

# Millennials' Participation in Democracy Practices

Kokom Komariah<sup>1</sup>, FX Ari Agung Prastowo<sup>2</sup>, Suwandi Sumartias<sup>3</sup>  
{Kokom.komariah@unpad.ac.id<sup>1</sup>, ari.agung@unpad.ac.id<sup>2</sup>, suwandi.sumartias@unpad.ac.id<sup>3</sup>}

Department of Public Relations, Universitas Padjadjaran<sup>1,2,3</sup>

**Abstract.** Public participation is an indicator of success in democracy implementation. Public willingness to participate in general election is the frontline of democracy practice. General election will produce a leader that suits the needs of and fights for the people, which in turn will create policies that will improve public welfare. This study aimed to discover the participation level of millennials in democracy practices. It employed survey method with quantitative approach. The respondents were 112 people from state and private universities selected through purposive sampling. The results showed that public participation level in general election, as part of democracy practices, was quite high. This was congruent with public participation in critiquing public institutions, organizations, and figures that operated in politics. However, in terms of political education, public participation was quite low, particularly in guiding and initiating political discussions. However, public willingness to implement government policies was quite high. It indicated that public enthusiasm in democracy practices was quite high.

**Keywords:** Participation; Millennials; Politics; Democracy

## 1 Introduction

The quality of democracy is affected by public participation, and the latter highly depends on the availability of opportunities that the nation guarantees (Roza, 2020). Public political participation in a nation is the greatest indicator of people's power implementation. The greater public understanding of civil affairs is, the greater their participation in politics will be. Conversely, lower level of public participation in politics indicates the low level of their appreciation and interest in civil affairs (Nur Wardhani, 2018). Similar point was raised in a study about public participation in general election as part of democracy implementation efforts. The study found that the quality and capacity of the public in policy-making correlated with their participation in political process. The higher public participation in politics was, the fewer people would be involved in policy-making. Conversely, the lower public participation was, the more people would be involved in policy making (Zarkasi & Rizal, 2020).

Public participation should be ensured in democracy. Public participation can take a form of monitoring the government. This system is a means of ultra democracy, which extends the legislative functions outside the institution that the society forms (Haliim, 2016). In the perspective of omnibus law, it is explained that government's authority is fully implemented not when it is exerted in accordance with the government's will but when it is limited by the people's will. Therefore the government democracy practices need to be monitored (Michael,

2020). The public monitor democracy practices implementation to maintain public trust. Weak and limited implementation of democracy by the government will diminish public trust towards the government's ability in managing national development. Government failure is caused by abuse of power, ineffective and inefficient use of power, and lack of attention to people's needs, which lead to bad governance (Henriyani, 2007).

Public monitoring/supervision of democracy practices can be done in two ways, direct and indirect monitoring. Direct monitoring is done by individuals through mass media such as printed and electronic media or even social media which can be used easily to express opinions, critiques, and expectations to government institutions. Meanwhile, indirect monitoring can be done through representatives in the form of community organizations or institutions. Another form of monitoring is through demonstration. A demonstration that has appropriate exposure from the public will gain support and can be a good way to control governance practices (Henriyani, 2007).

In addition to monitor government institutions and policy makers, public participation in democracy practices can be seen in people's involvement in general election, which serves to elect a leader who has the authority to decide on policies that side with the people. Moreover, public participation in democracy practices can also be seen in public involvement in political activities through various political parties and community organizations. People can participate through political parties, community organizations, and government institutions not only as members of those agencies but also as critics. In practicing democracy, the public need preparation and guidance from groups that understand about democracy practices, in the form of political education and discussion. Political education and discussion of political issues aims to improve the knowledge and prepare the public to implement democracy practices so that such practices can achieve the goal of democracy and realize public welfare.

In implementing democracy practices, the public also need a guarantee for their freedom of exercising their political and social rights. However, freedom in democracy practices still has clear boundaries so that no party can suppress another. The rules imposed in democracy implementation should guarantee the same room and opportunities for every citizen to conduct their activities, including in implementing democracy practices (Nuna & Moonti, 2019). Hence, this study aimed to discover the participation level of the public in democracy practices, from their willingness to vote in general election and to critique government institutions, community organizations, to their willingness in providing guidance and participating in political education.

