Pivotal Issues of Democratic Governance: A Literature Review

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Abstract

Democratic governance has become a popular term to influence public sector reform in many countries. As a new governance theory, democratic governance has also gained significant interest from scholarly circles. Scholars had different perspectives when discussing the topic of democratic governance. Political perspectives examined democratic governance, especially in terms of states, regime, election and democracy. Technological perspective saw the importance of ICTs, social media, artificial intelligence and big data. The public administration perspective studied the importance of public policy, public management and local government institutions. There were rarely scholars who mapped the ideas about democratic governance. The study tries to fill this gap in thinking about democratic governance by reviewing the journal articles on democratic governance published in Scopus data based. Via NVivo analysis tools, this study showed five pivotal issues, including "government," "public," "policy," "political,' and 'institutional.' Besides, this study revealed some important sub-issues of the pivotal issues, covered 'responsible government," "representative government," "government policy," "public participation," "public affairs," "public interest," "public policy," "policy formulation," "policy implementation," "political participation," "political actors," "political authority," "institutional change," "institutional capacity," "state institutions.' This study also developed propositions from the pivotal issues and sub-issues. Furthermore, this study proposed a new theoretical model based on the propositions. Finally, this study acknowledges the weaknesses and suggests future research.

Keywords:
democratic governance; literature review; social sciences; NVivo analysis

Introduction

Democratic governance can be defined as the activities of the state and citizens or civil society to create partnerships, networks, coordination, negotiation, dialogue, consensus and inclusion in the process of formulating and implementing public policies (Bevir, 2006; Ingrams, 2019; Strebel et al., 2019). There have been remarkable developments in the literature that address democratic governance from multiple perspectives. For example, from a political perspective, scholars discussed the relationship between democratic governance and the state, organizations, regimes, elections and democracy (Petracca, 1989; Cohen & Rogers, 1992; Bohman, 1999; Pottie, 2001; Bevir, 2006; Tusalem & Pe-Aguirre, 2013; Aliye, 2020). Others identified ICTs, geographic information systems, big data and artificial intelligence concerning democratic governance from technological perspectives (A. Haque, 2001; Kakabadse et al., 2003; Falch, 2006; Flyverbom et al., 2019; A. Clarke & Dubois, 2020). From a public administration perspective, scholars viewed the importance of public management, administration, public policy and local government in democratic governance (Coston, 1998; Terry, 1999; S. E. Clarke, 2001; Ayee, 2013; Vecchione & Parkhurst, 2015; Bamidele & Ayodele, 2018). In addition, studies on democracy in Indonesia are related to political life, regional development

and technological development. Winengan (2018) surveyed democracy related to the election, leadership, democratic government, power and legitimacy. Utami (2019) assumed that in modern democratic life, the use of social media fosters hoax information. Kusumasari *et al.* (2018) found that good governance and ICT can improve public services in the health sector. Indroyono *et al.* (2018) propose a rural community governance model that can encourage people to advance their economic life and protect the environment.

However, scholars rarely make a mapping of thought about democratic governance literature. Haque (2016) discussed democratic governance in epistemology, theory, governance and democracy. Chan (2016) tried to build the idea of democratic governance based on modernist and interpretive social sciences. Schuck (2018), in his *Essays on Democratic Governance*, explored politics, institutions, democracy and multiculturalism from a law and regulation perspective.

This article tries to fill this gap and understand how scholars from the social sciences view democratic governance. This study discusses the following questions: (1) what the pivotal issues and sub-issues of democratic governance in social sciences journals are? (2) What new propositions and theoretical frameworks can be built from these findings? This study conducted a systematic literature review on democratic governance in social sciences to answer these questions.

Methods

The Scopus Database identifies all previously published journal articles concerning democratic governance in the social sciences. All articles from all previous years, from the beginning to September 2020, are in this archive. This study takes an entire sample of all publication years to reduce bias from a small sample size. Therefore, this study obtained a representative and reliable sample.

