures/Screen Shoot
BCSMF 10 December 2020



Profile of Writers

Associate Prof. Dinna Prpto Raharja, Ph.D.



Associate Professor of International Relations, Faculty Member of Binus University, Co-founder of Paramadina Graduate School of Diplomacy, Co-founder of University of Indonesia's Center for Social Protection Studies, Co-founder of Executive Programs of Social Protection between Gadjah Mada University and University of Melbourne, Co-founder of Atma Jaya Institute of Public Policy, Senior Policy Advisor at FIHRRST (Foundation for International Human Rights Reporting Standards) and Founder of Synergy Policies consulting and training institute. She graduated with Doctoral degree of Philosophy and Master of Arts from the Department of Political Science, The Ohio State University (USA) and Bachelor of Political Science from the Department of International Relations University of Indonesia. Active as writer and speakers, Dinna train diplomats and policymakers on strategic issues including foreign policy, development and social protection. She served as Indonesian Representative to ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (2016-2018). She can be reached at *twitter*: @Dinna_PR or email dinna@binus.ac.id

Sylvia Yazid, Ph.D.



is an Associate Professor and Researcher at the Department of International Relations, Parahyangan Catholic University. She focuses on the issues of migration, civil society organizations, democracy, and human rights. Sylvia earned a Bachelor Degree in International Relations from Parahyangan Catholic University, Master of Public Policy and Management from Monash University, and Doctor of Philosophy from School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University. She was a guest professor at TU Dortmund, Germany, under the Gambrinus Fellowship programme. Besides teaching, researching, and publishing works on her issue focus, Sylvia has also been involved in various activities related to empowerment and development funded by national and international

institutions such as Australia Awards Indonesia, Save the Children Indonesia, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Korea and Indonesia, and Raoul Wallenberg Institute. She is currently the Head of Office for International Affairs and Cooperation in UNPAR. She can be reached at Twitter @sylviazid.

Mireille Marcia Karman, M.Litt



is an Assistant Professor in Parahyangan Catholic University, Bandung. She obtained her Bachelor Degree from Universitas Indonesia, majoring in International Relations and finished her Master Degree in International Political Theory, University of St. Andrews, UK. Her research interests focus around issues of democracy and political violence which includes the question of freedom and authority in a democratic regime. She has published some national and international journals on the topics of democracy, human rights, and political violence. From 2019 up until now, Mireille is part of a research team observing and encouraging the establishment of human rights city in Bandung, particularly on the possibility to adopt a deliberative democracy concept within the democratic mechanism in the city. Mireille Marcia Karman is available to be contacted at mireille.marcia@unpar.ac.id

Yvonne T. Chua, MPM,



is an associate professor at the Department of Journalism of the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines. A journalist for four decades, she cofounded the media nonprofit VERA Files, where she started and led various editorial projects from 2008 to early 2019, including VERA Files Fact Check. Yvonne is a member of the Commission on Higher Education's Technical Committee on Journalism, which monitors and proposes policies and standards in journalism education at the tertiary level. She is also a fellow of the research organization Social Weather Stations. Her current research interests as journalism educator include journalism standards, information disorders and fact-checking. Yvonne can be reached at [ytchua@up.edu.ph](mailto:yтчua@up.edu.ph)

Arif Susanto



is a researcher at the Center for Islam and State Studies Indonesia. A Jakarta based political analyst and cofounder of Exposit Research and Strategic Advisory. His research interests include, but are not limited to, democracy, election, civil society, and pluralism. While actively write opinions in national medias and journals, he was recently taking part in a joint publication by Kemenko Pembangunan Manusia dan Kebudayaan, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Indonesia and PSIK-Indonesia entitled 'Caring for the Sprouts of Awareness.' He can be reached at Twitter @withrif.