Jokowi's Political Dynasties: Impact and its Comparison to Nehru-Gandhi Dynasties

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Abstract
This research focuses on the Jokowi political dynasty that is now underway. The dynasty was marked by the advancement of Jokowi's eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming, as Mayor of Solo some time ago, followed by Jokowi's son-in-law, Bobby Nasution, becoming Mayor of Medan. A few days ago, Jokowi's youngest son, Kaesang Pangarep, was predicted to run in the Depok regional election. The participation of Jokowi's son and son-in-law as regional heads establishes an unprecedented milestone in the annals of Indonesian political dynasties. Because there has never been a similar case since independence, this condition has caused various negative impacts on the Indonesian nation. It starts from opening opportunities for corruption and the difficulty of regenerating new political cadres to injuring democracy. Relatives sitting in strategic seats will perpetuate the dynasty and protect each other. Thus, it will be challenging to prioritize the people because family interests hinder it. In addition, this paper will include a review of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty of India as a comparison. The dynasty was chosen because it has a long history that lasts for generations. This phenomenon captured Indonesian political dynasties. Carrying the type of qualitative research, this research used various literature reviews as its basis. Hopefully, this research can be the mainstay of literacy for various parties facing the upcoming 2024 political year.

Keywords: political dynasty, Jokowi dynasty, Nehru-Gandhi dynasty
Introduction

The practice of political dynasties is widespread in various parts of the world. There is a history of such practices from the United States to India and even Indonesia. Political dynasties are understood as a manifestation of control over government power at the regional and central levels. Political dynasties represent the efforts of rulers to place their family members, siblings, and relatives in strategic positions to build a political empire within the governance system. This ensures that members of the political dynasty can mutually safeguard and maintain power in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. The hope is that, through family members or siblings in positions of power, rulers can easily control everything necessary for their interests.

One of the countries with a legendary history of political dynasties is India. This dynasty is known as the Nehru-Gandhi Dynasty, named after a freedom fighter named Jawaharlal Nehru. Established by Nehru in 1947, the dynasty became legendary as it was inherited through generations by Nehru's children, grandchildren, and extended family. In the beginning, Nehru's leadership ran smoothly. He pioneered many successful policies that brought India towards progress. Nehru's success attracted public sympathy, which made them choose Nehru's descendants and relatives as their subsequent leaders.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia, political dynasties have existed since the era of the Old Order, also known as the Soekarno era. It continued with subsequent leaders such as Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Joko Widodo. The evidence lies in President Jokowi's son, Gibran Rakabuming, currently serving as the Mayor of Solo, while his son-in-law, Bobby Nasution, has become the Mayor of Medan. It does not stop there; his younger son, Kaesang Pangarep, is rumored to run as a candidate for the Mayor of Depok soon.

The legislation in Indonesia has made efforts to prevent the growth and development of political dynasties. This regulation is stated in Law Number 8 of 2015: "Indonesian citizens who are eligible to be candidates for governor and vice governor, regent and vice-regent, as well as the mayor and vice mayor are those who meet the following requirements." It is then continued in point r, stating, "do not have a conflict of interest with the incumbent," meaning they do not have a blood relationship, marital ties, and direct lineage with the incumbent unless they have passed one service period.

Nevertheless, according to the Constitutional Court, the article is not in line with Article 28J Paragraph 2 of the 1945 Constitution, which states, "In exercising their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject to restrictions as stipulated by law to ensure the recognition and respect of the rights and freedoms of others and fulfill the just demands based on moral considerations, religious values, security, and public order in a democratic society."

Based on the explanation above, researchers want to illustrate how the political dynasty in the era of President Jokowi is currently taking place. Moreover, the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty is included for comparison because it has existed for a long time and has persisted through several generations. The hope is that Indonesia can learn from similar cases and become wiser in addressing political dynasties, given that political dynasties tend to lead to the same conclusion, namely the perpetuation of family politics and the difficulty in regenerating new and more competent figures.

