

Cyberpolitics in the Transformation of Political Communication and Digital Democracy in Indonesia

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Abstract: This article discusses cyberpolitics as part of the transformation of political communication and digital democracy in Indonesia. The development of social media, digital platforms, messaging applications, online video channels, algorithms, and data-based communication networks has changed how citizens, candidates, political parties, and platforms interact in political processes. This study uses thematic content analysis based on literature and document review. The data used include academic literature on cyberpolitics, digital campaigning, disinformation, platform governance, digital political participation, and digital democracy; policy and regulatory documents as institutional context; and public digital data, electoral data, and disinformation reports as empirical context. The findings show that cyberpolitics in Indonesia develops around five main themes: the transformation of digital political space, digital campaigning and political platformization, disinformation and algorithms, digital political participation, and digital democracy governance. This article argues that cyberpolitics not only expands political communication and citizen participation, but also creates new power relations among political actors, citizens, platforms, data, and algorithms. Therefore, digital democracy governance needs to be directed toward campaign transparency, platform accountability, digital political literacy, data protection, and the integrity of electoral information.

Keywords: cyberpolitics; digital democracy; digital campaigning; political platformization; disinformation; digital political participation.

1. Background

The development of digital technology has changed how politics works in contemporary democracy. Politics no longer takes place only through political parties, face-to-face campaigns, conventional mass media, or formal state forums, but also through social media, digital platforms, messaging applications, search engines, online video channels, and data-based communication networks. This transformation has made digital space an important arena for citizens to seek political information, express opinions, build support, criticize power, and participate in public debate. In this context, digital democracy cannot be understood merely as the use of technology in politics, but as a transformation in the way citizens, candidates, political parties, media, and platforms interact in political processes.

The Indonesian context shows that digital space has become an important part of political life. In early 2025, Indonesia had 212 million internet users, with an internet penetration rate of 74.6 percent, and 143 million social media user identities, equivalent to 50.2 percent of the total population (DataReportal, 2025). These data show that digital space has broad social reach and can become a strategic arena for political communication, electoral campaigning, support mobilization, and public opinion formation. In the electoral context, the relevance of digital space becomes even greater because the General Elections Commission established the 2024 Final Voter List at 204,807,222 voters, meaning that Indonesia's political contestation takes place in a very large electorate that is increasingly connected to digital media (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia, 2023).

The concept of cyberpolitics is important for understanding this transformation. Cyberpolitics does not only refer to the use of the internet in political activities, but also to changing relationships among technology, power,



communication, institutions, and political participation (Choucri, 2012). In the Indonesian context, cyberpolitics can be understood as a new way of reading political practice in the cyber era, when political activities increasingly take place through digital media and online communication networks (Indrawan, 2019). Thus, cyberpolitics should not be understood merely as a campaign strategy or digital political communication, but also as a transformation of political space that affects relations among citizens, political actors, and digital platforms.

This transformation is clearly visible in electoral campaigning. Political campaigns no longer rely only on mass rallies, billboards, television advertisements, party machines, or direct meetings with voters. Modern campaigns increasingly use social media, influencers, data consultants, targeted advertising, paid content, digital volunteer networks, bots, buzzers, and algorithm-based message production. Roemmele and Gibson (2020) explain that contemporary political campaigning has two faces: a scientific face based on data and professionalized strategy, and a subversive face that can open space for digital manipulation. Haughton (2025) also shows that twenty-first-century campaigning combines digital tools with conventional campaign strategies. In the Indonesian context, Sanofi, Dewi, Arifin, and Sjachro (2025) show that multi-platform campaigning was used in the 2020 regional elections, indicating that cyberpolitics has become part of Indonesia's electoral practice.

