

# Control the State in the Era of Digital Democracy

## *The Case Study of East Java Elections in 2018*

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Abstract: The rapid development of information technology means political participation in the digital world is increasing. Political participation in the large digital world has made it necessary for the state to exist to control democracy in the digital age. This study aims to describe and analyse the control of the country in the era of digital democracy using the theory of digital democracy by Anthony G. Wilhem. Methods in this study are qualitative and descriptive and include data collection techniques using interviews. The results of this study indicate that state control limits political participation in the era of digital democracy. Some actors in digital democracy are severely disadvantaged by the control of the state. The purpose of the state itself is not to limit freedom in democracy but through freedom in democracy not to harm the rights of others.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology is increasingly sophisticated and many people who use the internet contribute to digital democracy. Digital democracy is a new form of democracy as a result of technological development where, in digital democracy, there is no space, time, and other physical conditions but it is not a substitute for traditional analogue political practices (Kenneth & Dijk, 2000). Digital democracy in practice uses digital media to communicate online.

The development of increasingly sophisticated information technology is very helpful for community activities even in the affairs of political participation. Many people use digital media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Online Media to participate in politics through things such as mutual discussions, deliberations, giving opinions and criticism as a form of surveillance by citizens. Currently many citizens who use the internet to search for any information so many who do political campaigns through social media. The influence of social media in the election is very high. One of them is Jokowi and Ahok's victory in the Jakarta election in 2012 where social media became an effective tool for organising citizens and voters (Utomo. Wisnu Prasetya, 2013). Dissemination of information through social media is cheaper and more efficient because many people today are using

social media especially among young people. Indonesia itself gets a demographic bonus because, in the election, the number of productive age is very much and they are actively using internet and social media.

Today many young people are using the internet for political literacy. Social media provides rapid accessibility and dissemination of information so that it will facilitate the delivery of opinions and ideas to influence government policy (Ruby, Cristina, 2014). Millennials today prefer to engage in politics through digital media (Nelson, Lewis & Lei, 2017). This study shows that young people are more involved online than offline in discussing political issues. They do not want to interfere directly in politics but they use their own way to participate in politics. They use the internet a lot to influence the policies of the authorities. So now social media has a very strong influence in the process of democracy.

The more people who use the internet to channel their opinions and ideas, the greater the digital democracy within a country. In this case, the state must be present to control the digital democracy to run properly and fairly. Political campaigns through social media should not be offensive to a person, religion, tribe, race, class in a way that can harm others. This arrangement refers to the 2008 ITE Law where the ITE Law was created to protect internet activity and increasingly sophisticated cybercrime.

## 2 THEORITICAL REVIEW

Computers and the internet that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, posed problems in the political field and future policy-making processes. Wilhelm (2000) describes the attempt to change which emerges from the increasingly sophisticated advances in technology for digital democracy. There are four characteristics of cyberspace that exist in digital democracy. Firstly, the essential resource is the basic ability to write, speak and speak well. The basic fundamentals of the community include the interaction through which people have the opportunity to express their choices through sophisticated telecommunication equipment. Thirdly, freedom, allows people to propose their ideas and opinions for giving the power of law. With free democracy, the documented debates in politics need to provide reasons to support their argument. Fourthly, the design, which includes information networks, including networks that are interactive, should be quiet, safe, and uncensored, with sufficient capacity preserved for non-commercial purposes.

## 3 METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method and focuses on state control in digital democracy. The technique for collecting data was interview so that researchers could explore information on how the state controls digital democracy. Information digging is also supported by data collection from documentation studies by conducting tracking and identification.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Political Campaigns in Digital Democracy

With the increasing number of internet users, political campaigns are often conducted using social media and online media. In Indonesia itself, in a study conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite, the research results showed that internet users in Indonesia are very fond of using social media to interact. Approximately 130 million Indonesians are active on various social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. As many as 54% of internet users are on the island of Java. So, the

basis of digital democracy in Indonesia is on the island of Java and became the national election benchmark.

The east java elections in 2018 were a bit unique because the fight to win in the election was not focused on the candidate for governor but on the vice governor. The East Java community is familiar with the name of Gus Ipul and Khofifah who is a candidate for governor but the people of East Java were not familiar with the name of Emil Dardak and Puti Guntur, the vice governor candidates. The two vice governor candidates were new figures in East Java, so they needed to be introduced to the people of East Java. In introducing the two vice governor candidates in the eastern Java elections in 2018, many people used social media and online media. Campaigns using social media and online media are cheaper and today's society prefers to search for information using the internet.

