The Future of Democracy in Digital Era: Challenges to Political Life in Cyberspace in Indonesia

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Abstract: The development of technology and information has an impact on a country's political and democratic life. Social media becomes an arena in voicing various thoughts and opinions. This paper seeks to explain the challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia. This study uses qualitative research methods with case study design. The data collected comes from books, research journals, reports, and articles in mass media and online media. The findings of this study indicate that the challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia are political culture in Indonesia which is not yet ready to face freedom and information disclosure and technology; non-democratic regime; and Media decadence. The conclusion in this study is the challenge of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia if it cannot be dealt with well, then the future of democracy is the deficit.

1   INTRODUCTION

The wave of reforms in Indonesia in 1998 has brought about a change of democratization with guaranteed rights to express opinions, gather and organize. However, during the 21 years of the journey of reform and democratization in Indonesia, the main political life of freedom of opinion in Indonesia is currently experiencing quite alarming problems. (Intelligence,) report states that Indonesia was the worst-performing country in 2017, falling by 20 places in the global rankings from 48 to 68 positions after its score declined from 6.97 to 6.39. This report from The Economist is in line with the results of research from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) (2018) which issued the Indonesian Democracy Index (IDI) in 2017 which explained that there was a significant decrease in freedom of opinion in 2017 compared to 2016 which was 6.20 from 72.17 to 65.97. Furthermore, freedom of assembly and association also decreased from 3.63 from 82.79 to 79.16 (Indonesia, 2017).

The development of democracy cannot be separated from the development of technology and information, especially the use of social media very rapidly. Through the development of social media, the public sphere has become very open and sometimes very difficult to limit. This freedom is the effect of the digitalization era which can affect the ongoing democratization in Indonesia.

The study of democracy in Indonesia has been explained and explored by political scientists with various focus studies such as the first, analyzing Islam, and democracy (Barton, 2010; Hamayotsu, 2011; Nasir, 2014). Second, civil society and democracy (Antlov et al., ; Marta, 2017; Mietzner, 2012). Finally, Media, internet, and democracy (Gazali, 2014; Hill and Sen, ; Tapsell, 2015). Based on the classification of studies on democracy, there are still a few who discuss the future of democracy by explaining the challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia. So this study is interesting to discuss and very relevant to the ongoing democratization process in Indonesia.

Therefore, this study aims to explain the challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia. The challenges of political life if not properly dealt with will have an impact on the future of democracy in Indonesia.

2   METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with case study research design. According to (Creswell, 2014) case studies are the design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluations, in which the researcher devel-

ops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Meanwhile, according to (Yin, 2018), A case study is an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when, and may not be evident. In the context of this study, the focus of the study is to analyze the challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia in the era of Joko Widodo and Jusuf Kalla's administration. This is due to the strengthening of the phenomenon of threats to freedom and political rights in that era. This is very contradictory to the rapid development of digitalization.

Data collection in this study comes from documentation and archival records such as books, research journals, reports, data surveys, and articles in mass media and online media. The strength of the data collection technique according to (Yin, 2018) is stable, unobtrusive, specific, and broad. Data collected from various sources are then analyzed using approaches and theories that are relevant to the research and produce research conclusions.

3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Today's digitalization of democracy has spread and the Indonesian state is one of those faced with this condition. Digital democracy is also called virtual democracy, E-democracy or cyberdemocracy. Digital democracy as a practice of democracy without limits of time, space and other physical conditions, using information and communication technology (ICT) or computer communication (CMC) instead, as an addition, not a replacement for the traditional "analog" of political practices (Hacker and van Dijk, 2000). Based on these explanations, the use and development of ICT or CMC through cyberspace has an impact on democracy and democratization with the opening of the public sphere for the public to convey their aspirations.

However, it cannot be denied that digitalization also presents a challenge to political life that influences the future of democracy towards the consolidation of democracy. The challenges of political life in cyberspace in Indonesia that can determine the future of democracy in Indonesia include the first, the community's political culture that is not ready for the digitalization of democracy. According to (Almond and Verba,) democracies are only able to persist in they enjoy political culture which is congruent to and supportive of its democratic structures. Furthermore, it was stated that political culture that supports democracy is called civic culture which is understood as at-

titudes and behavior citizens. Meanwhile, (Klingemann et al., 2006) state that political culture is a multitude of political attitudes and behavior.