However, the expansion of digital space in politics does not always strengthen democracy. Social media can expand citizen participation, but it can also become a space for the spread of disinformation, hate speech, black campaigns, polarization, and public opinion manipulation. Tucker et al. (2018) show that social media is associated with political polarization and disinformation. Dawood (2021) emphasizes that election disinformation should be understood as an electoral ecosystem problem because it involves many actors, channels, and information dissemination strategies. In the Indonesian context, Subekti et al. (2025) find that social media played a significant role in spreading disinformation against candidates in the 2024 presidential election, especially through platforms that support the circulation of video and text, such as Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok. These findings show that cyberpolitics not only opens space for participation, but also creates serious challenges for the quality of political information and electoral integrity.

Digital platforms are also important actors in cyberpolitics because they do not only provide communication spaces, but also regulate the visibility of political information. Algorithms, recommendation systems, content moderation policies, advertising services, and community rules can influence which political messages are visible, who receives attention, and which issues become dominant in public conversation. Bossetta (2018) explains that the digital architecture of each platform affects how political campaigns are conducted. Naranjo-Vinueza et al. (2025) also show that platform governance on Twitter/X is closely related to political communication and the distribution of power in digital space. Therefore, platforms cannot be understood as neutral media, but as political infrastructures that help shape power relations in digital democracy.

From the perspective of political science, cyberpolitics also transforms forms of citizen participation. Political participation no longer only means voting in elections, becoming a party member, attending mass rallies, or joining formal organizations. Citizens can now participate through social media posts, online petitions, hashtag campaigns, political content production, digital donations, policy monitoring, and criticism of public officials. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) explain this transformation through the concept of connective action, namely a form of political action that is more personalized, digitally connected, and not always dependent on formal organizations. However, digital participation also has a problematic side because citizens are not only participants, but can also become targets of political persuasion, message segmentation, voter profiling, and data-based manipulation.

Previous studies have widely discussed cyberpolitics as digital political communication, electoral campaigning, disinformation, digital political participation, and platform governance. However, these studies still tend to remain separate. The digital campaigning literature mostly emphasizes changes in the strategies of candidates and political parties, while the disinformation literature mostly discusses information disorder in elections. Meanwhile, platform governance studies often highlight platform power, but do not always connect it with changes in citizen participation and power relations in Indonesia's digital democracy. The earlier version of this article was also strongly directed toward constitutional issues, so it needed to be shifted to better fit a political science study of cyberpolitics, political communication, political platformization, and the quality of digital democracy.

Based on this gap, this article offers novelty by reading cyberpolitics as a transformation of democratic political space in Indonesia. The focus of this article is not on testing legal norms, but on how digital platforms, data, algorithms, multi-platform campaigning, disinformation, and citizen participation reshape political communication and power relations in Indonesian democracy. From this position, the article is expected to strengthen political science

studies on Indonesia's digital democracy, especially by connecting three issues that have often been discussed separately: digital campaigning, political platformization, and the quality of citizen participation in digital space.

2. Problem Formulation

Based on the background above, this article is directed toward answering two main questions. First, how does cyberpolitics transform patterns of political communication, electoral campaigning, and citizen participation in Indonesia's digital democracy? Second, how do digital platforms, data, algorithms, and disinformation influence power relations and the quality of electoral democracy in Indonesia?

3. Research Methods

This study uses thematic content analysis based on literature and document review. This method was chosen because the article does not aim to examine legal norms or statistically measure voter behavior, but to read patterns of ideas, issues, actors, and power relations in cyberpolitics. Content analysis is used to understand meanings and patterns in texts systematically, while thematic analysis is used to classify findings into main themes related to digital political communication, electoral campaigning, disinformation, platform governance, digital political participation, and digital democracy (Krippendorff, 2019; Schreier, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The research data consist of academic literature, policy and regulatory documents, public digital data, electoral data, and secondary reports on disinformation. Academic literature is used to build the conceptual framework of cyberpolitics as a political science phenomenon. Policy and regulatory documents are used as institutional context to understand the responses of the state and electoral institutions to the development of digital politics, rather than as primary materials for legal analysis. Meanwhile, public digital data, electoral data, and disinformation reports are used to show that cyberpolitics in Indonesia takes place in an increasingly digitalized society, with a large electorate and risks of information disorder in electoral contestation.

