



INDONESIAN GENERATION Z'S IMPACT ON DEMOCRACY AND LEGAL DYNAMICS IN INDONESIA

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Article	Abstract
<p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Generation Z; Democracy and Legal System; Social Media.</i></p> <p>Received: July 19, 2021; Reviewed: July 23, 2021; Accepted: July 26, 2021; Published: August 10, 2021</p>	<p>Indonesia's population is made up of 27.94% members of Generation Z, which comprises those born between 1997 and 2012, according to a 2020 Central Statistics Agency (BPS) poll. Considering that this generation grew up with the rise of social media and technology, there are serious concerns about how involved they are in democracy and the judicial system. This article highlights the critical role that Generation Z is playing in developing a new paradigm for a more responsive legal system and dynamic democracy, especially through social media, which they have grown to rely on. With their technological prowess, Generation Z makes use of social media platforms as tools to voice political views, mobilize collective action, and disseminate up-to-date information. Their activism enriches democratic dialogue, creating space for more inclusive voices. Social media is also a channel for building legal awareness, with discussions on regulations and human rights. In conclusion, the basis for constructive change is laid by Generation Z's involvement in democracy and their interaction with the legal system via social media. They are using technology to alter Indonesia's political and judicial processes, as well as to create lively forums for discussion.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

In theory, democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The origin of the word "democracy" comes from the Latin words "demos," which means "people," and "cratein," which means "to govern." In the modern context, democracy emphasizes that political power is in the hands of the people.¹ Meanwhile, law is defined as a system of rules that includes norms and sanctions created by authorized official institutions,

¹ Muhlashin, Ias, *Negara Hukum, Demokrasi dan Penegakan Hukum Di Indonesia* [UIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2021] (7)

which are regulatory and coercive in governing the behavior of society.²

From this definition, it can be inferred that law and democracy are two concepts that are interrelated and mutually influence the organization and governance. Emphasizing their close relationship, Moh. Mahfud, MD, in his book "Law and Pillars of Democracy" (1999:1), states that democracy requires a strong legal foundation. Without law, the democratic system cannot function properly and may lead to anarchy in its processes.

However, when the law is not upheld within a democratic political system, it becomes a repressive tool. The legal system serves as the fundamental framework for the sustainability of harmony in society³. With a set of rules and norms, it provides guidance to individuals on how to behave in their daily interactions. Additionally, democracy, as a form of government, offers the opportunity for active participation of the community in decision-making processes and the creation of laws that govern their lives. Law, as a set of rules governing people's lives, should be based on democratic principles.

According to Jimly Ashidique, the conception of democracy involves the principles of popular sovereignty, which means that legal policy should reflect the collective wisdom of citizens. In other words, in the formation of law, the active role and participation of everyone in society is required. Equal rights and opportunities must be given to all individuals to participate in the law-making process, so that the resulting law more fairly and democratically reflects the values, aspirations and common interests of the entire community.⁴

Along with the growth and development of technology, Generation Z grew up with social media, forming close relationships with digital tools as a means to voice their views and aspirations. Today, Generation Z is also actively voicing their opinions on democracy and law in Indonesia through their social media platforms, especially evident during the recent presidential debates. This participation has become a benchmark of community involvement in the nation. Those who perceive it as part of the national life system will have the urge to participate in the further development of national life to the greatest extent possible (Harun R., 2006: 133). This is because democracy is based on the basic idea of government from the people, by the people, and for the people (Mudjiyanto, 2012).⁵

² Mustaqimah, Lailatul, *Apa yang Dimaksud dengan Hukum* [Universitas Sari Mulia] (2019)

³ Mahfud MD, Moh, *Hukum dan Pilar-Pilar Demokrasi* [Gama Media, 1999] (1)

⁴ Pusat Pendidikan Pancasila dan Konstitusi Mahkamah Konstitusi, "Pendidikan Hukum dan Demokrasi," [2016] (12)

⁵ Satria Rizal dkk, *Penguatan Nilai Demokrasi melalui Peran Gen Z Indonesia dalam Media Online* [Universitas Slamet Riyadi, 2021] (2)

In this context, the use of social media serves as a tool for Generation Z to actively participate in expressing opinions and criticisms. Political participation activities can be carried out by searching for and disseminating information related to political content, expressing opinions through social media accounts, commenting on government-related social media, and accessing the activities of government representatives and political elites who serve the public (Salman, A., Salleh, N. A. M., Yusoff, M. A., & Abdullah, 2018).⁶

As a result of Generation Z's familiarity with social media, online communities have formed, serving as their platform to share ideas and perspectives related to law and democracy. These discussions illustrate the diverse perspectives and aspirations held by Generation Z, creating a dynamic pattern of participation in expressing their opinions.

