

# Citizenship and Democracy: How Young Citizen Behave Democratically in Digital Age

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**Submission date:** 23-Jul-2021 11:27AM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1622988427

**File name:** 125937516\_2.pdf (167.96K)

**Word count:** 4119

**Character count:** 23229

# Citizenship and Democracy: How Young Citizen Behave Democratically in Digital Age

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**Abstract**— The article aim to theoretically answers gap challenges between expected and the reality in the field, for example: Why is someone not yet democratic, while he has long "studied" democracy. The more question is why democratic attitudes are not yet embedded while they have studied democracy for a long time. Learning democracy and citizenship is not merely the result of an experience in school but also obtained in the context of daily life, both within the family, community, workplace, and others. The main focus also on how media can construct citizen transformation in democracy life. Now, exposure to news media (newspapers, radio, and the Internet) influences citizen participation, which depends on student involvement in discussions (primarily Internet-based) on citizenship issues and democracy.

**Keywords:** *media, democratic citizen, participation, digital age*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The development of technology today is so rapidly affecting all aspects of life. Today's digital world has a tremendous impact on changing patterns in relationships. The power of social media, for example, affects the participation of young citizens in America. McArthur Foundation Research Network on Participatory Political survey results that 41% of youth aged 15 to 25 years have participated in new political groups online, writing and disseminating blogs about political issues and political video on their social media [1], shows the power of digital media influences the political participation of young citizens. This condition is reinforced by Martens & Hobbs's research that there is a relationship between media literacy with increasing knowledge and civic engagement of young citizens and contributing to their civic engagement as adults [2].

Today's digital world has touched all aspects of life. The world of the internet connects everyone and provides everything, but no one is responsible when an error occurs when using the internet and the error returns to the person who uses the internet [3]. The internet is a neutral, free, open and unregulated technology, which means that we are all connected, but no one is responsible. In other words, the Internet is a democracy, but without a constitution [3], [4].

A broad understanding of digital literacy does not match the high growth of the internet and smartphones. The technology faces a challenging transition. In the internet age, information flows continuously through social media, group chats, and news channels and cannot digest this information

completely and correctly, but has a strong desire to share it with others [5] immediately. Unfortunately, some information can bring many interpretations and points of view. Some explanations can cause misunderstandings. In Indonesia, such cases are easily found, most visible in the political sphere.

## II. THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Digital citizenship and literacy

Digital citizenship defined as norms of behavior concerning the use of technology. More concisely said that digital citizenship as the ability to participate in online communities [5]. Digital citizenship also means the ability to use technology competently; interpret and understand digital content and assess its credibility; create, research and communicate with the right tools; think critically about the ethical opportunities and challenges of the digital world; make safe, responsible and respectful online choices [6]. Thus, the keywords from some of the definitions above include the presence of knowledge and skills to use technology appropriately in the digital world, manage risk and take advantage of the participatory opportunities it offers [7]. Meanwhile, their digital citizens use the Internet regularly and effectively every day [5].

Literacy is an essential means of communication that allows individuals, communities, and institutions to interact, from time to time and in all spaces, because they develop a network of social relations through language [8]. In a political context, when literacy is juxtaposed with civic becoming civic literacy is the knowledge and ability of citizens in dealing with social, political and state problems become a necessity along with political changes that require citizens to act autonomously [9]. Furthermore, Benavot identified that there must be at least a link between the development policy (education) and the needs of the community including the roles of government institutions, NGOs and religious institutions as well as individual literacy that strengthens productivity and work skills in the future [8]. In other words, the literacy of a young citizen is to prepare himself to live and be involved in different social spaces so that he can survive in the rafting. Citizenship literacy is related to and the weakness of these citizens, in the end, there is an understanding of citizens in political and governmental processes, local and national who understand their rights and obligations and always participate

effectively in the life of the local, national and international community.

The first orientation of Reichert and Print's research shows that people with higher status in society are more likely to participate in civic and political activities, and have a higher level of civic knowledge, efficacy, and use of informative news media [10]–[14]. The second orientation represents the direct consequence of civil discussion as a direct pioneer of actual participation in which research shows that the influence of the use of the news media on civil and political involvement is indirect and transmitted through other variables. Potential mediators identified include political knowledge. Political knowledge correlates with political efficacy and from political efficacy gives rise to active participation [15]. Political participation, political knowledge, and political efficacy are the main political variables that influence civic interest [10], [16], [17]. Other research also suggests that political efficacy influences participation because, in efficacy, there is a feeling of influencing others, thus giving rise to participation because of political awareness in him [18].