Table 1. Data Sources Used in the Study

Data Group	Data Used	Sources	Function in the Study
Academic literature	Literature on cyberpolitics, digital campaigning, platform governance, disinformation, political participation, algorithms, and digital democracy	Choucri; Indrawan; Bossetta; Roemmele & Gibson; Haughton; Sanofi et al.; Tucker et al.; Dawood; Bennett & Segerberg; Naranjo-Vinueza et al.; Karpf; Tufekci; Margetts et al.	Builds the conceptual framework and explains cyberpolitics as a political science phenomenon
Policy and regulatory documents	Regulations on campaigning, campaign supervision, and personal data protection	PKPU No. 15 of 2023; PKPU No. 20 of 2023; Bawaslu Regulation No. 11 of 2023; Law No. 27 of 2022 on Personal Data Protection	Explains the institutional context of state and electoral institutions' responses to the development of digital politics
Public digital data	Number of internet users, internet penetration, and social media users in Indonesia	DataReportal Digital 2025 Indonesia; APJII 2024	Shows the level of digital connectivity in Indonesian society as the context for the development of cyberpolitics
Electoral data	The 2024 Final Voter List consisting of 204,807,222 voters	General Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023	Shows the scale of voters in Indonesia's electoral democracy who become targets of digital communication and campaigning

Data Group	Data Used	Sources	Function in the Study
Disinformation reports	Reports or press releases on hoaxes and disinformation during the 2024 election and their potential recurrence in the 2024 regional elections	Mafindo, or the Indonesian Anti-Slander Society, a civil society organization	Explains the empirical context of disinformation risks in digital electoral contestation

Source: Compiled by the authors based on academic literature, policy and regulatory documents, public digital data, electoral data, and disinformation reports used in this study.

The collected data were then read thematically through five analytical focuses. These include the transformation of digital political space, digital campaigning and political platformization, disinformation and algorithms, digital political participation, and digital democracy governance. This thematic reading is used to explain how cyberpolitics transforms patterns of political communication, campaign strategies, citizen participation, power relations, and the quality of electoral democracy in Indonesia.

With this design, the study positions cyberpolitics as a political science phenomenon that is not only related to the use of digital media in campaigns, but also to changes in the structure of democratic political space. Therefore, policy and regulatory documents are used only as institutional context, while the main analytical focus is directed toward the relationship among citizens, political actors, digital platforms, data, algorithms, disinformation, and the quality of electoral democracy in Indonesia.

4. Results

Mapping Cyberpolitics in Indonesia's Digital Democracy

The reading of academic literature, policy documents, public digital data, electoral data, and secondary reports shows that cyberpolitics in Indonesia develops across three main layers. First, cyberpolitics emerges as a shift in political space from conventional arenas to digital arenas. Second, this transformation takes place in the context of Indonesian society, which is increasingly connected to the internet, social media, and digital platforms. Third, cyberpolitics raises new issues in electoral democracy, especially related to digital campaigning, disinformation, algorithms, citizen participation, and power relations among political actors, citizens, and platforms.

1. Thematic Mapping of Cyberpolitics in Indonesia's Digital Democracy

The thematic mapping shows that cyberpolitics is not only related to the use of social media for campaigns. Cyberpolitics covers broader changes in political communication, electoral mobilization, public opinion formation, and relations between citizens and political actors. In digital space, politics is no longer conducted only through political parties, face-to-face campaigns, mass media, or formal forums, but also through social media, messaging applications, video platforms, search engines, and online communication networks.

The first theme that emerges is the transformation of digital political space. Digital space becomes an arena for citizens to obtain information, express opinions, criticize power, participate in political discussions, and build support. The second theme is digital campaigning and political platformization. Candidates and political parties increasingly use digital content, influencers, political advertising, online volunteers, audience segmentation, and cross-platform messages to reach voters. The third theme is disinformation and algorithms, referring to how hoaxes, black campaigns, content amplification, and recommendation systems can influence public opinion. The fourth theme is digital political participation, which shows the expansion of citizen participation while also opening risks of data-based manipulation. The fifth theme is digital democracy governance, namely the need to strengthen campaign transparency, platform accountability, digital political literacy, and electoral integrity.

