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## Political Marketing Towards the 2024 Local Elections in the Frame of Digital Democracy

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### Abstract

The development of technology and information has changed human life towards digital transformation, including in the political sphere. Currently, the world of politics has shifted to the digital world. The political shift towards digitalization gave rise to the concept of digital democracy. This research will focus on political marketing in digital democracy, considering that Indonesia will hold simultaneous elections in 2024. The research method used in this study is qualitative and is analyzed using the concept of digital democracy. The results of this study indicate that political marketing will be more crowded in the digital world because most people prefer to find information online. After all, it is considered faster and easier. However, you must also be vigilant about hoax news in the digital world. Currently more than 50% of Indonesian people access information using the internet, so that the pattern of political marketing has also shifted to the digital world, this shift has experienced a shift in political narratives related to religion, ethnicity and race.

**Keywords:** Democracy Digital, Marketing Politics, Electoral

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### Introduction

Political marketing and democracy are currently experiencing a significant shift. The development of increasingly sophisticated information technology and many people using the internet has resulted in digital democracy. Digital democracy is a new form of democracy due to technological developments; where in digital democracy, there are no boundaries in space, time and other physical conditions, but it is also not a substitute for traditional analogous political practices (Kenneth L Hacker, 2000). Digital democracy, in practice, uses digital media to communicate online.

The development of increasingly sophisticated information technology is constructive for community activities, even in matters of political participation. Many people use digital media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Online Media to carry out political participation, such as mutual discussions, deliberations, giving opinions and criticism as a form of citizen oversight. Many citizens use the internet to find information, so many carry out political campaigns through social media. The influence of social media in elections is powerful (Allifiansyah, 2017). In the presidential and vice presidential elections in 2019, the campaign on social media was relatively high (Perdana & Wildianti, 2018). Dissemination of information through social media is cheaper and more efficient because many people currently use social media, especially young people (Malik et al., 2020). Indonesia itself gets a demographic bonus because in the election, the number of productive age groups is vast, and they actively use the internet and social media (Sasmita, 2011) (Andriani, 2022).

Indonesia is currently experiencing a demographic bonus where most voters are first-time voters. Based on data from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration (Dukcapil) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the population of Indonesia will reach 275.36 million in June 2022. Of this number, 190.83 million people (69.3%) of Indonesia's population fall into the age category productive (15-64 years). There are also 84.53 million people (30.7%) of the population who are in the non-productive age category. In detail, as many as 67.16 million people (24.39%) of the non-productive age population (0-14 years) and as many as 17.38 million people (6.31%) are in the non-productive age group.

The large number of young people who already have the right to vote means that many young people use the internet to find out about political literacy. Social media provides accessibility and rapid dissemination of information, making it easier to convey opinions and ideas to influence government policy (Ruby, 2014). Millennials prefer to be involved in politics through digital media (Nelson et al., 2017). This research shows that young people are more involved online than offline in discussing political issues. They do not want to interfere

directly in the world of politics, but they use their way to participate in the world of politics. They use the internet a lot to influence the policies of the rulers. So now, social media has a powerful influence on the democratic process.

One of the politicians who are active in social media is Mr Ganjar Pranowo. As the Governor of Central Java, he is very active on social media, so when conducting surveys for presidential candidate Mr Ganjar Pranowo, he always gets relatively high electability. He always gets first or second place in various survey institutions. It is important to note that when a survey institute conducts a study where the respondents are young, Pak Ganjar will always get the highest rating. However, if the respondent from the survey institution is the general public, several survey institutions place Pak Ganjar at number 2. When he was at number 2, the difference was not too much.

Apart from Pak Ganjar, who is active on social media, there is the name of the Governor of West Java, Mr Ridwan Kamil, who is also active on social media. He is active on YouTube and Twitter to provide information about his public activities. By utilizing social media, Mr Ridwan Kamil also obtained relatively high electability. In various surveys, Mr Ridwan Kamil is always in the top 5 positions. If you look at these two figures, they take advantage of the digital world to get high electability. When compared to other names such as Prabowo Subianto, Anis Baswedan or Puan Maharani, they came from an elite political family from the start, so they prioritized political networks because they already had sufficiently strong capital at the national level.

