

The Problem of E-Democracy and its Impact on Political Participation in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Technology has developed so rapidly that it has influenced various aspects of people's lives. In practice, the presence of media convergence also enters democratic life in democratic countries, including Indonesia. This study aims to examine how problems in implementing e-democracy and their impact on political participation in Indonesia. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method that focuses on extracting various data like books and journal articles related to problems in e-democracy practices and political participation in Indonesia. This research found that the use of the internet can significantly increase political participation. The fact that the implementation of e-democracy in Indonesia still raises dilemmas should also be the material of evaluation. Furthermore, the implementation of democratic freedom on the internet in Indonesia still has problems because internet freedom in Indonesia is categorized as partially free. Finally, to create a proportional e-democracy policy, the state must create an e-democracy policy embracing the principles of creating new public spaces for political interaction and deliberation, providing multi-way interactive communication channels, integrating e-democracy processes in the structure and development broader constitution, ensuring interaction between citizens and their elected representatives and government is meaningful, ensuring there is sufficient high-quality online information, involving efforts to recruit the broadest public voice into the democratic conversation, and reflecting the reality of geography and social structure in the environment on line.

Keywords: *E-democracy, Political Participation, ICT, Indonesia, Impact*

1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has developed so fast. In its journey, these developments developed technological, social and cultural processes that we now call media convergence [1]. The presence of the convergence produces facilities for the public with the presence of various options for the use of media both conventional and new media. Digital platforms are the new battleground for democracy. Shaping the flow of information on the internet is now an essential strategy of those seeking to disrupt the democratic transfer of power through elections. Incumbent political actors around the globe use both blunt and nuanced methods to deter opposition movements while preserving a veneer of popular legitimacy. Such internet freedom restrictions tend to escalate before and during crucial votes [2]. In addition, there were 175.4 million internet users in Indonesia in January 2020. The number increased by 25 million between 2019 and 2020. So, internet penetration in Indonesia stood at 64% in January 2020 [3]. The Freedom House report shows that in the Freedom of The Net 2019

report that there are three categories: free, partly free and not free. In that report, Indonesia is categorized as partly free [2]. Certainly, if there are problems in democratic freedom on the internet, it will have an impact on the emergence of problems in political participation for citizens.

In practice, the presence of media convergence also enters democratic life in democratic countries, including Indonesia. In this context, the practice of democracy which was felt directly in the real world before, now also can be done through increasingly converging media. Practices such as channeling opinions, conducting oversight to the government, until a vote in the general election can be easily mediated by the presence of media convergence. The presence of media convergence then also gave rise to new terminology in democracy, e-democracy.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

a. Democracy and The Public Sphere

Democracy in practice takes place in the public sphere. The significance of intelligence from the public sphere arises from its ability to translate between society and the state [4]. The German philosopher Jurgen Habermas defines the public sphere as a domain of our social life where such a thing as public opinion can be formed where citizens deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion to express and publicize their views. The domain of social life where things such as public opinion can be formed in which citizens deal with matters of general interest without being subject to coercion to express and publicize their views [5]. With this deliberative process, the emergence of the growth of internet interactivity and the decentralization of leadership relationships will allow for rational and informative debate [6].

Furthermore, publicizing the freedom of public opinion in the public sphere through freedom of expression can be questioned in the public sphere. Freedom in political activities is free but not private. Public opinion is created through public discussion based on such political activities has legitimate political power that can influence oriented government [7].

b. E-Democracy

Päiväranta and Øystein [8] explained that e-democracy refers to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in political debates and decision-making processes by complementing or contrasting traditional means of communications, such as face-to-face interaction or one-way mass media. Then the Council of Europe [8] explained e-democracy as support and enhancement of democracy, democratic institutions and democratic processes utilizing ICT is above all about democracy. The ultimate goal is electronic support from democracy, E-democracy is one of several strategies for supporting democracy, democratic institutions and democratic processes and spreading democratic values. It is additional, complementary, and interlinked with traditional processes of democracy. Each process has its merits: none is universally applicable.

