



Critical Review of Millennial Generation Involvement in Government: Opportunities and Challenges in Building Democracy in Indonesia

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Keywords

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Abstract

The millennial generation or the young generation plays a crucial role in building democracy in Indonesia because they have great potential to influence social and political changes in the future. According to a survey conducted by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), only 14.6% of young people are interested in the Legislative branch, and only 14.1% of young people aspire to run for regional leadership positions. Some issues faced by the young generation in government include a lack of interest in politics, limited access to political education, and the dominance of political elites in decision-making. As of now, a survey conducted by the Democracy Association has recorded the election of 20 young regional leaders and 17 young deputy regional leaders who are under 34 years old. This means that 13.7% of millennials are in positions of power, presenting both challenges and opportunities for Indonesian democracy. The research methodology employed in this article is a qualitative descriptive approach using literature study techniques, wherein the author collects relevant articles related to the research topic. This study will discuss the opportunities for the young generation to play a role in government and the challenges they face in their involvement, as they are seen as the nation's future successors capable of contributing to the development of the democratic Republic of Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

The millennial generation has a large population in Indonesia, making them a significant force in influencing the democratic process. The large number of millennials, their use of technology, and their life principles all contribute to the success of supporting democracy. As the size and influence of the millennial generation continue to grow, it is likely to play an even larger role in shaping Indonesia's democracy in the years to come. The millennial generation is the largest group within the population of Indonesia. The results of the Population Census in 2020 indicated that there were 69.38 million or 25.87% millennials in Indonesia (Jayani 2021). With their large numbers, the millennial generation has significant potential to influence the political dynamics and social changes in Indonesia. Their active participation in the process of democratization can have a significant impact on determining the direction of political change in the country. The involvement of young people is seen as one of the efforts to achieve a healthy democracy (Pradanna et al. 2023).

The millennial generation has broader access to information and technology, and in democracy, culture, and freedom of expression are important factors. Millennials can uncover new trends, for example, through social media, which has become a medium for expressing aspirations and public voices today (Rosadi, Darmawan, and Anggraeni 2020). Millennial generation also plays various roles, such as involvement in the preservation of local culture (Pradanna, Adha, and Siswanto 2021)(Pradanna et al. 2021), Millennial generation actively engages in programs and humanitarian activities (Amaliah, Sariyatin, and Musaddad 2018). Furthermore, the millennial generation plays a role as an agent of change and determines Indonesia's success amidst competition among nations in various aspects of life. Millennials are capable of supporting the growth of positive character traits and eliminating the development of negative values, while also supporting Indonesia's sustainable development strategically (Wahyuningtyas 2020). The millennial generation is characterized by their boldness in voicing their opinions and advocating for social and political change. They are not afraid to take risks and are willing to openly discuss taboo or sensitive issues. This is balanced by the fact that millennials tend to be more innovative and creative in problem-solving. Alongside these characteristics, millennials are accustomed to fast-paced technology and information, enabling them to develop new solutions to complex social and po-

litical problems (Irawan 2023; Wahyuningtyas 2020).

The survey conducted by the Research and Analytics team of Kompas Gramedia Media and Kompas Research and Development indicates a high enthusiasm among millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) to participate in the 2024 elections in Indonesia. The survey revealed that 86.7 percent of respondents expressed their willingness to participate in the elections, while 10.7 percent were still considering it, and 2.6 percent declined to participate. The telephone survey was conducted on 3,224 respondents aged 17-40 years in 80 electoral districts (dapil) from January 5 to February 9, 2022. The sample was taken using random sampling method, resulting in a confidence level of 95 percent and a margin of error of approximately 1.79 percent. The high enthusiasm of the millennial generation towards the elections has significant implications for the success of democracy in Indonesia. Millennials are expected to become pillars of the nation, leading the country towards further progress and competitiveness on a global stage. Indeed, the role of the millennial generation poses both challenges and opportunities for democratic Indonesia, as their contribution is crucial to the advancement of a nation's civilization. In Indonesia, nearly all cycles of social and political revolution have been driven and involved the younger generation. It started with the Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) in 1928, which marked the beginning of national unity in Indonesia. This was followed by the independence revolution in 1945, where the young generation played a significant role, particularly in the physical revolution.

