**Perspective of Civic Education in Analyzing the Meaning of Political Populism: A Literature Review**

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| **Abstract**. Populism has become an increasingly central topic in the context of political developments, both globally and nationally. Furthermore, in the rapidly advancing digital technology era, the existence of populism can significantly impact the stability of democracy and political order. This research offers a new perspective in analyzing the meaning of political populism through the dimension of civic education to comprehend the essence of political populism phenomena, thereby assisting in shaping citizens who are more critical and intelligent in dealing with complex political phenomena. The research employed a literature review method. The findings illustrate that within the framework of civic disposition and civic engagement approaches, political populism can be understood as a challenging phenomenon in the context of active and responsible participation in the political process. Political populism can also be interpreted as a phenomenon that influences citizens' political participation. The conclusion of this research emphasizes that civic education provides the conceptual foundation and values necessary for critiquing and analyzing political phenomena, including the phenomenon of political populism. |
| ***Keywords:*** *Civic Education; Social Education; The Meaning of Political Populism;* |

**INTRODUCTION**

Citizenship education is a multidisciplinary discipline with a cross-scientific context (Wahab & Sapriya, 2011). As stated by Chreshore (1886), civic education has the main study of political science, especially political democracy regarding the rights and obligations of citizens, democratic values, and ways of participating in political and community life. Civic education aims to form citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations and are able to participate in political and community life.

Civic education has an urgency in Indonesian democracy. First, it refers to the lack of political literacy or political illiteracy of the community towards how institutions and democracy work in the state environment. Second, political apathism or the tendency of indifference to the conditions of political dynamics that occur in Indonesia or at least with involvement in political processes such as general elections where abstention is still found. So civic education has a crucial role in the implementation of democracy by diving conceptually and implementatively into civic education for society and human rights in an effort to build civil society (Azra, 2021).

Therefore, community politics is one of the focuses of civic education studies, which certainly uses a civic approach. One of the phenomena present in society in the political context is the phenomenon of political populism. The use of the term 'populism' in Indonesian political studies reflects how the concept of populism itself is widely used and debated by academics (Gidron et al, Noam, 2013). Populism emphasizes how to mobilize the masses through social movements and build a communitarian model of democracy (Mudde et al, Kaltswasser, 2017). Political populism is a political movement or view that claims to represent the interests of the common people (lower class) and opposes political elites who are considered to have betrayed the interests of the people (Cannovan, 1999). Political populism often arises as a reaction to people's dissatisfaction with political policies that are ineffective or not in their favor. In the development of the phenomenon of political populism, of course, it is not only related to the popularity of individuals, but this phenomenon can also grow and develop within political parties, especially in countries that adhere to a democratic system. Of course, currently the phenomenon of political populism is used as a mere winning strategy from several populist groups.

A number of articles have reviewed the phenomenon of populism, but they do not specifically focus on civic analysis in studying political populism. For example, in 2017, there was one case that reflected the phenomenon of populism. At that time, in the context of the DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election, populist groups organized actions involving crowds of Muslims at the National Monument (Monas). These actions especially intensified in the run-up to the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election in response to remarks by the incumbent governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), that were perceived as insulting Qur'anic verses. A recording of the speech went viral on social media and was deemed to contain elements of blasphemy (Kusumo, 2018).

In addition, several previous studies conducted by (Repuci, 2020) illustrate that since 13 years ago democracy in the world has regressed. The results of this study are based on political phenomena that occur, one of which is political populism. For example, Indonesia in the general elections (2014 & 2019), the United States in the general election (2016), and Brazil in the general election (2019). These three countries managed to draw attention to the pattern of democracy played. In previous Presidential elections, candidates in all three countries openly adopted populist movements as a strategy to gain large mass support. Several well-known populist figures in the world today, such as Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen, Norbert Hoffer, Nigel Farage, and Geert Wilders, have changed the dynamics of democracy and party political competition by utilizing populist issues. These actions have resulted in a shift in traditional patterns of democracy and political competition (Inglehart, 2016).

