



X as a Catalyst for Change: Mass Mobilization Through the #PeringatanDarurat Hashtag in Indonesia's Digital Democracy

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Abstract: This research explores the complexities of mass mobilization through the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat in Indonesia's digital democracy, analyzing how social media transforms public participation in the contemporary democratization process. In the dynamic digital communication landscape, hashtags have evolved into strategic instruments for mobilizing collective awareness, shaping public opinion, and driving socio-political action. Through qualitative research with a constructivist approach, this comprehensive study will delve into the perspectives of X social media users, where hashtags serve as a communication medium capable of transcending traditional geographical and structural boundaries. The research methodology includes analyzing digital content by influencers, activists, and public figures who play a crucial role in issue dissemination and systematic observation of virtual interactions. The main focus of the research is to uncover the complex dynamics of how the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat shapes public narratives, creates spaces for democratic dialogue, and mobilizes the masses through social media platforms. This study aims to provide a deep understanding of the transformation of democratic practices in the digital era by showcasing the potential of social media in shaping social movements, raising critical awareness, and encouraging citizen participation. This research finds that the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat on social media X has become an effective tool for digital activism that mobilizes the public to reject the revision of the Regional Election Law. This movement demonstrates the power of mass autonomous communication in pushing back against policies, encouraging real action, and strengthening digital democracy in Indonesia.

Keywords: Digital activism; Mass mobilization; Public participation; Social media

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as a country based on the rule of law and democracy, has the authority to regulate and protect the implementation of human rights, including guaranteeing freedom of expression as a fundamental right (Nasution, 2020). In today's digital age, freedom of expression involves both mass and social media. Social media acts as a public space that allows all levels of society to express their opinions through criticism (Rahmawati et al., 2021). According to Addeo et al. (2024), in line with Pink's (2019) view, the development of the times has interconnected human life's digital, social, and material elements. As an example of digitalization, social media is considered a space where people can interactively understand, share, and negotiate the meaning of protest through dialogue about democracy. Kuznetsova & Tolbert (2023) state that social media can potentially

increase public aspirations for better governance, as these platforms enable discussions about democratic values, build connections between individuals with similar views, and disseminate information and news within online communities. As it continues to evolve, the internet and social media are growing rapidly, driven by the sensitivity and creativity of netizens, thereby illustrating that the internet has become one of the key drivers of democratic growth through cyberspace as a public voice ([Alfian, 2022](#)).

There are many platforms that people often use to voice their aspirations and criticisms of the government, one of which is social media X. [Levenson \(2024\)](#) refers to the opinion of [Isin and Ruppert \(2020\)](#) that digital citizenship encompasses various actions that take place in the digital realm, namely interactive spaces where digital citizens' identities are formed through a combination of their online activities and real lives. With hashtags sparking trending topics, political issues on social media X are widely discussed and serve as a platform for public discourse, including the call for *#PeringatanDarurat*. This activist group utilizes social media X to disseminate propaganda in their mobilization efforts ([Hasna, 2022](#)). Mass mobilization through social media like X is often driven by freedom of speech that is not merely transactional but transformative. It will ultimately prompt society to form public opinion and bring about social change through the fusion of perspectives on social media ([Kuncoro et al., 2023](#)). In this context, the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat* (Emergency Warning) illustrates how citizens disagree with political decisions or government policies. Hashtags are now on almost all social media platforms and have changed how people communicate digitally. More than just symbols, hashtags have also become emblematic of various global social movements ([Levenson, 2024](#)). It manifests freedom of expression in the digital space, a central topic in democracy. Discussions about digital activism often highlight how new media have enabled new forms of protest and mobilization, rooted in a particular culture of activism and characterized by more spontaneous and horizontal patterns of organization ([Dencik & Wilkin, 2020](#)).

