



## Digital Participation and Active Involvement of Civil Society in Organizing Ideal Elections

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| Info Articles  | Abstract   |
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| <b>Article History</b><br>Received : 2024-04-11<br>Revised: 2024-04-13<br>Published: 2024-05-30<br><br><b>Keywords:</b><br><i>Digital Participation, Civil Society, Election</i> | Digital participation and active involvement of civil society are important elements in organizing ideal and democratic elections. Digital technology opens up new spaces for the public to participate in the election process, either through social media, digital platforms, or special applications designed to monitor and ensure transparency and accountability of elections. The research method used is normative juridical, with a legislative, conceptual, and comparative approach. The legislative approach is used to examine regulations and policies related to digital participation in elections, while the conceptual approach is used to understand the concept of digital participation and the role of civil society. The comparative approach is used to compare digital participation practices in elections in various countries, in order to gain a broader understanding of the effectiveness of the strategies implemented. The results of the discussion show that digital participation has great potential in increasing civil society involvement, but there are still significant challenges, such as low digital literacy, the risk of spreading misinformation, and limited access to technology. Clear and systematic regulations are needed to support digital participation effectively and prevent misuse that can damage the integrity of elections. In conclusion, digital participation is an important means to increase public involvement in organizing ideal elections, but it needs to be accompanied by supportive policies and adequate public education. The suggestion from this research is to strengthen regulations on the use of technology in elections, increase public digital literacy, and encourage innovation in safe and transparent digital platforms for election participation. |

### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country of law that adheres to a democratic system. Specifically, the democratic system is called the Pancasila democratic system, namely a system that is organized based on deliberation to reach an agreement for the welfare of the people (Nurtiasih, 2019). Where individual freedom is guaranteed by the state but not absolutely because it must be adjusted to social responsibility. Every citizen has a right called constitutional rights in accordance with the constitution of the country where he is located. I Dewa Gede Palguna defines constitutional rights as rights that are guaranteed by the constitution or UUD either implicitly or not (Handayani & Angrayni, 2019).

In Article 1 Paragraph (2) of the Amendment to the 1945 Constitution, it is stated that "sovereignty lies in the hands of the people and is carried out according to the Constitution". Since the beginning of independence, Indonesia has been a democratic legal state originating from the idea of the concept of legal sovereignty and

people's sovereignty which has been realized by the founders of the Indonesian nation (Muhlashin, 2021). On the other hand, the Republic of Indonesia is a power structure designed based on the principle of people's sovereignty. In fact, the 1945 Constitution itself has the status of the highest law because it was formed by all the people as the owners of sovereignty.

One example of the realization of "people's sovereignty" contained in the article is the holding of general elections or what will be referred to as elections. Elections are a means for the people to elect their leaders and deputy leaders, who will later determine the direction of movement of a region or country (Millah & Dewi, 2021). so that they become important figures in organizing and running the government. Article 1 of Law Number 7 of 2017 states that elections are a means of people's sovereignty to elect members of the people's representative council, members of the regional representative council, president and vice president, and to elect members of the regional people's representative council, which

are carried out directly, generally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia.

Technology is an inevitability. Its development cannot be avoided, because technology corresponds to human needs in all fields (Hadi et al., 2020). However, most importantly, its existence can be the answer to every problem faced. Not the other way around, becoming the cause of new problems. Even in terms of elections, technology is needed to be able to provide solutions to every obstacle and challenge that exists, in order to present the implementation of elections with integrity, both in terms of process and results. The better the quality of the election results, the stronger the legitimacy of the elected government, which will then create a stable government and a government that is politically capable.

The development of IT is very important, especially in social media, The number of Internet users has increased significantly from 2013 to the present year. With this development, society is never separated from information technology, especially the Millennial generation and Generation Z. The rapid development of technological progress makes it the main source of information for a system that requires design and implementation in the Information System application mode to be developed (Abror et al., 2024).

One of the important elements in organizing elections is trustworthiness, public trust (Maarif & Arifin, 2024). No matter how much the election results favor one candidate, if the public does not trust them, then support for the government will also be weak and vice versa. Djamaludin Ancok said that building public trust in the government is the main prerequisite for creating a peaceful and democratic civil society.

