



The Role of Young People's Political Participation in Building a Strong Democracy: Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research discusses political participation among young people as the key to building and improving the political system in Indonesia. Young people play an important role as the future generation of voters who have great potential in determining political direction and policies. In this context, political awareness and political education are key factors in forming a young generation who are active and responsible in the political process. This research also discusses challenges such as apathy towards politics and efforts that can be made to overcome this problem. Through active participation, comprehensive political education, and involvement in political dialogue, the younger generation has great potential to become agents of positive change in building a strong and clean democracy in Indonesia.

Keywords: Political participation, young people, political awareness, political education, political system.

1. Introduction

The quality of human resources has an important role in determining the direction and fate of a nation in the future. It is important to remember that quality human resources are not only characterized by the level of knowledge alone, but must also involve active community participation in relevant political issues. Political participation is a real form of democratic practice, which is the main pillar in supporting democratic values such as openness, freedom and fair application of rules (Nwabunkeonye, 2014; Livingstone et al., 2005).

The concept of politics, since ancient times, has been a topic of discussion that has not always been clear. This concept serves as a guide to teach future generations about various phenomena described by political theories. Aristotle defined politics as the joint efforts of citizens to realize the common good. On the other hand, according to Prof. Miriam Budiardjo, politics includes a variety of activities related to establishing and implementing common goals. However, it needs to be understood that these efforts are not merely a form of political behavior aimed at influencing individuals' views on the values they hold (Budiardjo et al., 2014). On the other hand, political participation encourages each individual to actively participate in negotiating their respective interests, with the ultimate goal of reaching a mutual agreement that is fair and does not harm any party.

It cannot be denied that most people are reluctant to get involved in the world of politics, assuming it is a despicable domain. However, it is important to remember that discussing politics means talking about the behavior of each individual within society as a whole. Political participation encourages individuals to be active in fighting for their respective interests, with the hope that it will produce a collective agreement that benefits all parties. No less interesting is when we hear young people's thoughts about politics. What comes to their mind when the word 'politics' is heard? I am sure, for most of them, politics is often associated with power competition, considered old-fashioned, an adult matter, full of public trust, even tainted by corruption. However, in reality, politics has a much broader and relevant impact on all levels of society (Chakim, 2022; Parker et al., 2018; Ida et al., 2020).

The negative view of young people towards politics in this country is manifested by various factors that are important to understand. Many of them view politics as a dark arena, a place where politicians fight each other and even persecute their own citizens. They see politics as something scary, far from the ideal that politics should be a way to fight for the common good, justice, prosperity and freedom. Many young people tend to see politics as a tool to gain

power only. For them, politics is synonymous with power. And unfortunately, negative views towards politics in this country are difficult to avoid. Abuse of power, corruption cases, and unethical behavior from politicians are highlighted in the media, including social media which is an integral part of the lives of young people today. While one corruption case has not subsided, another case has been uncovered. And unfortunately, many of those involved have political party backgrounds, which further muddies their views on politics (Sen, 2003; Freedman, 2009). This reality is bitterly accepted by young people. Therefore, it is not surprising that they feel frustrated with the unethical and corrupt behavior of some political actors.

All this should be a warning to political actors. The millennial generation, or young people, have a very significant role because their number is not small in this country. Therefore, their voices must be heard and become a serious consideration for political actors. That's why it's important for politicians to rebuild trust and demonstrate their integrity and commitment to advancing the common good, justice, prosperity and freedom in politics. Only in this way, we can rebuild a positive relationship between young people and politics in this country.

Another issue that makes young people worried about politics is the rise of provocative writing and smear campaigns on social media. They feel angry and afraid of false information (hoaxes) which are increasingly spreading. For them, the spread of provocative writing or hoaxes about politics can cause people to become suspicious of each other and hate each other. This can trigger divisions among young people and hinder the nation-building process. How can we call them pillars of nation building if young people in this country blame each other and cannot unite?

Young people hope that their voice in politics will not only be used as a tool to mine votes. Currently, many politicians are trying to attract the hearts of young people just for the sake of their political parties. Some politicians appear in a contemporary style, while others still use the old strategy of making false promises. Young people are expected to be able to choose wisely so as not to be deceived by promises that are not realized. Not a few political parties are starting to include young people as members, perhaps in the hope that they can change young people's negative views of the political system in this country. Political parties are considered as tools that can raise public awareness through their political role. Political parties are also increasingly realizing the importance of providing intensive political education to young people, because they are the future generation of voters.

High political awareness and well-run democracy are the results of good political education. The thoughts and ambitions of young people who want to play a role in political change in this country can become the foundation for the existing political system. Even though social media can be used for young people to participate, there are still limitations in implementing politics through these platforms. Politics on social media is often limited to participating and talking, while real policy implementation requires more complex steps. Therefore, political parties and policy makers need to develop more comprehensive strategies to involve young people in political processes that have a real impact on the nation and state.

It is true, many young people view politics in this country with a very negative view, considering it a nest of corruption, nepotism and various practices that are detrimental to society. This is a strong reason why young people must play an active role in seeking significant and real change and reform of the political system. It is important to remember that politics should be conducted with honesty and integrity. For example, participation in elections is one way in which young people can contribute to bringing about positive change in politics. Political problems that are still bad can be changed by young people with the aim of improving politics in the future (Hadiz, 2019; Mahfud, 2019).