According to the [Narasi \(2024\)](#) website article titled "What Does the 'Emergency Warning' Post Mean and Its Connection to the Constitutional Court Ruling?", this phenomenon was triggered by a meeting held by the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) to discuss the Draft Election Law (*RUU Pilkada*). The issues under scrutiny pertain to the eligibility criteria for regional heads in the 2024 Regional Elections and the age requirements for candidates running for regional head positions. The Constitutional Court (MK) ruling on August 20, 2024, stated that political parties or coalitions no longer need to secure at least 20% of seats in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) or 25% of valid votes to nominate regional heads and deputy regional heads. Additionally, the MK stipulated that gubernatorial candidates or provincial-level regional heads must be at least 30 years old when designated as candidates by the Election Commission (KPU). However, this decision was overturned the following day by the House of Representatives (DPR), which reinstated the party threshold to the old rules and set the candidate age following the Supreme Court (MA) decision, namely 30 years old at the time of inauguration. There are suspicions that this move was intended to facilitate the nomination of Kaesang, whom several political parties have endorsed. At the same time, the DPR appears to be attempting to circumvent the MK's decision, which should be binding and final.

This phenomenon shows the high level of public involvement in responding to various developing political and social issues. The *#PeringatanDarurat* (Emergency Warning) hashtag reflects public concern over government policies that are considered to be biased against the people or ignore the public interest. The hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat*, accompanied by a visual featuring the Garuda emblem on a dark blue background, refers to public awareness and rejection of the discourse from the Legislative

Body (DPR) which is considered to ignore the decision of the Constitutional Court (MK) regarding the requirements for regional head elections, particularly the points in the Revision of the Regional Election Law (Yefriza, 2024). The hashtag has become a massive movement in online communities by various groups, including influencers and Indonesian comedians. Research on the massive movement of the public through social media is worth exploring further. This hashtag demonstrates how platforms like X have become an important arena for the public to express political views and shape public opinion. The mass movement triggered by this hashtag shows how social media can influence government performance, particularly regarding government accountability to public opinion. Online protests often force the government to reconsider its policies or face public criticism directly.

This phenomenon reflects public participation in political issues through digital media, which is important to understand in modern democracy. The controversy surrounding the Constitutional Court's decision and the House of Representatives' response highlights the complexity of the relationship between state institutions and its implications for public trust. This case provides an opportunity to analyze public perceptions of political dynasties and nepotism in Indonesia, as the decision was made with information that the son of the 7th President of Indonesia would run for governor. The involvement of several figures, such as Najwa Shihab, in highlighting and discussing this issue demonstrates the importance of influencers in shaping public discourse. This research can reveal the complexity of Indonesia's current political situation, particularly regarding the relationship between state institutions such as the Constitutional Court, the House of Representatives, and public response.

Additionally, it can uncover the level of public concern regarding controversial political decisions and evaluate the impact of such hashtag movements on political decision-making processes and public policy. This study can provide insights into how protest movements and activism evolve in the digital age. It is relevant in political science and communication and important for understanding the dynamics of Indonesian democracy in the digital age. It can provide valuable insights for policymakers, activists, and the general public about the role of social media in shaping political discourse and its potential to influence democratic processes. The case of the #PeringatanDarurat hashtag has been widely discussed, but it still requires further in-depth research.

Researchers found one previous study that discussed this case from the perspective of framing analysis. Researched by Ilhamsyah (2024), the article "Framing Analysis of Emergency Warnings on the *Narasi.tv* Instagram Account" highlights the role of social media in mass mobilization, particularly through hashtags as a tool for political communication. One example is a study that used framing analysis to explore how the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat on *Narasi.TV's* Instagram account triggered online mobilization. The study found that the issue of democratic emergency in Indonesia, triggered by the House of Representatives' swift response to the Constitutional Court's decision, was effectively framed through this hashtag. Social media, such as Instagram and X, played an important role in reinforcing this narrative and rallying public solidarity around political issues. The research showed that hashtags functioned as protest symbols and tools to unite different groups within social movements. Hashtags enable messages to be disseminated widely and quickly, engaging social media users in public debate and collective action. It demonstrates how digital technology can accelerate political mobilization, especially in emergencies that require a swift response from the public. The study focused on framing analysis and how political issues are framed on social media, but it did not explore the dynamics of direct interaction between social media users. This research overlooks how participants organize themselves, form strategies, and coordinate

collective action outside the digital space. Previous research has also been limited to the virtual impact of mobilization, without exploring how online mobilization through hashtags translates into real action, such as physical protests or policy changes. Direct public involvement and how real political decisions are influenced by online pressure have not been studied in depth.