One of the practices of digital democracy is how social media influence the policies of the authorities. The spread of bad photos led to a lot of negative news about Azwar Anas which caused him to drop out of the nomination for deputy governor of East Java. This shows that the influence of social media in digital democracy is very high. According to Anthony G. Wilhelm (2000) the involvement and freedom of the people to use and access the internet allows the public to be able to channel their opinions and ideas to put pressure on or control the authorities so as to be able to give control to a government. After Azwar Anas resigned from the group of vice governor candidates, the position of deputy governor candidate was taken by Puti Guntur Seokarno. To introduce Puti Guntur to the people of East Java, many people used the internet media. So, in a short time, the people of East Java were able to know something about the figure of this Guntur Puti. The basic resources possessed by society are a political function to recognise the figure of a future leader. This was seen when nominating Puti Guntur as a substitute for Azwar Anas as a candidate for Vice Governor of the community immediately find the year who Puti Guntur is.

### 4.2 State Control in Digital Democracy

The greater the influence of digital democracy, the more the state must be present in controlling the digital democracy. Indonesia is a country that implements direct election then the state control must exist to maintain political stability. In direct elections, the competition between candidates for elections in the election is enormous because they

have to convince the people that they are eligible to be elected so that direct election is very draining on resources owned by the party and the leader candidate. They are mobilising all the resources they have to win in direct elections. One of the biggest expenditures in direct elections is to conduct political campaigns. To conduct a campaign, political parties or prospective leaders spend substantial funds. One way to reduce the cost of such a large campaign, is to use social media and online media to conduct campaigns. In addition, online media and social media are quite cheap, and many people access them to search for and share information. Indonesian people also use the internet to open social media. So, with the number of campaigns conducted on social media or online media then the state must be present to control the phenomenon for democracy to run well.

The state regulates the use of social media as a campaign tool through Law no. 8 of 2015 on the Election of Governor and Vice Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent and Mayor and Deputy Mayor, under Election Law. The state organises campaigns on social media so that campaigns do not insult a person, religion, tribe, race class, or incite, insult, slander, or pit groups, individuals, community groups and so forth against each other. Forms of state control are also contained in the KPU regulation no. 7 of 2015 on electoral campaigns together with articles 41,46,47 and 48 which state that campaigns for candidate pairs can be done using social media. Paired candidates can create social media accounts for purposes during the campaign period but the social media accounts must be registered to the election organiser of the local KPUD. The social media accounts must be registered the day before the campaign period. This is done so it is easy to carry out surveillance considering it is now easy to create a fake account that is used to spread hoax news. The existence of an official account registered at the Election Commission will minimise the spread of hoax news in the community.

In addition to these two regulations, there is also Bawaslu Regulation no. 8 of 2016 on amendments to the regulation of the election supervisory body number 10 of 2015 on the supervision of regional head elections campaigns. The regulation was made to oversee the campaign during the election. Here Bawaslu is specifically working with the police to crack down on a black campaign. Bawaslu will examine whether the black campaign includes administrative or criminal offenses. If it proves that it is an administrative violation then it is still under

the authority of Bawaslu but if it is deemed a criminal case it will be the responsibility of the police. Bawaslu will examine the black campaign case for three days but if that is not enough then there will be an additional two days to study it. In the east Java election, Bawaslu never sanctioned one of the candidate pairs for proven to violate the rules. The candidate pair was proven to put up a campaign ad on one of the online media sites before the campaign was open. Bawaslu sent warning letters to the team of the candidate pairs and also to the online media company.

With various forms of regulation made by the state to control digital democracy, there are severely disadvantaged parties. Internet users in Indonesia are very much making online media companies benefit because they can provide information very quickly to the readers. Successful teams of election participants often use this to advertise in online media companies because online media readers are numerous. This was proven by the east Java elections in 2008 and 2013; one of the largest online media company's servers in East Java experienced overload because a lot of people accessed the news about the election. In addition, the reason the team successfully put an ad campaign on online media is that it is relatively cheap and can be read by many groups.

According to the online media company itself, the moment of the regional head election is something that is in waiting because online media companies get an abundant advantage of advertising campaigns of candidate pairs. But because there are so many rules issued by the state to control digital democracy, the online media companies call the 2018 east java elections with the term "not rain". This is because, in every election, the company makes a lot of profit from advertising but, in this election, the online media company only got a little profit. The country's control in the East Java election of 2018 was, indeed, somewhat increased from the previous year because the development of information technology has been very fast and the state must be present to control digital democracy which is becoming a bigger phenomenon by the day.

