Initiating the Engagement of Young Citizens in a Quality Politics in the Social Media Era

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Abstract— **Advances in information technology in the industrial revolution 4.0 era have fundamentally changed the involvement of citizens in public affairs. Included also in the form of political participation. The emergence of social media since the early 2000s, has provided a way to reduce the costs of their involvement, improve its quality, and / or improve the types of activities involved. However, there was an anomaly in the use of social media as a venue for channeling aspirations. Social media is a place to produce and reproduce false news. It would be very dangerous if the involvement of citizens, especially young citizens is based on hoax news. This article has been written using the literature review method, which is a method of finding a description of theories, findings, and other research materials obtained from reference materials to be used as a basis for activities in research. The results of this article are; First, young people interpret political participation not only in elections but other unconventional ways such as making online petitions, criticizing governments through social media, or even fundraising movements for people who do not get justice. Second, in participating in the era of social media, young citizens must be equipped with civic literacy. Civic literacy is the knowledge and ability of citizens to overcome social, political and state issues. Civic literacy is closely related to political awareness; namely the ability of citizens to understand (informed about) and sensitive (sensitive) to the political, social and economic aspects of their society.**

Keywords: civic engagement, young citizens, social media, civic literacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a research report titled "Digital in 2018: Essential insights into the internet, social media, mobile, and ecommerce use around the world" conducted by the *Wearesocial and Hootsuite* institutions [1], Indonesia ranks as the country with the most significant social media users in the world, namely: Indonesia is the top three Facebook users in the world with 140 million below India (270 million), and the United States (240 million). While in the use of Instagram, Indonesia ranks fourth in the world with 56 million users, below the United States (120 Million), Brazil (61 Million), and India (59 million).

Besides, the growth rate of social media users in Indonesia is also very high compared to other countries. The average growth in the use of social media annually grows by 23%, which places Indonesia in third place after Saudi Arabia (32%) and India (31%). The penetration of social media users in Indonesia is also included in the high category compared to the average penetration globally (42%). Indonesia stands at 49% above Russia (47%) and Germany (46%) [1]. With this amount, it is not surprising if then social media provides an important role for citizens, especially young citizens, in providing their civic involvement through opinions and actions in public spaces such as social media.

From the report of the research of the same institution, *Wearesocial and Hootsuit*, the number of social media users in Indonesia in 2019 was 150 million people with 66% of the users are young people, or in the category of young citizens. The results of the study indicate that young citizens and social media cannot be separated. This finding is certainly not surprising because indeed the current generation of young people, also called millennials, is a generation that has been brought up with advances in information technology as part of the industrial revolution 4.0. So that their life cycle can not be separated from gadgets that are embedded in social media. With smartphones in their hands, young citizens can do many things from just texting, sharing news, to creating and distributing content. Young citizens also have the advantage that some of them still have high ideals and hold it firmly.

With the enormous penetration of social media users, citizens' activities in the digital world are very influential in their real lives. The development of online sites and debate forums has stimulated new scientific interest in the notion of civic engagement, and has led to a redefinition of deliberative politics and public space. Social media has been praised for being able to facilitate civic engagement, when Western countries face the problem of decreasing citizen participation in politics. This potential provides hope that social media can help revive extra parliamentary political participation that is participation outside the rights and obligations of liberal citizenship (eg voting) - and thereby strengthen democratic accountability at the national and international levels [2, pp. 1–5].

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With these advantages, the younger generation who have been familiar with technology since childhood, are expected to contribute to the resolution of current national problems such as corruption, horizontal conflicts due to identity politics, exploitation of religious issues for political commodities, and other problems such as national disintegration, human rights violations, etc.