Theoretical Framework

Research Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative method. The research data was obtained from a review of various journal articles, laws, and news related to nepotism and political dynasties in Indonesia and India. Research data analysis was conducted qualitatively by deepening and understanding the collected data. Afterward, the data analyzed using this method consisted of texts or narratives.

Literature Review

Halilul Khairi researched dynasties from the Institute of Local Government, Sumedang, Indonesia (Khairi, 2022). The research aims to examine the extent of the influence of political dynasties in regional head elections, measured
by the level of electability of candidates related to political dynasties, and to describe the effective patronage types in influencing the victory of regional head candidates related to political dynasties. The most elected regional head candidates are those with familial relationships, such as parent-in-law/son-in-law, husband/wife, and sibling. The method used in this research was a descriptive quantitative approach by calculating the percentage of each observed parameter. A qualitative approach was also employed to analyze the data on the relationships between candidates related to political dynasties and their patrons. The phenomenon of political dynasties in regional head elections has increased since the direct regional head elections were implemented in Indonesia in 2005. In the 2020 regional head elections, political dynasties occurred in 29 out of 32 provinces.

Djoni Gunanto conducted further research to uncover the development of political dynasties in Indonesia comprehensively. According to his research, political dynasties in Indonesia were formed in two ways: by design and by accident. Political dynasties, by design, have been established for a long time. Regarding relationships, the familial networks in the government are strong, so relatives entering the government or participating in political contests are strategically arranged to engineer the success of their goals. Political dynasties by accident occur in situations of sudden government succession that nominate a relative to replace the leader to maintain informal power over the successor if they win in the political contest. Therefore, the upcoming research can be categorized based on previous studies related to political dynasties (Gunanto, 2020).

Otto Gusti Madung carried out further research related to Michael Sandel's thesis on the relationship between meritocracy and the crisis of democracy. This phenomenon indicates that the crisis of liberal democracy trapped in technocratic democracy has triggered the rise of populism in several countries worldwide. According to Michael Sandel, the root of this crisis is the tyranny of meritocracy. Meritocracy is an ideology that defines individual achievement as the sole criterion determining one's social status and position (Madung, 2020).

Rooted in several literacy studies, the authors emphasize an innovation related to political dynasties in Indonesia, which is starting to proliferate and is showcased by President Joko Widodo, disregarding democratic ethics. The authors also observed the political dynasty phenomenon in other parts of the world, especially in India, which notably shares a similar vision and strong ties since the early period of Indonesia's independence and a population distribution pattern almost similar to Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

Political Dynasty in India

Political dynasties are not exclusive to Indonesia but are prevalent in many other parts of the world. One such example is in a fellow developing country in Asia, namely India. This dynasty, known as the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, was initiated by a freedom fighter named Jawaharlal Nehru and passed down through generations to his children and grandchildren.

Jawaharlal Nehru was India's first prime minister after gaining independence on August 15, 1947. Born in Allahabad, British India, on November 14, 1889, to a Brahmin Kashmiri family that migrated to Delhi in the 18th century, Nehru came from a distinguished family of Indian independence fighters. His father, Motilal Nehru, was known as the Father of Independence, the President of the Indian National Congress (INC), and a lawyer. His grandfather, Gangadhar Nehru, had previously served as the Chief of Police in India in 1857.

Nehru received education at Harrow School, Trinity College Cambridge, and Inner Temple, London, England. He studied law and practiced as a lawyer alongside his father. During his studies, Nehru was already deeply interested in the struggles of oppressed nations for independence. One of his inspirations was the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, advocating for Ireland's independence from British rule. This movement motivated him to fight for his own country, which was still under British rule.
Nehru's nationalism intensified on April 13, 1919, during the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in a city park in Amritsar. In this massacre, the British military fired upon an unarmed crowd of Indians. At least 379 demonstrators were killed, and 1,200 were injured. The local population intended to protest against the compulsory military service imposed by the British and the heavy war taxes on the Indian people. Instead, the demonstrators were shot by the British military.

In response to this event, Nehru joined the INC the same year. Gandhi urged its members to act promptly to free India and bring about change for their country. Nehru dedicated ten years to this cause within the INC, from 1919 to 1929. In 1923, Nehru became the party's General Secretary for two years. He was re-elected to the same position in 1927 and served for another two years.