Another study found that social media can be used for mass mobilization. In a study by [Lawelai et al. \(2022\)](#) entitled “Democracy and Freedom of Expression on Social Media: Sentiment Analysis on Twitter,” the researchers discussed the theory of how social media, particularly Twitter, has become an important platform for expressing public opinion on democracy and freedom of expression. Social media is a space where people can understand, share, and interactively negotiate the meaning of protests through dialogue about democracy. Thus, social media creates a space where people can understand, share, and interactively negotiate the meaning of protests through dialogue about democracy. However, the data and information disseminated through social media like Twitter can be considered unreliable because anyone with an account can spread information. It aligns with this research topic, where social media, particularly Twitter or X, can catalyze change through mass mobilization. In this context, the X platform is a communication medium and a digital public space where citizens can discuss, debate, and shape public opinion. This research will explore how the unique characteristics of X (such as network structure and virality features) influence the formation and spread of the *#PeringatanDarurat* movement. The study will investigate how digital activism through *#PeringatanDarurat* interacts with and influences offline political processes.

Although there has been an increase in interest in the role of social media in mobilizing the masses, as researched in previous studies, those studies only used framing theory as a research analysis tool. In this study, the researcher will use the Network Society and Communication Power theories proposed by Manuel Castells as an analytical tool to analyze how online networks function in political mobilization. In the journal *The Network and the Society: Structure and Agency in Castells Theory* (2019), [Miconi \(2023\)](#) critically discusses the network society theory developed by Manuel Castells. Castells describes contemporary society as a network society, where networks—particularly those facilitated by information and communication technology—have become the dominant form of social, economic, and political organization. In this context, social structures transform hierarchical models toward decentralized and flexible models, which he calls the “space of flows,” an abstract space where information, power, and resources flow globally, distinct from the more geographically bound “space of places.”

Meanwhile, [Qihong & Yanhua \(2024\)](#) The theory of Communication Power in the journal “Construction and Realistic Transformation of Power Relations in the Space of Flows: A Historical Materialist Review on Castells's Theory of Communication Power” emphasizes that Castells views the space of flows as a unique form of space in network society, characterized by virtuality, openness, and globalization. In this space, power relations are no longer confined to traditional hierarchical structures but are shaped through control over digital information networks and the ability to construct public narratives. Mass self-communication makes the power shift from elites to the public possible, which becomes the new control in transforming power relations. In the *#PeringatanDarurat* case study, both theories are highly relevant to the events involving the public on social media platform X, which was used as a platform to voice their dissent and mobilize the masses regarding the Constitutional Court's decision.

The influence of interactions between social media users, the dissemination of messages, and how these networks affect power dynamics in mass movements remains largely unexplored in existing literature. To address the shortcomings identified in

previous research, researchers will adopt a more comprehensive approach, utilizing Network Society and Communication Power theories to analyze the structure and dynamics of interactions between social media users. According to [Castells \(2019\)](#), the “Network Society” theory posits that we live in a society dominated by networks, whether in social, economic, or political relationships. Networks form new social structures that characterize contemporary society ([Zhen et al., 2020](#)). In the digital age, interactive and horizontal communication networks such as the internet, mobile phones, and social media have become an important social life. These networks enable many people to communicate simultaneously, disseminate messages, and create and share information without requiring traditional vertical media (such as television or newspapers). This network era has introduced a new form of communication called mass self-communication, where individuals can produce and direct their content to reach a wide audience ([Castells, 2019](#)). Castells also explains that mass self-communication takes the form of self-directed emission and reception, where the dissemination and reception of messages are controlled by users, not by media institutions. [Castells \(2019\)](#) also discussed counter-power. Counter-power refers to an individual or group's ability to challenge existing power structures and ultimately transform those power relationships. Thus, it is about how individuals or groups can resist established systems or powers and strive to change them according to their objectives. Castells' concept of counter-power highlights the ability of social actors to challenge existing power relations. On a broader scale, political legitimacy has shifted and been replaced by patterns of public opinion communication within a society connected through networks (Network Society). ([Castells, 2019](#)).