2. Digital and Electoral Context in Indonesia

Cyberpolitics in Indonesia develops in a society with a high level of digital connectivity. DataReportal recorded that in early 2025 there were 212 million internet users in Indonesia, with an internet penetration rate of 74.6 percent, as well as 143 million social media user identities, equivalent to 50.2 percent of the total population (DataReportal, 2025). APJII also recorded that the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2024 reached 221,563,479 people out of a total population of 278,696,200, with an internet penetration rate of 79.5 percent (APJII, 2024).

In the electoral context, the scale of Indonesian voters is also very large. The General Elections Commission established the 2024 Final Voter List at 204,807,222 voters (KPU RI, 2023). This data shows that digital political campaigning takes place in an electoral environment that is broad, competitive, and increasingly connected to digital platforms. At the same time, digital space also faces the risk of information disorder. Mafindo recorded an increase in hoaxes during the 2024 election and warned of their potential recurrence in the 2024 regional elections (Mafindo, 2024).

These data show that cyberpolitics in Indonesia does not take place in a small or limited space. Instead, cyberpolitics develops within a large electorate, a broad internet user base, and a social media ecosystem that increasingly influences political communication, electoral campaigning, and public opinion formation.

3. Main Issues in Indonesian Cyberpolitics

Based on the mapping of data and literature, several main issues emerge in Indonesian cyberpolitics. The first issue is the transformation of campaign strategies. Electoral campaigns no longer rely only on billboards, mass rallies, television advertisements, or party machines, but increasingly depend on digital platforms, visual content, influencers, online volunteers, targeted advertising, and voter segmentation. This shows that electoral strategies are becoming faster, more personal, and more data-driven.

The second issue is the increasing risk of disinformation. Digital space allows political information to spread quickly and widely, but it also opens space for hoaxes, black campaigns, hate speech, public emotion manipulation, and polarization. In this context, the quality of digital democracy is not only determined by how many citizens are connected to the internet, but also by the quality of political information they receive.

The third issue is the growing role of digital platforms. Platforms are not only communication channels, but also regulate information visibility through algorithms, recommendation systems, content moderation, and advertising policies. This condition positions platforms as important actors in digital democracy because they help determine which political messages are visible, which issues become dominant, and which actors receive public attention.

The fourth issue is the ambivalence of digital political participation. On the one hand, citizens have wider space to express opinions, criticize, create content, join campaigns, and monitor power. On the other hand, citizens can also become targets of political persuasion, profiling, micro-targeting, and data-based manipulation. Thus, digital participation can strengthen democracy, but it can also weaken the quality of deliberation if it takes place in an information ecosystem that lacks transparency.

Table 2. Thematic Mapping of Cyberpolitics in Indonesia's Digital Democracy

Emerging Theme	Main Issue	Political Meaning
Transformation of digital political space	Politics takes place through social media, messaging applications, video channels, and online networks	Democracy is increasingly mediated by digital infrastructure
Digital campaigning and political platformization	Influencers, digital content, political advertising, online volunteers, and audience segmentation	Electoral strategies become more personal, faster, and platform-based
Disinformation and algorithms	Hoaxes, black campaigns, content amplification, and algorithmic recommendations	The quality of political information and public trust can be disrupted
Digital political participation	Online criticism, hashtag campaigns, political discussions, content production, and citizen mobilization	Participation expands, but is also vulnerable to direction and manipulation
Digital democracy governance	Campaign transparency, platform accountability, digital political literacy, and electoral integrity	Digital democracy requires adaptive and transparent governance

Source: Authors' thematic synthesis based on thematic content analysis of the study data.

Overall, this mapping shows that cyberpolitics in Indonesia is a complex political phenomenon. Digital space not only expands political communication and citizen participation, but also creates new power relations among political actors, citizens, platforms, data, and algorithms. These findings provide the basis for the following discussion on how cyberpolitics transforms democratic political space, campaign strategies, public opinion contestation, citizen participation, and the direction of digital democracy governance in Indonesia.