Populism has become an increasingly central topic in the context of global and national political developments. Moreover, in the era of rapidly developing digital technology, the existence of populism can significantly affect the stability of democracy and political order. When looking at the current phenomenon of political populism, it is necessary to look at it from the perspective of civic education, moreover there is no study that focuses on examining political populism in the perspective of civic education, this is a novelty in this literature review research.

This research makes a new contribution in understanding the role of civic education (Civics Education) in analyzing the meaning of political populism from a civic education approach, so that it can help shape more critical and intelligent citizens in the face of complex political phenomena. This research also integrates multidisciplinary perspectives from political science and education, which can provide a more comprehensive understanding of political populism and how civic education can help address related challenges. Therefore, this research has the potential to influence future civic education policies and practices.

The problem behind the title of this research is that the phenomenon of populism is theoretically interpreted as an understanding to defend the lower class and as a connector of people's voices to the ruling elite, but on the other hand the development of political populism is currently used as a political strategy to win groups in general elections, according to the author there is a phenomenon of blurring the meaning of populism itself in its development, so it is necessary to examine the meaning of political populism using a civic education approach. The author focuses on the main problem in the literature review to examine and examine how the perspective of citizenship education can be used to analyze the meaning of political populism, and thus provide a fairly complex and clear picture of the meaning of populism in accordance with the perspective of citizenship education. This can indirectly contribute to civic education in shaping critical and intelligent citizens in the face of complex political phenomena.

In the context of political development in society, this research wants to explore how civic education can be relevant in analyzing the construction of the meaning of political populism. By understanding the concepts taught in civic education such as democratic values, citizens' rights and obligations, and political participation, it can help in understanding the causes of the emergence of political populism. Therefore, the research conducted is expected to provide a better understanding of the relationship between civic education and political populism and provide suggestions for the development of more effective civic education in overcoming the phenomenon of political populism.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses the literature review method by searching various literature sources including books, websites, and Google Scholar. The researcher conducted a search using general terms and specific terms, namely the phenomenon of political populism, civic education, and community education. In this search, several journals and books were identified that were relevant to the terms sought and met the literature review criteria. The criteria applied to books and journals are as follows: first, books or articles that discuss civic education and populism. Second, only books and journals that were actually published between 2010 and 2023 were considered. The identification of articles was done by considering the abstract and literature review. After that, sources relevant to the purpose of the literature review were thoroughly identified. After going through these stages, the researcher selected the substance of the study that was in line with the research title and relevant to the purpose of the literature review.

**DISCUSSION**

Literature review of civic education perspectives in analyzing the meaning of political populism A total of 10 articles were found in accordance with the topic of discussion determined by the author (Table 1).

Table 1. Studies on Populism and Citizenship

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| **No.** | **Author** | **Title** | **Year** | **Journal, Book, Seminar Paper and Article Design** |
| 1. | Noam Gidron & Bart Bonikowski | Varieties of Populism: Literature Review and Research Agenda | 2014 | Harvard University. desain artikel literatur review |
| 2. | Pippa Norris | Trump, Brexit, and the rise of Populism: Economic have–nots and cultural backlash | 2016 | Australian National University Horizons seminar series. |
| 3. | Cass Mudde & Kaltswasser | Populism A Very Schort Introduction | 2017 | USA: Oxford University Press. |
| 4. | Margaret Canovan | Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy | 1999 | Political studies. Desain artikel literatur review |
| 5. | Abdul Aziz Wahab & Sapriya | Theory & Foundations of Civic Education | 2011 | Publisher: Alfabeta Bandung |
| 6. | Eli Karliani | Building Civic Engagement Through Service Learning Model to Strengthen Citizen Character | 2014 | Journal of Pancasila and Citizenship Education. Design of literature study article |
| 7. | Azyumardi Azra | Islamic Populism and Politics | 2021 | Journal of Civilization |
| 8. | Bachtiar Nur Budiman | Populism in Indonesia as a Threat to Societal Polarization | 2021 | Journal of Indonesianness. Literature review article design |
| 9. | Rangga Kusumo & Hurriyah | Islamic Populism in Indonesia: A Case Study of Islamic Defense Action by GNPF-MUI in 2016-1027 | 2018 | Journal of Politics. Case Study Journal Design |
| 10. | Sutrisno, dkk | Community Civic Education in Building Global Citizenship Insight | 2020 | Journal of Civic Education. Literatur Review Article Design |

