

# Democratic Challenge in Digital Era

Eko Handoyo Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia

## Abstract

This article is based on the growing development of social media in the digital era which provides new public spaces for citizens to express themselves and their interactions with fellow citizens in various aspects of life. This article used library research method to answer the changes from procedural democracy to substantial democracy and the way of democratic citizenship through social media. This article revealed that the use of social media is no longer limited to daily needs, however, social media has a significant role in building political culture as well as citizenship issues in society.

## Keywords

Digital; Democracy; Social Media; Citizenship

## INTRODUCTION

After the 1998 reformation, democracy has become a central issue in Indonesia's political development. Since then, the meaning of democracy has varied widely among the people. The results of a survey on the Indonesian society's understanding on democracy found that 38% Indonesian society associate democracy with freedom, 41% said they did not know anything about democracy, and 4% associate it with harmony, 2% mentioned about individual opportunities, and 2% mentioned the power in the hands of society (Sofyan, 2013). Those who said they did not

know about democracy mostly came from the lower secondary education level. When the society is asked whether Indonesia is a democratic country, the result shows that 74% believe that Indonesia is a democracy country, 15% say Indonesia has a democratic and undemocratic side, 6% say it is undemocratic, and 5% say it does not know. 72% of Indonesians prefer to have a democracy country, 20% say that they do not mind with any type of government, and 4% say non-democratic governments are sometimes better, and 4% say they don't know. This shows that most people have high hope for democracy.

The views of the people including intellectuals are very diverse towards the concept of democracy. Some interpret it as formal democracy, and some interpret it as substantial democracy. There was also the

---

Eko Handoyo is a lecturer at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Indonesia. His research foci on public policy and political ethic. Email: [eko.handoyo@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:eko.handoyo@mail.unnes.ac.id).

I am thankful for participants at the Prodipol International Symposium on Indonesian Politics June 2019 hosted by Universitas Negeri Semarang-Indonesia for their valuable comments on the early draft on this paper.

opinion of democracy in the political sense, and on the other hand, a democratic view in economic and social meaning is also emerged.

Most countries in the third world or developing countries interpret democracy in the narrow sense of formal democracy (Haynes, 2013). Formal democracy is also called representative or procedural democracy, which allows people to make political choices towards their representatives to sit in legislative and executive institutions (Silaen, 2012).

Democracy has various definitions, but the popular sovereignty keyword is the main thing when mentioning this term. People's sovereignty can be seen from several indicators, one of which is the guarantee of freedom of opinion and expression. An interesting dynamic in the digital age is that people often express their freedom through social media (Subiakto & Rachmah, 2015).

Some researcher and thought show that in the digital era, social media is a public choice in expressing certain ideas, ideas, and even social actions. Social media is not only used by the community, but also used by the President to communicate with the people (Salman, 2017). Ratnamulyani and Maksudi (2018) concluded that students in Bogor use social media to access information about elections. Dewi and Aminullah's (2016)

research shows that supporters of Presidential candidates in the 2014 Presidential Election use Facebook and Twitter to promote their candidates. Perbawani et al. (2018) concluded that in political expression on social media, netizens chose anonymously to avoid conflict and still have freedom in political opinion. In the case of the 2017 DKI Regional Election, the political elite who supported governor candidate Anis Baswedan used social media to mobilize the masses so as not to vote for Ahok who was alleged to have defamed Islam (Prasetyo, 2016). Through the internet, rolling snowball that shows resistance against the Soeharto regime in 1998 appeared (Al Indonesia, 2013). In Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, the success of the resistance movement from pro-democracy activists was carried out through social media and blogs (Umar et al., 2014). From the researcher, it can be concluded that social media as a public space for democracy can be used by anyone, ordinary people or political elites, for both positive and negative purposes.

This paper aims to solve the following problems: (1) how the people switch to realize the importance of substantial democracy that can be done through social media rather than direct democracy through representation (procedural democracy), and (2) whether citizens, in

this regard netizens, democracy through social media. In the second problem, the hoax will be analyzed as an impact of freedom and flexibility of expression on social media.

This paper has a novelty about a new perspective on the practice of democracy which up to now democracy has only been seen as direct public participation in determining who the desired leader is. This paper emphasizes how democracy is voiced in cyberspace and how democracy with mass hubbub is tested by the presence of democracy in the density of sounds in cyberspace. In digital democracy in cyberspace, people's identities can be invisible, while in classical democracies, people's identities become clear. At any time, they can express ideas, ideas, and even demands to the government. That is the novelty that is presented in this paper.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This paper uses the library research method, which searches the literature and uses literature sources that are relevant to the topic to obtain research data. In this study, data is collected to obtain information relevant to the research topic and purpose. Data was collected through books and articles related to the topic and carried out through literature reviews related to theories of democracy and various results of research and thinking

about democracy in the digital era, especially through social media used to discuss and analyze how democracy grows through social media and how netizens, not citizens have express ideas, opinions, and aspirations through social media. The results of the literature review are arranged in the form of a literature map (Cresswell, 2010). Data were analyzed qualitatively to determine parts, relationships between parts, and relationships with the whole to get a certain pattern (Hamzah, 2019). Further research data were analyzed using a qualitative analysis model from Creswell, namely (1) organizing and preparing data to be analyzed, (2) reading and looking at all data that has been collected, (3) making coding of all data, (4) using coding as material make a description, (5) make a connection between themes, and (6) provide interpretation and meaning of the theme (Sugiyono, 2019).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### From Procedural Democracy to Substansial Democracy

Democracy is a system of values and a political system that has been tested and recognized as the most rational and realistic system to realize a just social, economic and political order (Diamond, 2008; Yazid, 2007). Because of the testing of the democratic system, many

authoritarian and totalitarian rulers called the system he built a democratic system and power. In fact, authoritarian rulers often manipulate democratic systems as limited to formal procedural practices, not the substantive one.