From the previous explanation, the purpose of writing this article is to depict the contributions made by Generation Z in creating a legal and democratic system that is more dynamic and responsive. They achieve this by combining their familiarity with social media and the ease of accessing information to voice their opinions.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

The research used "Normative Juridical Legal Research" in accordance with Soerjono Soekanto's opinion that legal research is carried out by examining secondary materials or library materials or library legal research, through searching for books, laws, literature, and other legal materials.⁷

3. DISCUSSION

This article employs a literature review methodology, focusing on the evaluation and analysis of relevant literature from journals and articles. The central theme revolves around exploring the influence of Generation Z in Indonesia on democracy and the legal system, particularly through the use of social media. Generation Z plays a pivotal role in shaping democratic involvement and legal dynamics in Indonesia, constituting a significant portion of the population at 27.94%. The pervasive influence of technology, coupled with the rise of social media platforms, provides Generation Z with an influential space to express their opinions, aspirations, and thoughts, fostering discussions about democracy across various social media channels. This article focuses on answering a few key questions:

⁶ *Ibid hal 2*

⁷ Soerjono soekanto, *Penelitian Hukum Normatif, Suatu Tinjauan Singkat*, (RajaGrafindo Persada, Jakarta, 2011, hal.12)

- 1) What role does Generation Z play in the context of democracy and legal dynamics in Indonesia? especially in the context of technological advancement?
- 2) How do Generation Z's contributions impact the democratic system and legal dynamics in Indonesia?
- 3) To what extent does the use of social media and technology empower Generation Z to influence democracy and legal dynamics in Indonesia?

Through an in-depth exploration of these questions, this article aims to shed light on Generation Z's multifaceted role in shaping the democratic landscape and legal framework in Indonesia, utilizing the technological tools at their disposal.

3.1 Dynamics of Democracy and Law: The Significant Role of Generation Z in the Digital Era

Research by Putri Yolanda, H., and Halim (2020) on the political personalities of Generation Z revealed that they tend to choose instrumental and useful political participation in favor of strategic participation⁸ The findings show that Generation Z is more often involved in consumptive activities, such as watching and reading, than activities that involve interaction or information retention, such as joining political campaign communities on internet media. Nonetheless, their participation in public decision-making is expected to have a positive impact on government decisions (Rohaniah, 2015: 469)⁹

Their primary means of communication and enacting their political engagement are through online media. This involves using social media to seek out and share political information as well as voice thoughts about the government and the actions of elites and political figures. Together with technology advancements, Generation Z is playing an increasingly important role in Indonesia's democracy and legal system. They have a keen knowledge of information management in addition to using technical know-how to share their goals via social media. Their contribution to the advancement of democracy and law in this digital age is greatly aided by this insight. Their awareness of the ease of access to information must be balanced with a critical attitude, so that their contribution to political participation has a positive impact on society and

⁸ *Ibid hal 2*

⁹ *Ibid hal 3*

the democratic system as a whole.¹⁰ Clear evidence of their carefulness in managing the information available on the internet is the *bijakmemilih.id* website, initiated by the online media *What Is Up, Indonesia?* (WIUI) and the Think Policy online community.

As of late, Generation Z has also taken an active interest in watching the presidential debates. They eagerly expressed their thoughts on Twitter and other social media sites regarding the three presidential contenders. The opinions, remarks, and even supporting or contradicting evidence of the three presidential contenders' statements are spoken by Generation Z. Their involvement in the digital sphere indicates a deep involvement in the democratic process, where they are contributors as well as viewers, actively influencing public opinion and spreading information about political contests.

In a democracy, elections are the heart of democracy to realize the sovereignty of the people¹¹. In this case, the participation of the z-generation in realizing a dynamic and responsive legal and democratic system is very substantial because the percentage of the number of voters is dominated by them¹². Therefore, the 2024 election is an important stage for them to carve out their role in shaping the future of democracy and law in Indonesia.