The term "civil society" refers to the concept of a society characterized by citizenship, active participation, and social justice, and this concept is often associated with Islamic thought, forming the basis for the development of a harmonious and just society (Jufri, 2020). The concept of civil society has its roots in Islamic thought, particularly in the concept of "al-madina" which describes an organized and peaceful society. This idea is also related to the concept of the caliphate and just leadership in the Islamic tradition. Civil society emphasizes the active role of citizens in the development and management of society, involving active participation in social, political,

and economic life. The principle of social justice, including the equitable distribution of wealth and opportunities, and the protection of human rights, are important pillars of this concept.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research model that the researcher uses in this case is included in the type of Library research or normative legal research, namely research that focuses on a legal rule or other regulations on whether there is an impact resulting from the active involvement of civil society and digital participation in organizing elections. This research will also use a conceptual approach, namely to see how to realize the ideal election concept.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Civil Society

In Islam itself, there is no mention of what civil society is, but there are several names for a society with these characteristics, one of which is *khairu umma* (Ridho et al., 2021). This is found in the Qur'an, Surah Ali Imran verse 110, which means "You (Muslims) are the best people born to humans, (because you) order (do) what is right, and forbid what is wrong, and believe in Allah. If the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them there are those who believe, but most of them are wicked people." This letter itself was revealed in the seventh year of Hijri, which means that at that time the Muslim community had already settled in the Medina area and had formed a colony or group that was growing and developing. This means that this letter is a higher demand for not only individual Muslims but for all Muslims. Clearly, *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* and also faith in Allah are the obligations of every Muslim community, whose main goal is peace, justice, safety in the world and the hereafter (Fadillah & Putri, 2021). However, there are several criteria that must be met by Muslims to be called *khayru ummah*. So that not all Muslims can immediately get the title.

The formation of the Medina Charter at that time made the Prophet not only a religious leader, but also a leader of a community or constitutional head who had a mission to build the development of political and social life within it (Mesakh, 2020). In this case, it can be seen from the success of the Apostle in forming the Medina community into a civil society. This is what initially underlies the concept of civil society that exists today.

In modern times, civil society was first introduced by Anwar Ibrahim (at that time

Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia) in a lecture at the National Symposium in the framework of the Scientific Forum at the Istiqlal Festival, September 26, 1995. The term was translated from Arabic "mujtama' madani", which was introduced by Prof. Naquib Attas, an expert in Islamic history and civilization from Malaysia, founder of ISTAC. The word "madani" means civil or civilized. Madani also means civilization, as do other Arabic words such as hadlari, tsaqafi or tamaddun. The concept of "madani" for Arabs does refer to ideal things in life (Nur & Makmur, 2020).

The concept of civil society was born as a result of the Islamic Festival called the Istiqlal Festival, a festival organized by ICMI (Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals). ICMI is an Islamic organization founded in December 1991 with the blessing of President Soeharto and chaired by BJ Habibie, Soeharto's right-hand man who held the position of Minister of Research and Technology. The establishment of ICMI cannot be separated from the role of Habibie who succeeded in convincing President Soeharto to accommodate the interests of the rapidly growing Muslim middle class and needed a means to channel their aspirations. The response was positive because Soeharto was looking for partners from the Muslim group to support his desire to become president in 1998. Soeharto did this to reduce the pressure of influence from those who were very critical of his policies, especially from nationalists who founded various NGOs and Islamic groups that took the socio-cultural path such as Gus Dur, Emha, and Mustafa Bisri (MOKLIS, n.d.).

They developed the pro-democracy movement by introducing the concept of civil society. This concept was offered as a resistance to the massive state hegemony through the military apparatus, bureaucracy, and its technocrats. The concept of civil society was more intended to counter the dominance of ABRI as the main supporter of the existence of the New Order (MOKLIS, n.d.). ABRI not only plays a role as an element of defense and security but also interferes in civil affairs. For this purpose ABRI justifies its actions in the ABRI dual function doctrine, where ABRI also plays a role in civil duties in both the executive, legislative, and judicial institutions. Its involvement in politics is very decisive. As a result, checks and balances in the government system do not work and the New Order turns into a bureaucratic authoritarian regime.

Thus, the government has a very big role in the formation of civil society. The government needs

to adopt an all-inclusive attitude, which means being able to accommodate various elements in society and provide facilities without distinguishing between one group and another (Djani, 2022). In general, civil society is a concept of a society that is able to advance itself through independent activities in a space where the state cannot intervene. This is closely related to the concept of civil society with the concept of democracy and democratization, because democracy is only possible in a civil society and civil society only develops in a democratic environment.