Etymologically, democracy is defined as government of the people, by the people, and for the people (Graham, 1986; Andana, 2018). The definition of democracy is in the sense of formal or procedural democracy. In a procedural sense, democracy takes two forms namely direct democracy and representative democracy (Graham, 1986). In representative democracy, people's representatives are effectively monitored by the people in a periodic election based on the principle of political equality (Budiarjo, 2009). Democracy in this context is also understood as an institutional method or procedure to achieve a political decision that involves the struggle of individuals to gain votes (Mufti & Naafisah, 2013). In this democracy, the people have sovereignty (Rahardjo, 2015).

As the most popular political system in the world, democracy is believed to bring a lot of benefits to the people. This is because democracy gives the highest appreciation to the community. Society is the key word for democracy. The statement also fits the definition of

democracy which also proposed by David Beetham. Beetham said democracy as people's control over public affairs was based on the principle of political equality. He emphasized the idea that the public cannot be separated from democratic practices (Savirani & Tornquist, 2016).

In many countries, especially third world countries, the practice of democracy is limited to formal or procedural democracy. As Joseph Schumpeter said that a system is called democracy when the system allows political decisions where individuals gain power through competitive struggle to obtain popular votes (Diamond, 2008). The definition of political or procedural democracy in a narrow sense is interpreted as a mechanism for elections (Huri, 2008). These systems and mechanisms are also called electoral democracy. Even free and honest elections in a country, according to Diamond (2008) are insufficient to say that the country is a democratic country. This kind of democracy according to Surbakti (2007) is only limited to democracy which emphasizes the principles of authority and legitimacy. Rulers in this context obtain authority based on procedures as stipulated in the constitution or legislation, while citizens obey the authorities because the authorities are chosen based on procedures stipulated in the constitution or legislation. Democracy, which is merely

understood as a procedural mechanism, is believed to not be able to realize welfare equality.

A country is said to use a democratic system (Diamond, 2008) if it fulfills the following attributes. First, there is substantial freedom of belief for individuals, including in matters of opinion, discussion, publicity, demonstrations, and petitions. Second, there is freedom for ethnic groups, religious groups, racial groups, and other minority groups in practicing religion and culture and participating equally in political and social life. Third, there is the right for adult citizens to vote and enter political positions. Fourth, an open and competitive electoral arena that allows all groups to follow the constitutional principle of forming parties and participating in contests for political office. Fifth, there is a common law for all citizens under clean, stable, universal and non-retroactive legal rules. Sixth, there are courts that are independent, neutral and consistent in applying the law and protecting the rights of individuals and groups. Seventh, there is a legal process and individual freedom from torture and terror. Eighth, there is an oversight of officials elected by the legislature and an independent judicial system. Ninth, there is a pluralism of information sources and forms of independent organizations in a country,

called civil society. Tenth, there is control by civilians on the military and the state security apparatus.

The ten attributes are a sign that the state has implemented substantial democracy. The concept of substantial democracy as proposed by Diamond is similar to the concept of democracy developed by Carol C. Gould. Democracy according to Gould (1993) contains content of freedom and equality. Freedom and equality as core values of democracy are also recognized by Graham (1986). Individual freedom is understood not only as the ability to choose freely (procedurally), but also as a self-development activity. In the content of equality, democracy is understood as having the same rights of individuals to participate in policy making involving joint activities. This joint policy making is not only in the political sphere, but also extends to the area of social and economic life. This is what is called political development.

Political development has two objectives, namely to realize political stability and build effective governance (Ethridge & Handelman, 2016). This concept is understood as the development of democracy. Such democracy was developed in third world countries, especially in the 1980s and 2000s. Controlled democracy or democracy by

order and rule is seen in the practice of governance of third world countries, including Indonesia during the New Order era. In the New Order era, political development was directed towards achieving political and government stability. This stability jargon became mandatory in the New Order era, because it learned from the Old Order government that it always experienced political and government instability until the fall of Soekarno's power.

During the New Order, Suharto emphasized the importance of political stability and government by limiting citizens' political freedom. In order to realize this political and government stability, Suharto approached the 1977 general election to carry out party fusion, so that those who competed in the 1977 elections were only 2 parties namely PDI and PPP plus 1 functional force named Golongan Karya (Arifa, 2012). During the New Order, by its founders, Golkar was not called a party.

Elections in the New Order era included competitive elections but there were no civil liberties; there was mobilization. Electoral democracy in the form of elections in the third world as expressed by Ethridge and Handelman (2016) takes place competitively, but without extensive civil liberties. Most third world countries do not yet have

fundamental standards for liberal democracy, namely free and fair elections and large civil liberties. But after the New Order in Indonesia, the standard of liberal democracy was practiced at elections in the beginning of the reform era; that was the 1999 elections.