The relationship between political marketing and democracy cannot be separated, especially in countries that adhere to freedom. However, democracy and political marketing are currently experiencing criticism from each other. Democracy experts say that political marketing has devalued democracy and damaged the values that exist in a democracy. Political marketing, according to democracy experts, only includes imagery of candidates that make these candidates good in the eyes of the public, but actually, these candidates are not necessarily good. In a democratic system, it must be what it is so that voters or the people can choose good leaders so; that the actual concept of democracy is like what was said by Abraham Lincoln, who said that democracy is from the people, by the people and for the people can be realized. The welfare desired by democracy can exist. So many experts disagree with the existence of democracy (Frega, 2019).

Meanwhile, political marketing experts say that political marketing can increase the rate of political participation in countries that adhere to a democratic system. With political marketing, it can provide information on prospective leaders to voters. By providing this information, voters can reference which candidates are good to vote for and which candidates should not be elected. With this reference, it will reduce the number of non-voters and increase the political participation rate quickly. Political marketing also aims to keep voters from moving to another party or candidate.

The relationship between democracy and political marketing can be beneficial if political marketing provides information about prospective leaders to the public as it is without exaggerating the candidates or just imagining. This will teach the public about political awareness so that people do not vote and are not apathetic towards politics (Priambodo, 2019). Not creating an image for the prospective leader will prevent the people from being fooled, and voters will choose a candidate for a leader who is good. However, the relationship between democracy and political marketing could worsen if political marketing only sells imagery. This, of course, undermines democratic values and can devalue the democratic process. Political marketing that only sells the image of prospective leaders will fool the people. In addition, by selling only imagery, this approach is not linear with the democratic approach (Savigny & Temple, 2010). Of course, this is not good and very bad for the democratic system because this can be likened to accumulating disease in the human body system. With this, the democratic system will not run well and will cause problems in the system of government that will run.

By selling only imagery, the costs for democracy will be prohibitive because having imagery requires a very expensive political dowry. This very expensive political dowry will make the elected leaders want their political dowry to return immediately. This is what can be called a disease in the body. By wanting the political dowry to return quickly, what is being done is corruption. With this, the democratic system is hampered by bad political marketing and only creates imagery.

Besides that, the culture of the Indonesian people, most of whom have yet to receive higher education, makes the Indonesian people not know which political marketing is imagery in nature and which political marketing shows the track record of regional heads (Priambodo, 2021). Suppose the Indonesian people can select which are good to vote for and which are not suitable. In that case, rights like this will not hinder the democratic system, which is currently the focus of Indonesia's efforts to hold simultaneous direct regional elections. This is an irony for Indonesia, which currently holds direct regional elections, but many regional heads are entangled in corruption cases. With these various corruption cases, democracy is not in harmony with the concept of political marketing. Political marketing should provide objective information for the community. With regional heads using substantial funds for political marketing, this is not good for a democratic system.

Democracy is not a single concept that can be explained clearly. The concept of democracy is in a thicket which is challenging to explain singly and clearly. No one model or concept of democracy is accepted worldwide.

Each expert has their views on democracy (Robert A. Dahl, 2001). Democracy is a system of government that has existed since ancient Greece when Plato analyzed the democratic process in Greece when a leader election was taking place. At that time, there was no state; only city-states existed. Where the population is small, and the democratic process is only for noble people. However, over time the concept of democracy goes with its variations.

With the development of information technology, democracy has shifted to digital democracy. Computers and the internet, which appeared in the 1980s and 1990s, gave rise to new ideas about changes in politics and policy-making processes in the future. (Wilhelm, 2003) describes efforts to suppress challenges that arise when technological developments become more sophisticated so that they can be used to communicate to form a digital democracy. Four characteristics of cyberspace exist in digital democracy. First, the former resources are the basic skills of the community, such as reading, writing and speaking well. This essential ability is essential so that society can achieve certain political functions. Second is involvement, where people can express their choices through sophisticated telecommunications equipment. The third is freedom, namely expressing one's ideas and opinions for the granting of legal force. With a free democracy, speakers in a political debate need to provide reasons to support their arguments. Fourth is design, which includes the architecture of a network, including whether the network is interactive, safe, and not censored, with enough capacity to be preserved for non-commercial purposes.