5. Discussion

1. *Cyberpolitics as a Transformation of Democratic Political Space*

Cyberpolitics shows that democratic political space is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Politics no longer takes place only through political parties, face-to-face campaigns, conventional mass media, or formal state forums, but also through social media, messaging applications, video platforms, search engines, and online communication networks. In this context, digital space has become part of a new political infrastructure because citizens can seek political information, express opinions, criticize power, build support, and help shape public opinion through digital media. Cyberpolitics, therefore, should not be understood merely as the use of technology in politics, but as a transformation in the way politics is conducted in a digital society.

The findings in the Results section show that this transformation takes place in an increasingly digitalized Indonesian society. The high number of internet users, the large number of social media users, and the broad scale of voters in the 2024 election indicate that digital space has become an important arena for political communication and electoral contestation in Indonesia (APJII, 2024; DataReportal, 2025; KPU RI, 2023). Under these conditions, cyberpolitics cannot be positioned as a marginal phenomenon, but has become part of the main structure of Indonesia's electoral democracy.

Conceptually, cyberpolitics explains the relationship among cyberspace, power, institutions, communication, and political processes (Choucri, 2012). In the Indonesian context, cyberpolitics is also used to read political practices that increasingly take place through digital media and online communication networks (Indrawan, 2019). This transformation is in line with the idea of the hybrid media system, namely a condition in which old and new media influence one another in shaping information flows, public agendas, and political strategies (Chadwick, 2013). As a result, public opinion is no longer shaped only by political elites and mainstream media, but also by citizens, influencers, digital activists, online communities, and political support networks.

Cyberpolitics also expands forms of citizen participation. Political participation is no longer limited to voting in elections, becoming a party member, attending campaigns, or joining formal organizations. Citizens can participate through social media posts, hashtag campaigns, online petitions, digital donations, political content production, and criticism of public officials. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) describe this pattern as connective action, namely a form of political action that is more personalized, digitally connected, and not always dependent on formal organizations.

However, the expansion of digital participation does not automatically mean the strengthening of democracy. Digital-based political movements have the capacity to move quickly, but often face weaknesses in long-term coordination and organizational consolidation (Tufekci, 2017). Social media can also create political turbulence, namely a condition in which small actions in digital space can generate large political effects, but are not always stable or predictable (Margetts et al., 2016). Thus, cyberpolitics expands the space for citizen participation, but at the same time makes political participation faster, more fluid, more reactive, and more vulnerable to information flows that are not always verified.

In the Indonesian context, this transformation shows that digital democracy cannot be explained only by the number of internet or social media users. What is more important is how digital space changes the relationship among citizens, political actors, media, and platforms. Citizens are no longer only recipients of political messages, but can also become message producers, information disseminators, critics of power, and mobilizers of political support. However, this citizen engagement takes place in a space mediated by platforms, algorithms, and the logic of digital information distribution. Therefore, cyberpolitics should be understood as a transformation of democratic political space that opens opportunities for participation, but also creates new forms of dependence on digital infrastructure.

2. *Digital Campaigning, Political Platformization, and Electoral Behavior*

The transformation of digital political space is clearly visible in electoral campaigning. Political campaigns no longer rely only on mass rallies, billboards, television advertisements, face-to-face meetings, or party machines. In digital democracy, candidates and political parties increasingly use social media, video platforms, messaging

applications, influencers, online volunteers, political advertisements, and cross-platform content to reach voters. This transformation is in line with Haughton's (2025) view that twenty-first-century campaigning does not fully replace conventional campaigning, but combines older strategies with digital tools.

The findings in the Results section show that this transformation occurs in Indonesia's large and complex electoral context. The 2024 Final Voter List reached 204,807,222 voters, meaning that political actors need communication strategies capable of reaching a broad and diverse electorate (KPU RI, 2023). At the same time, the high number of internet and social media users shows that digital space has become an important arena for building image, spreading messages, and influencing public opinion (APJII, 2024; DataReportal, 2025). This condition explains why digital campaigning has become an increasingly important part of electoral competition in Indonesia.