Now, democracy which is understood merely as a matter of procedures or mechanisms that enable people to choose their representatives as practiced by the New Order government is not enough. This is affected by three things. First, the wave of democratization into the third world is moving rapidly by bringing new values that must be accommodated by the government. Second, global development has changed the way and purpose of society in practicing democracy. Third, the development of social media has brought new values that influence Warganet's way of expressing themselves and interacting with other warganet.

Democracy will provide an opportunity for the transition of the central role of the state to society. Through this system, the community has wider space to participate in public decision making. As an order of life in society, democracy provides guarantees for citizens to enjoy their basic freedoms and rights, and there are legal guarantees that citizens are able to express their aspirations optimally and openly. Issues related to citizenship that



will be guaranteed in democracy include citizen equality, law enforcement, equal justice, and universal human rights practices (Savirani & Tornquist, 2016).

### Democracy in Social Media: Are Netizens Devoted?

Democracy and the media are two different things, but now in the digital era, the media are an important pillar of democracy. Media, especially social media, is a new public space for people to express their expressions and aspirations. This public space is a space that is open to various possibilities for people to enter into it (Maulana, 2015). In public space, an authority cannot specifically regulate a person's right to speak or act (unless it disturbs others or damages public property). As a public space, social media is also a place for humans to propose personal views as well as a means to attract attention.

After the fall of the New Order in May 1998, the dynamics of the development of information dissemination were interesting to observe. The media is no longer shackled by strict rules which only benefit the authorities. News is no longer dominated by news which is identical to the success of the authorities. The media is more willing to preach the reality that was previously classified as a sensitive issue. It is undeniable that during the New

Order era, news coverage by the mass media was only dominated by reports that favored the achievement of the authorities; while the news that is considered to reveal the failure of the New Order regime will immediately be banned (Mas'amah, 2017). In other words, the media only presents news in a setting that is in favor of the government. Most media do not dare to uncover the facts that occur in the field.

Freedom of the media is one form of guarantee the basic functions for citizens are met. With the freedom of the press, the public's right to know current events that occur even at the elite level can be presented. This is a breath of fresh air, at least the media can be a means of control over the administration of the state. Leaders are required to be more careful in making political decisions. This can deliver a positive impact on improving the quality of life of the nation and state life.

The media, ideally, are expected to function as guarantors of the accountability of the political elite and people's control over the administration of government (Gunther & Mughan, 2000). In other words, the media bridges political communication between factors in a democratic system, so that the mediation process can take place both good and bad. Mediation is good if in political communication, the media can position

itself as a neutral channel in conveying information transparently from one political actor to another in the task of serving the interests of society. On the contrary, the media goes bad if the media becomes stronger than other political actors such as the state and society and focuses more on serving the interests of their owners and/or capital (Kurnia, 2019).

In a negative connotation, the media becomes a powerful tool for the state or the media owner. The issue of the power of the media that is more devoted to this political interest has become increasingly apparent in Indonesia in the past two decades. If in the New Order era the media was controlled by the state, then in post-reform the media was controlled by media owners. In addition, the power of media owners has strengthened in the era of media digitalization. The digital revolution makes the media industry experience concentration which enables media owners to increasingly have power both capitalally and politically (Kurnia, 2019). Partisan media is increasingly strong because the media is a space for domination of media owners who are also political elites in establishing their power in the digital age (Tapsell, 2018).

In addition to its advantages, the development of media has several shortcomings that are quite disturbing to the public. It cannot be denied, at this time

the media cannot be separated from commercial interests. The issue of the media as one part of the power of business, makes the media also can't escape from sensational reporting, so that the public glimpsed as consumers. Media that gives actual and factual reporting again is questionable for its credibility.

The development of information through the media which is quite significant has several negative effects in the future, especially for the recipient community. This is because the communication revolution in Indonesia was initially limited to the media community only and this progress was not matched by advances in the field of communication sources and their audiences. As a result, there is an imbalance in the mastery of understanding information between the media and the public. As technology develops more rapidly, it seems that people are not ready to become critical consumers of information

Another problem that arises in the dissemination of information presented by the media is the level of neutrality of a media that is still being questioned by the public. Neutral media in the arena of political contestation, especially just before the election, is a problem that is often questioned by the public. Seeing the increasingly fierce power struggle conditions, many media ignores the ethics



of not taking sides with certain candidates. The media as a node of information dissemination cannot be separated from the political power it has. If the media used to function as a means of control for the regime, today the media actually becomes a political player that is so loaded with various interests. The problem of media neutrality is a problem that is difficult to solve lately. The problem of the power of the media which has spread through the socio-political sphere of society is a threat to democratization.

Media has become one of the actors in digital literacy activities in addition to universities, government agencies, communities, non-governmental organizations, schools, corporations, professional associations, and mass organizations. Entering the Revolution 4.0 era, the dissemination of information again presents an interesting development. If previously the mass media were the actors who dominated the dissemination of information, this time the challenges faced by the public were increasingly severe. As the development of an increasingly globalized digital world, information dissemination is increasingly coming into the hands of the public through social media. The information presented often does not only come from media that have enough names. Individuals called netizens are personally able to influence the

thinking of society at large through the media (Andriadi, 2016). Individuals can pour their thoughts through writings that are shared through social media, whether in the form of facts, opinions, often even in the form of tricks to raise the 'prestige' of a particular phenomenon. This is where people's intelligence is needed to filter out all forms of information circulating through social media.