The Indonesian youth once again demonstrated their role during the revolution that toppled the Old Order and the rise of the New Order in 1966. The Tritura movement, symbolizing the three demands of the people, became the social movement of the young generation in 1966, ultimately overthrowing the Old Order. During the reform period in 1998, the Indonesian youth played a central role in overthrowing the New Order, which had been in power for 32 years. The massive student demonstrations in May 1998 eventually led to the downfall of Soeharto's political leadership in Indonesia. Therefore, the millennial generation's involvement in shaping the political landscape of Indonesia has been significant throughout history. Their active participation in social and political movements has proven instrumental in driving change and advancing democracy in the country. It is important

to recognize and harness their potential as both a challenge and an opportunity for the continued progress and development of democratic Indonesia.

In the context of national politics, the presence of the millennial generation has become increasingly strategic, especially in electoral practices or general elections. With their large population, millennials constitute a significant voting bloc, making their voices highly sought after by political parties and candidates participating in elections. Political parties and candidates in electoral politics cannot simply overlook the millennial generation, considering their significant role in terms of numbers as potential voters. Indeed, various facts indicate that the millennial generation is not particularly interested in political issues and problems (Juditha and Darmawan 2018). This condition suggests that political education for the younger generation has not received much attention. It is not uncommon for the perception to arise among young people that politics is not their domain. This fact is supported by the survey conducted by the political analysis institution Survey Alvara in 2018, which stated that only 22% of millennials were interested in political information, indicating a concerning level of apathy towards political life and practices among the millennial generation (Fauzi 2018). The Indikator Politik survey also showed a similar phenomenon, where political parties were considered the least trusted institution among young people. Political parties ranked at the bottom of the 9 institutions evaluated. With the involvement of the younger generation, this can indeed be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity in building a democratic Indonesia.

It is crucial to address the apathy and lack of interest in political matters among millennials. Efforts should be made to enhance political education and engage young people in the political process. By providing accessible and relevant political education, fostering civic engagement, and creating platforms for meaningful participation, the millennial generation can be motivated to actively participate in political affairs and contribute to the development of a vibrant and democratic society

METHODS

The research methodology used in this study is a qualitative approach with a literature review method. Qualitative research aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena experienced by the research subjects, such as their behavior, perceptions, motivations, actions, and

more. It seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by examining existing literature, theories, and concepts related to the subject matter. The qualitative approach allows for a deeper exploration and analysis of the complexities and nuances of the research area, providing valuable insights and interpretations (Hidayatullah et al. 2018). This approach is conducted by utilizing descriptions in the form of words and language, taking into account specific natural contexts, and employing various naturalistic methods (Moleong 2018). The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for a profound understanding of complex and diverse phenomena. A literature review is a research method that involves collecting, selecting, and analyzing literature or relevant sources of information related to the research topic being conducted (Neuman 2013). The literature review method is used to gather data through the analysis of relevant literature related to the research topic. The research process involves identifying the research objectives, collecting reading materials, selecting sources, analyzing and synthesizing the data, and writing a critical review. In this study, the data will be categorized based on emerging themes, such as the challenges of millennial engagement in governance, existing opportunities, and their contributions to democratic development in Indonesia.



Figure 1. The Flow of Literature Review
Source: Compiled by the researcher (2023)

Identifying the Research Objectives: The objective of this research is to conduct a critical review of millennial engagement in governance, with a focus on the opportunities and challenges in building democracy in Indonesia.

Collecting Reading Materials: The researcher will gather articles, books, journals, research reports, and other relevant sources of information related to the research topic. These sources will serve as the basis for analysis and synthesis in the research.

Selecting Sources of Reading Materials: The researcher will conduct a selection process of reading materials that align with the research objectives and predetermined inclusion criteria. The chosen sources should demonstrate relevance, authority, and sufficient quality to be utilized in the research.

Analysis and Synthesis of Data: The rese-

archer will analyze and synthesize the information found in the selected reading materials. The data will be organized and categorized based on emerging themes, such as the challenges of millennial engagement in governance, existing opportunities, the contributions of millennials, and their potential to influence social and political changes.

Writing a Critical Review: The researcher will write a critical review based on the analysis and synthesis of the data conducted. The critical review will encompass discussions on the challenges of millennial engagement in governance, existing opportunities, and their contributions to democratic development in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges of Millennial Engagement in Government in Indonesia

Millennial generation is often perceived as the least interested in political matters. Data from EACEA in 2012 suggests that relatively few of this generation are willing to join political parties. They also tend to choose to be non-voters in elections, opting out of exercising their right to vote. Pirie and Worcester also mention that this generation often experiences a disconnect with their community and lacks interest in political processes and issues. They also have low levels of trust in politicians and exhibit cynicism towards various political institutions and governments (Kuswati 2019). In the context of national politics, the presence of the millennial generation has become increasingly strategic. Particularly in electoral practices or general elections, the large population of millennials represents a significant voting base, making their voices a contested ground for political parties and candidates. Political parties or candidates in electoral politics will not simply disregard the existence of the millennial generation considering their significant role in terms of numbers as potential voters (Subagyo 2017).