According to Wang *et al.* (2018), there are five steps to conduct a systematic literature review: (1) planning the topic and formulating it; (2) literature search; (3) collection and assessment of data; (4) analyzing and interpreting data; and (5) presenting findings and suggesting future research. This study used the Scopus database for obtaining articles. In the database, the search settings were: Title = democratic governance; Access type = open access and other; Year = from the earliest available date up to September 2020; Author name = all; Subject area = social sciences; Document type = article; Publication stage = final; Source title = all social science journals; Keyword = democratic governance; Country/territory = all countries; Source type = journal; and Language = English. This study yielded 147 articles. This study used the NVivo 12 Plus software application to analyze, visualize and categorize journal articles. The NVivo is useful as the analysis program that helps index elements of textual documents and searches for words and phrases in data (Sotiriadou *et al.* 2014). This study applied the NVivo for indexing data components of journal articles by searching words related to democratic governance.

Results

This section presents a description and analysis of findings. The results include the year of publication, country of study, journal title, citations per author, and perspective. Analysis of findings includes the main democratic governance issues: government issue, public issue, policy issue, political issue and institutional issue.

The years of publication

The current trend in Figure 1 shows that the number of publications related to democratic governance is growing steadily. Since the articles were indexed by the Scopus Database 1989, the study's pinnacle appeared in 2013. Figure 1 also shows that the number
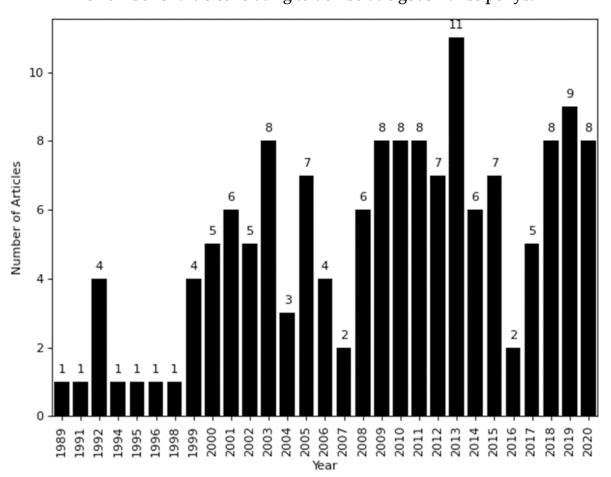
Figure 1.
The number of articles relating to democratic governance per year

Source: Processed from the Scopus Database

of studies on democratic governance has remained high in the last three years.

Countries of analysis

Figure 2 exhibits that the scholarships analyze the theme of democratic governance spread in almost all countries worldwide. However, the USA region dominates, followed by Europe, Canada and Africa. This finding is not surprising because the United States is the largest democracy in the world. Likewise, countries in Europe and Canada are countries with high socioeconomic levels. These countries also have established legal systems as a prerequisite for developing democratic governance systems.

Journal titles on democratic governance have been published in the social sciences subject area. These articles have been indexed in the Scopus Database. Table 1 identifies the names of journals containing at least two articles on democratic governance. The three journals with the highest number of items are Politics and Society, Democratization and International Review of Administrative Sciences.
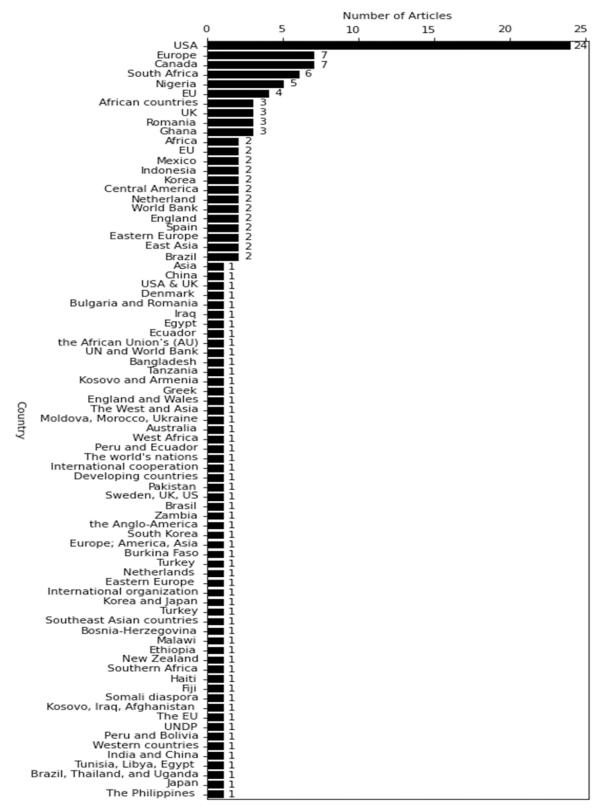
Citations per author