c. Requirements for Enhancing E-Democracy

E-democracy in practice requires requirements so that the functioning of e-democracy can be optimally mediated. E-democracy, which relies on technology and various requirements that require factors that exist in the citizens themselves, certainly cannot build a good e-democracy ecosystem without supporting requirements. In building this e-democracy ecosystem, Morisset (2003) explained six requirements for building democracy in the context of implementing e-democracy [9]:

1. Access
2. Information and Education
3. Discussion
4. Deliberation
5. Choices
6. Action

d. E-Democracy Dimension

E-democracy can be understood as a concept that has three dimensions. The first dimension relates to the basic conditions for the use of ICT. This dimension in democracy refers to two main requirements for the existence and resilience of e-democracy: (1) technical infrastructure which is access to digital media; and (2) internet freedom. In the case of the second requirement, what must be created are legal provisions regarding free use of the internet or regulation of content. As important as internet freedom, what is important is free access to the internet based on technical infrastructure and the question of whether there is filtering or blocking by an independent office or regulatory body [10].

The second dimension is the e-participation. Here, three elements are identified. First, there are fundamental differences between the two dimensions in e-participation: top-down and bottom-up [10]. Second, e-voting is separated from involvement in the decision-making process, because as in the offline world - this functionally speaks of different actions [10]. And third, e-monitoring, citizens' digital media can not only obtain better knowledge about complaints or unwanted developments but also have stronger voices to express 'alarms' [10].

The third dimension is e-government. Unlike e-participation, e-government is limited to top-down mechanisms that offer online tools to citizens as government services with a focus on providing public services, efficiency and policy outcomes. In this dimension, the role of citizens tends to be understood as the role of consumers or clients. The tools of e-government aim to focus on reducing costs and efficiency in administrative transactions. At the same time, increasing transparency can lead to a reduction in corruption. Also, scientists point out the fact that transparency in policy-making procedures and increasing citizen/consumer satisfaction can increase trust in government, which also should have an impact on legitimacy [10]. Therefore, although e-government seems to be purely a matter of service or efficiency, e-government has implications to the possibility of improving the quality of democracy. It can increase the output dimension and support a positive attitude towards government, regime and democracy [10]. Furthermore, e-government can be seen as a tool to support and discuss the principles of good governance [11].

e. Political Participation

Political participation refers to voluntary activities carried out by the public masses to influence public policy, either directly or by influencing the election of people who make policies. Examples of these activities include voting in elections, helping political campaigns, donating money to a candidate or cause, contacting officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with others on various issues. Political participation figures in philosophical discussions about democracy and representative government since ancient times provide a means for citizens to communicate their views. Then political participation remains to be an strong interest in the topic. Scientists look for systematic patterns to explain why some individuals are inactive and why others choose certain activities. Patterns reflect the

political context and both reflect and influence the structure of political power [12].

3. METHODS

This research used a qualitative approach with a literature study method focusing on digging various data from various related kinds of literature problem in practice e-democracy and political participation in general and is happening in Indonesia. This research seeks to multiply various that aspect model e-democracy, campaign, and participation politic that appear generally and practiced by several countries. Then research will discuss the dilemma e-democracy and the problem of freedom democracy on the internet that happened in Indonesia. Next, the research will explore the proportional pattern of e-democracy policy. The data collection is done by collecting documentation in the form of journal articles or other sources that focus on e-democracy activities and political participation in general and already happening in Indonesia.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In course of e-democracy, the public can actively use electronic platforms to express their democratic rights. Various expressions of democracy such as expressing public opinion, conducting oversight of government policies, implementing government services, elections, and many others online can be done through this medium of e-democracy. In principle, e-democracy can encourage citizens to become more easily obtain their rights and obligations as part of democratic citizens.

