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The Role of Social-Media in Increasing Millennial Political Participation in the Medan Johor Subdistrict

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Abstract. Millennials' subordinate role and participation in the political process have resulted in declining trust. Social media is used in several ways during regional elections and other political events, like campaigning for candidates' spouses. The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of social media in increasing the political participation of millennials in the 2021 Medan mayoral election with a case study on the couple Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman in Medan Johor District. Four 20-year-old respondents from the Medan Johor District were interviewed for this qualitative study. The data is analyzed descriptively. The results show that social media is an essential part of the political process, especially when collecting people's hopes and letting the public have a say in who the candidates' spouses are. In the Medan Johor sub-district, social media is used as a catalyst to attract millennial political participation, but it needs to be more effective. Social media and its content are being used to shape political perceptions, particularly in the marriage of Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman. Social media drives and shares the latest information from potential couples to get more people involved, build trust, and change how millennials think about politics.

Keywords: Political perceptions; millennials; elections; social media; Medan-Johor

INTRODUCTION

Social media has made various people's lives easier. In addition to serving as a basic necessity, social media allows people of different generations to interact from anywhere, at any time (Matthes, 2022; Raksha, 2019; Yan, 2021). As a result, some millennials spend their time engaging in social media activities (Fatema et al., 2022; Raksha, 2019). Individuals born between 1981 and 2000 are classified as members of Generation X or millennials (Maharani & Nurafifah, 2020; Nur, 2020). Pew Research Center (2018) states that the lives of millennials cannot be

separated from the internet. As a result, most people have relatively low levels of concern, including in political matters. Hamid et al. (2022) also said that only a small number of millennials are interested in joining a political party. This is because people do not trust politicians and are skeptical of different political institutions and how governments are run (Haste & Hogan, 2006).

The millennial generation's lack of trust hurts political participation in many places, including Indonesia (Berliani Ardha, 2014). Nowadays, political participation is widely carried out through the internet and online

media (Tariq et al., 2022). However, more research must be conducted to reveal and investigate political participation on social media. Political participation focuses on community participation or participation in politics, which is the act of a person or group of people actively taking part in political life by choosing state leaders and directly or indirectly influencing the policies of the central, regional, and district/city governments (Ahmad et al., 2019; Effing et al., 2011; Theocharis et al., 2022). Triwahyuningsih (2019), political participation is usually measured at the central, regional, and district/city levels during general elections, which are democratic activities. With the general election, a new government was elected legally and in line with the constitution. This was because the people gave the new government their approval (S. K. Lee et al., 2022; Marquart et al., 2020).

According to Prihatmoko (2003) and Maharani & Nurafifah (2020) their existence of election-related activities, which figuratively have three distinct goals, namely: (1) Elections aim to choose government leaders and general policy (public policy). (2) Elections as the transfer of vested interests from the electorate to institutions that serve as their representatives through elected deputy representatives or the winning party; (3) The use of elections to mobilize or increase public

support for the government through participation in voting at polling places (TPS). In the reform era, general elections are implemented in two stages, with the election of the president and vice president occurring before the legislative election. Nevertheless, because of the Constitutional Court's (MK) ruling on the challenge to Law Number 42 of 2008 put up by Effendi Ghazali and the Community Coalition for Elections, the 2019 elections were held concurrently (MK Ruling, Number 14, 2013) (Maharani & Nurafifah, 2020). It is always assumed that elections will be conducted efficiently; this may be seen in an increase in voter turnout and quality, as voter turnout directly correlates to election quality (Sucipto, 2019) for this purpose, the general election commission has been running the democracy volunteer program since 2014.

An initiative called Democracy Volunteers strives to raise election quality and voter turnout. This is in line with the directive of Law Number 7 of 2017, which highlights the significance of community involvement in every election-related activity as one of the indispensable indicators. This initiative is regarded as one of the critical breakthroughs in raising the participation rate and lowering the number of white groups (*Golput*) in Indonesia, which are influenced by a variety of sociopolitical factors, one of which is the

general election's lack of socialization (Sa'ban et al., 2020; Sa'ban & Wijaya, 2018).

We highlight an incident during the regional head election in Medan City involving Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman, demonstrating millennials' low political participation. The low participation of the public in the election, shown by the high turnout, hurts the quality of elections. This study examined how social media affects community involvement, particularly among millennials. ³ The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of social media in increasing the political participation of millennials in the 2021 Medan mayoral election with a case study on the couple Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman in Medan Johor District. Through social media, it is hoped to provide an overview of factors that affect the interest and participation of the community in politics.