Political platformization is a key feature of this campaign transformation. Digital platforms do not only function as channels for delivering messages, but also shape how political messages are produced, distributed, and received by voters. Bossetta (2018) explains that each platform has a different digital architecture, including upload features, content formats, interaction systems, algorithms, and message distribution mechanisms. These differences influence how candidates craft political messages, choose communication styles, and build relationships with audiences. Political messages on video platforms, for example, tend to emphasize visuals, emotions, and personalization, while text-based social media more easily develops into spaces for debate, criticism, or polarization.

In the Indonesian context, multi-platform campaigning has become part of electoral practice. Sanofi et al. (2025) show that Web 2.0-based campaigning was used in Indonesia's 2020 regional elections. This finding indicates that campaign digitalization is no longer an additional phenomenon, but has become part of electoral political strategy. Candidates cannot simply be present on one platform, but need to manage messages across different channels with different audience characteristics. Thus, digital campaigning works through the logic of platformization, in which political strategies are increasingly adjusted to the features, algorithms, and communication cultures of each platform.

Political platformization also influences electoral behavior. Voters no longer obtain information only from official campaigns, mass media, or direct meetings with candidates. They also receive political information from friends' posts, algorithmic recommendations, influencer content, video clips, memes, political advertisements, group conversations, and comments from other users. Stier et al. (2018) show that social media changes the relationship between politicians and audiences because political communication becomes more direct, but also increasingly depends on user responses and interactions. Under these conditions, electoral behavior is shaped not only by candidate programs or party identity, but also by voters' digital experiences in viewing, sharing, and interpreting political information.

This transformation in electoral behavior becomes stronger because digital campaigns can use data to design more segmented messages. Roemmele and Gibson (2020) explain that modern campaigning has a scientific face because it uses data, professionalized strategy, and increasingly measurable communication techniques. However, modern campaigning also has a subversive face because digital techniques can be used for manipulation, negative messaging, or non-transparent persuasion (Roemmele & Gibson, 2020). In this context, voter data, political preferences, online behavior, and audience segmentation can become sources of political power for actors who are able to manage them.

Digital campaigning also cannot be separated from the risks of disinformation and information manipulation. When political messages spread across many platforms, the boundaries between official campaigns, organic support, paid content, citizen opinion, and digital manipulation become increasingly blurred. Mafindo recorded an increase in hoaxes during the 2024 election and warned of their potential recurrence in the 2024 regional elections (Mafindo, 2024). This data shows that digital campaigning not only expands the reach of political communication, but also creates challenges for the quality of electoral information. Voters can access information more quickly, but they do not always receive information that is accurate, balanced, and verifiable.

Thus, digital campaigning should be understood as a political ecosystem involving candidates, parties, platforms, data, algorithms, influencers, digital volunteers, and voters. Digital campaigning is not merely the transfer of political messages from physical space to online space, but a transformation in how political actors build images, reach voters, and influence electoral behavior. In Indonesia's digital democracy, voter behavior is increasingly influenced by digital experience, platform visibility, message segmentation, and the quality of political information circulating in digital space.

3. Disinformation, Algorithms, and Platform Power Relations

Disinformation is one of the main challenges in cyberpolitics because digital space allows political information to spread quickly, widely, and repeatedly. In the electoral context, inaccurate information can influence how citizens understand candidates, political parties, electoral institutions, public issues, and election results. Tucker et al. (2018) explain that social media is closely related to political polarization and the spread of disinformation because information can move through user networks with particular political preferences. Dawood (2021) also emphasizes that election disinformation should not be understood only as a matter of false information, but as an electoral ecosystem problem involving political actors, digital platforms, media, citizens, and electoral institutions.