The study conducted by Japelidi in 2017 shows that from 2010 to 2017, digital media has become a vital part of the lives of Indonesian people. The media and information literacy movement focuses on digital media. The name of the movement also shifted from the media literacy movement to the digital literacy movement. Media has a role in democracy, especially providing space with diverse information choices. In addition to conducting digital literacy to the public, the media also collaborates with other media, with the community, or with other organizations that mostly try to suppress the impact of information chaos in the post-truth era. Collaboration is an important issue in enhancing the role of the media in the digital literacy movement, especially as an alternative solution to face the chaos of political information in the critical year of the 2019 Election (Kurnia, 2019). Democracy carried out through digital media is called digital democracy,

which is an era when all voices can be heard and responded to, an era in which private affairs can quickly become public consumption and vice versa (Prasetyo, 2016). This digital democracy presupposes the provision of information, deliberation, and participation in decision making (Tsagarousianou, 1999). This can happen because digital democracy implements the concept of democracy without being constrained by the limitations of time, space and conditions. This practice of democracy uses digital media both online and offline.

The space for expressing opinions, ideas, and political ideas in the past was mostly done through public spaces that physically brought together individuals in the public arena, for example in voting at polling stations, following grand campaign activities in open spaces, participating in political discussions in the hall, and other political activities that bring citizens together face to face. But now, such democracy is shifting even though it is not frontal in non-insulated public spaces, namely public space in cyberspace through the social media arena.

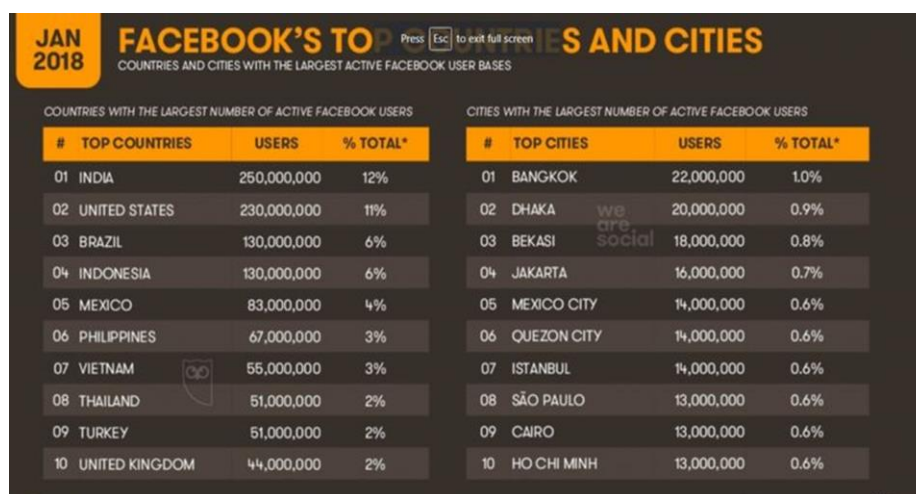
In this context, social media is a tool to increase the ability of users to share and collaborate between users and carry out collective actions that are all outside the institutional and organizational framework (Shirky, 2008). Social media is

also a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves in sharing, interacting, communicating, collaborating, and collaborating with other users that have the potential to form social bonds virtually.

From year to year, the number of social media users has increased. In 2014 internet users in Indonesia were 38 million people, while those with Facebook accounts were 62 million (Nasrullah, 2018). In 2018, the number of internet users in Indonesia increased to 143 million people, as many as 49.52% were young people aged 19-34 years (Bohang, 2018). Based on its geographical area, the Javanese people are most exposed to the internet as much as 57.70%; then Sumatra 19.09%; Kalimantan 7.97%; Sulawesi 6.73%; Bali-Nusa Tenggara 5.63%; and Maluku-Papua 2.49%. In 2018 the number of Facebook users in Indonesia increased sharply to 130 million people (Septania, 2018).

Social media promises space for expression and free political discussion without any obstacles and may even be left without rules; it is in contrast with the physical public space with conventional political expressions whose rules are clear and rigid. Political campaigns carried out by candidates for example, in open spaces and closed spaces have rules that must be obeyed by candidates. If not, they will be

Picture 1. Facebook Users in Indonesia



Source: [Septania \(2018\)](#).

reprimanded even disqualified from their candidacy.

If people's sovereignty is narrowly interpreted as a political procedure that allows citizens to determine the choice of those who have the right to sit as officials in the executive, legislative and judicial institutions through direct, general, free, honest and fair general elections; then in the digital era, popular sovereignty and democracy are broadly meaningful as a way for individuals or groups of netizens to express ideas, invite, and build public opinion through social media that can be easily accessed by any citizen, regardless of age, and whatever the background. In this context, citizens who have changed as cyber citizens or netizens have full sovereignty for opinion, convey aspirations, and carry out political movements. Social media as a new public

space that allows netizens to express opinions and comments including negative views or comments.