However, with all its advantages, there are fundamental problems faced by young people today. There are at least three problems faced by young Indonesian citizens today. First, young people are trapped in the flow of diametrical socio-political conflict which divided the Indonesian nation from the 2014 elections to 2019 with the terms "Cebong"/"tadpole" and "Kampret"/"shucks". As a result, reasoning that was built was partisan reasoning that had been exhaled from a very young age. The consideration used is no longer for national unity and integrity, but rather to channel short-term political desires by degrading opponents who disagree with their groups.

Second, news hoax has tainted the common sense of young citizens today. As a result, public spaces on social media are noisy with blasphemies, verbal abuse, and endless curses. The narratives of the Indonesian people who are known to be religious with the spirit of nationalism also decay in hatred, mutual suspicion, and exploit each other's mistakes. Political participation channeled is exposed to lies from false news and information.

Third, youth are alienated with instant culture, including access to information. This is very dangerous, because they enjoy reading instant on social media without being critical and looking for authentic sources to dive into. The perception that is built does not refer to valid references and data, but merely false information and even hoaxes. So that the steps of youth are often trapped in the spread of slander.

With these problems, the hope of the young generation being able to resolve the national problem is blurred. Because precisely the younger generation has its own fundamental problems. For this reason, a concerted effort is needed to overcome the difficulties faced by young citizens, one of which is their belief in false news. According to the results of a survey conducted by the IPSOS 2017 Center for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) the number of internet users in Indonesia reached around 132 million and 65% of them were still easily incited by hoaxes [3]. This data is indeed very astounding, meaning that more than half of the citizens, especially those connected to the internet, consumer and trust hoax news or junk news that has been deliberately created to overturn a previously established belief system.

The most important principle of democracy is citizenship. This includes the right to get equal treatment with others, related to joint choices and the obligations of those authorized to carry out these choices to take responsibility and open access to all people. Instead, this principle also imposes an obligation on the people to respect the legitimacy of deliberate joint choices and the right of the authorities to act with authority to encourage the effectiveness of these choices, and to protect the country from threats to its sustainability [4, pp. 8–9]. Given the importance of citizen participation so that democracy can function in a healthily, ignoring the role and involvement of young citizens is a mistake that will only make democracy sicker.

II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Definition of Civic Engagement

There is a lot of discourse about civic engagement, especially among young citizens. This discourse carries a message and a special understanding of youth as citizens [5, pp. 302–303]. Relation to politics, civic engagement according to Heter is very closely related. He explained "engagement is simply authenticity with respect to the political" [6]. Referring to the opinion of Adler and Goggin [7, p. 329], civic engagement is defined as the involvement of citizens both individually and collectively in community life based on skills, knowledge, combined with values, motivation, and commitment to make changes in order improve the quality of community life.

Furthermore Adler and Goggin [7] classify the definition of civic engagement in several views. First civic engagement as community service, namely the involvement of civil society in voluntary services in the community either independently or as group members. Second, civic engagement as collective action, is the definition of citizen involvement that limits collective involvement to increase the influence of civil society more broadly. The third civic engagement as political involvement, namely the involvement of citizens who are not only collective, but also political involvement (which involves government action). The fourth civic engagement as social change, namely the involvement of citizens who focus on social change. Citizen involvement illustrates how citizens actively participate in community life, to determine their own future which ultimately must include dimensions of social change.

B. Limitation of Young Citizens

Based on article 1 paragraph 1 of Law No. 40 of 2009 concerning Youth, the young age limit in Indonesia starts in the age range of 16-30 years. With these limitations, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) noted that in 2018 Indonesia was inhabited by 63.36 million citizens with the category of "young". This figure is equivalent to a quarter of the total population of Indonesia, which reaches more than 260 million people.

Young citizens who are growing up today are referred to as "millennials" who were born in the late 1980s to early 2000s who have lived intimately and are adept at using technology since their youth. Even able to use information technology better than the previous generation. The young citizen is now also a potential beginner voter in determining regional and national leadership. So it is not surprising when the last 2019 elections were voted up by all election

contestants by accommodating the "millennial" theme in every political campaign. During the election period, like this in 2019, the votes of the millennial generation are very calculated. Millennials are characterized by Critical (critical thinking), Change (happy about change), Communicative (communicating their choices with others), and Community (incorporated in the community) or abbreviated as 4C [8, p. 126].