His role as the General Secretary took Nehru across India, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. The fundamental issues in this region were poverty and the oppression of farmers. Nehru also traveled to several countries, including Italy, Switzerland, England, Belgium, Germany, and Russia. His significant position in the INC also led him to represent the party in various important Congresses in India and worldwide.

Nehru became India's first and longest-serving Prime Minister from 1947 to 1964. During these 17 years, Nehru emphasized four fundamental principles: democracy, socialism, unity, and secularism. Nehru's government successfully upheld the country with these four principles. Some of the essential policies implemented by Nehru during his tenure include the following:
1. They provided free and compulsory primary education for all children in India.
2. They launched a complimentary milk and food distribution program for children to combat malnutrition.
3. They advocated for non-aligned policies and co-founded the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union in the late 1940s.
4. They instilled modern Western values and thoughts adapted to the conditions in India.
5. They modernized India in terms of technology and scientific discoveries.
6. Emphasizing secularism, the separation of worldly and religious affairs strengthened unity in the country.
7. They inspired the public to respect democratic values.
8. They reformed ancient Hindu civil laws.
9. He changed Hindu laws in India regarding caste discrimination. In his new laws, he criminalized anyone discriminating against others based on their caste.
10. He oversaw the establishment of many higher education institutions, including the All-India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Indian Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, vocational and technical schools, and adult education centers.

The Nehru-Gandhi dynasty played a significant role in India. The successes achieved during Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership garnered public attention. Moreover, the longevity of the power held by the dynasty is deeply rooted. This dynasty was established when Jawaharlal Nehru became India's first Prime Minister on August 15, 1947. Nehru's relatives have held strategic positions as political policymakers throughout this dynasty.

Concrete evidence includes Nehru's only daughter with his wife Kumala, Indira Priyadarshini Nehru, following in his footsteps. She joined the family party, becoming its leader, and was later elected as the first female Prime Minister of India from 1980 to 1984. Her position was occasionally replaced until she was re-elected in 1986-1977.

However, Indira was not regarded as successful or as illustrious as her father in her career. Her government was unstable, and she was accused of being authoritarian, often curbing civil liberties, seating only close associates in parliament, and imprisoning her political opponents. In 1984, she had to face the same fate as her mother and was assassinated by two of her trusted guards, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh.

The saga of political power in the family continued with Indira's eldest son, Rajiv Gandhi. He was the only heir to the throne as Prime Minister since his brother Sanjay Gandhi died in
a plane crash in 1980. Despite being the second son, Sanjay was initially considered the strongest candidate to succeed his mother. Rajiv served as India's sixth government head from 1984 to 1989. His leadership story ended abruptly when, in 1991, he met the same fate as his mother and was assassinated. Nevertheless, the efforts of this dynasty continued with Rajiv's widow, Sonia Gandhi, whose original name was Edvige Antonia Albina Maino. In 2004, she played a crucial role in leading the United Progressive Alliance to victory in the elections for Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Rajiv-Sonia's children were also involved in the chain of this dynasty. Rahul Gandhi was elected as a member of parliament in the same year his mother entered the political arena. His cousin, Varun, also joined under the leadership of Narendra Modi, serving as the secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party. This dynasty continued through the seventh generation, falling into the hands of Varun Gandhi's daughter from his marriage to Yamini Gandhi, namely Anusuya Gandhi. She competed with Priyanka Gandhi's son and daughter, Rahul's sister, Raisha Vadra and Miraya Vadra. In addition to the direct descendants of Jawaharlal Nehru, Nehru's siblings, his wife, and other relatives also held essential positions in specific government sectors. For example, Kamala Nehru was a prominent social reformer and an active All India Congress Committee member. Maneka Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi's wife, is an environmental and animal protection activist. She is also known as a cabinet minister of the Bharatiya Janata Party and served for four government terms. Finally, she was assigned as the cabinet minister responsible for developing women and children.