Indonesia is a unique country with a diversity of ethnic groups that gave birth to a plurality of people. This will indirectly lead to regional ties or primordialism. The primordialism culture that has existed since long ago has persisted into the digital era. This culture will later become anti-democratic. Political reforms have not brought too much change to the political culture in Indonesia. The political system that has been successfully built has only arrived at a form of pseudo-democracy; on the basis of this level of institutional change that has not been supported by changes in the level of political culture (Culla, 2018).

The form of primordialism and identity politics can be seen clearly during the General Elections, especially the Election of the President and Vice President in 2019. The results of the University of Indonesia's Center for Political Studies (Puskapol) reveal that the use of political buzzers has become one of the triggers of strengthening identity politics in society (Amrullah, 2019). The Puskapol research results are in line with the survey conducted by the Indo Survey and Strategy Institute (ISS) stating that ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup (SARA) issues, as well as communism, will be increasingly used in the run-up to general elections, both regional and legislative elections and the president (Hamdi, 2019).

Furthermore, the political culture that developed in the midst of a society which contradicts the values of democracy is the development of hoaxes and speeches of hatred. The community still enjoys the euphoria of freedom of opinion which was during the New Order era something "expensive". However, the freedom to express their opinions and aspirations in the digital era today has spread in cyberspace which is very difficult to control. Hoax news and utterances of hatred will damage the threat of social capital to build democracy, namely the values of community unity and solidarity.

The second challenge for this political life in cyberspace is the non-democratic regime. (Brooker, 2013) explains that non-democratic regimes are that they show why and how a modern state might be ruled by other means than representative democracy. The Joko Widodo government used its power by curbing civil liberties and association by dissolving Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI). This is a serious threat to political life in Indonesia. Even (Warburton and Aspinall,) mention that Indonesian democracy has experienced regression. Civil society as a basis for democracy, but its existence is currently threatened because of the interests of the authorities.

Freedom of expression today also experiences restrictions and blocking of social media applications. The blocking of social media carried out by the government was carried out in 2017 by blocking telegram. The climax, after the 2019 Election, the blocking and temporary restrictions were made on the use of social media applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. This condition is reminiscent of the past history of the New Order which used its power to block media with the aim of maintaining its power. The difference, in the digital era today is the blocking and limitation not only of mainstream media but also on social media.

Finally, media decadence, (Keane, 2013) states that democratic potential is threatened by the troubling growth of media decadence. Furthermore, it was explained that media decadence is a reference to the wide gap that is opening up between the rosy ideals of free and fair public contestation and chastening of power. Free and independent media are fundamental elements and have a contribution to democracy and democratization. The freedom of the press as a reform agenda has not been successful and continues to be championed in the digital era today. The current mainstream media has become a tool of authority rather than as a bridge between the ruler and society. In fact, mainstream media has become partisan of the government rather than as an agent to convey the aspirations of citizens. This is of course inversely proportional to the role of media in the democratic era, namely as a watchdog and government monitoring (Coronel, 2003).

The impact of public distrust on this mainstream media, the community tries to find information and channel their thoughts on social media. This freedom in cyberspace is used as a public sphere and is a hope for the community in politics and democracy.

The challenges of political life faced in leading digital democracy in Indonesia, if not managed properly, will have an impact on democratic deficits. Deficit Democracy lacks the most important check on abuse of power: informed citizenry resolutely defending their rights and liberties (Bovard, 2005). This will have a broad impact on the emergence of divisions, political polarization, and weak law enforcement which are entirely contrary to democratic values.

4 CONCLUSION

The development of technology and information through cyberspace has brought changes to all joints of life including in political life and the course of democracy in Indonesia. Indonesia began a new chapter in political life in cyberspace which was full of challenges.

The biggest challenge for political life and democracy in Indonesia is the political culture in Indonesia which is not ready to face freedom and openness to information and technology, non-democratic regimes, and media decadence. These three things are interrelated with one another, thus adding to the complexity of democratization in Indonesia. This challenge must be faced seriously so as not to contribute to the retreat of democracy in Indonesia so that it experiences a deficit democracy.

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