Civic education is important and very significant in shaping citizens' perspectives and attitudes towards political phenomena, one of which is political populism. Political populism is basically a political ideology that prioritizes the interests and aspirations of the people, by criticizing and opposing political elites who are considered detrimental to the interests of the people.

In the literature review on the perspective of civic education in analyzing the meaning of political populism, there are several aspects that can be discussed. First, civic education can help increase people's understanding and awareness of the importance of responsible political participation. Thus, people will be more critical in assessing and selecting information received, including information related to political populism. Second, civic education can also help identify factors that influence the emergence of political populism, such as public dissatisfaction with the performance of political elites, distrust of democratic institutions, or high social polarization. By knowing these factors, people can be wiser in making political decisions and prevent the phenomenon of political populism. Third, civic education can help develop critical and reflective thinking skills, which are indispensable in analyzing the meaning of political populism. With this ability, people will be better able to recognize political manipulations associated with populism, such as the use of emotionally stimulating rhetoric, stereotyping certain groups, or spreading false information. Fourth, civic education can also help develop democratic values, such as tolerance, pluralism, justice and inclusive participation. These values are crucial in preventing the emergence of exclusionary political populism, which only accommodates the interests of certain groups.

From the explanation above, civic education has an important role in analyzing the meaning of political populism, therefore it is necessary to study populism through a civic education approach in a societal context.

**Studies in Civic Education and Political Populism**

One of the studies of civic education is the study of politics. Of course, politics is not intended to support a particular regime or political power, but is an independent field of study. This is in contrast to hegemonic theory, which emphasizes the dominance of certain groups in society and produces political power in favor of those groups. In civic education, the orientation taken is on the principles of equality and justice, so that it is expected to be able to form critical citizens who have high political awareness (Prewitt, K., Dawson, R. E., & Dawson, 1977).

Civic education is a process by which civic knowledge is transformed and applied in the daily life of society to enable individuals to fulfill their responsibilities and duties as citizens directly. This concept is integral to the development of more comprehensive civic education materials, and is the sociocultural domain of civic education. In general, civic education encompasses the socio-cultural dimensions that are important for individuals to understand their rights and obligations as responsible members of society (Rahmat et al., 2009).

As stated by Wahab (2011), a citizen must have adequate knowledge and skills to be able to understand and solve various problems that arise with quick and precise decisions, both for the benefit of himself and others. Thus, the ability to make wise decisions that have a positive impact on society is an important quality for responsible citizens to have (Wahab, 2011).

In an effort to develop human resources, one of them is through education and can be done through formal education in schools, informal education in the family, and non-formal education in the community (Irmawita, 2013). Formal education is carried out as an effort to achieve a good and civilized system of community life based on national values, therefore it is very necessary for the concept of education to be connected in social life.

Community education is an important part of non-formal and informal education that has a significant role in the context of education in various countries. Community education is defined as a form of education that is deliberately and intentionally planned by the community, intended as an addition, alternative or complement to formal education in the process of lifelong learning. Community education can take many forms and be geared towards different goals, including short-term duration, with an emphasis on quality learning that is not available in formal education. Thus, community education plays an important role in forming educated and responsible citizens in the social life of the community (Yasunaga, 2014).

