

Digital Democracy Political Participation Through Technology in the Modern Era

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Abstract

As a country that upholds democracy, Indonesia uses democracy in carrying out political participation. Along with technological developments, the integration of this technology appears in the way of politics. This research aims to explore the impact of digital technology on political participation in the modern era. In its implementation, this research was carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach. Using relevant data from previous research through literature studies, this research will produce a deeper understanding of the role of technology in shaping the way people engage in politics. The results of this research found that there is a lot of potential in digital democracy technological innovation. These various potentials such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and mobile devices have the potential to increase the efficiency and quality of political participation. However, in its implementation, there are still several obstacles, such as regulations, ethics, and unequal access to technology. Through the right steps, a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic digital democracy in the digital era can be achieved.

Keywords: *Digital Democracy, Political Participation, Technology.*



A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a democratic country. Democracy is a political method, a mechanism for electing political leaders. Josep Schumpeter defined democracy as competition for the people's votes. The meaning of this essence is the meaning of "minimalism" and is called "electoral democracy" or "formal democracy" (Siahaan & Tampubolon, 2021). Therefore, every individual has the same right to enter the political realm and occupy a position in government, be it regional government, or central government, or become the number one person in a country and become the leader of a country. In the 1945 Constitution, Article 28 emphasizes that freedom of association and assembly, expressing thoughts verbally and in writing, and so on is determined by law (Aron Said & Castillo Jara, 2022).

Democracy has become one of the most fundamental concepts in social and political organizations throughout the world. Over time, democracy has undergone significant transformation, especially in the modern era which is marked by the development of information technology. The development of digital technology has influenced various aspects of our lives, including political participation. Technology has enabled the emergence of what we know as "digital democracy," where information and communications technology plays a critical role in the political

process and citizen participation (Boese et al., 2021). Digital democracy has great potential to expand people's access to political information, facilitate communication between leaders and citizens, and increase overall political participation. With the widespread adoption of social media, online platforms, and applications that support political participation, we are witnessing new developments in the way citizens interact with governments and political institutions (Ida et al., 2020).

However, while digital democracy offers great opportunities, it also presents several challenges. Questions surrounding the privacy, security, and validity of information spread across cyberspace have become a major concern. Additionally, digital democracy also creates inequalities in access to technology and skills, which can limit the participation of some groups in society. Amid these developments, it is important to understand in depth how digital technology influences people's political participation (Calzada, 2022). This is not only relevant for developed countries that have widely adopted this technology, but also for developing countries that are undergoing a similar transformation process. Empirical studies on the impact of digital technology on political participation are limited. Although there are several studies on this topic, most of them tend to be descriptive and lack a focus on an in-depth understanding of the mechanisms underlying changes in political participation in the digital era (Nawaz et al., 2021).

Digital democracy has brought about fundamental changes in the way society engages in political affairs. While conventional democracies rely on a scheduled election process, digital democracies enable daily participation through social media, online forums, and software applications. However, the true impact of these changes on the quality of political participation and democratic processes still needs to be better understood (da Silva Neto & Chiarini, 2021). Based on the brief explanation above, this research then aims to identify the factors that influence political participation through digital technology in the context of modern democracy. Thus, this research aims to provide deeper insight into how digital technology can shape political participation in this contemporary era.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Digital Democracy

One thing that needs to be understood is that as an ideology "democracy is neutral", so its existence is very dependent on the fulfillment of "standard" democratic indicators both at the policy level and implementation level, as well as at the cultural level which always requires the existence of a check and balance mechanism (mutual control and mutual balance) between the superstructure and between the superstructure and political infrastructure. As a universal teaching, democracy is demonstrated by at least five main principles. First, there are equal rights and no distinction between one person and another. These rights are regulated in a law and regulations that can be accounted for and accepted by all parties (legitimate) (Hammarfelt & Hallonsten, 2022).

Second, there is effective participation which shows that there is an equal process and opportunity for the people to express their preferences in the decisions taken. For this reason, there must be a space that allows the public to express their wishes. Third, there is enlightened understanding which shows that the people understand and understand the decisions taken by the state, including the executive. This understanding shows the effectiveness of the executive's role in socializing its decisions and providing equal opportunities for the people to criticize them. This means that the people in general can accept the government's decision as the fairest decision, in this case, the role of the legislature as a moderating representative of the people (Lepp et al., 2021).