RESEARCH METHODS

⁴ Qualitative research with a descriptive approach was used in this study (Darwin et al., 2021). This study included four key respondents randomly selected with purposive sampling techniques (Adnyana, 2021). The criteria for being included are: a) being a local indigenous resident of Medan Johor District, as shown by a KTP (Identity Card); b) being at least 20 years old and able to communicate well; and c) being willing to give information

for the study's purpose, which is shown by being willing to answer questions from the source. One respondent was selected from each village to participate in this study. Respondents came from Gedung Johor Village, Pangkalan Mahsyur Village, Suka Maju Village, and Titi Kuning Village. The COVID-19 pandemic caused many people to pull away from each other in the area, so only a few people answered the survey. Each chosen respondent is carried out directly while adhering to strict health protocols. Data collection techniques consist of an interview process, documentation, and a literature review. In the last step, all the information gathered is analyzed descriptively and told as a story.

DISCUSSION

Participation of Millennials in the Medan Mayoral Election

²³ Regional head elections are a way for the people to exercise their regional autonomy. Establishing regional head elections is a change in Indonesia's governance structure (Maharani & Nurafifah, 2020). In Indonesia, regional head elections directly result from the initial reform movement in 1998. The regional head election is the most significant democratic momentum in Indonesian life, especially as a means of implementing democracy across communities because it

requires significant community involvement to be directly involved in choosing its leaders (Suyanto et al., 2016).

Like the Medan Mayoral Election, the Medan City Mayoral Election is closely watched by the whole Medan City population, particularly the six-village Medan Johor District. In the regional elections in 2020, Bobby Nasution's running mate Aulia Rachman, who is carrying the number 2, is one of the candidates for mayor of Medan. The *Struggle Party*, *National Democracy* (NasDem), *Golongan Karya* (Golkar), *Gerindra*, and *PPP* are among the parties that support it (Nasution, 2020). Because Bobby Nasution is Mr. ²¹President Joko Widodo's son-in-law, the involvement of the community, particularly millennials, in Bobby Nasution's political activities has sparked various opinions from the community, which has led to millennials' lack of interest in the candidate's spouse. According to the findings of fieldwork interviews, namely with a precious resource from the hamlet of Titi Kuning, who said:

"In my opinion, the Medan mayoral election held in 2020 went well; at that time, I also participated by choosing Mr. Salman; why didn't I choose Bobby? Because I was not interested."

Azalia Salasa, who believed that the lack of interest in the candidate's spouse was being transmitted by the speaker Indah, added:

"In the election I did not participate because I was at the time exposed to covid so I was afraid to come to the polling station, besides that I was less interested in the campaign conducted by the candidates, and maybe because of this covid situation in the long distance that usually the campaign was done directly to the public whereas yesterday the campaign was done in the mass media so it made me feel less interested."

Dhita from Pangkalan Mansyur concurred with what was written above regarding his lack of interest in Bobby Nasution's spouse. He stated that:

"If I participated in participating and came directly, I happened to be a witness at TPS 22 at that time, I think the Medan mayoral election election was not effective because there were many issues that brought Bobby's partner towards negative, especially he was the son-in-law of Mr. President Jokowi so many people thought he participated because of the help of his in-laws. At that time, I chose Mr. Salman, why didn't I choose Mr. Bobby because I also thought that Mr. Bobby joined politics because of the help of his in-laws, Mr. Jokowi, and because the issue was also won so that I was not interested and he lacked experience as well and suddenly entered politics."

Ayu from the Johor Building village in Malaysia stated that looking at the many remarks above, where the influence of the present COVID-19 situation also affects community engagement, aside from backgrounds such as experience in the field of politics being very influential,

"At that time, I was disinterested because I was not interested in the candidate, especially Bobby Nasution, seeing from his background that he was the son-in-law of President Mr. Jokowi, so I considered the help of the other party."

Social media's role in the campaign for the mayor of Medan

Election campaigning is a coordinated effort by candidates for office to persuade people in Indonesia to gain as many votes as possible in the presidential election (Okolikj & Hooghe, 2023). An essential component of electoral activity is campaigning. Presidential candidates use several tactics, including governors, People's Representative Council, Mayor, Regents, and others, to win over the public, including peaceful convoys, open stages, donating money to build public facilities like mosques, and distributing necessities like food and clothing (Ferreira et al., 2012; Suyatno, 2016). A campaign transmits a message from the sender to the audience. These messages can be spread through various mediums, including speeches, discussions, commercials, banners, billboards, and more (Berliani Ardha, 2014; Saud et al., 2020). Social media campaigns are run in Medan, Johor, where COVID 19 is present and severely restricts all other activities.

