The Roles of Digital Democracy on Political Education for Young Generation

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to determine the roles of technology through digital democracy in younger generation's political education.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Research data were obtained through observation, interviews on students in Universitas Malikussaleh, and also retrieved from some literature studies that are relevant to the above research problems. Data are then analyzed by using qualitative descriptive analysis technique.

Findings – The research results show that the role of political activity using digital channels as a form of political participation gives positive impacts to the political participation of young generation.

Research Limitations/Implications – This research limits the scope of attention only on young generation's participation in political activities.

Practical Implications – The necessity of the younger generation is to be given wider opportunities and responsibilities in the public sphere as well as involving as a member of a political party, or other social and political organization.

Originality/Value – Therefore, in order to push towards political democratization, political education agents must be able to utilize social networking media on the internet to convey ideas, actions, and other political activities for the development of political education.

Keywords Digital democracy, political education, younger generation

1. Introduction

Digital democracy is simply a political activity that uses digital channels, especially web 2.0, as a form of political participation or public support (Wilhem, 2003). According to John Rawls (1971), the importance of information to democracy is called information-based justice. In this digital era, the embodiment of information-based justice gets opportunities and challenges as the development of communication and information technology. Therefore, democracy requires fair information for citizens because through information people have access to knowledge so as to determine the best option for themselves in all areas of social, economic, legal, cultural, and political matters. The presence of information

technology would have an impact on the form of information distribution among the community.

One of the political activities that can be done through the media of digital information is political education. It cannot be denied that the popularity of social networking in the current era of globalization has become an outstanding phenomenon, especially among young generations. The Internet has become a new medium for the young generation in obtaining information and even in participating some political activities through the polls offered by several political events that occurred in Indonesia. For example, the controversy of fuel price increase, the arrest of KPK members, election of DKI governor, etc. Public voices on these political issues have even become embedded with online petitions. Online petition is a new format in Indonesia that has public space for people to express their opinions (Hartanto, 2016).

In the view of experts who are concerned about relations between new media and democracy, the internet or digital media has the potential to improve public communication and enrich democracy (Coleman and Blumler, 2009). The potential of the internet to reshape democracy is strongly influenced by the normative values presented in the direct work of defenders of democracy and public spaces such as Habermas, Bohman, Dryzek, Putnam (Davis, 2010). They argue that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) offers tools for applying theories of democracy and public sphere, especially regarding more inclusive society participation and deliberative exchange between ordinary citizens and political elites. Thus, theoretically, the internet has the potential for the renewal and development of democracy.

Democracy theorists believe that democracy can be preserved because of active action of citizens' political participation and care for civic affairs. In addition, in the view of Towner (2013), the use of mass media is a positive predictor of political participation, and as the media landscape has changed, the Internet has played an increasingly important role in politics. Some observers are raising the role of the internet as a tool that can help the democratic process by giving citizens exposure to political information. Some other experts also state that internet use has a positive influence on political participation, and knowledge and civic engagement through social capital.

This paper critically seeks to look at the role of technology using the internet for political education of young generations in improving the quality of democracy. How does the internet play a role for the younger generation as one of the political education agents. The field research was done on some students and politicians through observation and interviews.

2. Theoretical study
This part deals with some theoretical study on some theories and previous related researches concerning digital democracy, political education, and political participation. This paper limits the discussions on young generation's political activities.

2.1 Digital democracy
Digital democracy is simply a political activity that uses digital channels, especially Web 2.0, as a form of political participation or public support. Understanding Web 2.0 or definition Web 2.0 (Wikipedia, 2017) is a business revolution in the computer industry that occurs as a result of the movement to the internet as an attempt to understand the rules for success on the platform. Web 2.0 refers to a perceived generation as a second generation of web-based services, such as social networking sites, wikipedia, communication tools, and folksonomies that emphasize online collaboration and sharing between users. According to James Slevin (2000), the *World Wide Web* (www) is a multifunctional application that

enhances online interactivity as it enables users to send emails, chat, send files, and automatically load helper applications when needed.

The latest research (Gilardi, 2016) on digital democracy, explains clearly how this digital technology also influences the democratic process itself. Political mobilization, campaign strategy, polarization of public opinion, and governance tools and channels began to change. Not only in the West, but also in Indonesia at the time digital technology began to dominate. Not only in political practice in contemporary democracy, digital technological revolution has also directly affected how the social sciences are reproduced and disseminated.

2.2 Political education

Political education is the process of influencing individuals to gain more information, insight and political skills. Thus political education encourages people to see themselves and their environment in other ways, to do other things, to do self-escalation and to improve their standard of living (Kartono, 2009). So it is not expected that political education is identical with "political propaganda" or popular term "indoctrination." Indoctrination will only show a narrow and fanatical view, so its behavior is often contrary to the actual reality encountered, even against its own conscience.