Political Dynasties in Indonesia

Dynastic politics is a phenomenon that has been introduced previously in Indonesia. Its practice dates to the Old Order era, precisely under the leadership of Indonesia's first president, Ir. Soekarno. However, there still needs to be more clarity between dynastic politics and political dynasties. In reality, these two are different. A political dynasty is the process of mobilizing the renewal of oligarchic power to obtain power or continuity. Meanwhile, dynastic politics is a power reproduction system based on family or kinship. Although it has been ongoing for a long time, dynastic politics during President Jokowi's leadership has made new history. Indeed, President Jokowi's children and in-laws have become regional leaders in districts/cities, and they can move up to the provincial level in the future. In the paper titled "Indonesia's 2009 Elections: Populism, Dynasties and the Consolidation of the Party System" (Mietzner, 2009), it is assessed that the tendency of a dynasty is quite strong in contemporary Indonesian politics. Political dynasties in Indonesia are carried out in two ways: by design and by accident. Political dynasties, by design, have been established for a long time. In terms of relationships, the family network within the government is already strong, so relatives who want to enter the realm of politics are arranged in such a way as to engineer the success of their goals. On the other hand, political dynasties by accident occur in government successions that suddenly nominate relatives to replace them to maintain informal power over their successors if they win in political contests. Political dynasties in Indonesia can be dangerous if not prevented because, based on the observed facts, the mechanisms and regulations in candidacy are not adequately regulated. There are several essential perspectives in describing the dangers of political dynasties in Indonesia: 1. Kinship politics in Indonesia makes it difficult for criticism, oversight, and mechanisms of checks and balances to enter. Political dynasties in Indonesia only prioritize kinship and benefit only certain parties in policymaking.
2. The growth of political dynasties causes the playing field to experience inequality because political dynasties have accumulated influence, wealth, control over territories, and specific economic control, allowing a potential percentage of victory in political contests compared to other candidates who still have limitations in resources and capital.
3. The thriving growth of political dynasties indicates the worsening institutionalization of
political parties and shows the mediocre quality of political parties.

4. The strength of political parties is weakening because the strength of individual candidates becomes a determinant factor in the victory of the contest. Political parties prioritize candidates with relationships to relatives who hold political positions because they are considered competent in terms of financial popularity and the ability to mobilize the masses.

Looking upwards, political dynasties are always conducted by major parties. Political dynasties have become a system. According to Idrus Affandi (2019:79), a political dynasty is deemed fair if the leader allows another national cadre to lead after serving two consecutive five-year terms. After one or two terms, the leader's spouse or child re-enters the electoral contest. If they receive the support of the people and win the contest, their political dynasty has a positive value. It means that the dynasty's leadership is known to be good, and the people feel its benefits.

Jokowi Political Dynasties

The advancement of President Jokowi's son, Gibran Rakabuming, in the Solo Mayor election, marked a milestone in Indonesia's flourishing political dynasties. He signified the first time the son of a sitting president had participated in a local election. Gibran was officially endorsed by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) as the Mayor of Solo, a position once held by his father. Gibran's victory was inseparable from the support of parliamentary parties, such as PDI-P, PKB, Gerindra, Nasdem, PPP, Demokrat, Golkar, and PAN, as well as non-parliamentary parties, i.e., Gelora, Hanura, PSI, Perindo, PKPI, and PBB.

Then, it was followed by the nomination of Jokowi's son-in-law in the Medan Regional Election. The pair Bobby-Aulia was supported by a large coalition of political parties, including the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan), Gerindra Party, PAN, Golkar, NasDem, PSI, Hanura, and PPP, not to mention the non-parliamentary parties that supported Gibran in the Solo Regional Election. This significant coalition forced opposing candidates to run independently, potentially leading to a significant defeat. This was inseparable from President Jokowi's decision to bless his children and in-laws to become regional leaders.

Before the end of Jokowi's term, his youngest son, Kaesang Pangarep, was rumored to run in the Depok Regional Election. A striking move involving family members is seen to maintain Jokowi's presence in the national political scene, with the hope of still being taken into account in national politics. Moreover, Gibran and Bobby are preparing to move up the political ladder, considering Gibran is rumored to become the Governor of DKI Jakarta or Central Java and is even a vice-presidential candidate alongside Prabowo Subianto. Meanwhile, Bobby is expected to run for Governor of North Sumatra.