However, various facts indicate that the millennial generation is not particularly interested in political issues and problems. This condition suggests that political education for young people has not received much attention. It is not uncommon for young people to perceive that political life is not the world of the younger generation. These facts are supported by the results of a survey by the political analysis institution Alvara in 2018, which stated that only 22% of millennials are interested in political information (Kurnia Yunita Rahayu 2022). Therefore, it can be said that the apathy of the millennial generation towards political life and practice is quite con-

cerning (Media Indonesia, 2018). The results of the Political Indicator survey also show a similar phenomenon, where political parties are considered the least trusted institution by young people. Political parties are ranked at the bottom among the 9 institutions evaluated. The millennial generation has great potential in terms of political power due to their large numbers. The population of Indonesia aged between 15-34 years currently accounts for 34.45% of the total population. (BPS, 2010). However, as previously mentioned, this generation is less interested in actively participating in conventional politics for various reasons. Therefore, they tend to seek and choose alternative paths that are more easily accessible for participation, such as becoming volunteers and consumer activists through social media platforms (Gilman dan Stokes, 2014). Furthermore, this generation is the future successor and will eventually become part of the nation's leaders, making their political participation in the country highly necessary (Isbatono and Raharjo 2016).

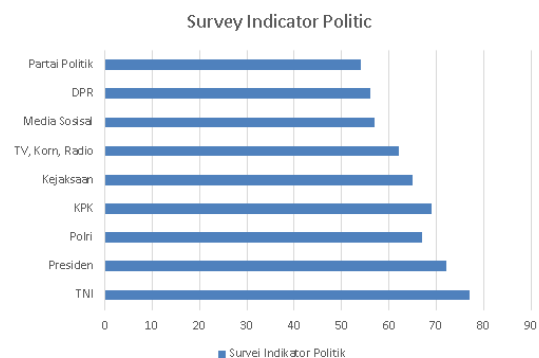


Figure 2. Trust Levels of Young People towards State Institutions. Source: processed by the researcher (2023)

Opportunities for Millennials in Building Democracy in Indonesia

The millennial generation has great potential to influence social and political change. As a generation that is widely connected to technology and has access to abundant information, millennials have the power to spread messages, mobilize masses, and influence public opinion. Additionally, millennials have inclusive attitudes and are oriented towards humanitarian values, social justice, and environmental sustainability. They tend to advocate for important issues such as human rights, gender equality, environmental protection, and social justice. Millennials can also play a role as agents of change in promoting political reform, proposing new policies, and advocating for more inclusive and responsive political participation.

Democracy is a societal concept that places the people as the holders of sovereignty (power), wherein no party is allowed to take political actions on behalf of the people without the consent of the people who delegate their power (Pavlićević 2021). Democracy is a system of government that involves active participation from all citizens. In Indonesia, the millennial generation has great potential to be agents of change in building a stronger and more inclusive democracy. The youth generation is a productive generation, and their activities should be directed in a way that benefits the nation. As agents of change, the youth are expected to actively contribute in various aspects of national life according to their respective fields and expertise. Active participation in public affairs is one form of the youth's active role (Prihatini 2018).

The millennial generation has a high level of technological proficiency and the ability to harness it to disseminate messages, mobilize masses, and influence public opinion. In this regard, Ahmad and Nurhidaya state that millennials are a generation that is very familiar with digital technology, where they incorporate gadgets into their lifestyles, and social media is one of the frequently used platforms. (Ahmad and Nurhidaya 2020). Social media, as one of the platforms frequently used by millennials, provides a space for them to share their views, voice their political aspirations, and organize social movements. By harnessing their technological abilities and digital skills, millennials have a significant opportunity to actively participate in the democratic process, embrace freedom of expression, and influence positive social and political change in Indonesia.

Millennial generation, being young individuals, plays a crucial role as agents of change in promoting political reform and enhancing inclusive political participation by actively engaging in political activities, utilizing technology and social media to advocate for human values, social justice, and environmental sustainability, and investing their resources in companies committed to environmental sustainability and social justice (Kusuma 2012). The student movement in the early years of 1998 is one important example of the active role of the millennial generation in transforming the direction of Indonesian politics (Supriyanto 2022). The movement resulted in significant political changes, including the emergence of democratic reform and changes in the governance system. Through active participation in the political process, the millennial generation can provide fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to address the challenges faced by demo-

cracy.