Fourth, there is final control on the agenda by the people (final control on the agenda by the demos), which shows that the people have a special opportunity to make decisions, limit material, or expand material that will be decided and carried out through political processes, which can be acceptable and satisfying to various parties, in this case, the role of the legislature must be truly capable of playing its role. Fifth, is inclusiveness, which is a sign that shows that the sovereign is the entire people, that is, all adult members of society except mentally disturbed people (Barberá et al., 2019).

The five principles above show that democracy must be understood as a systemic process. It involves various potentials that influence each other and have balanced power. In other words, democracy requires a balance of power between state institutions and between state institutions and community institutions, so that elite domination of the people does not occur, and that various state policies can represent all the potential that exists in the people. This also shows that the corridor of democracy is equality which is reflected in attitudes and behavior that view differences as a wealth of democracy. Differences are no longer taboo, while disagreements are more considered the "flowers" of democracy toward political maturity (Otamendi-Irizar et al., 2022).

Digital democracy refers to a form of political engagement utilizing digital platforms, particularly for political involvement and garnering public backing. In this context, public engagement utilizes technological means, such as the Internet. Digital democracy ensures the freedom of expression, allowing users of the internet or information technology to articulate their viewpoints with minimal regulation. Each citizen has the ability to present or convey their thoughts, even those that may seem unconventional. Through this framework of digital democracy, information and political research can be generated without constraints, disseminated in the public domain, and freely expressed through methods like email and websites (Tseng, 2022).

The development of communication technology, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and so on, is a new tool in democracy, namely a new digital democracy (New Digital Democracy). Grossman writes about the synergy between media and democracy which is manifested in digital democracy. Implementation of Digital Democracy The Internet is generally considered an open and hyper-interactive medium platform. Although participation on the Internet is limited by factors such as

access, cost, censorship, lack of technological literacy, and technophobia (Hardison, 2022).

Digital democracy encompasses political engagement that employs digital platforms, particularly as a means of participating in politics or garnering public endorsement. In this context, public involvement is channeled through technological mediums, such as the Internet. Digital democracy ensures the protection of freedom of expression, allowing users of the internet and information technology to voice their perspectives with minimal restrictions. Every individual has the opportunity to formulate and convey their ideas, regardless of how unconventional they may be. Through the framework of digital democracy, information and political research can be generated without hindrance, disseminated publicly, and fully expressed through electronic mail and websites (Lichtenstein et al., 2021).

2. Political Participation

Political participation is an important aspect of a democratic state structure and is also a characteristic of political modernization. In countries where the modernization process is generally going well, the level of citizen participation usually increases. Political modernization can be related to aspects of politics and government. Political participation is an activity carried out by citizens to be involved in the decision-making process to influence government decision-making (Sawyer & Korotayev, 2022).

As per Budiarto's perspective, political participation is defined as the engagement of an individual or a group of individuals in actively taking part in political affairs. This involvement primarily includes processes like voting for state leaders and exerting influence on government policies, either directly or indirectly. Huntington and Nelson, on the other hand, describe political participation as the actions of citizens, acting as individuals, with the aim of influencing those in authority within the government. Participation can take various forms, such as individual or collective, organized or spontaneous, consistent or sporadic, peaceful or involving violence, lawful or unlawful, and may range from being effective to ineffective. (Djumadin, 2021).

In a democratic country, the underlying concept of political participation is that sovereignty is in the hands of the people, which is exercised through joint activities to determine the goals and future of a country and to determine the people who will assume leadership. From the definition of political participation above, it can be concluded that what is meant by political participation is the involvement of individuals or groups as citizens in the political process in the form of positive and possibly negative activities aimed at actively participating in political life to influence government policy (Floridi, 2020).

Due to the diverse conditions in society, of course, each member of society has various goals in life according to the level of their needs, and efforts to fulfill these needs are reflected in the form of activities, which of course have different needs which will produce different activities. Likewise, in political participation, of course,

the goals to be achieved are different from one citizen to another. This is a consequence of government actions in all areas of life. According to Davis, political participation aims to influence the authorities, both in the sense of strengthening them and in the sense of suppressing them so that they pay attention to or fulfill the interests of those participating (Van den Beemt et al., 2020).

This goal is very reasonable because the targets of political participation are political institutions or governments that have the authority to make political decisions. Meanwhile, for the government, political participation from citizens has the following objectives:

- a. To support government programs means that community participation is realized to support political and development programs.
- b. As an organization that voices the interests of the community for input for the government in directing and improving development (Arifin, 2021).