The accumulated citations per author are shown in figure 3. The cumulative citations per author's statistics might indicate the authors' academic impact in the field of democratic

Figure 2.
The number of articles relating to democratic governance per country analysis

Source: Processed from the Scopus Database

Table 1.
Analyzed Journals

No	Journal	No. of articles	%
1	Politics & Society	4	2,721
2	Democratization	4	2,721
3	International Review of Administrative Sciences	4	2,721
4	Public Administration Review	3	2,041
5	Public Administration and Development	3	2,041
6	European Journal of Political Research	3	2,041
7	Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences	3	2,041
8	IDS Bulletin	2	1,361
9	Futures	2	1,361
10	International Journal of Public Administration	2	1,361
11	Public Integrity	2	1,361
12	European Journal of Development Research	2	1,361
13	Japanese Journal of Political Science	2	1,361
14	Review of Policy Research	2	1,361
15	European Politics and Society	2	1,361
16	Terrorism and Political Violence	2	1,361
17	Voluntas	2	1,361
18	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	2	1,361
19	American Review of Public Administration	2	1,361
20	Korea Observer	2	1,361
21	Canadian Public Administration	2	1,361
22	Asian Journal of Political Science	2	1,361

Only journals publishing at least two democratic articles have been selected.

Source: processed from articles on scopus.com

governance. The 14 authors with the highest cumulative citations are as follows: Loader, I. 281 (2000); Sørensen, E. 279 (2006); Zürn, M. 225 (2000); Cohen, J. and Rogers, J. 206 (1992); Kakabadse, A., Kakabadse, N.K., and Kouzmin, A. 111 (2003); Michels, A. 110 (2011); Freyburg, T., Lavenex, S., Schimmelfennig, F., Skripka, T., and Wetzel, A. 103 (2009); Bohman, J. 97 (1999); Bevir, M. 68 (2006); Skelcher, and C., Torfing, J. 57 (2010); Cizre, U. 47 (2004); Courville, S. 44 (2003); Mncube, V. 40 (2009); and Haque, A. 38 (2001).

Perspectives used to study democratic governance

Figure 4 denotes perspectives to study democratic governance in the journals of social sciences. There are six main perspectives that scholars use to analyze democratic governance. From the most widely used to the least used, the six views are politics (44%), public administration (10%), public policy (10%),

development (8%), ICTs (technology) (6%) and legal (law) (5%).

Pivotal democratic governance issues

This study uses NVivo 12 plus to show the co-occurrence of keywords to provide an overview of the pivotal issues of democratic governance discussed in social science publications. Scholars use NVivo to support the analysis in the literature review process. NVivo is an ideal set of tools for analyzing literature in a qualitative analysis software package (Gregorio, 2000). NVivo is the most popular data analysis technique. NVivo constructs the coding scheme. Through the auto-code tool, NVivo processes data and creates coding schemes and nodes (Brandão & Miguez, 2017). NVivo allows scholars to manage and arrange data and makes it easier to analyze data, identify themes, collect insight and develop conclusions. Critically, NVivo enables the

Figure 3.
Cumulative citations 14 top author

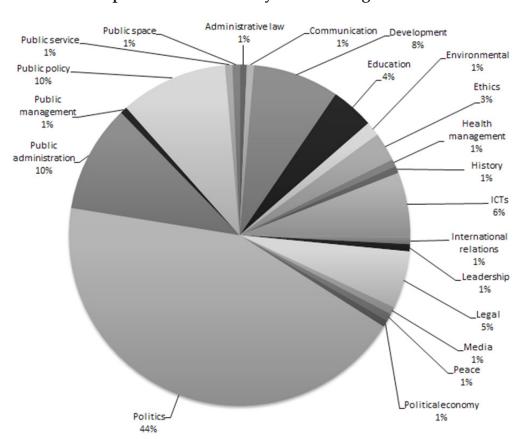*Source: processed from articles on scopus.com*

Figure 4.
Perspectives used to study democratic governance

Source: processed from articles on scopus.com

researcher to code all data and create themes, categories or nodes (Sotiriadou et al., 2014).

Jaccard's coefficients resulting from data processing with NVivo give validity to ten themes. Each major theme is closely related to democratic governance. The coefficients of Jaccard imply that the numbers are more than 0.5, which indicates that they have a meaningful relationship.