The main foundation used in implementing political education in Indonesia is Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution, GBHN and Youth Pledge 1928. Furthermore, for the purpose of political education for the younger generation there are government guidelines set forth in Presidential Instruction No. 12 of 1982 on Political Education for Young Generation which states that the purpose of political education is to provide guidance to the young generation of Indonesia in order to raise awareness of the life of nation and state. While the other political education goal is to create a young generation of Indonesia who is aware of the life of the nation and state based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution as one effort to build a complete Indonesian man.

3. Methodology

This research applied qualitative approach using interviews and observations. The research was done in Universitas Malikussaleh involving eight resources, two students of politics departments, two students of communication departments, two students as leaders of students' organization, and two lecturers, and two members of local parties. The data were collected through natural interviews and observations, therefore, the interviewees did not realized that their opinions were recorded.

4. Discussion

Social media brings political actors to communicate, in the sense of dialogue or monologue, with social media users. The advantage gained, of course there is no special time provided. Traditional campaign patterns are increasingly being abandoned, providing day, time, place, with all its trinkets, including *nasi bungkus* and entertainment. More campaign material is delivered, rather than simply shaking or shouting numbers or party symbols. With methods like this, campaign materials are easier and more delivered than traditional ways of consuming energy and cost.

Younger generation in this reseach was represented by students of Universitas Malikussaleh, from Politics and Communication Departments who are active in social media. Below are the results of the deep interview to seven students concerning the existance of digital democracy using technology of smartphones with the applications twitter, facebook, Whatsapp, and BBM in participating some political activities. The result can be seen in Table 1.

Activity	Online	Offline
Getting information about political leaders in Aceh	Mostly got from postings in facebook Online newspaper Twitter BBM LINE Instagram	Open campaign Newspaper Friends
Getting information about viral political issues	Prefer online to offline: Got faster information Got many sources about the event, so can get relatively comprhensive information Can react to the matter directly and Can discuss interactively with other *netizen*	From friends newspaper
Joining polls or petition to certain viral political event	Prefer online to Offline: Can express freely in determining the decision Can be done anywhere and anytime Can use "alias" no need to expose personal information	–
Following Quick Count	Twitter Online TV	TV
Attending/following political leaders debate	Online TV	TV (delay)
Getting political lessons	Facebook Twitter WA	Lecturing
Knowing latest public policy, qanun or perda	Facebook Twitter WA	–
Favourite political Issues Types	Breaking News in Twitter, LINE, Facebook Meme in all online media Debate of candidates	Carricature in newspaper or magazine

Table 1.
Media Used in
Polictical Activities

Table 1 shows that online media are used more commonly amomg young generation in campus. All the interviewees stated that they tend to do the activities mentioned using online media. For the interviewee getting information about the political leaders, in the interview, they confessed that they mostly got it from postings on facebook. It seems that the politicians are quite aware in using social media to promote or publish their personal information or political activity using the online media . The next choice are from the online newspaper, twitter, WA, LINE, BBM, and Instagram.

The viral political issues gain attention faster using the online media because they get the information in seconds after the information posted in the media. The netizen feel that they are *well informed* and confident when they meet their friends and discuss the viral matters.

When following the quick count, they will mostly choose the online media due to the speed and accuracy of information.

Interviewees also admit that they often join online polls to express their choice or decision on certain matters in the polls. They also joined some online petitions like "save Buniyani", "Save KPK", or facebookers support against Prita Mulyasari related problems with Omni Tengerang Hospital and Movement of 1,000,000 facebookers who support Bibit-Chandra which reaches more than 1 million supporters.

The interviewees also feel more comfortable and easier in understanding political lessons through online media compared to the lecturing they got in class. They get more perspective information and views to open their understanding and knowledge to the real and practical implementation of political theories. Therefore, most of them said that they mostly introduce some public policy such as qanun, or perda through online medias rather than formal socialization from the government.

For the Favourite political issues they put the first rank on the breaking news, then meme, and debate of the candidates. And as for the meme, the respondents said it was their favourite type of postings. They feel they can understand the matters through a relaxed and funny way. The term meme was first introduced by Richard Dawkins (1976, pp 189) which refers to a mutation of a gene in replicating and multiplying. According to him, meme is a form of cultural transmission through the replication of ideas, ideas, that penetrate into human cognition. This concept is applied in the context of social phenomena, especially those that occur on the internet. the meme phenomenon becomes a new style of digital democracy that also shows the genre of communication style in the new media era as a form of participatory digital culture (Wiggins and Bowers, 2014). Many researchers write and discuss meme as one of effective media in digital democracy.

5. Conclusion

The existence of technology has accelerated democracy to be closer, tangible, and contribute to critical demos. The netizen are featured as demos in the present situation through click, post, and sharing activity on their respective social media accounts. It is what creates the "second value" of digital democracy, that is, a connective democracy, a networked democracy is more collective and more organic rather than a previous democratic value.

Today's society views in politics tends to be informal, communal, multilateral, and populist. Due to the variety of information, people are now able to act as interest groups or pressure groups directly or indirectly. The main of digital democracy is the seductive and connective democracy that is now being and will continue to grow in the politics of Indonesia in the future.

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