It is easy for a president's family member to become a regional leader because the President has all the instruments of power. Mobilizing the civil service apparatus, inheriting political networks, and financial support differentiate Jokowi's family from other candidates in political contests. In the patron-client system, Jokowi endorses his family to be part of the bureaucratic command to support and win regional elections. Moreover, the success of Gibran and Bobby is not without achievements but rather a blessing from the "Jokowi Effect."

Undeniably, the Jokowi dynasty has become a blessing for parties with minimal cadres and new parties in need of popularity among voters, especially Gen Z voters who are more selective in choosing leaders based on virality rather than leaders with a clear vision, mission, and competent capacity. Gibran's fame derived from the viral endorsement of Markobar and the widespread establishment of its branches across Indonesia, followed by Kaesang's Sang Pisang. At the same time, Bobby is known as a property entrepreneur and the son of a high-ranking official in a state-owned enterprise. While it may lead to positive developments, political dynasties hinder open democracy. Not only democracy but political parties also become dependent on Jokowi's coattails.

According to a survey by the Nagara Institute quoted from CNN Indonesia.com, 57 incumbent political dynasty candidates won in the simultaneous regional elections (Pilkada
Serentak) in 2020. Meanwhile, 72 political dynasty candidates lost. "Our other findings are that out of 129 incumbent dynasty candidates who competed, 57 were declared winners in the regional elections," said Nagara Institute researcher Mustaqim in a video conference on Monday (12/4), including Gibran and Bobby, who are core members of President Jokowi’s family. According to the observed phenomenon, the Jokowi political dynasty damaged political ethics and undermined the democracy built for more than two decades since the beginning of the reform era.

The vote count by the KPU (General Election Commission) exhibited that Gibran Rakabuming won by a large margin against Bagyo Wahyono in the Solo City Regional Election (Pilkada Kota Solo).

Gibran-Teguh pair received a total of 225,451 or 86.5 percent valid votes. Meanwhile, the Bagyo-Supardjo pair only received 35,055 or 13.5 percent valid votes (Indonesia, t.t.)

Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman participated in a debate during the Medan City Local Leader Election (doc. Facebook KPU Medan).

The official recapitulation of the vote count is as follows: Bobby-Aulia obtained 393,327 votes or 53.45 percent of valid votes. Meanwhile, the pair with number 1, Akhyar Nasution-Salman Alfarisi, only received 342,580 votes or 46.55 percent (Bobby-Aulia Raih Suara Terbanyak Di Pilkada Medan, Golput 54 Persen, 2020).

The figure demonstrates that candidates for regional leaders with ties to the President or former President were entirely patronized. In the 2020 regional elections, three candidates for regional leaders were associated with the President or former President, namely the mayoral candidate for Solo and the mayoral candidate for Medan, who are the children and son-in-law of President Joko Widodo, and the regent candidate for Pacitan, who is the nephew of former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Arianto, 2021).

Not only from the perspective of regional elections, but the Jokowi dynasty is also starting to extend its influence on the judiciary. Recently, Jokowi held the marriage of his younger sister, Ida Yati, to the Chairman of the Constitutional Court, Amran. It is known that the Constitutional Court is an institution where complaints related to laws or policies that do not conform to the principles of justice and equality of citizens are addressed. As it is widely discussed, the cancellation of the 20 percent Presidential Threshold and the discussion regarding the age of vice-presidential candidates are underway. This institution has the authority to perpetuate and annul anything that does not comply with the rules of the rulers. Therefore, a wide-open opportunity exists to perpetuate power by intervening in the Constitutional Court.