## **Research methods**

This study uses qualitative methods and focuses on political marketing in the digital democracy era. Data collection techniques using interviews. Extracting information is also supported by collecting data with documentation studies by conducting searches and identification.

## **Results and Discussion**

Political marketing, like today, is needed in a democratic system. One of the things that drive the development of political marketing is today's increasingly sophisticated technology. Political marketing will only thrive with the presence of technology. One instrument for using political marketing is using the media. Political marketing has existed since the time of the Francis empire. However, political marketing became popular when television began to appear and dominate entertainment events in this world. One example is Margaret Thatcher became the British prime minister in 1980 due to her announcement on television and print media.

In the era of modern democracy like today, it will be tough if a candidate does not use political marketing to participate in elections even though the candidate has an influential political network, like the American presidential election won by Donald Trump by selling the issue of Islamophobia. Donald Trump's political marketing strategy is to use Islamophobia to win elections in America. The media raised the issue of Islamophobia and even reached the whole world to know about it. Another case that caused an uproar was Anies Sandi's victory over Ahok Djarot, who used the 212 phenomena to make it into a political marketing strategy. Anies Sandi used the 212 phenomena to gain support during the 2017 DKI Jakarta election. This proves that political marketing in the modern era, where the media has freedom, political marketing will thrive everywhere.

The number of internet users is increasing; political campaigns are often carried out using social media and online media (Zainal & Megasari, 2019). In Indonesia itself, in a study conducted by We Are Social and Hootsuite, the research found that internet users in Indonesia like to use social media to interact. Around 130 million Indonesians are active on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram. As many as 54% of these users are on the island of Java, so the basis of digital democracy in Indonesia is on the island of Java and has become a benchmark for national elections.

In 2024, when there are simultaneous elections, the digital world will not be separated from political marketing. In a digital democracy, four cyberspaces will indeed exist. The first the former resource is the ability of the community to use various technologies to obtain information. The development of increasingly sophisticated technology makes society develop dynamically, not statically. This is because it is elementary for people to get information from the internet, thus demanding that people adapt to keep up with the times. The adaptability of the community to use information technology will significantly influence the development of digital democracy because it relates to what they have access to. The community's ability to understand the content on social media or online media can be measured by their educational status. The higher a person's education, the more proficient the ability to filter out which information is accurate and which is hoaxed. However, if people have low education, it will be easier to distinguish which information is accurate and which is a hoax. They will be easily focused on hoax news spread in various media. They will also participate in spreading the hoax news so that the previous resources must be fulfilled to create a conducive digital democracy.

Nowadays, people are getting more competent in managing information. One example that we can see is how political narratives are carried out on social media. For example, the rejection by one campus against the work copyright law was mainly done using social media. If, in the past, the rejection of government products was done

by taking to the streets and then making speeches demanding that their aspirations be heard, now more and more use social media to voice these aspirations. With speeches in the digital world, the speed of information is considered more effective and can reach the wider community. One of the most viral cases is the Wadas case which occurs in a region where the leader has very high electability. The case had become a trending topic on Twitter, disturbing Pak Ganjar's electability. The wadas phenomenon is a phenomenon that is deliberately made viral in the digital world to reduce Pak Ganjar Pranowo's electability. This phenomenon indeed proves that Pak Ganjar's electability has decreased, but not too significantly. After the Wadas case disappeared on social media, Pak Ganjar's electability rose again. This proves that the digital world dramatically influences the political world in Indonesia.

The second requirement is involvement. If the first condition has been met, namely the previous resources, then the community needs to be involved in exchanging information online. Involvement means that people can access and exchange information in the digital world. People prefer exchanging information through the digital realm to conventional ones because they are considered faster and more efficient. Community involvement in political participation in this digital democracy is necessary so that the community can control the policies made by the government. If the people do not want to be involved in political participation in digital democracy, then deviations from the government will occur. So community involvement in a digital democracy is crucial so that it runs well.