However, it needs to be acknowledged that some young people today are involved in political parties, but many of them are not consistent with one political party. They often move from one party to another because they do not yet have a strong political stance and still lack understanding about politics. Some young people even only get involved in politics to seek personal power, without the determination to carry out the mandate given to them. Actions like this are in line with egoism and conflict with the values of Pancasila, which emphasize common interests and justice.

As the nation's successors, young people should have good moral values, strong idealism and integrity that can be a guide in politics. They must be committed to running politics well, serving the community, and fighting for the common good. In doing so, they can act as agents of positive change in the political system and help build a better future for the country.

2. Methodology

The research method used in this writing is a qualitative descriptive method. This method, in accordance with Nazir (1988), is used to examine the current status of a group of people, objects, conditions, systems of thought, or classes of events. The main aim of this descriptive research is to present a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture or painting of the facts, properties and relationships between the phenomena being investigated.

Descriptive research does not involve comparison or correlation between existing variables, as explained by Sugiyono (2001). This means that this research focuses on independent variables without any attempt to relate them or compare them with other variables. This approach allows researchers to understand the phenomenon under study in more depth, build a comprehensive description, and describe existing conditions as well as possible.

In the context of this writing, qualitative descriptive methods are used to describe young people's views and perceptions of politics, and how these views influence their participation in politics. This research aims to provide a clear and in-depth picture of phenomena related to young people's views on politics.

3. Discussion

3.1. Definition of Politics

To understand politics, it is important for us to have a clear understanding of what politics itself really means. History records that the first person to introduce the word "politics" was Aristotle (384-322 BC), a prominent Greek philosopher (Burger, 2005). He stated that "man is a political animal, or a political animal." From this explanation, Aristotle explained that the essence of social life is basically political, because interactions between two or more people will definitely involve political relations.

Aristotle concluded that if someone wants to achieve personal success through political activities, then that means the individual tries to maximize his abilities with the aim of achieving a better social life through social interaction, namely political interaction with other people in an institution or body (Dietz, 2012).

In Greek, "Polis" is taken from the words "polistaia", which means "an independent unit of society (state)", and "taia" which means "affairs". Therefore, polis refers to an institution that has the power to manage community unity in creating order in collective life in the territory of the country.

By using the policy concept, politics can become the basis for regulating people's lives related to government affairs in order to create good and orderly social conditions in a country.

In politics there are various aspects, such as institutions that carry out government activities, the community as parties who have interests, and legal regulations that are used to accommodate various common ideals to be achieved.

Words derived from "polis" have developed in various languages, including English such as polity, politics, polities, political, politician, and policy.

However, because the understanding of politics still often seems vague, there needs to be clarity in the definition of "politics" to avoid wrong interpretations and enable people to have a clear and systematic vision of political reality. Therefore, it is important to formulate several precise definitions of politics.

From the various definitions of politics above, it can be seen that there are differences in approach. This difference is caused by the tendency of each scholar to focus on one particular aspect or element of politics. This element is then treated as the main concept used to examine other elements, such as state, power, decision making, policy, distribution or allocation.

3.2. Community Political Participation

Political participation is the active involvement of a person or group of people in the political life of a country. This can include activities such as electing leaders, participating in political campaigns, voting in elections, or engaging in other political activities. Political participation is an important part of democracy because it allows citizens to contribute to the political decision-making process and influence the direction of government policy.

In democratic countries, political participation is seen as a citizen's right and obligation. This is based on the belief that political power should be in the hands of the people, and political participation is a way to actualize this right. Political participation is also closely related to political awareness, where individuals are aware of their role in the political system and feel that their participation has a political impact.

Political participation can be positive or negative. Positive participation includes activities such as elections, political debates, volunteer campaigns, and participating in political organizations. Meanwhile, negative participation includes actions such as boycotting elections, protests or demonstrations.

The importance of political participation among young people lies in the fact that they are the future generation of voters. Political education and high political awareness among young people can help build a more democratic and responsible society. They can influence a country's policies and political direction if they are actively involved in the political process.

However, there are also challenges in encouraging young people's political participation. Some young people may feel apathetic towards politics because they feel that significant change is difficult to achieve through political participation. It is important to provide good political education and engage young people in political dialogue to address this problem.

In an effort to improve the political system, political parties can be an initial forum for struggle. They can help shape and push a better political agenda. However, it is also important for young people to choose political parties that match their values and aspirations, and to become not just followers, but also critical thinkers and active players in the political process.

The importance of young people's political participation in improving Indonesia's political system cannot be ignored. With high political awareness, active participation and good political education, the younger generation can become agents of positive change in building a strong and clean democracy in Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

Political participation among young people is an important aspect in building and improving a country's political system. Young people as the future generation of voters have a big role in determining political direction and policies.

Political awareness and good political education are very necessary to form a young generation that is active and responsible in the political process.

Despite challenges such as apathy towards politics, comprehensive political education and active engagement in political dialogue can help overcome this problem. Apart from that, political parties can be a forum for young people to play a role in improving the political system, as long as they choose a party that suits their values and aspirations.

With high political awareness, active participation and good political education, the younger generation has great potential to become agents of positive change in building a strong and clean democracy in Indonesia. Through joint efforts, young people can play a key role in creating a better and fairer political future for the Indonesian nation and state.

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