Social capital social media as a new conceptual and empirical construction to complement face-to-face social capital. The results of de Zúñiga, Barnidge, & Scheman show that social media social capital is empirically different from face-to-face social capital [19]. To create a healthier and more participatory democracy, experts, as the above findings, have long-established the positive effects of social capital, the values derived from the resources embedded in social bonds with others that characterize the structure of opportunities and actions in society. Nowadays, social media gives members of the digital community the ability to connect in new ways. However, in the context of the Netherlands, citizen participation has turned out to be a few exceptions.

### III. RESEARCH METHODS

Literature reviews have an important role as a foundation for all types of research. They can serve as a basis for knowledge development, create guidelines for policy and practice, provide evidence of an effect, and, if well conducted, can engender new ideas and directions for a particular field [20]. As such, they serve as the grounds for future research and theory. So, this article uses a literature review to find a way about democratical citizens in a digital age.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The word democracy has many meanings. Democracy is a sacred word but difficult to implement [21]. Everyone claims it, but no one really understands and fosters democracy fully, as Pericles (the first Athenians) was very good at telling people what they wanted to hear, but not so good at practicing what he said [22].

Historically, there have been four conceptualizations of democracy [22]. First, democracy is "a group that has rules" [21]. On the other hand, Plato attacks this concept of democracy as the rule of the poor and the fool more than the educated and knowledgeable. However, Aristotle denied

that good governance is a mixture of elements, which govern a little with the agreement of many people. It is the forerunner of the aristocracy.

Second, in the Roman era, Machiavelli's discourse, in the seventeenth century in England and the Netherlands, and the United States at its inception. Good governance is a mixed government, as in Aristotle's theory, but that popular elements that are democratic can give a country greater strength. Third, in the French revolution which knows from Rousseau's writings, everyone, regardless of education or property, has the right to make his will felt in the affairs of the state; and indeed the common will or the common good is better understood from our own experiences [21].

Fourth, the concept of democracy used in the American constitution, and many constitutions in South America, Europe in the nineteenth century, and West Germany and Japan after World War II, also in the writings of John Stuart Mill and Tocqueville. That all can be citizens if they care and at least have basic education, but must also respect the equal rights of fellow citizens in the official legal rules that define, protect and limit these rights [21].

What is most commonly interpreted today by 'democracy' in the United States, Europe, and Japan, ideally is the integration (but often confusion) of the idea of popular power and the idea of individual rights guaranteed by law [21]. The two must indeed be combined, but they are different ideas and can separate in practice. Excessively emphasizing 'democracy' in civic education can lead to dogmatic definitions of the various meanings of the term democracy. Democracy is an important element in good governance but not adequate.

Learning democracy must be interpreted as not a linear process, meaning that it is a process that involves aspects of positive and negative experiences, so it is fluctuating. Learning democracy and citizenship is also not solely the result of an experience in school but also obtained in the context of everyday life, both in the family, community, workplace, and others. Although it is not a linear process, learning democracy is cumulative, because various past experiences, both positive and negative, carry over when learning something new with the nature of its fluctuations. Learning democracy is also recursive because it involves the process of recalling past experiences. In other words, learning democracy involves a reflective process.

In connection with this discussion, it is necessary to question the gap between what expected and reality on the ground, for example: Why a person has not been democratic, while he has long "learned" democracy, or specifically: why democratic attitudes have not embedded while they have been around for a long time. Learn democracy. The answer to this question is, among others, through (1) elaboration of understanding of democracy, (2) a person's capacity to participate in an enlightened democratic way, (3) establishing active relations, (4) willingness to carry out transformation, and (5) willingness and willingness to engage in dialogue [23].

Democracy requires active citizens to be competent in maintaining checks and balances on democratic life [24]–[26]. Competence reflects a complex combination of knowledge, skills, understanding, values, attitudes, and desires that lead to effective human actions and manifested in the world in certain domains [27].

Challenges democratic development of young citizens in the digital age to preparing young citizens as citizens to compete now must begin to be directed at preparing them not only to compete locally and nationally but to be able to compete internationally. Citizens are legally recognized members of the state or nation [28]. Citizenship is a political struggle that is often spelled out in two important aspects, namely first, as a legal status, and secondly, citizenship as a practice [29]. In legal boundary, a citizen is a creature who acts according to the law and has the right to obtain state protection, and as a practice, refers to the status of citizens as political agents [30].