Social media's existence makes it simpler for potential candidates to communicate with their supporters, advertise themselves, and share

their vision, mission, and program initiatives (Indrawan et al., 2021; Jandevi, 2019). Social media has evolved into a new platform for politicians to communicate with the public, establish dialogue, and spread political information (Munzir, 2019). People in Medan Johor Village, particularly millennials, believe that the social media campaign has two sides, which the first speaker claimed was crucial to Bobby Nasution's success. This is consistent with what Ayu and Indah said:

"I think the role of the media is very big (towards potential candidates), especially Bobby because at that time bobby's partner was still rampant, especially when medan residents heard Bobby participated in the election. The contribution that the role of the media, especially to Bobby's candidate, is that they give promises to sumatran residents, especially medan residents, like for example yesterday they won they will make angkringan captivity will be opened, meaning this is going to the mineial to attract the attention of millennials, this information I got when I read on social media, namely instagram."

Another opinion expressed by Azalia Salsa is that it says that:

"The role of social media does exist especially for millennials who do have social media accounts (it doesn't directly give an idea that this is the spouse of a mayoral candidate in 2020, it just gives a little bit of a picture like a video, it doesn't give a real picture of what the candidate is like, whether they really care and things like that so the role of the media is not realistic at the time."

Looking at the above opinion, Dhita also expressed his opinion that there is a role for social media even though it is ineffective:

"The role of social media in the 2020 regional elections is quite a role, especially now that most of these people use social media so people who use social media must have more or less known that mr. Bobby Nasution nominated and surely mr. Bobby's goal is also to announce on social media so that people vote for him."

The presence of social media allows people who previously knew the candidate's partner, which will lead to learning more about them, even though it will not be a direct interaction (Juditha, 2019). These two social media are crucial to the candidate's success because they allow them to communicate their vision and mission as well as high-quality programs that can pique the interest of their target audience (Badaru & Adu, 2020; Komariah & Kartini, 2019).

Social media's limitations as a tool for political socialization

Social media is one of the tools that can be used to communicate the means of aspirations, including one of the campaigning media that can play a significant role in increasing participation and can play a role in victory (Lee et al., 2022; Vaccari & Valeriani, 2021). However, it is undeniable that social media as a campaigning medium undoubtedly

has some drawbacks, as stated by the informant Azalia Salsa who said:

"I don't think the use of social media is that all people use it, there are some people who don't have social media accounts, for example aged 40 and over, so I think it's not effective. Also, on social media, we don't know very well how our future leader really is, the public needs real evidence, and knows that this is how the character of the future leader is when he comes down. Hence, when candidates come down, people are more aware of it, while social media is less affordable, even though we know that the community needs more attention, especially to the elderly and other things. In addition, social media is more dominant in making good ones such as biographies, videos, photos and others so that people are less able to know more about their future leaders such as their character so that social media is less effective."

Dhita also states the same he said:

"I don't think yet, because social media we get information but the information we get is still a lot of confusion, for example, one spreads information and the other brings even more influential information, so that social media is less effective."

Millennials' strategies for resolving disputes on social media

Naturally, issues arise from both the candidate's ally side and the opposition camp in a regional election. Aulia Rachman and Bobby Nasution's partner, also encounters this issue that develops on social media, as Ayu stated:

"There is, but I don't know if it's a fact or not, but what I've seen is that when bobby's future partner and his opponent competed, it must be that siBobby won because he was the son-in-law of Mr. Jokowi who caused the conflict at that time, my response to the question I didn't want to know because I was not interested."

Apart from Ayu, it is lovely and reveals several issues, such as Bobby Nasution's preference for identity politics and his entry into politics as Mr. Jokowi's son-in-law.

"I think there's a lot of identity politics"

In contrast to Dhita and Azalia Salsa, he said that:

"I think it's less, because on social media it's more dominant to make the good ones (like biographies, videos, photos and so on so that people can't know enough about their potential leaders like their character so that social media is less effective. But I think every campaign that mixes negatively on the two candidates must exist but I'm here depending on the person who decides which partner is more tolerable than the candidate's partner (so I think the human being must have their own strengths and weaknesses."

While Dhita says:

"I think on social media, there must be positives and negatives, when we are pro to Mr. Bobby Nasution the positive news will continue to appear but there are also those who don't like and spread the negatives, but I take the middle ground because I think the issue of negative issues also has some truth, so I think I don't really listen to people's opinions."

The case in point about mr. Bobby is not there as far as I am (but I don't agree with him) that he has no experience in politics and immediately won."

The use of social media is evolving alongside millennials' increased political engagement

¹⁸
Information, service, access to political power, and space are the advantages social media has for a party and candidate pair's political activity. Social media helps explain political success, according to (Lorenz-Spreen et al., 2022; Pinho, 2023). This is because social media enables candidates to engage with voters on a size and intensity that is impossible through conventional campaign strategies like door-to-door canvassing, pamphlets, or even print and broadcast media coverage (Dwi Putri, 2018; Putra Alamsyah et al., 2021). According to the outcomes in the field in Medan Johor, the contribution and success of social media have two opinions as to whether it has reached 100% or not. This is consistent with Ayu's opinion:

"I think social media has given success to them because everyone already has electoral tools such as mobile phones and has accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, and others. Significantly people who do not understand politics could have been influenced. It could have liked the candidate by looking at the good news on social media about the candidate."