This study visualized more deeply five pivotal issues of democratic governance. The goal of the visualization was to explore the co-occurrence of each word of pivotal issues with other important words. Each pivotal issue is presented and discussed with the theory and results of previous research below.

The number in the figure below shows the close co-occurrence between the word 'democratic governance' and other words. Referring to Jaccard's coefficient in NVivo analysis, the closeness of the co-occurrence is marked on a scale of 0 - 1. The closer to 1, the higher the number of co-occurrence closeness. On the other hand, the further away from 1, the lower the co-occurrence closeness. Figure 5 affirms that the phrase of democratic governance co-occurs with 'government (1), public (1), policy (0.995), political (0.995), institutional (0.993), state (0,746), economic (0,699), development (0,696), power (0,632), groups (0,597) and other words.

Pivotal issue 1: government issue and its sub-issues

Figure 6 shows the interconnection between the word of government with other words. Based on Jaccard's coefficients, the interconnections can be ranked from the highest value to the lowest value, including responsible government, representative government, government policy, government effectiveness, open government, national governments, government structure, local government, military government and local government areas.

Pivotal issue 2: public issue and its sub-issues

Figure 7 depicts the relationship between the word public and other words. The linkages can be sorted from the highest to the lowest value using Jaccard's coefficients, with public participation, public affairs, public interest, public authority, public administration, public institutions, public policy, public services, public servants, public managers and public officials being the highest and lowest values.

Pivotal issue 3: policy issue and its sub-issues

The link between the term policy and other words is depicted in Figure 8. Using Jaccard's coefficients, the links can be sorted from highest to lowest value, with policy implementation, policy formulation, public policy, policymaking

Table 2.
Interconnection of democratic governance with its issues

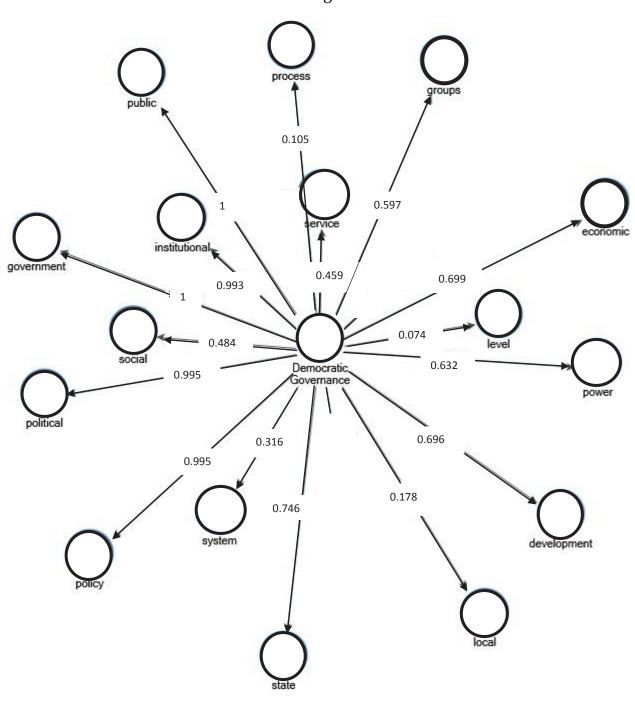| Code A	Code B	Jaccard's coefficient
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\government	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	1
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\public	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	1
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\policy	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,995422
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\political	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,995422
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\institutional	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,993133
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\state	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,74573
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\economic	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,699243
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\development	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,696425
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\power	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,631625
Nodes\\Democratic Governance\groups	Nodes\\Democratic Governance	0,597464

Source: result from NVivo 12+

Figure 5.
Pivotal democratic governance issues

Source: result from NVivo 12+

and public policy representing the highest and lowest values, respectively.

Pivotal issue 4: political issue and its sub-issues

Figure 9 depicts the relationship between the term political and other terms.

The linkages can be sorted from highest to lowest value using Jaccard's coefficients, with political participation, political actors, political authority, political elites, political culture, political institutions, political development, political power, political equality, political
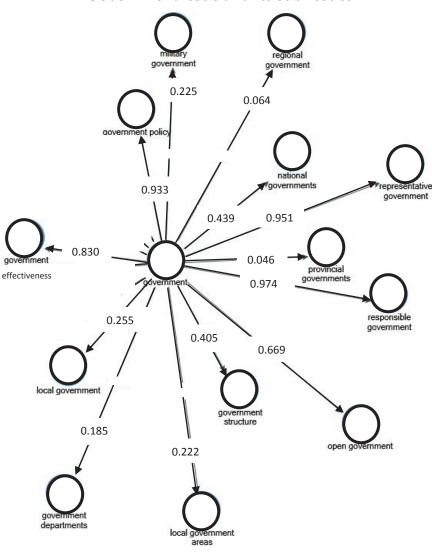
JSP
JURNAL ILMU SOSIAL
DAN ILMU POLITIK

Figure 6.
Government issue and its sub-issues

Source: result from NVivo 12+

reform, and the political system being the highest and lowest values, respectively.