Synergy between education and society is needed because both are a means to transform social values into formal and non-formal forms of education, such as community civics education. To build a good civic education culture in formal and non-formal environments, cooperation between family, school, community, nation and state is needed. This joint effort will acculturate an understanding of the importance of building citizen insights to form good and smart citizenship (Sutrisno et al, 2020).

Community citizenship education is one of the important concepts in civic education to shape the character of a nation that has awareness and responsibility for society and its country. However, the study of community civic education should not only focus on the theoretical and conceptual aspects, but should also pay attention to its implementation in the real world. The implementation of community civic education should also involve the active participation of the community, including families, community institutions such as social and religious organizations, and political parties. This will strengthen the link between education and society, so that people can gain a more holistic understanding of their responsibilities as citizens.

One of the phenomena that arise in society is the political phenomenon of populism, of course this is one of the topics of study in community civic education. Political populism and civic education have a complex and mutually influential relationship in the study of social and political science. Political populism has always been a contemporary topic of study, especially in political development and election times. On the one hand, civic education can be an effective instrument in preventing the emergence of political populism that is harmful to democracy and social stability. This is because populist groups play an anti-elite narrative, populist groups also build a narrative that their group is the only one that reflects the true will of the people, which indirectly identifies itself as antipluralist (Madung, 2018). The success of populism as a movement is highly dependent on the charismatic leader of the movement's originator (Budiman, 2021). Based on the description of this phenomenon, it is necessary to examine political populism through community civic education, which can provide a better understanding of the rights and obligations of citizens, as well as increase awareness about the importance of maintaining the principles of democracy and tolerance in society.

However, on the other hand, political populism can also affect the implementation of community civic education, especially in polarized and conflictual political contexts. This can lead to civic citizenship education often being used as a tool to reinforce a particular political agenda and exploit public dissatisfaction with the government and political elites. This can lead to distorted and unbalanced education, which only promotes views that fit a particular political agenda (Cannovan, 1999: Mudde, 2004).

In addition, education focused on narrow nationalism or extremism can reinforce populist views that emphasize separation and confrontation, rather than cooperation and dialogue between groups in society (Bonikowski, 2017). This can increase conflict and hatred in society, and weaken the foundations of democracy and tolerance on which civic education is based.

In the context of globalization and the rise of political populism in countries around the world, a balanced and inclusive civic education is increasingly important to strengthen democracy and prevent the rise of dangerous populism. Civic education should promote inclusiveness, tolerance and dialogue as fundamental principles in building good citizenship awareness, and should be able to address the challenges faced by societies and states in the era of globalization.

The study of Community Citizenship Education and political populism is important, but it must be done comprehensively and holistically, and must pay attention to the challenges and opportunities faced by the people and nation of Indonesia. Through community civic education in studying political populism, it becomes a means to build critical awareness and active participation of citizens in political and social life. In the midst of the development of political populism that utilizes public sentiment can undermine democratic values and threaten political and social stability. Therefore, the role of community citizenship education is very important in anticipating political populism by forming critical, cultured citizens who are able to actively participate in political and social life.

**Looking at Political Populism Using Civic Disposition and Civic Engagement Approuches as Dimensions of Civic Education**

The importance of the concept of education in the community to form a smart and good citizen pattern is an important focus in the formation of good citizen character. Community civic education is the most important part in achieving this goal. There are three main aspects that are the focus in creating quality civic education that needs to be taken seriously. These three aspects include: (1) civic knowledge; (2) civic skills; and (3) civic dispositions (Branson, 1999). To build a human civilization that focuses on developing the nation's personality within the scope of community citizenship, strategic and systematic efforts are needed from the government and community organizations in instilling knowledge about citizenship to the community (Sutrisno et al., 2020). Knowledge about citizenship includes information that every citizen should know. Citizenship skills in a country can be seen from the aspects of intellectual and participatory skills. Meanwhile, civic dispositions are public and private traits that are important for every citizen to maintain and develop constitutional democracy (Murdiono et al., 2014).