3. Digital Technology

With digital technology, it will make it easier for everyone to communicate and find information quickly. The role of technology is very important because technological advances will give rise to online marketing activities. Technology is a rational method that leads to the efficiency of every human activity. Digital is a complex and flexible method used to make something basic in human life. Digital is closely related to media because digital is an electronic tool that displays visual images (Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

Digital technology is a tool whose operation no longer requires human power and tends to be a system that can automatically connect to all computers. Digital technology literacy also brings various conditions regarding awareness of digital use, one of which is about social change, because digital technology can provide a virtual public, as well as fast information transmission. Almost every day, humans are always in contact with various kinds of digital technology, from the internet to smartphones. The development of digital technology makes it easy for people to get various information related to online payments (Fraga-Lamas et al., 2021).

Digital technology has many important functions and roles in people's lives. Some of these benefits include the following:

- a. Digital technology as a marketing tool

Increasingly sophisticated digital technology makes it easier for companies to market their products effectively. Digital technology will become a more attractive prospect in marketing products through various applications and marketing research that is suitable for the product to be marketed. The use of digital technology will reach all areas connected to the internet and can be useful for increasing the number of muzaki and fundraising (Jung & Shegai, 2023).

- b. To make work easier

With digital technology, it will be easy for people to carry out work wherever they are and at any time. Several uses of digital technology to make work easier.

First, sending messages (email). Second, to transfer data. Third, for browsing or searching. Fourth, to send, store, and present information (Criollo et al., 2021).

From the function and role of digital technology above, it can be concluded that digital technology has an important role in fundraising for zakat, infaq, and alms. Digital technology has become a tool to make it easier for muzaki to distribute zakat, infaq, and alms without having to come to the office in person. Digital technology is an effective tool that is used to introduce institutions to the wider community (Putra, 2021).

C. METHOD

This research will take a descriptive qualitative approach to explore a deeper understanding of the impact of digital technology on political participation in the modern era. In this research, the data used was obtained from previous research and studies that still have relevance to this research. These data will be obtained through a desk study, making it possible to utilize existing knowledge to take a deeper look at how digital technology influences interactions between citizens and government in the context of political participation. After the research data has been collected, the data will then be processed to produce findings and a deeper understanding of the impact of digital democracy on people's political participation in the modern era (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Changes in Patterns of Political Participation

Information and communication technology has fundamentally changed the way people engage in politics. The role of technology in changing patterns of political participation is very significant. Technology facilitates quick and easy access to political information, connects citizens with political leaders, and creates platforms for broader political expression. Political participation can be divided into two main types: active participation and passive participation. Active participation includes actions such as voting, participating in a campaign, or organizing a protest. On the other hand, passive participation includes activities such as consuming political news or following political developments without being actively involved. Technology has had a significant impact on both types of participation. The role of technology in changing political participation patterns can be seen in the increase in passive participation. Social media platforms and online news applications allow citizens to easily access political information and follow political developments in real time. This has changed the way people engage in political monitoring without having to engage in direct political action.

On the other hand, technology has also stimulated active participation. Political campaigns today utilize social media to gather support and organize political action. Citizens can quickly organize protests via social networks or participate in online petitions, resulting in more accessible active participation. Technology has also

accelerated political participation in elections. The electronic voting process or online monitoring of election results has made it easier to actively participate in the political election process. However, along with these positive changes, technology also presents some challenges. Too much political information available online can confuse voters and blur the lines between factual news and political opinion.

Apart from that, changes in the level of community involvement in the political process are also related to the issue of unequal access to technology. Not everyone has the same access to technology, and this can create inequalities in political participation. It is important to remember that these changes in political participation patterns are not homogeneous. Different groups of society may experience different impacts of technology in politics, depending on their level of digital literacy, access to devices, and other socio-economic factors. In this digital era, changes in political participation patterns have become a complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Through a qualitative approach, we can more deeply understand the role of technology in changing the way people engage in politics, and identify its positive and negative impacts. By better understanding changes in political participation patterns, we can design more effective policies and strategies to promote inclusive and democratic political participation in the digital era.

2. Digital Democracy and Its Influence on Political Decisions

Digital democracy has changed the dynamics of political decision-making. One of the biggest impacts is through the use of social media as a platform for sharing political information and discussing. Social media allows citizens to become more involved in various aspects of politics and can influence the decision-making process. The impact of social media on the political decision-making process is very significant. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allow political leaders and parties to directly communicate with their voters. With the rapid spread of information via social media, political issues can go viral in a matter of hours. Apart from that, social media also facilitates interaction between citizens who have different political views. This allows multiple points of view to be expressed and allows voters to hear a variety of arguments before making a political decision.

The role of digital media in influencing public opinion cannot be ignored either. Online political news and news portals have become the main sources of political information for many people. These media can have certain biases that influence the way voters understand political issues. In addition, digital media can also influence public opinion through customized algorithms. Search engines and social media platforms can display content that matches individual preferences, which can create information bubbles and reinforce existing beliefs.