In the context of a member of a country, it can say that citizenship is the relationship between an individual and the state and results in certain rights and responsibilities, including the right to be heard and to participate in their government, the right to equal legal protection, and the right to freedom basics such as freedom of religion and speech [31]. The fulfillment of the rights and obligations of citizens with this country requires active citizen participation. In the context of citizenship it is called active citizenship, which is to participate in society, community and political life, which is characterized by mutual respect, non-violence, following human rights and democracy including various participatory activities such as voting, and also participation in people's daily lives [32], [33]. However, it is different from Crick as written in his journal, which views citizens in two other perspectives [21]. According to him, good citizens, in certain countries, given greater obligations than rights, while the rights granted are not in the form of political rights with the reason to reduce the potential for overthrowing the dictatorship. On the other hand, Crick negates citizens on the first concept with citizens in the west who are more politically active and enjoy their political rights. Thus, Crick's distinction can be categorized in the context of citizenship as a practice, as explained by Osler and Starkey [21].

Crick also distinguishes between being a good citizen and being an active citizen. Good citizens are in autocratic countries [21], [22]. Likewise, in a democratic country, good citizens are reflected in attitudes and behaviors that comply with applicable regulations. Thus, good citizens are in the minimal category.

At the end of his writing, Crick responded to citizenship. Citizenship is not individualism, as in the culture of a pure market or consumer society. According to him, citizenship is related to rights and obligations, to the extent that those rights do not harm the interests of others. That is, there is responsibility regarding collective obligations to achieve common goals through mutually agreed values. Thus, there is a need for political education for citizens, as offered by Crick. In line with Crick, Michels and De Draff regarding

political education in the Netherlands aimed at influencing citizens. The theories of participatory democracy, deliberative democracy and social capital state that citizen involvement has several positive democratic effects concerning citizens' inclusion, skills and virtues, deliberation, and legitimacy [34]. The findings in this study in two Dutch cases show that citizen participation in policymaking does not lead to the division of new roles between government and citizens.

Martens and Hobbs (2015) discuss how young citizens become active users of the internet and its contribution to the development of civic engagement. Some experts, as stated in this journal, believe that citizen engagement naturally follows the use of the media, but other experts believe that literacy education is needed for young citizens to prepare knowledge and social constructions that support their involvement. The assumption is that citizens need not only access to information but also the means and motives to process the information effectively and efficiently so that it is meaningful.

Citizen involvement is related to political participation in a general sense, but also, this relationship extended to the relationship of citizens in society [35]. The reason is that in social life, a citizen associated with many things in his daily life. It is necessary to have knowledge and attitudes to develop social norms and beliefs that bring beneficial effects on all aspects [25], [35], [36]. Civic engagement has measured in some ways including citizen behavior, attitudes towards elected officials (election results), participation in political conversation, consumption and media perception, intention to engage in civic action, and civic knowledge [37]. This varied conceptualization of civic engagement used to explore two very different views of civic engagement about digital media because of an optimistic and pessimistic perspective on the role of digital media in supporting the capacity of young people to regulate themselves [38].

Regarding the relationship of the use of news media on the internet, Reichert & Print's research findings found that the use of news media stimulates discussion of citizenship issues, although different media have different effects, listening to the news on the radio is completely irrelevant in promoting discussion [15]. News exposure rarely produces positive effects on people's knowledge and efficacy. As expected, citizenship knowledge also increases the efficacy of citizenship, but the direct influence on intended political participation is inconsistent, because there are positive and negative effects, depending on the type of activity [15]. However, the efficacy of the community is a pioneer / a precursor to strong participation. Besides that, his research examines indirect effects and confirms that political knowledge and efficacy mediate the relationship between civil communication and participation, both directly and sequentially. Instead, and despite the mediating role in citizenship discussions, exposure to news media (newspapers, radio, and the Internet) also influences citizen participation that depends on student involvement in discussions (mainly based on the Internet) on the issue of citizenship.

Research findings of Reichert & Print (2017) reveal that the Internet is the main source or facilitator of youth participation, both through direct and indirect channels. Some experts agree that the internet is a medium for political participation [15], [38]–[41], and the role of social media is important for young people to discuss political issues that causes them to participate actively [42], [43]. However, the use of the internet and social media is also allegedly increasing disparities in youth participation [43]–[45]. This article compares two things that we want to study, first, for some young people, social media might be a strong distraction from being active in their community, and second, for others, using the Internet can contribute to citizen involvement. Which aspects of young people's experience of using the media most contribute to the practice of community involvement.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Finally, citizens in the 21st century must have what is expected of civic education to help young people acquire and apply the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to become competent and responsible citizens in democratic life. In the end, in the context of Indonesia which claims to be a democratic country, its citizens should have a significant role in democratic life. Young citizens as the spearhead of civilization in the future need to inculcate about the concepts, values and implementation of democratic life. References

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# Citizenship and Democracy: How Young Citizen Behave Democratically in Digital Age

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GRADEMARK REPORT

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GENERAL COMMENTS

**Instructor**

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