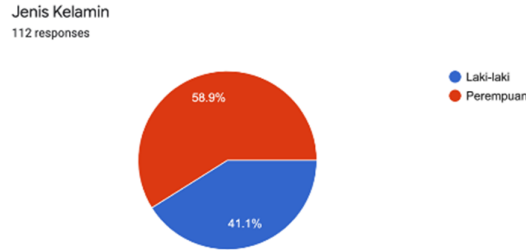
## **2 Methodology**

This study was conducted using survey method, with quantitative approach. Purposive sampling was used to select sample based on certain criteria. 112 respondents participated in this study online, through google form.

## **3 Result and Discussion**

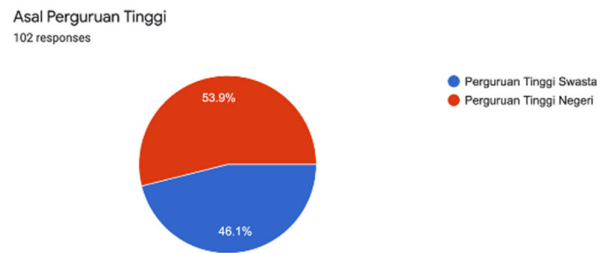
The results of this study discuss the participation level of respondents, measured by their willingness to participate in various democracy practices, including participation in general election, willingness to monitor democracy practices by criticizing government institutions,

political figures, and community organizations, and their willingness to get involved in political education, The respondents' responses are displayed as follow.



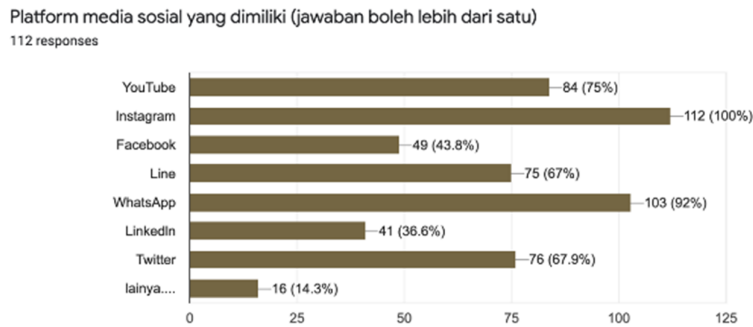
Source: Research Finding  
**Fig. 1.** Respondents' Sex

Based on the results of questionnaire distribution, it was found that majority of respondents were female (58.9%) and male (41.1%).



Source: Research Finding  
**Fig. 2.** University Origin

Based on the finding, it was known that 53.9% of respondents were from state universities while 48.1% were from private universities.



Source: Research Finding  
**Fig. 3.** Social Media Platform Used

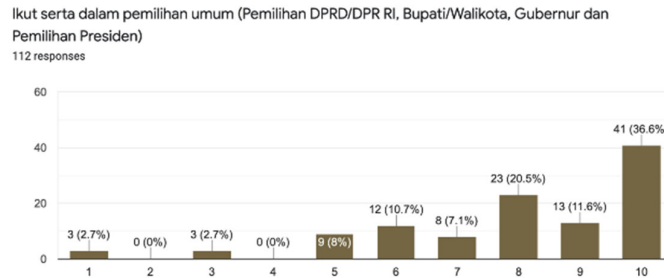
Based on the graph in Figure 3, it was found that all respondents used Instagram. The next most used social media was WhatsApp, selected by 92% (103) respondents, followed by Youtube (75%), Line (67%), Twitter (67.9%), Facebook (43.8%), LinkedIn (36.6%), and other social media (14.3%).



Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 4.** Intensity of Searching for Political News in a Day

Based on the findings, it was known that majority of respondents searched for political news 1 time a day (53.6%). The next most common intensity of searching for political news was 2 times a day (27.7%).