## **B. The Role of Civil Society in Organizing Ideal Elections Through Participation in Cyberspace**

### **1. Elections and Digitalization**

Elections are a means of people's sovereignty to elect members of the People's Representative Council, members of the Regional Representative Council, the President and Vice President, and to elect members of the Regional People's Representative Council, which are carried out directly, generally, freely, secretly, honestly and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (Indradjaja et al., 2022). Elections are the election of people to fill certain positions, therefore general elections are very important because in elections the implementation of people's sovereignty occurs. However, to implement the ideal election, it must at least include the following characteristics: fair representation, transparency and integrity, high voter participation, data security and protection, supporting technology, fair and clean campaigns and financial openness (FHERRA, 2023).

Civil society has a number of characteristics that reflect its values, principles, and characteristics. First, the active participation of its citizens in social, political, and economic life is a distinctive feature of this society. Citizens are actively involved in the process of community development and decision-making that affects life together. Furthermore, responsible citizenship is a characteristic of civil society, where citizens are aware of their rights and obligations as citizens and contribute positively to the development and maintenance of the social environment (Mubarok, 2019).

Political participation refers to voluntary actions taken by the general public to influence public policy, either directly or by influencing the choices of individuals who make those policies.

Examples of these activities include voting in elections, supporting political campaigns, donating money to candidates or causes, communicating with officials, petitioning, protesting, and working with others on issues. Citizen participation is fundamental and an essential requirement for a democratic system. Citizens have several different methods of political participation, such as choosing officials through the electoral process or influencing policy directly through protests, lobbying activities, or demonstrations (Setiawan & Djafar, 2023).

With the increasingly modern era, the use of technology and information has spread into various aspects of community life, including in elections. Technology and information systems that contain communication support functions, human networks, efficiency, political decisions, authority decisions, public services, and public insight have great potential to support the democratic process in any society, regardless of the direction of the government's politics (Rahman et al., 2022). In its development, science has also become a major aspect of technological development because technological development will not be separated from the development of science. Furthermore, the existence of technology for monitoring supports the development of information technology in the future and there is technology in technology learning with blended learning.

According to Silih Agung Wasesa, the presence of new digital-based media makes political information not only more passive, but also distributed quickly and interactively.

With its characteristics, not a few political actors in a number of countries utilize social media in the political campaign process. Social media has greater potential in the production and distribution of information more effectively (Solihin et al., 2021). With such capabilities, social media can certainly play an active role in strengthening democratization. Political communication is the delivery of messages directed at achieving such an influence, so that a problem discussed by this type of communication activity can bind all groups or citizens through sanctions determined jointly by political institutions. Political communication can use media such as radio, billboards, banners, flags, pennants, pamphlets and so on.

Danuri said that digital technology is an information technology that prioritizes activities carried out by computer or digitally rather than using human power. He further explained that

digital is basically just a very fast counting system that processes all forms of information as numerical values (Martins, 2022). From this system, various very significant developments are produced such as in the fields of communication, information transformation, data processing, data security and handling increasingly complex activities. The transition of human activities from manual to automatic systems and in this case technology is also called digitalization. Digitalization is an automatic operating system with a format that can be read by a computer.

## **2. Civil Society and Its Role in Realizing Ideal Elections**

To realize an ideal election that is in accordance with the progress of the technology and information system, of course, good cooperation is needed between the government and the community and in this case the community becomes the most important element for the implementation of this. Both before the election is held, during its implementation, and after the election is held. Digital participation in civil society in the implementation of an ideal election is certainly an important tool to increase the effectiveness of their role (Asfia, 2023). Technological advances make everything easier both in conveying and receiving information. It can be said that the many invalid votes in previous elections were the result of a lack of socialization to the public about the election, so that people who are not familiar with it make mistakes that cause their votes to be invalid, be it mistakes in voting, being absent during the election, and so on.

The role of civil society in the field of digital participation is important in various aspects concerning information (Irwan et al., 2023). Such as providing information about the election, conducting socialization to the community, sorting positive information so that it is not misleading, conveying information about the candidates to be elected, reporting election violations that occur and so on. Of course, this will increase public knowledge so that it can increase public participation in the implementation of the election. Not only that, as stated above, things like transparency and data security will also increase public trust in the election.