As previously said, in light of Indonesia's progress toward democracy and legal politics, Generation Z makes excellent use of social media as a means of communication and idea sharing. Generation Z uses social media to diversify political discourse and establish inclusive forums for discussion. They promote the sharing of different opinions and ideas, eradicating polarization and bolstering democracy as an inclusive system of government. Generation Z is becoming more and more interested in politics, both as volunteers and voters, and they offer fresh ideas and new energy to the political scene.

Generation Z actively advocates for changes to the legal and democratic institutions as change agents. They have a fervour for using their political engagement to bring about constructive change. All of these modifications are a result of Generation Z's adjustment to social and political dynamics, which is paving the way for new developments in Indonesian law and democratic participation.

¹⁰ Syamsul Maarif dkk, *Pentingnya Kesadaran dan Partisipasi Generasi Z Terhadap Dinamika Politik*

¹¹ Anggelina, Devina *Peran Generasi Z di Pemilu 2024*, [Universitas Bangka Belitung, 2023] (

¹² *Ibid* hal 3

Advances in technology and social media are having a major impact on political participation and civic education, especially among Generation Z. Gen Zers who are familiar with technology from an early age are more likely to participate in the 2024 elections and gain political knowledge. The importance of political capacity to deal with inappropriate information was also emphasized, especially given that Generation Z is particularly susceptible to misinformation. Social media is an important platform for political discussion, but it must be used with caution.

Political literacy is different from democracy literacy, where political literacy is more specific to elections. However, both are important for improving Generation Z's political knowledge. While social media provides opportunities for political discussion, the role of generation Z's political participation needs special attention. The influence of technology and mass media is also evident in building students' political awareness and democratic attitudes.

Generation Z, as users of technology and the internet since birth, has a positive impact on increasing their participation, understanding, and aspirations in democratic life. However, it is necessary to be aware of negative impacts such as the spread of hoaxes, indoctrination, radicalization, and abuse of power. Therefore, good education and guidance are needed for Generation Z to excel and be responsible in the context of democracy and law¹³

Through social media, Gen Z, who were raised in an era of digital technology, has a big impact on politics. They see themselves as tech-savvy and utilize social media as a democratic means of sharing ideas, voicing concerns, and expressing opinions on public policy. Social media journalism emerged as a result of the transition from traditional to social media, enabling users to both generate and consume information. The kind of information it offers, how quickly it delivers it, and its target audience are all different from those of conventional journalism.¹⁴

In this context, normative media theory establishes the perfect environment for mass media existence in a democracy like Indonesia, including respect for human rights, diversity in property

¹³ ¹² Aziz, Abdul dan Bambang Eka Cahya Widodo, *Pengaruh Media Sosial sebagai Sumber Pengetahuan Politik Generasi Z terhadap Literasi Politik pada Pemilu 2020*, [Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, 2022] (3)

¹⁴ Evanalina, Sadryna, *Peran Jurnalisme Media Sosial dalam Mewujudkan Demokrasi Indonesia di Era Post Truth*, [Universitas Paramadina, 2022] (3)

rights, and freedom of speech. Although it is a desired objective, establishing a democratic media system is not without its difficulties.¹⁵

At this point, the emergence of social media and other technological advancements, together with the availability of these resources to Generation Z, have influenced Indonesia's legal system and democratic principles. The fact that websites like *bijakmemilih.id* exist to facilitate the sorting and access of fake news or news unrelated to the presidential election, along with the fact that members of generation Z are actively commenting and sharing their thoughts on the three candidate pairs, is unmistakable proof of the influence of this generation on Indonesian democracy and legal dynamics.

By eliminating false information spread by politicians and reminding them of historical details that certain political parties may have forgotten or overlooked, particularly when it comes to political concerns, Generation Z enhances information. They actively participate in exposing the truth and making sure that content published on social media is truer and more correct. This helps ensure that democracy and legal knowledge survive in the digital age of disorganized information and frequent efforts at manipulation and buzzers by interested parties.