After that, Gibran Rakabuming is elected as a candidate for vice president of the Republic of Indonesia for 2024-2029. In fact, there was nothing wrong when Gibran wanted to run as a vice presidential candidate, and this cannot be said to be dynastic politics if he followed the rules under a democratic system. However, the constitution changed directly for running Gibran to follow the constellation. Many interventions are shown for those processes in constitutional court. According to Article 13 in the PKPU for Presidential and Vice-Presidential Nominations, a derivative of Law Number 7 of 2017 Article 169 letter q concerning elections, the age limit for presidential and vice-presidential candidates...
is a minimum of 40 years. Initially, the KPU stated that it would not revise this article. The Constitutional Court changed the article's contents to "Requirements to become a presidential or vice-presidential candidate are to be at least 40 years old or have/are currently holding positions elected through general elections, including regional head elections." This decision results in Gibran being able to continue to run as a vice presidential candidate because he meets the requirements, namely having served or currently serving as Mayor of Solo, even though he is only 36 years old.

Gibran's intention to run for vice president was, in fact, legitimate, and dynastic politics cannot be attributed to his actions so long as he adhered to the procedures of a democratic system. Nevertheless, it is essential to remember that in a healthy democracy, according to Eep Saefulhak Fatah, a Political Observer and Consultant, the political process is divided into three stages. The first is selection; there must be a meritocracy system in the selection process. The second is election, through voting in political party candidacy. The third is delivery. When elected, individuals must be able to create policies or take government steps aimed at the interests of everyone, not only personal or family interests.

Gibran’s become Vice-President candidate with Prabowo Subianto.

Impact of Political Dynasty

Political dynasties occurring in Indonesia are by design. This is not without reason but due to the high political costs and the opportunity to maintain power for extended periods, even for several generations. According to Lord Acton, 'power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,' which is true where the inequality of someone's right to participate in the contest becomes more minor than that of the dynasty. Political dynasties can have negative impacts if continued, including the following (Power of Political Dynasty - Bawaslu Babel, n.d.):

1. Undermining Democracy

The term democracy, according to its origin, means "rule by the people." In a democracy like Indonesia, there should be no political dynasties. Indonesia's constitution upholds every citizen's right to vote and be elected. However, if a family or a dynasty dominates political life within it, it results in leadership based on kinship rather than competence.

While meritocracy is considered highly suitable for Indonesia's political climate, where rewards are given to those who have achieved or demonstrated capabilities, it is essential to avoid the formation of political dynasties. Meritocracy is seen as the most appropriate system for building a complete democracy.

Besides, it becomes challenging to achieve the goals of democracy because of the absence of sound and clean governance. The function of power control weakens, and there is a potential for abuses of power, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

2. Opening Opportunities for Corruption

Political dynasties are often viewed negatively as politicians spend more resources, especially on urban infrastructure, health, and sanitation investments, without improving economic growth and the quality of public services. Dynasties not only create tendencies of injustice in democracy, inefficiency, and ineffectiveness in governance but also bring up potential problems of power abuse.

Lord Acton's saying, 'power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,' holds. Given their deep-rooted and widespread power, political dynasties tend to open up opportunities for corruption. Although it cannot be guaranteed that all political dynasties will create corrupt regimes, dynasties that are deeply rooted and extensive open up the possibility of uncontrolled governance.
3. Political Parties as Tools

Political dynasties often turn political parties into political machines. Political parties are used to garner as many votes as possible to support the existing dynasty. The role of political parties in creating checks and balances between the people and the ruler becomes disrupted. Therefore, the function of political parties is becoming a tool for power.

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from the above explanation:
1. Political dynasties can be accepted if the individuals involved have the necessary skills and achievements. However, it can lead to destruction if solely based on kinship without apparent capacity.
2. Political dynasties open up many negative possibilities, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism.
3. The difficulty of political cadre regeneration exists. Talented politicians from ordinary families will likely find it challenging to compete with dynasty members due to limited funding, instruments, resources, and opportunities available.
4. The Jokowi dynasty's existence in Indonesia is an essential record of how a leader can build a dynasty that spans several generations. However, numerous incidents of violence and failure occurred during the process due to insufficient abilities to balance power.

With the 2024 elections, it is hoped that political dynasties will progressively vanish. Voters are expected to be able to assess their parliamentary representatives and regional leaders with greater discernment and skepticism. In the future, political dynasties ought not to bring about catastrophe.

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Journal


Website