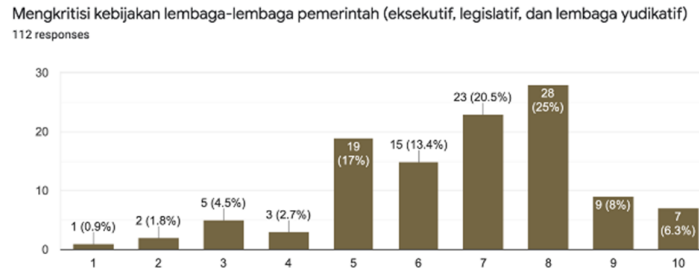


Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 5.** Participation in General Election

Based on the result, respondents stated that they were willing to participate in general election of DPRD (Regional Body of Representative) or DPR-RI (Indonesian Body of Representative), of Mayor or Regent, and of President. 41 people (36.6%) gave a score of 10 out of 10, indicating their full willingness to participate in general election. Respondents who were in the group of first-time voters showed willingness to vote in general election as a form of political participation and democracy practice. General election is the highest indicator of democracy practice, since democracy comes from the power of the people. General election is an effort to realize public welfare through electing an aspiring, high-quality, and responsible leader. Respondents' attitudes towards participation in general election are affected by several factors. Factors that affect participation in general election include political information obtained from various media (online or other mass media), respondents' awareness of their rights and duties as citizens who have to choose a political stance through general election,

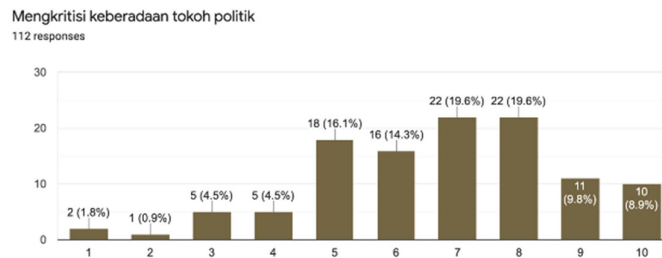
and the regional system around the respondents. Regional system in the society should not force anyone to participate in general election (Nur Wardhani, 2018).



Source: Research Finding

**Fig.6.** Criticizing Policies of Government Institutions (Executive, Legislative and Judicative Institutions)

Based on the result, it was known that respondents showed diverse attitudes regarding their willingness in criticizing government institutions. 7 respondents (6.3%) stated that they were totally willing to criticize, giving a score of 10 out of 10. Majority of respondents (28 people or 25%) gave a score of 8 out of 10, indicating their willingness to criticize government institution. Only a small number of respondent (8 people) were hesitant in criticizing government institution, giving scores from 1 to 3 out of 10 regarding their willingness. Critiques towards government institutions are necessary in implementing check and balances in democracy practices. Check and balances is a form of feedback that the public give to the government to ensure that government institution perform their functions well (Fimmastuti et al., 2018).

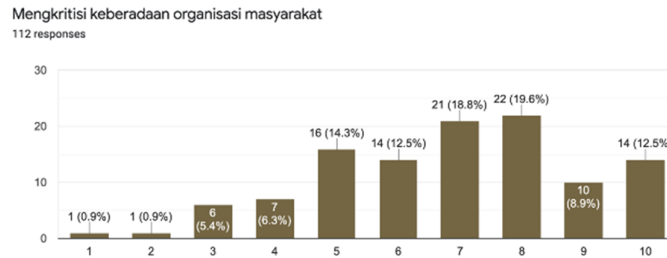


Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 7.** Criticizing Political Figures

Based on the survey, it was found that respondents were very willing to criticize political figures (10 respondents or 8.9%). Majority of respondents (22 people or 19.6%) gave scores of 7 to 8 out of 10 to indicate their willingness to criticize political figures in democracy practices. Meanwhile, only 2 respondents (1.8%) showed unwillingness to criticize political figures. Critiques from the public to political figures are necessary in development activities, which is part of democracy practices. In its practice, national development is done not only by powerful groups of people who give instruction to the common people. These elites must give the public an opportunity to provide feedback and have to encourage public full participation. Civil Society serves to express aspiration, support, critique, and control in the process of

making decisions or policies that may harm the people. This is a function of political communication to control the power of political superstructure (Sulaiman, 2013).