The third condition is freedom. The law has regulated the freedom of the Indonesian people. The freedom referred to here is the freedom to debate, discuss and express ideas or ideas to the public. So that with this freedom, people can exchange information in the public sphere. The community can carry out activities to express opinions and hold discussions and debates face-to-face or via cyberspace. However, the current problem in many countries and not only in Indonesia, is that the freedom to disseminate information and conduct debates in cyberspace can trigger social conflict. The spread of incorrect information, such as hate speech, slander, and hoaxes, can trigger societal conflict.

So that the fourth condition appears, namely design, involvement and freedom so as not to trigger conflict in society needs to be designed by the government. The government needs to take preventive steps so that debate and exchange of information in the digital world do not trigger conflict in society. Wilhelm already saw that involvement and freedom would trigger societal uproar because democracy is a managed conflict. So the government must make an excellent design to keep digital democracy running well.

The practice of digital democracy here proves how social media influences the authorities' policies. This shows that the influence of social media in a digital democracy is considerable. According to (Wilhelm, 2003), the involvement and freedom of the people to use and access the internet enables people to channel their opinions and ideas to put pressure or supervision on the authorities so that they can provide control for a government.

In direct elections, the competition between prospective leaders who advance in elections is tremendous because they must convince the public that they are worthy of being elected. Direct elections could be more draining of the resources owned by parties and prospective leaders. They mobilized all the resources they had to win in direct elections. One of the most significant expenditures in direct elections is political campaigns. Political parties or prospective leaders spend much money to carry out campaigns. One way to reduce the cost of this sizable campaign is that they often use social media and online media to carry out campaigns. Besides, online and social media are cheap; many people access them to find and share information. Many Indonesian people also use the internet to open social media. So with the many campaigns carried out on social media or online media, the state must be present to control democracy so that it runs well.

Democracy and fast-growing media freedom mean political marketing will proliferate (Roza, 2020). The mass media has an effect that has the potential to damage political leadership or can even lead to trust in political leaders. Media pressure and the growing opinion polls in almost all walks of life continuously suppress the power of leaders to set the political agenda. All prospective leaders in modern times have used a polling system to determine whether they are fit to be leaders for a country. He can devise a strategy to win the election using the polling system. Such political marketing can ultimately undermine democracy by accumulating bad candidate leaders and making a leader who is not pro-people and does not have ideas for the common good. Good leaders should have to make decisions to determine common interests. However, due to bad political marketing, all voters are tricked into choosing a candidate for a leader who could be better and more self-oriented.

This could lead to a revival of traditional fears about the depth of attachment to democratic ideals among citizens vulnerable to existing manipulations. Many citizens are deceived because political marketing can make a candidate who should not be elected become elected as a leader. It will be bad for the democratic system. It can be argued that political marketing is relationally problematic for orienting democratic systems that focus on the need for leaders to derive clear and decisive action from incompatible references.

More politically sceptical, a meaningful relationship with the state based on political interactions is realistic by increasing the number of citizens who are interested, informed, and therefore interested in political relations,

the majority of the significant minority. However, it does not care and is potentially easy to manipulate. Therefore, the concern of democratic leaders with their leadership roles must be maintained, and protests against political competition must be fair, open and designed to produce the best leaders. Both aspects are the primary concern of relationship-oriented political marketing.

Authentic public deliberations require a space protected from manipulation and self-serving promotions where citizens can engage with equal power in discussing issues of common concern. It does not mean political marketing should not exist, but it should not replace or dominate discussions about the personal preferences that congregate to shape the public. It is still being debated whether an ideal public domain can be manipulated by political marketing. This is the concern of the democrat movers to leave a protected space for citizen-to-citizen communication through district assemblies and city halls broadcast on television or other media.

Candidates use sales-oriented political marketing as a vehicle or rhetoric, but on the one hand, it can be a threat to deliberative ideals. This is because it can damage electoral politics if it dominates the public sphere. After all, the public spheres are controlled by political marketing. Political marketing will create public opinion and hold substantial authority over their government and future leaders (Dunan, 2020). Adherents of the democratic system must be suspicious of the dominant political marketing carried out by instrumental political marketing. Their concern is that sales-oriented instrumental political marketing will result in weak leaders. Democracy that should be used for the people effectively goes through public deliberations, at this moment, not passing through the public realm. That opinion can be reflexes, prejudice, or even a created view.