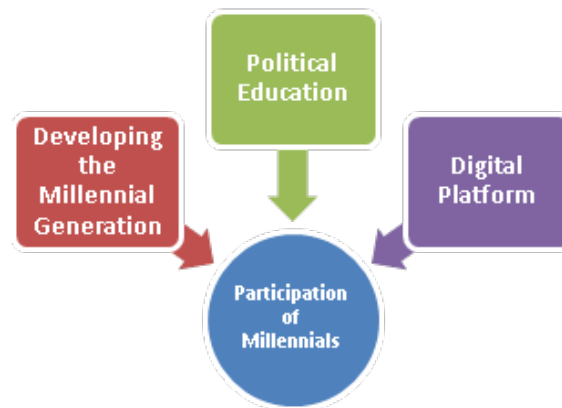


Figure 3. Efforts to Increase the Participation of Millennials. Source: processed by the researcher (2023)

One important step to increase the participation of millennials in the political process is by improving millennials' access to political education. Political education can provide a better understanding of the political system, decision-making processes, citizens' rights and obligations, and the importance of political participation (Sutrisman 2019). However, political education cannot be implemented without concrete implementation in the field or within the community. Therefore, regulations are needed to support political education. In Indonesia, political education is regulated through Presidential Instruction Number 12 of 1982, which contains explanations regarding the pathways for implementing political education, including informal, formal, and non-formal pathways. These pathways can be described as follows

Formal Pathway: The formal pathway of political education includes structured and official education provided in educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and political higher education institutions. Civics education can be considered as political education because its goal is to shape good citizens and fulfill citizenship responsibilities. Civics education helps build political literacy and a good political culture among young people, providing understanding of political concepts and processes (Pratama 2021), Increasing Early Political Preferences of First-Time Voters (Tamma 2021) Increasing Political Awareness (Alanur S et al. 2022).

Non-Formal Pathway: The non-formal pathway of political education involves political education approaches that are conducted outside the formal and structured education context, but

still aim to enhance political understanding and participation among the millennial generation. For example, political awareness campaigns conducted through scheduled meetings, enlightening political insights, and providing information on state-related issues that are received by the public (Rachmawati 2015).

Informal Pathway: The informal pathway of political education involves learning that occurs in everyday life through direct experiences and social interactions. Following political developments through mass media is one form of informal political education. Millennials can obtain information about political issues, elections, and government policies through news outlets (Anam 2017).

In addition to increasing access to political education, it is also important to develop programs that specifically facilitate the involvement of millennials in governance. For example, the Village Assistance Fund Program can create opportunities for young people to engage in local development activities through locally-based work programs (Nursyamsu 2018). Or leadership development programs can also provide opportunities for millennials to actively participate in governance, such as the Millennium Aide Program for the Governor of Lampung or the Presidential Staff School. These programs may include training, internships, or special assignments that give millennials firsthand experience in governmental activities.

The establishment of digital platforms is also a crucial step in enhancing public participation and providing a space for millennials to voice their aspirations. As stated by Ahmad and Nurhidaya, the majority of millennials access social media in their daily lives. These digital platforms can serve as effective channels for engaging millennials in discussions, promoting civic participation, and amplifying their voices in the political sphere (Ahmad and Nurhidaya 2020). In line with that, digital platforms have great potential to facilitate interaction between millennials and the government, as well as to expand their participation in political decision-making. Digital platforms can take the form of applications or websites that allow millennials to provide input, ask questions, give opinions, and express their aspirations online. Through these platforms, millennials can easily access information about public policies, elections, or current political issues. They can also interact with political leaders, parliament members, or government officials through features such as discussion forums, polling, or online Q&A sessions.

The establishment of adequate digital platforms enables millennials to be part of the political decision-making process and make meaningful contributions to shaping public policies. With these platforms, the aspirations of millennials can be widely heard and taken into consideration in creating more inclusive and responsive policies that align with their needs and aspirations. Moreover, digital platforms can help enhance government transparency and accountability, as well as strengthen the relationship between the government and millennials as important stakeholders in building a better future for Indonesia. An inclusive and responsive democracy in Indonesia is built by involving the millennial generation as agents of change. By enhancing political education, creating digital platforms, and improving the quality of millennials through government programs, we can contribute to building democracy, where youth participation is one of the indicators of a healthy democracy (Pradanna et al. 2023). Because youth involvement enriches perspectives, represents diverse interests, encourages active participation, and shapes future leaders of quality.