C. Definition of Social Media

The definition of social media generally refers to digital technology that emphasizes content or interactions created by users [9], [10]. Specifically Kaplan & Haenlein [9, p. 61] defines social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that are built on the ideological foundation and Web 2.0 technology, and which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC)" . While a simpler definition is conveyed by Lewis [11, p. 2] which explains that social media is a label for digital technology that allows people to connect, interact, and produce various content (produce and share content).

Whereas [12, p. 50] define social media as an Internet-based channel that allows users to interact opportunistically and selectively present themselves, both in real-time or asynchronously, with broad and narrow audiences who get value from user-generated content and perception of interaction with others. Social media is content created by users who use internet-based publishing technology that is connected and that is unique compared to print and other broadcast media because it is able to facilitate two-way communication that allows organizations to personalize content and engage with communities and communities. Social media offers various tools for connecting people and various content such as social networking sites (Facebook and Twitter), photo sharing sites (Instagram and Flickr), and video sharing sites (Youtube and Vimeo) [13, p. 2].

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This article has been written using the literature review method, a research method that critically studies or reviews the knowledge, ideas, or findings contained in the body of academic-oriented literature, and formulates theoretical and methodological contributions for a particular topic.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the current era of information technology, the young generation and social media cannot be separated. Social media which was originally being used as a means of information and communication has changed to become very strong. At the global level the role of social media can even trigger a political revolution, as the Arab Spring phenomenon is heavily influenced by citizens who actively initiate political movements through social media so that the spread of discourse about revolution.

In Indonesia itself, with the most significant social media users and high growth in internet citizen activity (netizens) has a wide-ranging impact on political decisions. Although the participation trend in elections has decreased, the involvement in other political activities outside the

election is getting higher. Even giving a very significant influence in the national political arena. Citizens' political participation is not just in elections. Uldam and Vestergaard [2] define political participation on two sides; First, formal participation such as voting in elections. And secondly, civic engagement such as volunteerism, activism, and participation initiated in society. Civic engagement is then understood as involvement in social political issues. Examples are engaging in protests against government, influencing policy makers, and making alternative movements such as social services, fundraising, making online petitions, etc.

Based on research conducted by *Wearesocial Hootsuit* [14] which was released in January 2019, social media users in Indonesia reached 150 million from 268.2 million people in Indonesia. This means that more than half of Indonesia's population (56%) are active users of social media. Of these, 66% of social media users are in the age range of 18-34 years or fall into the category of young citizens. The research also mentioned that the average daily time spent using social media for 3 hours 26 minutes or nearly half our productive time each day. Therefore, the role of young citizens with social media cannot be ignored.

In media studies, many have linked the potential of social media to facilitate civil society access to public space. This view departs from the long-standing political axiom called deliberative democracy in the Habermas concept. Discourse in the public sphere involves a conversation about the issue of public concern among empowered citizens as an essential and vital prerequisite for the function of democracy [2]. For civic engggement in public spaces, social media with internet technology provides a way to reduce the costs of their involvement, improve its quality, and increase the types of activities involved. when previously the form of citizen participation was carried out in conventional ways that were expensive and complicated, the current era of social media undermines that notion.

The internet has different characteristics compared to media in the previous era, namely: (a) increases the speed with which information can be gathered and transmitted, (b) increases the volume of information that is easily accessible, (c) creates greater flexibility in terms of when in- formation is accessed, (d) provides greater opportunity and mixes of interactivity (one to one, one to many, many to one, and many to many), (e) shifts the nature of community from geographic to interest based, (f) blurs distinctions between types of media (print, visual, and audio), (g) challenges traditional definitions of information gatekeepers and authoritative voices, and (h) challenges traditional definitions of producers and consumers of information. All of these characteristics have broad implications in changing the current style of citizen participation [15, pp. 346–347].