This study focuses on looking at political populism from the approach of the dimensions of civic education, namely Civic Disposition and Civic Engangement as follows:

**Civic Disposition**

Civic disposition is the most important and fundamental skill in Civic Education (Civics). The ability of civic disposition can be considered as the end result of the development of the previous two skills. Quigley states (Quigley et al, 1991) that civics disposition is "...those attitudes and habits of mind of the citizen that are conducive to the healthy functioning and common good of the democratic system".

Populism was born and developed in countries that adhere to the democratic system, populism was born as the antithesis of resistance to the ruling elite and they labeled themselves as the connector of people's aspirations to the ruling elite. But on the other hand, populism becomes a political strategy to attract public attention and become a way to gain power under the pretext of being a representative of the people who can convey the aspirations of the people. If populism becomes a political strategy, it will have a negative impact if they use methods that can divide or impact conflict in society. So populism can be studied through civic disposition because it is related to society and democracy. Civic disposition is important in addressing the development of the phenomenon of political populism like this.

Civic skills and character traits grow slowly through the learning and experiences that individuals gain from home, school, community and civil society organizations. These experiences should build an understanding that democracy requires self-governance and responsibility from each individual. Personal character traits such as responsibility, morality, discipline, and respect for human dignity are important. In addition, public character traits such as civic concern, good manners, following the rule of law, critical thinking, and willingness to listen, negotiate, and compromise, are necessary to maintain the success of democracy (Mulyono, 2017).

Civic disposition and political populism can be an interesting subject of critical analysis. Civic disposition refers to the skills, values, and attitudes required in performing the role of a responsible citizen. These include concern for the well-being of society, participation in democratic processes, respect for human rights, and a willingness to listen to and respect the views of others. Political populism, on the other hand, is a political movement or style that often utilizes simple rhetoric, attractive promises, and distinctions between "the people" and "the elite" to gain political support. Political populism often emphasizes emotions, explores people's fears and discontent, and offers seemingly simple solutions to complex problems.

In a critical analysis, it can be argued that a strong and well-functioning civic disposition can be a barrier against harmful political populism. Mature civic skills can help individuals to more critically evaluate populist claims, understand complex social and political contexts, and participate in democratic processes in a responsible way. A strong civic disposition encourages individuals to have a critical attitude towards political populism. They do not just accept populist claims and rhetoric at face value, but are able to conduct objective analysis, test political claims and promises with evidence, and question the arguments presented. However, on the other hand, a weak understanding of civic disposition in healthy citizenship can facilitate the influence of political populism. When individuals are less critical or less engaged in society, they may be more susceptible to populist messages that appeal to their emotions and offer seemingly easy solutions.

In the civic disposition approach, political populism can be understood as a challenging phenomenon in the context of active and responsible participation in the political process. In this context, political populism refers to a style of politics that often uses simple rhetoric, manipulates emotions, and creates seemingly easy solutions to problems in order to gain mass support. From a civic disposition perspective, political populism can be a threat to healthy and constructive civic engagement. This is because populism often ignores the complexity of political issues and encourages the adoption of approaches that reduce public debate to a clash between "the people" and "the elite", and reinforces black-and-white thinking that divides society.

In the context of civic disposition, an understanding of political populism would emphasize the importance of active engagement in the broader political process, beyond simply rejecting populist rhetoric. Encouraging responsible, critical and inclusive participation is an integral part of the civic disposition approach in dealing with political populism. Therefore, it is important to view populism through civic education to build a healthy civic disposition in society. This will help prevent populist manipulation, increase citizen participation in responsible political processes, and maintain fundamental democratic principles.

**Civic Engagement**

Civic engagement, also known as civic participation, refers to any form of individual or collective action by citizens to participate in government policy making as well as various activities within the community (Karliani, 2014). Based on the above description, civic engagement is a collective and individual action taken to identify and show interest in public issues. Referring to this description, the concept of civic engagement (hereinafter referred to as CE) is closely related to democratic government. Therefore, the civic engagement domain can be one of the approaches in looking at the phenomenon of political populism. Because political populism was born and developed in countries that adhere to a democratic system.