The findings in the Results section show that the risk of disinformation is also evident in the Indonesian context. Mafindo recorded an increase in hoaxes during the 2024 election and warned of their potential recurrence in the 2024 regional elections (Mafindo, 2024). This data indicates that disinformation does not only emerge during the campaign period, but can move across various electoral stages, from candidacy, campaigning, voting, vote counting, to the determination of results. Under these conditions, the quality of digital democracy is not only determined by how many citizens are connected to the internet, but also by the quality of political information they receive and share.

Disinformation in digital space becomes more complex because it does not stand alone, but is connected to the work of algorithms and platform recommendation systems. Algorithms can strengthen the visibility of certain information through recommendation, trending, search, and user interaction mechanisms. Huszár et al. (2022) show that Twitter's algorithm can amplify the distribution of certain political content, although the level of amplification may differ across actors and political contexts. Papakyriakopoulos et al. (2020) also show that recommendation systems and hyperactive users can influence the distribution of political communication on social media. Thus, the spread of political information is determined not only by message content, but also by how platforms organize public attention.

Platform power relations are important because digital platforms do not only provide communication spaces, but also determine how political information is made visible, circulated, or restricted. Bossetta (2018) explains that each platform's architecture influences how political campaigns are conducted, including through features, content formats, interaction systems, and message distribution mechanisms. Naranjo-Vinueza et al. (2025) also show that platform governance is closely related to political communication and the distribution of power in digital space. This means that platforms cannot be understood as neutral spaces because they have the technical capacity to shape information flows and public attention.

In the context of Indonesian cyberpolitics, these power relations allow political actors with greater digital resources to gain advantages in shaping public opinion. Actors who are able to manage content, influencer networks, digital advertising, audience data, and cross-platform strategies can reach voters more quickly and in a more segmented way. By contrast, citizens are often positioned as users as well as targets of political information. They can participate, but they can also be directed by recommendation systems, repeated content exposure, and political messages designed based on digital preferences.

This problem shows that disinformation cannot be understood merely as the spread of false news. Disinformation is also connected to the structure of information distribution, algorithmic logic, platform design, and unequal digital resources among political actors. Therefore, the main challenge in digital democracy is not only to remove false content, but to ensure that the political information ecosystem remains open, healthy, and accountable. If platforms play a major role in shaping political visibility, then the quality of electoral democracy also depends on platform transparency in managing content, political advertising, recommendations, and user reporting mechanisms.

4. Citizen Participation and the Direction of Digital Democracy Governance

Cyberpolitics opens a wider space for citizen participation in digital democracy. Citizens no longer participate only through elections, party membership, face-to-face campaigns, or formal political organizations. They can also engage through social media posts, hashtag campaigns, online petitions, political content production, discussions in messaging applications, digital donations, and criticism of public officials. Bennett and Segerberg (2012) describe this transformation as connective action, namely a form of political action that is more personalized, connected through digital media, and not always dependent on formal organizations.

However, digital participation is ambivalent. On the one hand, digital space can amplify citizens' voices, accelerate mobilization, and open space for criticism of power. On the other hand, digital participation can become reactive, unstable, and vulnerable to disinformation, polarization, or data-based manipulation. Tufekci (2017) shows that digital-based movements have strength in rapid mobilization, but often face weaknesses in long-term coordination

and organizational consolidation. Margetts et al. (2016) also explain that social media can create political turbulence, namely a situation in which small actions in digital space can produce large political effects, but are not always stable or predictable.

The findings in the Results section show that citizen participation in Indonesia takes place within a very broad digital space. The large number of internet and social media users indicates that digital space has become an important part of people's political life (APJII, 2024; DataReportal, 2025). At the same time, the large number of voters in the 2024 election shows that digital political communication takes place in a very broad and diverse electoral context (KPU RI, 2023). This condition makes citizen participation inseparable from digital platforms, because a large portion of political conversations, information circulation, and support formation takes place in spaces mediated by technology.