State control in this increasing digital democracy cannot be separated from the experience in the Jakarta elections in 2017. In the 2017 Jakarta general election, the movement of social media was massive, causing movements that could trigger conflict (Ikramina, Tia Zatu, 2017). The campaign in the election of DKI Jakarta used social media to conduct a negative black campaign so as to cause enormous protests to reject one candidate pair because it is not

a belief and considered insulting one of the groups. The wave of protests caused by the influence of social media could trigger a very dangerous conflict. Learning from the experience of the Jakarta elections, the state must control digital democracy more strongly in order not to cause movement that could trigger conflict in society.

The state makes all the rules so that the public space remains conducive to the realisation of a secure and comfortable digital democracy. In reference to the theory of digital democracy, Anthony Wilhelm states that there are four conditions to ensure ideal cyberspace to maintain a conducive climate for digital democracy.

The first is that the former resource is the community's ability to use various technologies to obtain information. The increasingly sophisticated technological developments make the community grow dynamically; it is no longer static. This is because the public can very easily get information from the internet that requires people to adapt to follow the times. The adaptability of the community to use information technology will greatly influence the development of digital democracy as it relates to what they access. The ability of the community to understand content on social media or online media can be measured from their educational status. The higher a person's education the more proficient the ability to be able to know whether the information is correct and which information is a hoax. But if people have low education then they will find it very difficult to distinguish which information is correct and which is hoax. They will be easily pre-populated about hoax news spread across the media and they also share the hoax, so that the preceding resources must be fulfilled to realize a conducive digital democracy. The second condition is engagement. If the first condition is fulfilled then the community needs to be involved in the exchange of information online. Involvement here refers to freedom to access and exchange information in the digital world. Currently people prefer to exchange information through the digital realm than conventionally because it is considered more quick and efficient. Community involvement in political participation in digital democracy is necessary so that people can control the policies made by the government. If society does not want to engage in political participation in digital democracy then the deviation of a government is bound to happen. So, the involvement of people for digital democracy to run well is very important.

The third condition is freedom. Actually, the freedom of Indonesian society has been regulated in

the law. Freedom referred to here is the freedom to debate, discuss and put forward ideas or ideas to the public. So, with this freedom, people can exchange information in the public sphere. Communities can pass the activity for the sifting of opinion, conduct discussion and debate by face to face or through cyberspace. But the current problems that occur in many countries and not just in Indonesia occur because the freedom to spread information and debate in the virtual world can trigger conflict in the community. Incorrect dissemination of information such as hate speech, slander and hoax can trigger conflict in the community. So, the fourth requirement relates to design. Involvement and freedom so as not to trigger conflict in the community needs to be regulated by the government. The government needs to take a preventive step so that the debate and exchange of information in the digital world does not trigger conflict in the community. It has been seen by Wilhelm that engagement and freedom will trigger a commotion in society because democracy itself is essentially a managed conflict. So, the government needs to ensure it designs good regulations in order to keep digital democracy running well.

In the East Java elections, the practice of digital democracy can be said to be safe because it does not cause conflict in the community. All political parties and prospective leaders follow all forms of control set by the state. They, in conducting political campaigns through social media, also register all their social media accounts to the KPUD. So, when the country wants to know all the activities of the campaign through social media can be controlled properly. The KPUD also socialises the official accounts of potential leaders. This is done so that people do not easily believe in hoax information spread through social media. If there is a social media that spreads bad news outside the official account registered with the KPUD East Java, it can be ascertained that the information is a hoax. But in the East Java election there are also violations so the state must take action. One of the successful teams of prospective couples pairs advertisements in online media without first reporting to the KPUD East Java. Therefore, the KPUD gives a reprimand to the team of the candidate's success. But overall digital democracy in the East java elections run quite safely and fairly.

## 5 CONCLUSION

State control in digital democracy aims to make the democratic process work well. The state gives freedom and involvement to the community using various social media or online media to participate in the East Java elections. Digital democracy in the East Java election process runs quite safely because it does not cause conflict in society. All elements in the election process follow all forms of control established by the state so that the election process can run safely. The country was able to run all the controls in the practice of East java elections in 2018. Although the state control is detrimental to online media companies, it must be done to maintain the quality of democracy in order for it to run well.

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