Contributions of Millennials to the Development of a Democratic Republic of Indonesia.

Millennial generation is a generation that has mastery in the field of technology. Experts say that millennials have the C3 abilities: Creative, Confident, Connected. Millennials are a creative generation. Their works in the field of technology should not be underestimated. Besides being creative, millennials also have high productivity in social media/industry media. However, this productivity should also be supported by several aspects. According to Subandowo (2016), here are some tips to optimize the productivity of Generation Y: (1) create a work atmosphere with a continuous improvement atmosphere, which provides them with opportunities to express their ideas and creativity (Hidayatullah et al. 2018; Irawan, Hermawan, and Wijayanti 2021; Pradanna and Irawan 2024; Rohmiyati 2018).

Furthermore, the millennial generation plays a role as agents of change in strengthening political participation and enhancing the quality of democracy in Indonesia. They grew up in the era of digital technology and global connectivity, which enables them to engage in political activities and communicate rapidly. Millennials actively use social media and online platforms to voice their aspirations and disseminate information related to political issues. Through active participation in elections, protests, and social campaigns,

millennials contribute to promoting transparency, accountability, and greater public participation in the process of democratic development in Indonesia (Ni et al. 2018).

The millennial generation also brings new ideas and fresh perspectives on relevant political and social issues. They bring innovative and creative thinking acquired through education, access to information, and diverse life experiences. In the process of democratic development, millennials can provide new solutions to challenges, propose inclusive policies, and advocate for the rights of individuals and broader groups. Their contributions in addressing issues such as social justice, gender equality, and environmental protection have the potential to bring about significant change and strengthen the foundations of democracy in Indonesia.

In addition, the millennial generation is capable of connecting various segments of society through extensive social networks. They are more open to differences and build inclusive relationships with diverse groups, regardless of social background, religion, or ethnicity. Millennials use online platforms to collaborate, share ideas, and strengthen intergenerational and inter-group solidarity in advocating democratic values. Through cooperation and constructive dialogue, millennials contribute to creating a social climate that supports democracy, where the voices of all parties are heard and valued as contributions to the progress of the Indonesian nation.

Here are the contributions of the millennial generation to the progress of democracy in Indonesia:

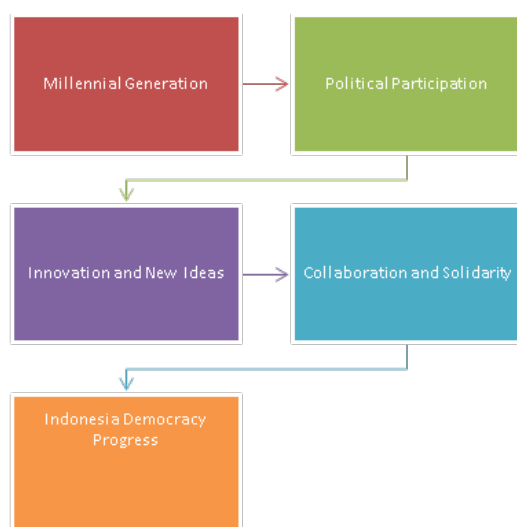


Figure 4. Role of Youth in Politics Chart. Sum-
ber: Compiled by the Author

CONCLUSION

The participation of first-time voters (*millennials*) refers to citizens of voting age. Millennials are defined as those born between the 1980s and late 1990s. Millennial voter participation is a generation familiar with technological advancements. Millennials, as the future generation of a country, are crucial in the political realm. If their participation is low, a country will lack political successors. Therefore, findings indicate that the role and political participation of millennials will remain significant for several democracies in the future, and each successful team must develop its own strategy to attract the attention of millennial voters, considering their substantial numbers, ranging from 40 to 50 %. In general elections, the participation of millennial voters is highly needed. Leadership in the millennial era requires a unique approach due to the pervasive digitalization in the workplace, which no longer allows leaders to act conventionally. In terms of leadership style, millennial leaders need to understand and utilize the communication patterns of the millennial generation they lead. Additionally, millennial leadership needs to encourage innovation, creativity, and the entrepreneurial spirit of the new generation. All channels for innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship should be well-designed and concrete, providing a process that millennials can truly enjoy to develop themselves. Millennials need to read the opportunities and challenges. The meaning derived from the values of democracy should be implemented in a structured and constructive manner. The characteristics of excellence they possess should not only breed individualistic personalities but also contribute to progressive change and benefit the entire society. In the future, this generation will undoubtedly carry the baton and bring a new dimension to a more advanced and competitive Indonesia on the international stage.

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