4.1. *E-Democracy, Campaigns and Political Participation*

In terms of e-democracy and election campaigns, politicians around the world have used different strategies and tactics on the internet. During the campaign 2007-2008 in the United States, for example, Barack Obama set the standard with his world-famous online campaign that received everyone's attention. This campaign generates a large number of online activities and the participation of voters and candidates. The results were unprecedented, resulting in a huge surge in popularity for the candidates for President of the United States. Obama cleverly uses the Internet platform to connect with various voters across the country, especially young people, who usually have no interest in traditional politics. The Obama campaign, now considered a breakthrough campaign to bring politics to a new media platform, shows the world that the internet can play a big role in politics and if used properly [13]. As for things that could be a concern in political campaigns in the context of e-democracy as mentioned by Curran & Singh (2011) is as follows:

1. Establish a dialogue: Starting with the electorate, political campaigns can show that voters' voices can be heard and that this is not just party rhetoric or empty campaign slogans.
2. The rise of the online politician: Through this platform, other leaders can engage more with their audience. By using social networking and new media tools, candidates can have a simultaneous online presence in many places.
3. An online campaign plan: A digital strategy will never replace a party program. However, digital strategy has enormous potential when making this party program known to all voters, promoting it and getting feedback. Each party needs to decide how it will utilize social networks and who will manage the account.
4. Technology infrastructure: The latest advances in technology, especially cloud computing and the widespread use of integrated platforms for campaigns, have proven to be not only innovative but also efficient, saving costs and time. They allow campaigns to develop customized tools targeted at different categories of voters, as well as to reach out to non-voters.

Furthermore, online participation is not required as an endpoint for participation but encourages greater participation in a variety of settings. The use of the Internet is often used for greater political conversation and participation [14].

4.2. *The E-Democracy Dilemma in Indonesia*

In practice, the implementation of e-democracy in various countries still faces several obstacles. In Indonesia still presents various problem that become dilemmas. On the one hand, e-democracy can facilitate the various applications of democracy by existing electronic means. But on the other hand, in the implementation of e-democracy in Indonesia, there are still many things that become evaluations. Alwajih (2014) mentions that there are three main points of tension in principle, in the application e-democracy in Indonesia [15].

First, e-democracy only facilities or means to achieve the objectives of state administration through information and communication technology. However, e-democracy becomes an objective, until finally the purpose of running the country is often ignored. Procurement of all kinds of internet-based public services is considered more important because of the various interests in it. At the same time, the principle of e-democracy is merely facilities opposite the direction of the practice [15].

Second, the difficulty of distinguishing goals and means impacts the uncertainty of the foothold of implementation e-democracy in Indonesia. Government logic which establishes electronic democracy as an objective seems to ignore the digital culture that has not yet been established. The end of the infrastructure logic is held first, new structures are added, then local culture must

be adaptive, but it does not work as expected. Even if digital culture is established, Indonesia is still in a transition period [15].

Third, although it is still in transition, the increasing number of internet users and the emergence of various forums in cyberspace evoke optimism for electronic democracy. However, does this then make the internet a public sphere, if it is linked to the theory of free space domination? Meanwhile on the other hand, the internet is not merely a means to voice political aspirations, but various overlapping discourses within it. Therefore, the extent to which the internet is seen as a public sphere or public space has seen its limits, namely when it is a rational discussion of the public interest [15].

4.3. Digital Divide's Problem

As stated earlier that ICT has become an important dimension in e-democracy, digital infrastructure has become an important factor in sustaining e-democracy. Unfortunately in the discourse in Indonesia, the dichotomy that occurred in Java and outside Java became one of the sensitive issues that are still heard in the political and economic fields in Indonesia. National development and economic activity are more concentrated on Java. One effect of this condition is the lack of communication network infrastructure needed in Internet-based public services. There is a digital divide between Java and outside Java for web pages, incoming links and traffic. Digital disparities can be caused by several factors, including telecommunications infrastructure as noted in the results of research conducted by the Ministry of Information and Communication and the level of ICT penetration by people outside Java. Popularity as measured by inbound links and traffic shows the participation of people is visiting the website. This could be due to the low level of ICT penetration or the narrow scope of public information available on the website. This condition requires government attention to improve the function and role of e-government in Indonesia to run more smoothly [16]. In more detail, the digital divide by various provinces in Indonesia as Ariyanti's (2013) research findings are as follows [17]:

Table 1: Digital divide index in Indonesia

No	Province	Digital Divide Index	No	Province	Digital Divide Index	No	Province	Digital Divide Index
1	Papua	0.0081	12	West Nusa Tenggara	0.064	22	West Java	0.054
2	East Nusa Tenggara	0.079	13	West Kalimantan	0.064	23	South Kalimantan	0.054
3	Central Sulawesi	0.073	14	Central Kalimantan	0.064	24	East Kalimantan	0.053
4	West Sulawesi	0.073	15	Bangka Island Belitung	0.063	25	Gorontalo	0.050
5	West Papua	0.071	16	East Java	0.063	26	South Sulawesi	0.049
6	Aceh	0.070	17	Bengkulu	0.062	27	Riau Island	0.046
7	North Maluku	0.069	18	South Sumatera	0.062	28	North Sulawesi	0.046
8	Southeast Sulawesi	0.068	19	Jambi	0.060	29	Banten	0.044
9	Riau	0.066	20	West Sumatera	0.057	30	Bali	0.025
10	Lampung	0.065	21	North Sumatera	0.055	31	D.I.Yogyakarta	0.008
11	Central Java	0.064	22	Maluku	0.055	32	DKI Jakarta	0.000

Besides, the problem of information and communication technology gaps that affect the process of e-democracy in Indonesia is a gap that does not only occur in some provincial regions but is also seen from the disparity of urban and rural communities, the presence of ICTs complicates relations between villages and cities, where they access the internet in rural areas in particular, only half of digital access is ready compared to urban areas. This digital divide is not only about infrastructure and access, but also includes digital skills and literacy. While the state is the most responsible actor for guaranteeing equality of digital infrastructure, access and literacy markets and must work with the community. One of them, with intermediaries in a community, has the most potential to be understood in rural-urban relations and introduces the domestication and appropriation of ICT based on their space and context of life [18].

4.4. The Problem of Freedom Democracy in The Internet

In addition to various previous analyses, the data shows that the implementation of internet freedom in Indonesia still has many problems. A report published by Freedom House [2] launched that internet freedom in Indonesia is categorized as partly free or partially free. The Freedom House categorizes it into three categories: not free, partly free, and free. Indonesia in its report got a score of 51 points from a total score of 100 points with details of an obstacle to access 14 points out of 25 points, limits on content 19 points out of 35 points, and violation of user right by 18 out of 40 points.

Freedom House (2019) explained in their analysis that internet freedom in Indonesia was declining due to limited access to social media platforms and the use of content manipulation for political purposes around the April 2019 general election. Death of a detained journalist who worked for an online outlet, also journalists who experienced harassment and forms other harassment also contributed to the decline. Meanwhile, criticism of the government, especially journalists and members or supporters of the LBGT + community, continues to face criminal charges and harassment in retaliation for their online activities.

Freedom House (2019) continued that Indonesia has made impressive democratic achievements since the fall of the authoritarian regime in 1998, which is building significant diversity in politics and the media and undergoing many peaceful transfers of power between parties. However, Indonesia continues to struggle with challenges including systemic corruption, discrimination and violence against some minority groups, separatist tensions in the Papua region, and political use of defamation laws and defamation. In more detail, Freedom House (2019) outlines several analyses in its assessment of the three indicators used [2].

4.4.1. Obstacle to Access

Temporary the use of smartphones is widespread; connectivity is limited by geography Indonesia which consists of 17,000 islands. The authorities imposed a block on social media and communication platforms during the

coverage period, as well as connectivity restrictions. Meanwhile, the 2018 restructuring of the Indonesian Telecommunications Regulatory Body (BRTI) gave the agency greater authority.

4.4.2. *Limits on Content*

The authorities continue to block or force the removal of negative content online, violating principles such as transparency and democratic oversight. Services including TikTok, Netflix, and platforms that serve the LGBT + community can also be blocked, while Tumblr was blocked on December 2018. Content manipulation and disinformation multiply online around the April 2019 election, often spread by paid commentators known as "buzzers". Siswoko (2017) stated that efforts to combat one negative content namely the spread of fake news on the internet are not enough to block the site. The government can block thousands of sites, but in the not too distant future, new sites will emerge. The government later realized that the site-blocking step was ineffective [19]. Then, Felicia (2019) stated campaign message that was spread by political buzzers as a negative campaign [20].