The political danger that follows opinion polls, focus groups, and casually expressed voter opinion is, in the context of democracy, the neglect of genuinely deliberate forums of public opinion. A clever and unprincipled power seeker may spread prejudice, thereby not making a good leader for the masses.

The political marketing model seems to be only a relationship-oriented model based on a society that has the potential to be compatible with the ideal construct of democracy. It is on relationships with people by purely polling-based preference judgments. Relationship marketing based on sales instruments inherently invites dialogue but does not have to be an ideal consideration from the public sphere. This applies to supporters or members, floating voters, and other community stakeholders. A Democrat who is genuinely a deliberative democracy must look carefully at the parties' growing claims to be listening to the extensive conversation launched by Tony Blair in 2003, claiming it was the largest-ever exercise of consultation with voters, now largely forgotten.

It is possible that the supporters of democracy do not fully understand how flexible political marketing can be effective as a tool to fight hegemonic elitism. Political marketing is not only limited to party campaigns. Political marketing is as diverse as its concept, and methodology is increasingly being adopted by pressure groups such as the United Kingdom Stop the War coalition. Democracy with political marketing must remain competitive for its participants. This will improve the democratic system in a country. The emphasis here is on the competitiveness of the election-winning fighters so that it will give rise to the essence of democracy, which thinks that in a democratic system, power is not centralized but spread out. Political marketing should not be like imports. Where the candidate is still being determined where it came from, but with the marketing system, this alien won the election competition.

Understanding democracy as a normative concept requires combining the interpretation of normative standards with the fulfilment of norms with the notion of normativity as paradigmatic. At the same time, defining democracy as a primitive concept completes the first step. We also need to explain how its scope can meaningfully expand beyond the domain of political institutions or life to embrace society's more significant functions. By understanding democracy as a broader overall framework, we can develop a complete account of the broad social and moral stakes associated with democracy (free).

Introducing the distinction between conformity-norm and normativity paradigms brings to light an apparent paradox. While democracy has attained unparalleled political stature, its meaning is systematically framed in theoretical terms from other normative notions such as justice, equality, freedom, or non-dominance. Indeed, there is ample evidence that political philosophy rarely regards democracy as a normative concept assigned to structuring the entire conceptual field of politics. Liberal theory has traditionally assigned this task to the concept of freedom and, since John Rawls, to its justice. Likewise, republicanism, Marxism and critical theory tend to side with non-dominance.

Even if this tradition is genuinely committed to democratic ideals and institutions, theorists' adherence to democracy has been an indirect and derivative result of earlier support of either justice or non-dominance as a normative concept paradigm. Due to the methodological approach, all concepts of democracy play only a limited and subordinate role and tend to be confined to the domain of government theory. For example, one can derive democratic justification from Rawls's theory of justice by assuming that democracy is the political regime that best fulfils the requirements of the basic structure of society. Similarly, Pettit argues that a democratic regime is better

than others at providing the conditions under which non-dominance can develop. However, democracy assumes the status of a derived, non-primitive normative concept.

From this point of view, democracy has been seen essentially as a system of government. This regime has been instrumentally praised for its superior capacity to provide the institutional conditions under which freedom can be achieved in the political sphere. However, with the development of mass media in the modern era like today, political marketing will live and thrive in a democratic system. In a democracy, power is not centralized. However, this power is in the hands of the people, and getting power from the people requires a strategy in political marketing. Using political marketing, the candidate or prospective leader will know what strategy to use to win the election. That way, political marketing will thrive in a country that adheres to a democratic system that upholds freedom of expression.

## Conclusion

The current political campaign has shifted significantly in the digital world. This is because many people prefer to use social media. More than 50% of Indonesians use the internet to search for information, so political marketing has shifted to digital democracy. This shift has led to many political narratives that often use religion, ethnicity and race. So that with this political marketing in the digital world, more campaigns are black campaigns rather than contesting ideas from prospective leaders. This shift to digital democracy means the state must be present to control what pairs of candidates do in the digital realm. So as not to cause the spread of hoaxes in society.

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