Pivotal issue 5: institutional issue and its sub-issues

The link between the term institutional and other terms is depicted in Figure 10. Using Jaccard's coefficients, the links can be sorted from highest to lowest value, with institutional change, institutional capacity, state institutions, public institutions, political institutions, institutional environment, institutional arrangements, institutional framework, and

institutional design having the highest lowest values, respectively.

Discussion

The discussion between the results of this study and the previous literature that has been reviewed is as follows. Figure 6 shows that the government issue has close connections with several other issues such as responsible government, representative governments, government policy, government effectiveness and open government. Previous scholars have also discussed the themes.
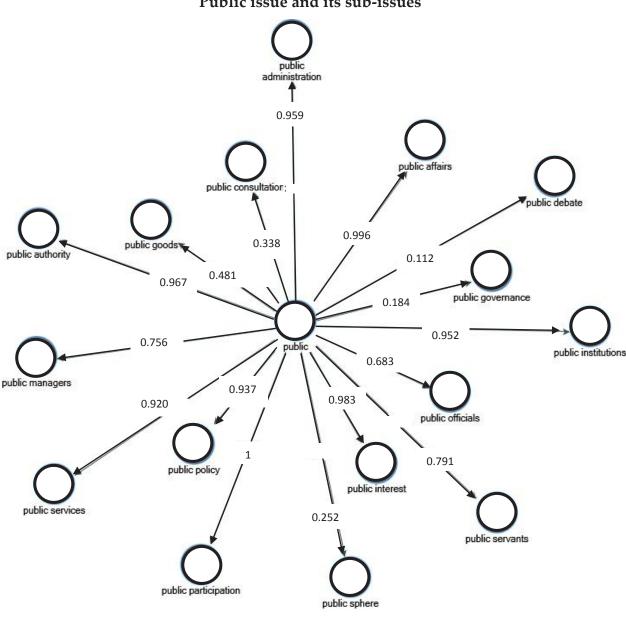
Figure 7.
Public issue and its sub-issues

Source: result from NVivo 12+

Bhuiyan (2015) stated that responsive and respective governments support building democratic governance. Krick & Holst (2019) claimed that democratic governance development requested the government's response to the quality of human life and inclusive stakeholders. Bamidele & Ayodele (2018) and Makakavhule & Landman (2020) explained that building public space for forcing democratic governance needed responsiveness, participation, deliberative democracy and willingness to dialogue. Clarke & Dubois (2020) revealed that the digital era of open government improved government effectiveness. Chopra & te Lintelo (2011) confirmed that the role of citizenship in the public policymaking process affects program transformation and government effectiveness. Warwick (2010) emphasized that the significance of government policy outcomes depends on public opinion and converting the policy. Tusalem & Pe-Aguirre, (2013) warned that political dynasties
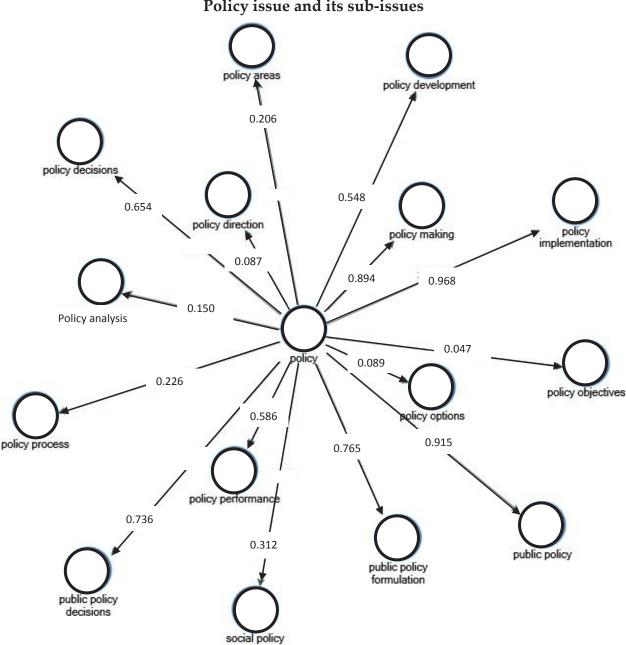
Figure 8.
Policy issue and its sub-issues