4.4.3. *Violations of User Rights*

People are targeted for activities on line during the coverage period that is one digital journalist who died in custody and the other doxed. Prosecutions under the Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE) Law continued and several people were sentenced and received prison sentences for defamation. Meanwhile, the authorities set up a "war room" for monitoring real-time social media, triggering concerns about increasing surveillance of online activities.

Speaking more of the ITE Law, Nurhayati & Suryadi (2017) on their research stated that the presence of the ITE Law has not been able to make democracy more polite and cool. However, it makes democracy challenging in front of the voices of potential critical citizens through social media that can be prosecuted by the ITE Law. Under the pretext of defaming the good name of the government through false news, provoking by speaking of hatred, even accused of carrying out subversive acts against the state. Supposedly, regulations through the ITE Law increasingly require the process of democratization in Indonesia today.

Various obstacles in the freedom of the internet show that the e-democracy ecosystem in Indonesia is still quite problematic by showing a partially free category. Various problems such as barriers to access, content restrictions, and violence in user rights along with the accompanying cases, are problems in the implementation of e-democracy in Indonesia [21].

5. CONCLUSION

With the increasing level of internet penetration and the growth of new media, e-democracy has truly become an attractive general political currency. The success of Obama's online campaign is increasing a large number of online activities and voter participation [13] shows that Indonesia also has a great potential to increase public political participation if it can make the most of e-

4.4.4. *Towards Proportional E-Democracy Policy*

In today's era, the politicians are starting to realize that directly dealing with the citizens they represent can result in better policymaking and legislation, based on public experience and expertise that is a new type of relationship between government and governed, based on listening, learning and sharing the ideas of politicians and directing and aggregating and appreciation for increased public trust in democratic institutions and renewed government legitimacy [22].

As for to create a proportional e-democracy policy, need e-democracy policy that embrace the following principles [22]:

1. Creating new public spaces for political interaction and deliberation. There is a lack of such space in the offline environment; online offers a significant advantage to foster public discussion and effective discussion areas.
2. Provides multi-directional interactive communication channels, designed to connect citizens, representatives and executives. It is important to distinguish between layers *Citizen to Representative* (C2R) (parliament, delegated assembly, regional or local assembly, community, Europe); various aspects, not always connected from *Citizen to Government*(C2G); and democratic needs to make it possible *Citizen to Citizen* (C2C).
3. Integrate the process of e-democracy into the structure and development of a wider constitution.
4. Ensure that interaction between citizens, their elected representatives and government is meaningful. If public input is invited into the policy or legislative process, ensure that it is effectively facilitated and summarized and that a response mechanism exists so that representatives and the government can listen and learn.
5. Ensure that there is sufficient high-quality online information so that citizens can consider policy options based on trusted knowledge, as well as their own subjective experiences. The information must be accessible, understandable and not excessive.
6. If public voices are heard more clearly and more frequently, this must involve efforts to recruit the broadest range of public voices into democratic conversations, including those who have traditionally been marginalized, disadvantaged or not heard.
7. Reflecting the reality of geography and social structure in the environment online, to provide equal access to the democratic process for all fields and all communities.

democracy. Then the practice of e-democracy in Indonesia which still raises various dilemmas must be resolved immediately. Problems that arise such as e-democracy are still limited to being a facility or means to achieve the objectives of state administration through information and communication technology, the difficulty of distinguishing goals and facilities, the internet ecosystem that cannot yet become a public sphere [15], and digital divide must be resolved immediately so that e-democracy returns to its benefits that is, facilitating various applications of democracy by existing electronic means. So as with the

problem of freedom of democracy on the internet must be resolved immediately by fixing the problem as an obstacle to access, limits on content, and violations of user right [2].

Finally, Indonesia must make it e-democracy policies that embrace the principles of: creating new public spaces for political interaction and deliberation, providing multi-way interactive communication channels, integrating e-democracy processes in the structure and development of a broader constitution, ensuring interaction between citizens, representatives they choose and the government is meaningful, ensuring there is sufficient high-quality online information, involving efforts to recruit the broadest public voice into the democratic conversation, and reflecting the reality of geography and social structure in the online environment so that Indonesia can create a proportional e-democracy policy [22].

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