Social media provides space for users to voice their thoughts, opinions, aspirations, and criticisms in the democratic process ([Zubaidi, 2011](#)). Devices that are on social media provide a stage for users as citizens and citizens of the virtual world to convey what is of concern to them who have not been heard so far ([Nasrullah, 2018](#)). Social media as a virtual space is an open space that can be used by anyone both individually and in groups. Virtual public space is also an arena for conversation and a place for political discussion. This virtual public space holds both positive and negative potential ([Fuadi & Tasmin, 2018](#)). Because there are no strict rules and strict hierarchies, users can use social media to

influence the public on a particular issue. In fact, many political elites also use social media to campaign for themselves. For example, Barack Obama when running for US President in 2008 and Joko Widodo and Prabowo when running for President of Indonesia in 2014. Similarly, in the 2019 election, Joko Widodo-Ma'ruf Amin's pair registered a campaign account, namely: [www.facebook.com/jokowi.amin](https://www.facebook.com/jokowi.amin) and [www.twitter.com/jokowi\\_amin](https://www.twitter.com/jokowi_amin) (Ardipandanto, 2018).

Before the development of social media, citizens often used mass media as a medium for delivering aspirations, but due to strict regulations from editors, sometimes these aspirations were not published. Likewise, the delivery of aspirations through the mechanism of political parties requires complicated procedures. Even through the bureaucracy and parliament, aspirations are merely accommodated as a sweetener that aspirations have been heard. The people's aspirations just evaporated. Social media is present to bring new values in the midst of its users, not only to be used to tell themselves, but also to increase the media of citizens' aspirations online (Wilhelm, 2000).

As a space for democracy, social media is used by netizens to criticize regulations made by the government, carry out virtual actions against legal cases,

request support for an issue by signing petitions online, can even be used to move the masses from online to offline (Nasrullah, 2018). A real case example is the case of Cicak versus Buaya, which moves online masses to physical masses in giving support to the Corruption Eradication Commission.

Social media has certain values that are hidden from the owner. In the perspective of structuration theory from Giddens, social media as a structure has a duality of functions, namely the power to impose constraining on the agency, namely netizens and on the other hand empower the agency. Structure and agency are interconnected and interdependent, structures require agencies and agencies need structures (Hasibuan, 2015). What is noteworthy is that netizens as agents must be smart not easily dictated by capitalists who control social media. Netizens are also not coopted by the interests of investors, let alone become victims of investors.

Social media that can be accessed through the internet has a wide range of conventional communication technologies. This global affordability is finally manifested in the formation of interactions between the leadership of political parties and their supporters and between supporters themselves that are able to transcend the borders of this country. The

internet also broadens the space for individuals and politicians to discuss and interact politically (Gainous et al., 2015). Behind its excellences, social media also has weaknesses. As virtual encounters become increasingly easy, especially in terms of the dissemination of ideologies or the values carried by (leaders) of existing political parties, there is also the possibility of friction between supporters because there is no more "partition" between them (Putranto, 2019). In addition, through social media, the spread of hoax is increasingly rampant. This can happen because social media makes it possible to spread information quickly, coming in rushing barracks of information in our brains and the brain does not have time to trace the truth of that information (Putranto, 2019; Dwipayana, 2018). The most common example is the spread of hoaxes on Whatsapp social media which begins (can also be terminated) with the sentence: "Copas from other..." (Kami, 2019).

Police records that every day there are an average of 3,500 hoax information circulating on social media every day (Rizky, 2018). News that is verified by hoax has risen sharply ahead of the 2019 Election. In August 2018, the news that proved false was only 25, while in January 2019 it increased sevenfold. The hoax continued to double from January to

February 2019 to 353 news hoaxes (Fakhri, 2019). A total of 62 hoax content related to the 2019 Election were identified by the Ministry of Communication and Information during August-December 2018. Hoaxes were most identified in December 2018. Hoax content during 2018 was somewhat funny and strange, including: China asked Jokowi to sell Java and Sumatra, Sandstorm occurred because of the banner #GantiPresiden, Megawati agreed PKI rose, Prabowo had a debt of IDR17 trillion, Jokowi's fat account abroad reported, the Government will soon ratify the LGBT Law, KH. Ma'ruf Amin kissed the cheek of a not "Muhrim" woman, Fatwa forbidding to choose PSI for Muhammadiyah citizens, If they win, Jokowi will replace KH. Ma'ruf Amin with Ahok, Threat of murder to KPU members if it does not win Jokowi in the 2019 Presidential Election, and there are still many other Hoaxes.

President Joko Widodo on various occasions often invites rampant hoaxes or hoaxes on social media. He also gave an example of some strange hoaxes that were eaten by social media users. MUI was asked to ban roast pork; Panadol is hardened wet tissue; LGBT and abortion are legalized; Snakes die from eating a pan; Tuyul was caught in Blitar; A Cow hugged the owner crying before being

slaughtered; and hundreds of other false news.