Source: result from NVivo 12+

harm effective governance. Brown (2003) clarified that accountability and transparency of state institutions in implementing social and economic development would increase democratic governance. Nyoni & Matlabe (2014) elucidated that organizations based on community and civil society endorse democracy and governance. Fraser-Moleketi (2012) pointed out that non-state actors that have political power

significantly shift the capacity of government. Schnell (2018) stated that transparency in decision-making will enhance accountability and democracy. Redden (2018) defined that artificial intelligence has made government transparency and accountability. Bowen (2015) made clear that democratic governance relates to institutional autonomy and effective and accountable state organizations.
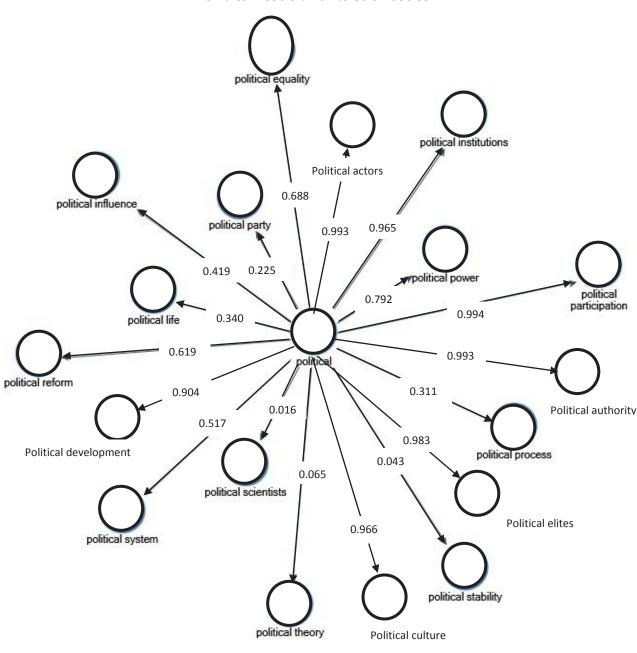
Figure 9.
Political issue and its sub-issues

political equality

political institutions

Political actors

0.688

political influence

political party

0.993   0.965

0.419   0.225

political power

0.792

political life   0.340

political participation

0.994

0.619

0.993

political reform   0.904

0.311

Political authority

0.517   0.016   political process

Political development   0.983

0.043

political scientists   0.065

Political elites

political system   0.966

political stability

political theory   Political culture

Source: result from NVivo 12+

Proposition one: The government issue is a critical element for building democratic governance. The responsible government, representative government, government policy, government effectiveness and open government are the most sub-issues of the government issue.

Figure 7 indicates that the public issue is linked to public participation, public affairs, public interest, public authority, etc. These findings support scholars' previous findings. Bhuiyan (2015) explained that inclusive participation and responsive institutions are the pillars to achieve democratic governance. Hilliard & Kemp (1999) defined
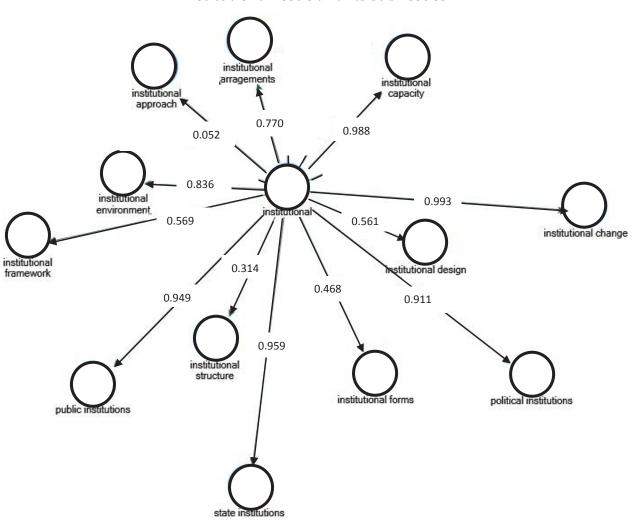
Figure 10.
Institutional issue and its sub-issues