Gen Z, also known as digital natives, is highly connected to technology, especially computers and the internet. They have grown up in an environment where technology is an important part of their daily lives. This generation is active on social media and often creates and shares content. Experts say they have unique characteristics, expectations, and a different work ethic, which is seen as a challenge for companies.¹⁶

Gen Z has global influence and an incredible ability to benefit from technological change. They are considered a borderless generation who grew up in an era where access to information and interaction with technology was extremely easy. Each generation has demographic differences, including beliefs, careers, work-life balance, family, social roles, gender, and work environments. Social media is an important tool for interaction and information sharing, especially for his Generation Z. Across six categories including social networks, blogs, microblogs, shared media, and wikis, social media has become an important part of our digital lives. Gen Z is deeply connected to social media, spending 8 to 15 hours a day on these platforms

¹⁵ *Ibid hal 4*

¹⁶ Nadia, Diva, *Peran Media Sosial dalam Mewujudkan Pendidikan Politik untuk Generasi Z*, [Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam, 2023] (13)

to influence their political views. Social media has become an important channel for quickly accessing information from around the world.

According to Rusadi Kanthaprawira, political education can be achieved through social media. Using this as an effective way to shape Gen Z's political understanding, for example, through content about politicians and political magazines, can increase their political participation. Social media also plays a role in political communication by supporting democratic movements, expanding social interaction, and making communication practices dialogic. In the context of democracy, social media has positive impacts such as increased participation, openness, conversations, and connections between users.¹⁷¹⁶

Based on research conducted by Harun Harsono, it reveals that social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, and other platforms, have become important tools for Generation Z in political participation and identity formation. They can engage in political behaviors that help develop their identity through increased communication and exposure. While social media enables this positive engagement, the relationship between identity politics and social media is complex and can be both positive and negative.

Social media provides new spaces for individuals to communicate and form communities, increasing political participation through easy access to information. However, there are also risks associated with the strengthening of identity politics. As found in this study, political conversations on social media tend to become more polarized, leading to negative counter-engagement. Interestingly, latent engagement, expressive engagement, and follower engagement are not significantly associated with specific identity politics.¹⁸¹⁷

Overall, Generation Z, who grew up with digital technology, has become a significant force in Indonesian politics through the use of social media. They not only use these platforms to express their hopes and criticize government policies, but also as channels to spread accurate information and debunk misinformation. The shift from mainstream media to social media opens the door for the formation of social media journalism, where Generation Z is not only a consumer but also a producer of information.

¹⁷ *Ibid* hal 18

¹⁸ Harsono, Harun, *Identity Politics and Political Participation on Social Media: Structural Model Analysis in Generation Z in Malang*, [KPU, 2023] (182)

In the context of democracy and legal dynamics, Generation Z's contribution is very much felt. They not only influence their own political views but also expand political participation among the younger generation. Through social media, they play an active role in educating the public about democracy and the law, as well as pushing for changes in legal policies at both the national and local levels. Despite the complexities and challenges associated with sustaining a democratic media system, Generation Z's positive contributions to maintaining the integrity of information and strengthening the democratic process in Indonesia are significant.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings show that Generation Z is more often involved in consumptive activities, such as watching and reading, than activities that involve interaction or information retention, such as joining political campaign communities on internet media. Their primary means of communication and enacting their political engagement are through online media. This involves using social media to seek out and share political information as well as voice thoughts about the government and the actions of elites and political figures. Together with technology advancements, Generation Z is playing an increasingly important role in Indonesia's democracy and legal system.

They have a keen knowledge of information management in addition to using technical know-how to share their goals via social media. Their awareness of the ease of access to information must be balanced with a critical attitude, so that their contribution to political participation has a positive impact on society and the democratic system as a whole. Their involvement in the digital sphere indicates a deep involvement in the democratic process, where they are contributors as well as viewers, actively influencing public opinion and spreading information about political contests. In this case, the participation of the z-generation in realizing a dynamic and responsive legal and democratic system is very substantial because the percentage of the number of voters is dominated by them.

Therefore, the 2024 election is an important stage for them to carve out their role in shaping the future of democracy and law in Indonesia. As previously said, in light of Indonesia's progress toward democracy and legal politics, Generation Z makes excellent use of social media as a means of communication and idea sharing. Generation Z uses social media to diversify political discourse and establish inclusive forums for discussion.

They promote the sharing of different opinions and ideas, eradicating polarization and bolstering democracy as an inclusive system of government. All of these modifications are a result of Generation Z's adjustment to social and political dynamics, which is paving the way for new developments in Indonesian law and democratic participation.

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