The spread of hoax is very worrying because hoaxes are designed to influence or manipulate the opinions of social media users on certain topics for certain purposes as well. The spread of hoaks, especially during the period leading up to the 2019 election, is a complicated problem. Quoting from the page [www.idntimes.com](http://www.idntimes.com), based on information from the Director General of Information and Public Communication at the Ministry of Communication and Information, hot content reaches 800,000 content per year. This number is not a small number. You can imagine how crowded and dangerous the world of social media if the number of hoax continues to increase. Based on research conducted by DailySocial.id in collaboration with the Jakpat Mobile Survey Platform, the online media for the Democratic Era of Digital Era 140 mentions that the three biggest hoax spreader social media applications are Facebook (82.25%), WhatsApp (56.55%), and Instagram (29.48%) ([Putranto, 2019](#)).

The alleged occurrence of electoral fraud can also be a hoax content that is politically charged. Even after the voting on April 17, 2019, there was a false news about the death of hundreds of KPPS members because they were poisoned.

That is not true. The police confirmed that the cause of KPPS members in the 2019 Election was being poisoned was a hoax ([Suara Merdeka, 11 May 2019](#)).

Hoaxes spread in social media can mislead the mindset of the people; it is even suspected to cause disunity and security disturbances. Therefore, the state is present in overcoming the hoax. The hoax spreaders who disturbed the community were arrested by the police. An honorary teacher in Madura with the initials HA (35 years) was arrested by the police because through a fake account on Facebook, HA spread hatred and would kill President Joko Widodo ([Kompas, May 20, 2019](#)).

The high number of hoax content in Indonesia is also accompanied by the inability of the community to detect whether news or content circulating in cyberspace is hoax or not ([Putranto, 2019](#)). Kumparan Media shows the results of research that as many as 44.19% of respondents (out of a total of 2,032 respondents) claimed not to have confidence that they possessed expertise in detecting hoaxes. The high number of hoax content also arises because of the low level of literacy of the Indonesian people. As stated by Revolusi Reza, the secretary general of the Indonesian Independent Journalists Alliance (AIJ) quoted on page [www.voanews.com](http://www.voanews.com), that



literacy between people (Indonesia) is very low (Putranto, 2019). These facts show that besides Indonesia experiencing a hoax emergency, Indonesia also experienced an emergency media literacy. However, we cannot avoid or run away from the world of social media because social media has become an integral part of modern society (Satria & Arifin, 2014).

The presence of various social media circulating in the community should be grateful. Various facilities offered by social media for ease of communication. In relation to the political world, social media is instrumental in causing important information on the dynamics of the administration of this country. Politics is an arena of struggle for the interests of fighting for or maintaining power, social media is often used as a place for elements to spread deceptive information that worsens social harmony.

Social media provides an egalitarian role to the public, where each individual can provide information without being dominated by anyone. It's just that the information shared on social media is sometimes confusing. Public freedom to be able to interact on social media is again highlighted, because often the chain messages or news that are spread actually grow into something that is disturbing, heated up, and confuses the public. Often people are less able to distinguish

between sensational and actual news. Whereas the progress of democracy also relies on the competence of the people. Therefore it is necessary to have certain abilities that citizens have in democracy, so that they can function properly as members of a democratic system. The ability of people to choose and sort out information that circulates becomes important.

Now the public needs the ability to increase media literacy, especially social media. Media literacy needs to be done because media is not a value-free tool. The media is full of interests that are often diverted (Nurudin, 2018). Public critical attitude is very important in realizing the success of media literacy. Social media is in cyberspace. Social media cannot be separated from the 'pretense or imagination' of news or information makers. What is displayed in the information and news, does not necessarily reflect the actual conditions. The public is demanded to be smart in receiving information that is circulating. This is important because mistakes in understanding information will reduce the quality of the information itself. The impact, chaos in society due to information and wrong reporting is inevitable.

A critical attitude towards information from social media is a real effort in guaranteeing citizens' rights to express

freedom of opinion and expression. This is also important to help the process of maturation of democracy. The basic right of individuals to speak freely can be an indicator of progress and maturation in democracy. Ideally, freedom of expression through social media is directed to build a national outlook, not to divide the public with various deceptive political issues in circulation. Social media must be developed to strengthen national insight in the present context. Social media which is the product of mastery of science and technology should be able to deliver the Indonesian nation to compete in the international arena and bring prosperity to the community.

Democracy is believed to be the best way that promises public independence in a pluralistic society. The actualization of democracy must be directed towards realizing efforts that are oriented towards the realization of a democratic, tolerant and competitive society (Ubaidillah & Rozak, 2014). Social media as one of the platforms that serves as a bridge to achieve a democratic transition to quality democracy in order to create a dignified social life that is meaningful to the public. Digital democracy or democracy through social media in the future is believed to be able to mature the public to express ideas and demands to the country with dignity.

## CONCLUSION

In a democratic system where citizens or netizens are increasingly intelligent, then the meaning of democracy in a formal political or procedural sense is not enough. Democracy must be oriented towards not only the opportunity for citizens to determine the people who will sit in representative, executive, and judicial institutions, but also substantially citizens have civil liberties to develop themselves through various channels of democracy, including also to obtain life who are worthy of being human.

Channels of face-to-face democracy or meeting physically are not sufficient. With the growth and development of social media and information and communication technology, it allows citizens or citizens of the world to express their social, political and economic aspirations freely without pressure, not confined to time and place. Democracy thus, experiences deconstruction not only the channel used, but also the type and value of democracy itself. On this side, citizens or netizens of the world have sovereignty in expressing their thoughts and conveying aspirations through social media, but on the other hand, the development of hoax becomes a devastating effect due to the lack of strict rules regarding democratic activities on social media.