The direction of digital democracy governance needs to take this condition into account. Governance should not be directed only toward content control or administrative campaign supervision. Digital democracy governance needs to be directed toward protecting the quality of citizen participation, digital campaign transparency, platform accountability, data protection, digital political literacy, and electoral integrity. In the context of political science, digital democracy governance should be seen as an effort to keep digital space open for participation, while preventing it from being dominated by information manipulation and unequal digital resources.

Digital platforms need to be positioned as important actors in digital democracy governance. Platforms play roles in content moderation, information distribution, political advertising policies, recommendation systems, and user reporting mechanisms. Leerssen (2023) shows that transparency in content moderation and curation is an important issue in digital platform governance. Palladino et al. (2025) also show that civil society can play a role in encouraging global content governance that is more aligned with democratic principles and citizens' rights. Thus, digital democracy governance cannot be assigned only to the state or electoral institutions, but requires the involvement of platforms, civil society, academics, media, and citizens.

Digital political literacy is also an important part of this governance. Internet access does not automatically produce high-quality political participation. Citizens need the ability to recognize disinformation, understand how platforms work, assess the credibility of information, protect personal data, and distinguish criticism, opinion, satire, propaganda, and misleading information. If digital political literacy is weak, participatory space can turn into a space of manipulation. Therefore, strengthening digital literacy is not only a technological education agenda, but also a democratic agenda.

Thus, Indonesia's digital democracy governance needs to move from a merely administrative approach toward a more democratic and adaptive approach. Digital campaign supervision needs to consider actor transparency, funding sources, data use, political advertising, and cross-platform message circulation. Platform accountability needs to be directed toward openness in moderation systems, recommendation systems, and political advertising. Citizen participation needs to be strengthened through digital literacy, access to healthy information, and protected spaces for criticism. In this framework, digital democracy is not measured only by how widely citizens are connected to the internet, but by the extent to which digital space can strengthen participation, maintain information integrity, and build more accountable political relations.

6. Conclusion

Cyberpolitics has transformed democratic political space in Indonesia. Politics no longer takes place only through political parties, mass media, face-to-face campaigns, or formal forums, but also through social media, messaging applications, video platforms, search engines, and data-based communication networks. This transformation means that citizens are no longer merely recipients of political messages, but can also become producers of information, disseminators of opinion, critics of power, and mobilizers of political support. Thus, cyberpolitics should be understood as a transformation of democratic political space, not merely as the use of digital media in campaigns.

In the electoral context, digital campaigning and political platformization have changed how candidates, political parties, and voters interact. Campaigns no longer rely only on billboards, mass rallies, television advertisements, or party machines, but increasingly depend on digital content, influencers, online volunteers, political advertising, audience segmentation, and cross-platform strategies. This transformation makes electoral behavior increasingly shaped by voters' digital experiences, platform visibility, algorithmic recommendations, and the quality of political information circulating in digital space. Therefore, digital campaigning cannot be understood only as an

expansion of communication channels, but as a new political ecosystem that shapes relations among political actors, platforms, data, and voters.

This article also shows that disinformation, algorithms, and digital platforms create new power relations in Indonesia's digital democracy. Disinformation is not only related to the spread of false information, but also to how political information is amplified, directed, and circulated through recommendation systems, user networks, and platform design. Digital platforms have the capacity to determine which political messages become visible, which issues receive public attention, and which actors can more easily reach voters. Under these conditions, citizens have wider space for participation, but they can also become targets of persuasion, profiling, micro-targeting, and data-based manipulation.

Therefore, Indonesia's digital democracy governance needs to be directed toward a more democratic, transparent, and adaptive approach. Digital campaign supervision should pay attention to actor transparency, funding sources, data use, political advertising, and cross-platform message circulation. Platform accountability should be strengthened through openness in content moderation, recommendation systems, political advertising policies, and user reporting and appeal mechanisms. In addition, digital political literacy should be positioned as an important agenda so that citizens can recognize disinformation, understand how platforms work, protect personal data, and participate more critically. Ultimately, the quality of digital democracy is not determined only by how many citizens are connected to the internet, but by the ability of digital space to strengthen participation, maintain information integrity, and build more accountable political relations.

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