(Dudley & Gitelson, 2003) say that "political knowledge is a necessary precondition for civic engagement, but information per se is unlike to be a sufficient precondition for civic engagement". The meaning of the statement is that political knowledge is a necessary precondition for citizen engagement in public affairs (civic engagement), but information per se is not enough to be a sufficient precondition for citizen engagement in public affairs. In other words, while having political knowledge is important, simply having information will not be enough to encourage active participation in public affairs. There are other factors that influence civic engagement, such as motivation, attitudes, values and social environment that play an important role in encouraging active engagement in political processes and society.

The relationship between populism and democracy is often conflicting and a topic of debate among social science researchers. The terms populism and democracy still lack clear boundaries and are often interpreted differently by researchers. Therefore, there is a need to more clearly define and understand these two concepts in order to make the discussion and analysis of their relationship more meaningful and constructive (Weyland, 2017). Robert Dahl in his thoughts written in the book Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition reveals that one of the eight dimensions of democracy is a high level of contestation that allows for balance and mutual supervision between groups. In this dimension, the ability to present alternative ideas is expected, so that no one group dominates another. This high level of contestation reflects the importance of pluralism, healthy political competition, and the ability to question existing authority in order to maintain justice and equality in a democratic system (Dahl, 1971).

Political competition comes with various strategies, one of which is populism in current political developments, so it is appropriate to look at the meaning of political populism through a civic engagement approach as one of the dimensions of civic education.

In the civic engagement approach, political populism can be understood as a phenomenon that affects citizens' political participation. Political populism often comes with attractive promises and simple rhetoric, aiming to gain broad support from the public. In the context of civic engagement, it is important to consider the implications of political populism for a healthy and inclusive political participation process. Political populism can have negative effects if it is used as a tool to manipulate public opinion, limit substantial discussion, or ignore minority interests.

Through a civic engagement approach, it is important to encourage active participation that is based on a deep understanding of complex political issues and the effects of proposed policies. This involves gathering diverse information, listening to different views, and participating in open discussions and debates. In addition, civic engagement also emphasizes the importance of building critical skills in identifying and evaluating populist rhetoric. This involves the ability to objectively analyze political arguments, question the claims being made, and understand the long-term implications of proposed policies. The goal is to build a participatory, informed, and responsible society that treats political populism with a critical attitude, puts the public interest first, and champions inclusive and equitable democratic values.

**CONCLUSION**

Civic education provides the conceptual foundation and values necessary to critique and analyze political phenomena, including political populism. Through civic education, individuals are equipped with knowledge about the political system, the democratic process, the rights and obligations of citizens, as well as the ability to actively participate in political and community life. By using the perspective of civic education through the dimensions of civic disposition and civic engagement approaches, we can see political populism as a more complex phenomenon than just attractive populist promises. We can explore the implications of political populism for inclusive political participation, substantial public discussion, and fundamental democratic values such as justice, equality and tolerance. In the context of civic education, we encourage individuals to develop critical thinking skills, access diverse information, listen to different views, and engage in constructive dialog. This helps people understand and evaluate the claims of political populism objectively, and take responsible stances based on a deep understanding of complex political issues. Thus, civic education provides a strong framework to analyze and understand the meaning of political populism holistically. This perspective helps us see populism as a complex phenomenon, with implications that go beyond mere populist rhetoric. As a result, we can develop a more critical and democratic values-based understanding of political populism, and contribute to a society that is participatory, inclusive and grounded in a deeper understanding of political processes and civic values.

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Civic education can be a relevant analytical framework in understanding and criticizing political populism. The concepts and values taught in civic education can help people understand, evaluate and respond to the phenomenon of political populism.

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