Non-face-to-face democracy, called digital democracy, is being used by citizens not only to express themselves, but also to channel demands or even rejection of government policies or government decisions that are considered unfair. This perspective and practice of mass democracy through social media in Indonesia has become a novelty in understanding the practice of democracy in Indonesia.

## REFERENCES

- All Indonesia. (2013). *Internet, Media Online, dan Demokrasi di Indonesia*. Jakarta. Available at: <https://aji.or.id/read/buku/18/internet-media-online-dan-demokrasi-di-indonesia.html>. Accessed 2 April 19.
- Andana, T. (ed.). (2018). *Kajian Akademik Penegasan Demokrasi Pancasila*. Jakarta: Badan Pengkajian MPR RI.
- Andriadi, F. (2016). *Demokrasi di Tangan Netizen: Tantangan & Prospek Demokrasi Digital*. RMBooks. [Google Scholar](#)
- Ardipandanto, A. (2018). *KPU dan Kampanye Pilpres 2019 di Media Sosial. Kajian Singkat terhadap Isu Aktual dan Strategis: Pusat Penelitian Badan Keahlian DPR RI, 10(9)*. [Google Scholar](#)
- Arifa, R. (2012). *Visualisasi Realitas Pemilu 1971-2004 dalam Kartun Editorial Oom Pasikom Harian Kompas*. Thesis: Universitas Indonesia.
- Bohang, F. K. (2018). *Berapa Jumlah Pengguna Internet di Indonesia?* Available at: <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2018/02/22/16453177/berapa-jumlah-pengguna-internet-indonesia>. Accessed 21 April 2019.
- Budiarjo, M. (2009). *Dasar-dasar Ilmu Politik (Revisi)*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama. [Google Scholar](#)
- Cresswell, J. (2010). *Research Design, Pendekatan Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan Mixed*, terjemahan: Yogyakarta. Pustaka Pelajar. [Google Scholar](#)
- Dewi, S. I., & Aminulloh, A. (2016). Social media: Democracy in the shadow of fanaticism. In *Proceeding of International Conference on Communication, Culture and Media Studies (CCCMS)*, 3(1). 79-88. [Google Scholar](#)
- Diamond, L. (2008). *The Spirit of Democracy*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC. [Google Scholar](#)
- Dwipayana, A. A. G. N. A. (2018). *Kembali Ke Politik Akal Sehat: Demokrasi di Era Post-Truth Politics* in Wisnumurti, A. A. G. O. *Demokrasi Prosedural dan Semangat Kerakyatan*. Denpasar: Warmadewa University Press. [Google Scholar](#)

- Ethridge, M. E., & Handelman, H. (2016). *Politik Dalam Dunia Yang Berubah* (Terj.). Bandung: Nusa Media. [Google Scholar](#)
- Fakhri, F. (2019). Berita Hoaks Naik Tajam Jelang Pemilu 2019. Available at: <https://news.okezone.com/read/2018/09/22/337/1954094/polri-sebut-3-500-informasi-hoaks-beredar-di-meds-os-tiap-hari>. Accessed 2 April 19.
- Fuadi, A., & Tasmin, T. (2018). Gerakan Sosial Baru di Ruang Publik Virtual. *Hanifiya: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 1(1), 48-60. [Google Scholar](#)
- Gainous, J., Wagner, K., & Gray, T. (2016). Internet freedom and social media effects: democracy and citizen attitudes in Latin America. *Online Information Review*. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Gould, C. C. (1993). *Demokrasi Ditinjau Kembali* (Terj.). Yogyakarta: PT. Tiara Wacana Yogya. [Google Scholar](#)
- Graham, K. (1986). *The battle of democracy: Conflict, consensus and the individual*. Wheatsheaf books. [Google Scholar](#)
- Gunther, R., & Mughan, A. (2000). The political impact of the media: A reassessment. *Democracy and the media: A comparative perspective*, 402-447. [Google Scholar](#)
- Hamzah, A. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Malang: Literasi Nusantara. [Google Scholar](#)
- Hasibuan, S. (2015). Budaya Media dan Partisipasi Anak di Era Digital. In *Proceedings of International Post-Graduate Conference*, 1, 829-850. [Google Scholar](#)
- Haynes, J. (2013). *Democracy and civil society in the Third World: Politics and new political movements*. John Wiley & Sons. [Google Scholar](#)
- Huri, D. (2008). Demokrasi dan Kemiskinan. In Saiful Arif (ed). *Demokrasi & Kemiskinan*. Malang: Averroes Press. [Google Scholar](#)
- Kami, I. M. (2019). 62 Hoaks Pemilu 2019 Teridentifikasi Kominfo, Ini Daftarnya. Available at: <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4368351/62-hoax-pemilu-2019-teridentifikasi-kominfo-ini-daftarnya>. Accessed 20 April 2019.
- Kompas Newspaper. Senin, 20 Mei 2019, page 2.
- Kurnia, N. (2019). Peran Media dalam Mewujudkan Demokrasi Damai Melalui Gerakan Literasi Digital. In Wicaksono (ed.). *Demokrasi Damai Era Digital*. Jakarta: Siberkreasi. [Google Scholar](#)
- Mas'amah. (2017). *Komunikasi Politik dan Sistem Pers di Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Buku Litera Yogyakarta. [Google Scholar](#)