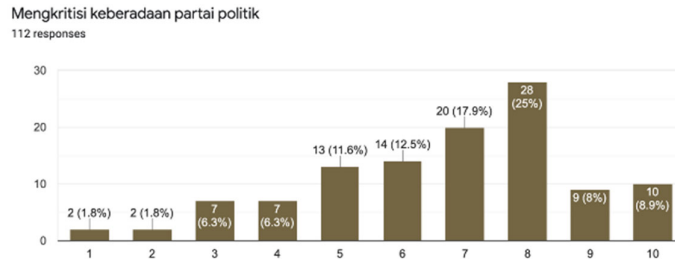


Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 8.** Criticizing Community Organizations

Respondents' willingness to criticize the existence of community organizations was found to be quite high. 14 respondents (12.5%) stated that they were very willing, 10 respondents (8.9%) stated that they were willing (giving score 9 out of 10). Majority of respondents gave scores of 7 and 8 (21 and 22 people or 18.8% and 19.6%, respectively) to indicate their willingness to criticize the existence of community organizations. Meanwhile, the number of respondents who were unwilling to criticize community organizations was very small (only 2 people), giving scores of 1 and 2 out of 10. In implementing democracy, the public who joined community organizations and non-governmental organizations have the freedom, independence, and opportunities to practice civil society and to be potential political resources. In addition, community organizations play a role in controlling, curbing, and preventing government policies. This role aims to ensure that government policies will guarantee the satisfaction of people's needs.

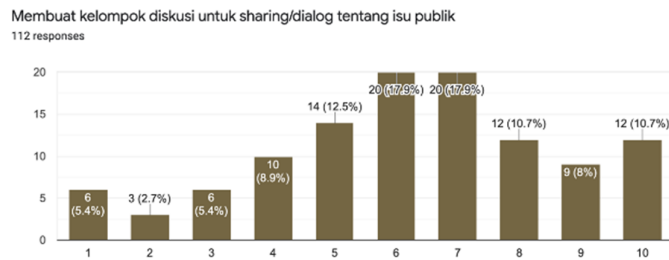
NGOs and community organizations also serve a function of maintaining political and social stability in a nation. Aside from that, community organizations and NGOs also minimize social conflicts (Herdiansah, 2016). However, in its implementation, the role of community organizations was heavily distorted and many organizations only took actions that would benefit their group. The shift in NGOs' and community organizations' function was caused by several factors, including an ulterior motive from certain members of the organization to gain profit, the lack of funding, low level of professionalism amongst the member, the fact that ideology was only normative that members could not use it as a guideline, and regulations that were too flexible. The last factor had to do with how easy it was to form an NGO without any structured and systematic service program (Pelor & Helianny, 2018). Considering the importance of community organizations and NGOs in democracy practices in Indonesia, some efforts need to be made to ensure that these organizations can perform their functions well. One of the efforts is through public critique so that community organizations and NGOs can return to their fundamental function of empowering the grassroots community. Another effort to improve the function and role of community organizations is through collaboration with other relevant organizations and through improving the internal structure of the organization (Pelor & Helianny, 2018).



Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 9.** Criticizing Political Parties

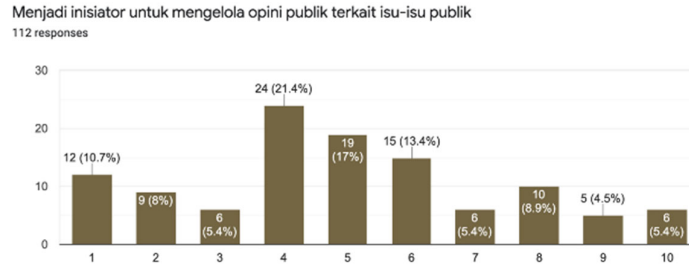
Based on the questionnaire, it was found that the majority of respondents were willing and were interested to criticize political parties. It was evident in the scores the respondents gave for this item. 10 respondents (8.9%) gave a score of 10 out of 10, indicating full willingness to criticize political parties. The most responses (28 people or 25%) indicated that respondents were willing to criticize political parties. In addition to being a means to obtain power and authority in government, political parties serve a function of shaping political behavior and culture in the community in accordance with democracy principles and system. Political parties also play a role in political education through regeneration process which will produce high-quality leader who can fulfill people's needs (Maarotong, 2020). In a similar note, a study on young people's perception of political parties explained that the functions of political parties include political communication, political education, and political recruitment or regeneration functions. Public trust towards political parties and other governmental institutions affects political resistance in regional and national levels. One of the factors that causes the decrease in public trust towards political parties is that political system is deemed to be inadequate to promote political stability (Hermawan, 2014).



Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 10.** Group Discussion about Public Issues

The results showed that respondents participation was shown not only by their involvement in general election and their criticizing political and government institutions, but also by their active action, including forming discussion group to talk about public issues. 12 respondents (10.7%) stated that they agreed to have such group discussion. Majority of respondents gave scores of 6 and 7, indicating that they were willing to form discussion group to share knowledge and insight regarding public issues. However, some respondents (6 people) state that they were very unwilling to form a discussion group.

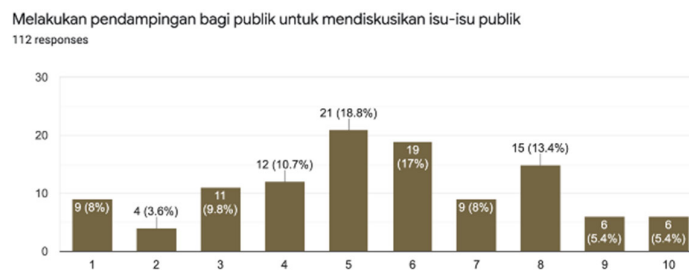


Source: Research Finding

**Fig. 11.** Being Initiator in Managing Public Opinion Regarding Public Issues

Based on the result, it was known that respondents' participation as initiators in managing public opinion regarding political issues was not significant. Majority of respondents were unwilling to participate as initiator (24 people or 21.4%), giving a score of 4 out of 10. 12 respondents stated that they were very unwilling, giving a score of 1 out of 10. However, a small number of respondents (6 people or 5.4%) were willing to be initiators, as indicated by their giving a score of 10 out of 10. Public opinion can be formed and shaped by, among others, an effective political communication. Based on the questionnaire, respondents' participation as initiators in managing public opinion regarding political issues was low.

It is important to optimally form and shape public opinion so that public aspiration can be facilitated to produce policies that will benefit all parties, not just certain groups. In addition to its benefits for the people, public opinion can also increase the popularity of political elites. Political communication performed by the elites will be effective if it is supported by public opinion that sided with them. Social media play a great role in shaping public opinion. Moreover, social media can increase public political participation in line with the formed public opinion (Indrawan, 2017). Social media can also be a channel for political parties elites to communicate with the people. One form of such communication is the shaping of public opinion to increase support, participation in democracy practices, and building political network (Darwis, 2021).



Source: Research Finding

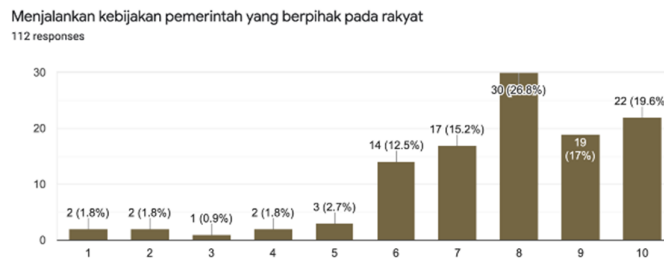
**Fig. 12.** Providing Guidance for the Public to Discuss Public Issues

Respondents gave diverse responses (scores) in the scale to show their willingness to provide guidance for the public to discuss public issues. Majority of respondents gave a score of 5 out of 10 (21 people or 18.8%), while 19 people (17%) gave a score of 6 out of 10,



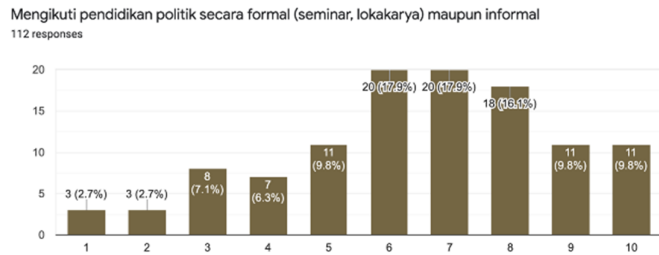
indicating that they were willing to provide guidance for the public. Based on the questionnaire, it can be seen that not all respondents were willing or unwilling to provide guidance for the public in discussing public issues. 6 respondents (5.4%) stated that they were very willing and 9 respondents (8%) stated that they were very unwilling to provide such guidance.