In addition, the application of digital technology in general elections not only increases effectiveness and efficiency in political contestation, but also provides a solution to the obstacles that often arise in conventional systems (Waruwu et al., 2024). The use of e-voting

simplifies data processing, presents more credible, accountable, and accountable results because of the transparency in calculations using electronic systems. The application of e-voting in the general election mechanism is part of an effort to digitize elections that rely on computerized applications to support daily activities in social life (IRAWAN TARA MANDAPU, 2022). Although it brings potential progress in democratic life, it is necessary to consider the various threats that may arise, especially related to data confidentiality and security.

However, there are still challenges in the use of social media today, one of which is hoax news and buzzers who increasingly influence public perception to be negative about a particular candidate. The term buzzer was initially used to market a product or service on various social media so that it was expected to increase sales of a product or service. Buzzers can be ordinary individuals, celebrities, or even fake accounts that are deliberately created for a specific purpose. They use their social media accounts to spread certain messages, ideas, or views so that more people see and follow them. Buzzers can also form groups or networks to increase the impact of their campaigns (Faulina et al., 2020).

However, the use of the term buzzer on social media during the Regional Head Election (Pilkada) and Presidential Election (Pemilu) tends to be identified with the use of negative campaign strategies, making the term seem negative. They can use various tactics, such as spreading information that supports or harms, creating trending topics on social media, or participating in online discussions to achieve their goals (Faulina et al., 2020).

The role of civil society is again needed in this problem, because everyone has an obligation to contribute positively to the development and maintenance of the social environment. Especially in straightening out the public view that is swayed by the irresponsible buzzers. Not only that, this is also exacerbated by the absence of regulations governing how political buzzers work in campaign activities that are suspected of containing negative things. then coupled with the difficulty of law enforcement officers in tracking the anonymous accounts of these buzzers. Although things like buzzers have grown rapidly in recent elections, the public must still be able and remind each other to always sort out the news that is scattered in the present day so as not to be incited.

## IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

### A. Conclusion

Elections in Indonesia serve as a mechanism for expressing the people's sovereignty in determining their representatives, including members of the DPR, DPD, President, and Vice President. Democratic principles such as direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair elections are the basis for organizing elections, in accordance with the values of Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The importance of ideal elections is reflected in a number of characteristics, such as fair representation, transparency, integrity, high voter participation, data security and protection, technological support, fair campaigns, and financial openness. All of this aims to ensure a democratic and accountable election process.

The role of technology and information in modern elections cannot be ignored. The use of digital technology, social media, and information can make a major contribution to the efficiency, transparency, and public participation in the election process. Digital participation of civil society is a key element in increasing the effectiveness of elections. The public can use technology to disseminate information, conduct outreach, convey information about candidates, report violations, and raise public awareness of the importance of participation in the democratic process.

However, challenges arise along with the development of social media, including hoax news and the role of buzzers that can influence public perception. Therefore, the active role of civil society is crucial in straightening out information, filtering positive news, and making positive contributions to maintaining the integrity of the election. Thus, active and responsible civil society participation, supported by sophisticated technology and information, is the main key to holding democratic, transparent, and quality elections.

### B. Suggestion

Based on the conclusion regarding the importance of digital participation and civil society involvement in the implementation of ideal elections, it is recommended that the government, election organizers, and civil society organizations work together to improve digital literacy among the community. Education on the wise use of technology, how to detect and combat false information (hoaxes), and understanding the importance of each individual's role in

maintaining election integrity needs to be expanded and strengthened.

In addition, the government and election organizers must develop stricter and more systematic regulations regarding the use of technology in elections, including the protection of voters' personal data and monitoring of social media activities that have the potential to damage election integrity. Initiatives are also needed to improve technological infrastructure, so that access to information and digital technology can reach all levels of society, including in remote areas.

To support the creation of fair and transparent elections, various technological innovations such as election monitoring applications and credible information platforms must continue to be developed and optimized. Civil society is also expected to take an active role in providing independent supervision, participating in election monitoring activities, and voicing aspirations constructively. With these steps, it is hoped that the election process in Indonesia can be more democratic, accountable, and trustworthy.

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