Source: result from NVivo 12+

that participatory democracy and citizen participation in the government process was essential to maintain democratic governance. Toussaint (2019) clarified that public participation in development planning had an impact on deliberative democratic governance. Anechiarico & Segal (2020) stated that the voice and participation of organizational members in pursuing ethics and integrity were the elements of democratic governance. Akech (2013) confirmed that the principle and procedures of administrative law and public participation could help realize and deepen democratic governance. Makakavhule & Landman (2020) expressed that public affairs were also a factor

in developing democratic governance. Park & Perry (2013) revealed that characteristics of the democratic governance process were the transformation of the public sector and new public servants in growing social, health, and education of public affairs. Papaioannou (2012) emphasized that democratic governance also discusses healthcare, safer drugs, ethics, legal, social and politics. Ganev (2013) noted that public problems of corruption, unstable conditions, and having no state-building were barriers to developing democratic governance. Maurice et al. (2012) affirmed that social issues, such as corruption, ethnic conflicts, electoral malpractice, had confronted democratic

governance. Casares (2018) understood that democratic governance faced economic wealth creation changes, unexpected technological progress, social tensions, and reduction in human communication. (Angelis, 2017) declared that public interest was also a factor for developing democratic governance. Androniceanu (2015) elucidated that the politics and policy of democratic governance are based on national and local public interest and the needs and expectations of the public and private organizations and other stakeholders. Sepulveda et al. (2020) showed that implementation of democratic governance was related to government employees' interests and culture, community stakeholders, and organizations. Ekstrand (2017) illustrated that to create democratic governance was to create access and accommodation of disabilities.

Proposition two: Creating democratic governance must pay attention to public participation, public affairs, public interest, public authority, public administration, public institutions, public policy, public services, public servants, public managers and public officials.

Figure 8 points out that the policy issue is linked to policy implementation, policy formulation, public policy, policymaking, and public policy. These findings corroborate earlier research. Yang & Park (2020) stated a relationship between government policy, political democracy and democratic governance in a renewable energy project. Ringquist et al. (2013) confirmed that the policy process was an essential criterion of democratic governance in improving environmental programs. Toussaint (2019) suggested that public policy and participation were crucial in land use and water management programs. Ingrams (2019) clarified that policy efforts of big data applications would determine democratic governance. Taylor & Dewsbury (2019) showed that policy formulation in the environmental program must pay attention to inclusive deliberation,

risk, regulations and participation. Schnell (2018) affirmed that information access, dual communication and the process of decision-making affect democratic accountability and governance. Prieto-Flores et al. (2018) revealed that, in the context of the educational system, policy formulation and institutional arrangement became factors in developing democratic governance. Panchuk et al. (2017) identified that policy implementation was a criterion of democratic governance. The projects' performance and technical complexity affected EU democratic governance. Vecchione & Parkhurst (2015) described those policy decisions, implementations and evaluations that shaped the democratic governance process. Cooper & Farooq (2015) warned that policy implementation sometimes differed from political elites' rhetorical speeches in promoting democratic governance. Cornell (2014) confirmed that civil servants in implementing policy influenced developing democratic governance. Behagel & Arts (2014) underlined that multiple rationalities of political actors in intervening policy implementation challenged democratic governance.

Proposition three: Policy implementation, policy formulation, public policy, policymaking and public policy influence democratic governance.

Figure 9 shows that the political issue is linked to political participation, political actors, political authority, political elites, and so on, according to the findings of this study. These findings back up the previous study. Strebel et al. (2019) found that political participation affected democratic governance. Citizens' perspective is essential, meaningful involvement in decision making so that public participation legitimized democratic governance. Yildiz (2014) warned that low-level civil society participation in defense and security made the failure of democratic governance in Turkey. Cichowski (2013) explained that advocacy and societal groups have a massive effect on

democratic governance. Aliye (2020) confirmed that engagement and citizens' participation were two critical factors that leaders must consider for forcing democratic governance. Besides, political elites affected democratic governance. There were no influential leaders in Africa; consequently, there was no successful democratic governance. Boettke & Thompson (2019) emphasized that political actors affected democratic governance. Identity politics and identity group formation of political actors affected democratic governance. Nyamnjoh (2018) underlined that local actors who have different authority, capacities and resources influenced democratic governance in peacebuilding cases. Bowen (2015) expressed that powerful actors often determined the success of state-building and democratic governance. Gunde (2015) found that political elites in under-developing countries controlled the mass media. As a result, it was difficult to realize good governance because of the intervention of the elites' interests. Cooper & Farooq (2015) clarified that speech and nobility statements, which were only nonsense, made the promotion of democratic government challenging to realize.