The use of big data in political campaigns and elections is a significant new trend. Voter data collected from various sources is used to identify potential voters, understand voter preferences, and design more focused campaigns. Big data allows political campaigns to send more tailored messages to voters. This can increase campaign effectiveness and change how voters respond to political messages.

However, the use of big data in politics also raises privacy and ethical issues. Extensive monitoring of data and its use in politics raises questions about how personal data is used and protected. The influence of social media, digital media, and big data on political decision-making is a complex and evolving topic. Changes in technology and online behavior continue to influence the way politics is conducted. To understand the true impact of digital democracy on political decision-making, in-depth research is necessary. By understanding how these technologies influence the way people engage in politics and influence public opinion, we can design more inclusive and democratic systems in the digital age.

3. Challenges and Ethical Issues of Digital Democracy

Digital democracy brings various challenges and ethical issues that must be overcome in online political participation. One of the biggest challenges is the issue of privacy and data security related to the use of technology in politics. Privacy and data security are key issues when citizens participate in online politics. Personal information can easily be exploited, and cyberattacks can threaten the integrity of political processes. Apart from that, the spread of fake news or hoaxes is also a serious problem in digital democracy. Hoaxes can quickly spread via social media and influence public opinion and election results. The spread of fake news also threatens the integrity of political information. People often find it difficult to differentiate between legitimate news and hoaxes, which can influence the decision-making process.

Inequality of access to technology is an important issue in digital democracy. Not all citizens have equal access to the internet and digital devices, which can create inequalities in political participation. This inequality of access can affect political representation. Groups with less access to technology may not be well represented in online political processes. Apart from that, there are also ethical issues that arise in digital democracy. The use of personal data for political purposes raises questions about the fairness and ethics of the use of personal information.

To overcome the challenges and ethical issues of digital democracy, there needs to be strong regulations. Appropriate regulations can help protect data privacy, control the spread of hoaxes, and ensure more equitable access to technology. Digital education is also an important factor in overcoming these challenges. Better education about how to use technology safely and ethically can help citizens confront threats to digital democracy. Digital democracy is a revolutionary change in politics, but it also raises various challenges and ethical issues that must be overcome. With awareness and the right actions, we can develop a more inclusive and democratic political system in this digital era.

4. The Future of Digital Democracy

The future of digital democracy is filled with the potential for technological innovation that can change the way people participate in politics. Advances in technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and cloud computing will

enable new possibilities in political participation. One potential future is the use of AI in political data analysis. AI can help analyze voter behavior patterns and identify relevant key issues, thereby aiding in smarter political campaign planning.

Blockchain technology can also increase transparency in elections and voting. By using this technology, a safer and more reliable system can be created for reporting election results. Additionally, mobile devices and the Internet of Things (IoT) can change the way voters interact with political leaders. For example, voters can provide direct input on policies via mobile apps or their smart devices. Increasing transparency and accountability is one of the positive potentials for the future of digital democracy. With the right technology, people can access political information more easily and monitor government actions more closely.

However, regulatory challenges need to be overcome to achieve a successful digital democratic future. Inadequate or inappropriate regulation can harm data privacy and political security. It is important to develop appropriate regulations that protect individual rights while facilitating innovation and broader political participation. Technology's ability to collect and analyze data also raises ethical questions. How personal data is used in politics is an issue that needs serious consideration. Additionally, it is important to address inequalities in technology access. People who are less able to access technology will be left behind in political participation, which can reduce equality in digital democracy.

In the future of digital democracy, technological innovation will play a central role in shaping politics and civic participation. However, the success of digital democracy will depend on our ability to address the regulatory, ethical, and inequality challenges that arise in this process. With the right steps, we can achieve a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic political system in this digital era.

E. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the future of digital democracy offers the potential for technological innovations that change the way people participate in politics. Technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and mobile devices have the potential to improve the efficiency and quality of political participation. The use of AI can help plan smarter political campaigns, while blockchain technology can increase transparency in elections and voting. However, regulatory challenges, ethics, and unequal access to technology are obstacles that need to be overcome. Appropriate regulations are needed to protect data privacy, maintain political security, and ensure fair treatment in online political participation. Additionally, ethical issues surrounding the use of personal data in politics must be of primary concern. Inequalities in access to technology also need to be addressed so that there are no gaps in political participation. With the right steps, we can achieve a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic digital democracy in this digital era, which provides opportunities for society to be more actively involved in the political process.

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