Guidance in political communication is very important in democracy practices. Such guidance can be provided in various forms of political dissemination and education. Creating a culture for political actors is a part of political dissemination. This process involves not just a group of people or a generation. It involves many generations and groups of people, including families, social environment, and work places (Kharisma, 2015). Young generation is not exempt from political activities. Based on the survey, respondents were relatively unwilling to provide guidance for the public to discuss public issues. The finding of this study is in line with that of (Juditha & Darmawan, 2018), which stated that millennial's participation was quite low in terms of political participation, in terms of being a member of political parties, supporting government policies, and fighting for people's rights. However, majority of millennials still show willingness to participate in general election.



Source: Research Finding  
**Fig. 13. Implementing Government Policies**

In explaining this political participation, respondents stated that they were very willing, and willing, to implement government policies that sided with the people. 22 respondents (19.6%) stated that they were very willing, while 19 respondents (17%) stated that they were willing. The latter gave a score of 9 out of 10. Meanwhile, majority of respondents gave a score of 8 out of 10 (30 people or 26.8%).

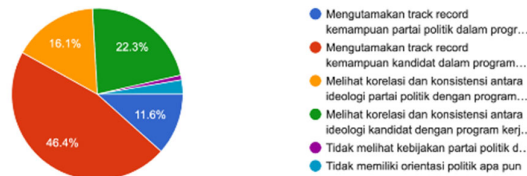


Source: Research Finding  
**Fig. 14. Attending Political Education**

Based on the result, it was found that respondents were willing to attend or be involved in formal political education such as workshops and seminars, as well as in informal political education. Majority of respondents gave scores of 6 and 7 out of 10 (20 respondents or 17.9% each). Considering the level of respondents participation in political education, it should be maintained. To do so requires some efforts from various institutions, including political and non-political institutions, to optimize political education functions, particularly among young people. A study on the effects of political education on public political participation showed that there was a significant correlation between the two variables (Nasuha & Kholik, 2019). Public political participation needs to be continuously improved, including through political education, because public participation can maintain democracy in a nation. The more people are aware of and concerned about civil affairs, the more effective democracy practices will be (Alatas, 2014).

Political education can be performed by various elements of the society, including religious figures who are close to certain group of people. A previous study (Anwar & Daryono, 2019) explained that the role of religious figures in political education could be implemented in the form of regeneration, service, and preaching. However, there are challenges in its practice, particularly because there was a negative stigma in the public's eye when a religious figure supported certain political party's candidates. This problem can be solved by relying on facts when conducting political education to increase public political participation. Besides using public figure, other activities can be done for political education purpose, including tutorial, training, and evaluation. The result of political education is the increase in public awareness to participate in general election as a form of democracy practice (Hasyim et al., 2020).

Keputusan yang diambil Anda dalam memilih bakal calon presiden, kepala daerah atau pemilihan anggota legislatif karena mempertimbangkan faktor ... (\*pilih salah satu)  
112 responses



Source: Research Finding

Fig. 15. Factors in Decision Making to Select a Candidate in General Election

Based on the results, the dominant factor that influenced respondents in determining their selection of candidates in general election was the track record and ability of the candidates in describing their programs, as stated by 46.4% of respondents. Meanwhile, 22.3% of respondents stated that the correlation and consistency between a candidate's ideology and their program was the primary factor of consideration in determining the choice in general election.

#### 4 Conclusion

Public participation indicates public willingness not only to get involved but also to perform monitoring/control function in democracy practices. Monitoring is performed on government institutions (executive, legislative, and judicative), political figures, and political organizations. Monitoring can take the form of willingness to criticize policies and performance of the institution or figure. Critiques in democracy practices serve as check and balances system as well as political communication through expressing aspiration, critiques, support, and assessment regarding policy-making process to control the power of political superstructure. Public willingness to criticize political institutions and political figures was quite high. However, public participation in political education was relatively low. Political education in this study refers to willingness to provide guidance in group discussion and to be initiators of political discussion. It can be concluded that the public comply to and implement government policies and are willing to criticize those policies. However, public awareness needs to be further developed in political education to ensure ideal democracy practices can be implemented in the nation.

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