Proposition four: The success of strengthening democratic governance depends on political participation, political actors, political authority, political elites, political culture, political institutions, political development, political power, political equality, political reform and political system.

Figure 10 proves that the institutional issue is linked to institutional change, institutional capacity, state institutions, public institutions and so on. These findings corroborate earlier other scholars' research. De Brasi (2019) stated that democratic governance is related to institutional change. Information technology has changed the circumstances and forms of a democratic citizenry. Prieto-Flores et al. (2018) confirmed that, in realizing democratic governance in academic life, public schools must develop their institutional designs.

Filgueiras (2018) affirmed that, in developing countries, the government must reform its administrative state to achieve democratic governance. Kramarz (2016) found that the World Bank advised some countries to redesign their organizational structures in empowering democracy. Inayatullah & Song (2014) said that leaders of political parties and activists in Asia have struggled to change governments' institutional design for reaching democratic governance. Yildiz (2014) warned that the fall of institutional state reforms, such as eliminating the military from politics, was a barrier to achieving democratic governance. Rădulescu et al. (2018) explained that digital communication was a new model for empowering the government through the opening of government for citizens and partnership relationships with users and facilitating public participation. Noula et al. (2015) stated that organizational capacity could also be reached by the inclusion and empowerment of any groups in education situations. Sepulveda et al. (2020) emphasized that in making high-quality public services, the government must create democratic governance characterized by governance arrangements for the community, stakeholders and cultural organizations. Eizaguirre et al. (2017) declared that good democratic local governance incorporated citizens' organizations and advocacy groups. Makakavhule & Landman (2020) confirmed that the cities must establish their cities as multiracial and multicultural. The towns must institutionalize the ideology of deliberative democracy. Bowen (2015) affirmed that to realize the institutional building of democratic governance, leaders must give autonomy to public institutions and stay away from powerful actors.

Proposition five: Democratic governance can only be created when institutional change, institutional capacity, state institutions, public institutions, political institutions, institutional environment, institutional arrangements,

institutional framework and institutional design can be built.

Figure 11 is a comprehensive proposed theoretical model deduced from the first to fifth propositions. Democratic governance has a significant connection with the five most closely related issues of government, public, policy, political, and institutional. Furthermore, the government issue is connected to the three closest issues, namely: responsible government, representative government, and government policy. The public issue is linked to the three

points that are nearest to it: public participation, public affairs, and public interest. The policy issue is intertwined with the three issues: policy implementation, policy formulation, and public policy. The political issue is inextricably linked to the three issues that are most closely related to it: political participation, political actors, and political authority. The institutional issue is linked to the three issues that are nearest to it: institutional change, institutional capacity, and state institutions.

Figure 11.
A comprehensive proposed theoretical model

Source: author's proposed model

Conclusion

Democratic governance has already been discussed in social sciences by many scholars. This study leads to the extension of the debates and perspectives of these social science scholars. The literature review of previous articles on democratic governance provided a chance to comprehend state of the art and assess the research course. The study reviewed 147 journal articles published in the Scopus database. This study finds five pivotal issues in democratic governance and develops five prepositions. This study declares a comprehensive proposed theoretical model based on the findings of the issues and sub-issues of democratic governance.

A practical implication of this study is that building democratic governance by all governments, their stakeholders and the public in the world can only be reached by developing responsive and representative government, creating public organizational capacity and promoting political participation in policy formulation and implementation.

This research has certain limitations, including the scope of the science being analyzed being too broad, so it cannot identify more specific issues. The number of articles reviewed is relatively tiny, so it may not represent the actual state of the art. The duration of the research is not long. In contemporary themes, the issues may differ.

This study suggests some ideas for future research. First, subsequent studies should examine the theme of democratic governance in specific disciplines, such as politics, public administration or sociology, to reveal more particular issues. Furthermore, future studies should involve a more substantial number of articles from many sources to determine the consistency of their issues. Finally, longitudinal research might be employed in coming studies to confirm the new proposed theoretical model.

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