With all its advantages, young citizens and social media can be the right combination to improve the quality of citizen participation in politics. Not only on formal participation in elections, but citizen participation in other social activities.

In Indonesia, seen from the behavior of millennials in accessing the internet, 83.23 percent of millennials claim that the reason for accessing the internet is to access social media.

While 68.01 percent use it to get information / news and 46.81 percent use it for entertainment [8]. Thus, access to social media is the most compelling reason why millennials access the internet.

A. The Concept of Quality Civic Engagement by Young Citizens

Based on a study conducted by Ekman & Amnå [16] he made a new typology in the form of citizen participation. In contrast to the conventional civic engagement described by Adler and Goggin [7] which refers to the activities of ordinary citizens to influence conditions in the community that are relevant to others. Specifically, Ekman & Amnå distinguishes between social involvement and civic engagement. Social involvement is personal interest in politics and social issues. In public activities this activity takes the form of a sense of belonging to a group or a collective with a distinct political profile or agenda. Whereas civic engagement is an activities based on personal interest in and attention to politics and societal issues.

In the public sphere in the form of voluntary work to improve conditions in local communities, for charity, or to help others [16]. In brief, it can be distinguished between social involvement which refers to one's interest, whereas civic engagement refers to one's actions.

In the typology made by Ekman & Amnå, the concept refers specifically to individual or collective actions as mentioned above. People engage in society in a number of different ways: they discuss politics, follow politics, write letters to editors, donate money, and recycle for environmental reasons. People do voluntary work to help others. People become organized to solve local problems or improve conditions for certain groups in society.

The definition of civic engagement as a collective action assumes that such involvement most often comes in the form of collaboration or joint action to improve conditions in the civilian sphere. Other definitions emphasize the political aspects of "civil", and consequently equate civic engagement with "activities that are not only collective but also political (eg, those involving government action)" [7], [16]. Civic engagement is an important component of the historical role of the profession in forming social contracts and the welfare state that is produced [17, p. 305]. Furthermore, to fully understand the meaning of civic engagement for young citizens it is necessary to know how certain forms of civic engagement and social position of young citizens are and how they imagine the underlying problems to be addressed. Therefore five key issues are needed that call civic engagement for young citizens as desirable activities and analyze their basic assumptions about youth and the purpose of their involvement. The five key discourses are: Democratic citizens, Positive youth development, belonging, care, and justice [5].

With so many definitions of civic engagement, the explanation has been conveyed by Adler and Goggin [7] who have classified civic engagement in: (1) civic engagement as community service; (2) civic engagement as collective action; (3) civic engagement as political involvement; and (4)

civic engagement as social change, is the definition that best fits the characteristics and forms of participation of qualified young citizens expected in this article. Characteristics of young citizens or millennial generation include the increased use and familiarity with communication, media and digital technology. Because it was raised by the advancement of information technology, millennial generation has creative, informative, and productive passion. With a smartphone in his hand, millennials are able to do anything rather than just texting. From accessing educational sites, online transactions, creating and disseminating video content, raising funds, and even making online petitions. Millennials have the characteristics of open communication with political and economic views, so they look very reactive to the environmental changes that occur around them [8].

Therefore, civic engagement for young citizens is a non-conventional form of participation. Traditional ways of expressing ideas are no longer used but will utilize technology that will be even more impactful. Because this generation means political participation not only in democratic parties. But in a broader social sphere such as making an online petition, criticizing the government through social media, or even a fundraising movement for people who don't get justice. Ways like this happen because of an educated and open minded culture that is supported by technology and global trends. Because civic engagement is not a neutral concept but rather the interrelationships between individuals, the community and the wider community.