Social Media's Contribution to Millennials' Increasing Political Participation

Millennials' increased political engagement is significantly influenced by social media, particularly in Johor's Medan District. Because one of the spouses married president Joko Widodo's son-in-law, there are differing views on whether millennials should vote in the Medan City regional head election for the Bobby Nasution-Aulia Rachman marriage. Millennial interest declines as a result, besides using the last name to look for supporters and voices. The two are developing a successful strategy with the other party's assistance. Therefore, the program's introduction was limited to millennials, but the reality is still being determined (Putri & Dwipriandi, 2021; Rahmani, 2021).

Social media does provide several advantages concerning elections and the campaign process in general. According to Saud et al. (2020) research, social media is acceptable for online political platforms and gives respondents a chance to get involved in politics in their own country. Social media's ability to disseminate information widely has sparked an infectious phenomenon that makes every notification surveyed accessible to everyone. Social media presents numerous potentials to increase civic space, promote public conversation, and enhance citizen access to information (Christiany, n.d.; Law &

Journal, 2017). This change is crucial, especially in light of the rising trend of nations clamping down on political involvement in the real world. Social media political activism encourages people to imitate political conduct, which boosts political participation offline. It can spark enthusiasm and establish the groundwork for offline political engagement, such as organizing, running for office, and casting ballots (Anderson, 2023; Maharani & Nurafifah, 2020; Mezzenzana & Peluso, 2023).

People who participate in politics through social media and online platforms. Access to unbiased information about social, economic, and political issues affecting the community or nation is more accessible thanks to online platforms. Citizens also employ naming and shame campaigns and #Hashtag Activism to raise awareness and focus on particular events and topics. By engaging in these actions, individuals draw attention to the subpar work of public authorities and force them to act (Ahmad et al., 2019; S. K. Lee et al., 2022). This promotes democratic governance and fosters public accountability. Because of this, social media—especially among millennials and in Medan—plays a significant role in social movements and current political upheavals. According to Matthes (2022) research, even though young adults use of social media has skyrocketed, and

there is remarkable research evidence that social media use encourages offline political participation, the gap in voter turnout between young adults and older generations has not narrowed significantly.

The majority of students utilize social media to stay informed about politics, according to a Ahmad et al. (2019) study. Online political participation is a significant factor in political effectiveness. Social media is also a crucial forum for netizens to engage in actual political activity. The study's findings imply that political knowledge and offline political participation are substantially connected with online political action. The younger generation in Pakistan's rural areas uses social media extensively to engage in online and offline political activities. These findings show that social media significantly affects political engagement.

Referring to the findings of research on millennial involvement in politics and regional head elections, particularly in the city of Medan, it is clear that the mayoral election in Medan is not proceeding smoothly due to the abundance of information and problems that drag Bobby's partner in the wrong direction. Many respondents claimed that social media is ineffective for politics, primarily campaigning, because of the numerous distractions brought on by the fake news extensively disseminated among

politicians' wives. As a result, the quality of political news during election campaigns is less appealing to the public's hearts and minds. Public trust has dropped as a result of the poor quality of the material and the absence of the candidate's spouse's image.

According to Hamid et al. (2022) research, reputation and trust directly and significantly impact social media content quality. Through social media reputation, the quality of social media information also substantially impacts trust. However, the level of political engagement is not significantly correlated with the quality of the information. Political marketing initiatives on social media also significantly influence political engagement through trust directly and indirectly. Finally, trust significantly and favorably affects political activity. Supporting Maharani & Nurafifah (2020), findings, it was stated that social media also has detrimental effects, such as the emergence of hoaxes, post-truth, and anti-Semitic campaigns.

CONCLUSION

Social media is an essential part of the political process, including collecting aspirations and public participation among the spouses of regional head candidates. In Medan, Johor, millennials believe that using social media as a catalyst to participate in politics tends to be less effective. The role of

social media is indeed able to increase the participation of millennials, but it is not based on reality. Social media and its content are used to shape political perceptions. The role of social media in the selection of Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman's partner is: a) as an agent of political socialization to deliver the program to be carried out; b) for the prestige manikin of the couple Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman; c) as a means of online campaigning; d) as a place for the dissemination of information related to the couple Bobby Nasution and Aulia Rachman. Social media is a driver and distributor of the latest information updates from prospective couples to attract public participation and trust, especially among millennials. In the future, further studies will be needed to be related to the impact of inaccurate information on social media concerning millennial participation in politics.

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