- Maulana, S. (2015). Ruang Publik dan Intelektual Organik. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 12(1), 119-134. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Mufti, M., & Naafisah, D. D. (2013). Teori-teori Demokrasi. Bandung: Pustaka Setia. [Google Scholar](#)
- Nasrullah, R. (2018). Media Sosial Perspektif Komunikasi, Budaya, dan Siosoteknologi. Bandung: Simbiosis Rekatama Media. [Google Scholar](#)
- Nurudin. (2018). Media Sosial Agama Baru Masyarakat Milenial. Malang: Intrans Publishing. [Google Scholar](#)
- Perbawani, P. S., Rahayu, R., & Anshari, I. N. Online Political Participation and Netizen Anonymity in Indonesia's Digital Democracy. *PCD Journal*, 6(2), 185-212. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Prasetyo, Y. E. (2016). Demokrasi Digital. *Media Indonesia*, page. 6.
- Putranto, I. A. (2019). Mencari Kedamaian di Tengah Hiruk Pikuk Demokrasi 4.0. In Wicaksono (ed.). *Demokrasi Damai Era Digital*. Jakarta: Siberkreasi. [Google Scholar](#)
- Rahardjo, M. D. (2015). Agama di Ruang Publik Politik. *Societas Dei: Jurnal Agama dan Masyarakat*, 2(1). [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Ratnamulyani, I. A., & Maksudi, B. I. (2018). Peran Media Sosial dalam Peningkatan Partisipasi Pemilih Pemula dikalangan Pelajar di Kabupaten Bogor. *Sosiohumaniora*, 20(2), 154-161. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Rizky, F. (2018). Polri Sebut 3.500 Informasi Hoaks Beredar di Medsos Tiap Hari. Available at <https://news.okezone.com/read/2018/09/22/337/1954094/polri-sebut-3-500-informasi-hoaks-circulating>. Accessed 21 April 2019.
- Salman. (2017). Media Sosial sebagai Ruang Publik. *Kalbisocio*, 7(2), 124-131. [Google Scholar](#)
- Satria, H. W., & Arifin, L. H. (eds.). (2014). *Panduan Optimalisasi Media Sosial untuk Kementerian Perdagangan RI*. Jakarta: Pusat Humas Kemendag RI. [Google Scholar](#)
- Savirani, A., & Törnquist, O. (eds.). (2016). *Reclaiming the State: Mengatasi Problem Demokrasi di Indonesia pasca-Soeharto*. *PolGov*. [Google Scholar](#)
- Septania, R. C. (2018). Indonesia, Pengguna Facebook Terbanyak Ke-4 di Dunia. Available at: <https://tekno.kompas.com/read/2018/03/02/08181617/indonesia-pengguna-facebook-terbanyak-ke-4-di-dunia>. Accessed 21 April 2019.
- Shirky, C. (2008). Here comes everybody: The power of organizing without

- organizations. Penguin. [Google Scholar](#)
- Silaen, V. (2012). *Prospek Demokrasi di Negara Pancasila*. Jakarta: Permata Aksara. [Google Scholar](#)
- Sofyan, A. S. A. (2013). Pemaknaan Demokrasi di Era Reformasi (Opini Masyarakat Jawa Tengah terhadap Demokrasi Saat Ini). *Politika: Jurnal Ilmu Politik*, 4(2), 5-12. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Suara Merdeka Newspaper. Sabtu, 11 Mei 2019, page 1.
- Subiakto, H., & Rachmah, I. (2015). *Komunikasi Politik, Media, dan Demokrasi*. Jakarta: Prenadamedia Group. [Google Scholar](#)
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta. [Google Scholar](#)
- Surbakti, R. (2007). *Memahami Ilmu Politik*. Jakarta: PT. Grasindo. [Google Scholar](#)
- Tapsell, R. (2018). *Kuasa Media di Indonesia: Kaum Oligarki, Warga, dan Revolusi Digital (Terj.)*. Wisnu Prasetyo Utomo, Tangerang: Margin Kiri. [Google Scholar](#)
- Tsagarousianou, R. (1999). Electronic democracy: Rhetoric and reality. *Communications*, 24(2), 189-208. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Ubaidillah, A., & Rozak, *Demokrasi, Hak Asasi Manusia dan Masyarakat* Madani. Jakarta: ICCE UIN Syarif Hidayatullah. [Google Scholar](#)
- Umar, A. R. M., Darmawan, A. B., Sufa, F. S., & Ndadari, G. L. (2014). Media Sosial dan Revolusi Politik: Memahami Kembali Fenomena “Arab Spring” dalam Perspektif Ruang Publik Transnasional. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik*, 18(2), 114-129. [Crossref](#) | [Google Scholar](#)
- Wilhelm. (2000). *Democracy in the Digital Age: Challenges from Cyberspace*. New York: Routledge. [Google Scholar](#)
- Yazid, A. (2007). *Demokrasi dan Hak Asasi Manusia*. Malang: Averroes Press. [Google Scholar](#)
- Zubaidi, A. N. (2011). Ruang Publik Dalam Media Baru. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 1(2), 139-158. [Google Scholar](#)