B. Encourage young citizens toward Civic literacy

Young citizens and social media are two combinations that can have both positive and negative impacts when linked to civic engagement. The positive impact is that young citizens and social media can contribute to influencing the government's response to a problem that occurs in society, influencing government policy, or even spurring government performance. On the other hand, the participation of young citizens through social media can also trigger a political revolution as happened in Arab countries or known as the Arab Spring in 2011. Therefore, in participating in the social media era, young citizens must be equipped with civic literacy.

Civic literacy is the knowledge and ability of citizens to overcome social, political and state issues. In the realm of civic science, civic literacy is placed as a basic element of political virtue of citizens (political virtue of citizenship), in civic literacy implies mastery of the form of citizens' political knowledge in particular and will be manifested in citizenship activities [18].

Civic literacy is closely related to political participation and political knowledge. According to Milner, Civic literacy is "the knowledge and ability of citizens to make sense of their political world" [19]. In his book *Civic Literacy: How Informed Citizens Make Democracy Work* (2002), Milner examines some challenges in civic literacy, such as television and the level of interaction and participation in the community. He found that social capital was not an indicator of the ability of the state to support democracy, especially civic literacy. Social capital and the social trust can support

democracy, but it is difficult consistently, testing empirically the level of social capital. Civic literacy, according to Milner, offers a consistent way to measure the ability of citizens to support their community and country.

Furthermore Milner [19] argues that civic literacy can be increased through three aspects; education, the use of mass media, and political institutions. Specifically in education, according to Milner, citizenship education is the most supportive subject in increasing civic literacy [19]. To measure the level of civic literacy there are two indicators namely; (1) factual knowledge, namely knowledge about the political system and government of each country, so there is no standard instrument to measure this level of factual knowledge. ; and (2) cognitive proficiency, namely learning material for Citizenship Education in schools [19]. Thus civic literacy will be able to influence the quality of citizens' political participation based on adequate knowledge and will be able to increase its efficacy, not only to gain satisfaction because of its involvement but also to increasingly open access for citizens to sources of economic income [18].

To carry out their rights and obligations properly and as they should, citizens must know, understand and practice what are the rights of citizens and what are the obligations of citizens, herein lies the importance of civic literacy. In principle, civic literacy is a comprehensive mastery of the scope of citizenship education. Citizens who have good civic literacy skills have excellent intellectual capital, this is very important for the political maturity of citizens. The political decisions of citizenship are largely determined by the level of knowledge. If the knowledge they have is low, civic engagement is also in poor condition.

V. CONCLUSION

In the midst of declining conventional political participation through elections, social media gives new hope because it is able to facilitate civilian involvement that is more open and more widely used. Social media which are mostly owned by young citizens, are able to have a positive influence to improve the quality of citizen participation which will ultimately improve the quality of democracy itself. This is certainly followed by strengthening civic literacy for young citizens. So that young citizens understand that their involvement in political life and in a democratic society can help improve the quality of life in their environment. Civic literacy is closely related to political awareness (political awareness); namely the ability of citizens to understand (informed about) and sensitive (sensitive) to the political, social and economic aspects of their society.

Civic engagement is very important to be emphasized for young citizens because it will provide quality to the democracy that is carried out. In addition, civic engagement for young citizens also has several benefits: first, individual benefits in the form of; positive identity and development; increase self-confidence and self-esteem; improved social skills, communication and critical thinking; greater educational / academic achievement and career aspirations;

good physical health; and increasing citizen interest and services. Second, benefits for the community: Collaborative citizenship actions can help create connectivity between community members, and promote collaboration through identification of local problems together and bringing solutions to these problems. This can emphasize the importance of young people as civil actors [5].

Young citizens who have good civic literacy skills will be able to provide a better quality of democracy with their concern for socio-political issues through social media in their hands, this is very important for the political maturity of citizens. Political decisions of citizenship are largely determined by the level of knowledge. If the knowledge they have is low, civic engagement is also in poor condition.

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