This study will map how the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat* spread, who the key influencers in the network were, and how information circulated among them. This analysis can help identify the role of social media in strengthening solidarity and mass coordination and understand how relationships between individuals shape effective mobilization patterns. In addition, this research will examine how social media user participation occurs in mass mobilization. This case study illustrates how public pressure through social media can influence government decisions and the legislative process. This research will contribute to the development of political science by providing a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of digital mobilization, how hashtags function as catalysts for change in digital democracy, and how social interactions on social media can be translated into tangible political change. It will also enrich the literature on digital democracy and social networks in the modern era, where technology plays a crucial role in global political movements.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach to explore the phenomenon of the *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag as a form of digital social movement. The case study approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of a contextual phenomenon in real life, with clear spatial and temporal boundaries ([Yin, 2018](#)). This qualitative approach generates descriptive data from narratives from writings, conversations, and observable behaviors on social media platforms. The research was conducted online using online observation techniques (netnography) through the social media platform X, with the planned implementation period between August and November 2024. Although limited to text-based online content, netnography is still recognized as a powerful method for analyzing consumer behavior in the digital space. Through computer-mediated conversations, this technique enables researchers to understand preferences, desires, and the factors influencing users' decisions ([Bartl et al.,](#)

2016]. The data collection method will involve in-depth observation of tweets, comments, and interactions on social media platform X, particularly those related to the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat*.

The research subjects include active social media platform X users involved in discussions about the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat*, including influencers, activists, and public figures helping spread this issue. The subjects were selected purposively based on their involvement in the observed digital discourse. By understanding the patterns of interaction and message dissemination, this study aims to explain how social media facilitates mass mobilization and shapes public opinion in the digital democracy. This research will reveal how digital movements can influence public policy and demonstrate how pressure from cyberspace can impact political processes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the Indonesian House of Representatives released the results of its revision of the Constitutional Court's decision, the move sparked controversy and unrest among the public. This action is seen as violating democratic principles and raising serious questions about compliance with the Indonesian Constitution, as seen from the massive public movement across various media platforms, particularly X. Numerous hashtags have been circulating, such as *#PeringatanDarurat*, *#KawalPutusanMK*, *#TolakPolitikDinasti*, and the hashtag *#IndonesiaEmergencyDemocracy*, which are being used simultaneously. The House of Representatives (DPR) and the Government are accused of ignoring the Constitutional Court (MK) Decision No. 60/PI-XXII/24 regarding the threshold for regional elections. This unrest is not only being voiced through social media but also through public demonstrations and street protests to express dissatisfaction with the government.

Following the theory raised in this study, mass self-communication provides a great opportunity for social movements and individuals who resist to develop independence and challenge institutions with their approaches and plans. In a world increasingly interconnected through global networks and socialized communication, social movements also operate within these global networks. They think locally but act globally, challenging power where it resides—within global power networks and communication. In the case of *#PeringatanDarurat*, the social movement on the social media platform X is a concrete example of counter-power. The public opposed the DPR's decision, which was seen as disregarding the MK's ruling, and through social media, they voiced their dissatisfaction. It demonstrates how individuals and groups can use digital platforms to pressure the government to be accountable for its policies. In this case, social media X provides a space for the public to express their counter-power through direct participation in political debates and disseminating critical discourse. In the digital age, social movements utilize mass self-communication to discuss, shape public opinion, and become a powerful political tool. Although they also utilize traditional media, the internet has become the main platform for their actions. In addition to being active in the digital space, they are also involved in the real world, through direct interaction and actions at important locations often associated with institutions of power.

Mass self-communication has emerged in the digital age, enabling individuals to create and direct their messages to a global audience. In the context of *#PeringatanDarurat*, social media platform X users can produce their content, such as tweets, videos, and memes, which spread widely across online communities. This content sparks discussions and protests related to ongoing political issues. This movement serves as an example of how mass self-communication not only grants individuals and social groups autonomy to voice their opinions but also functions as a tool to challenge existing

power structures, as outlined in counter-power theory. Drawing on Castells' theory, today's digital society is supported by interactive and horizontal communication networks that enable individuals to connect globally while maintaining their local identities. In the case of *#PeringatanDarurat*, it can be seen how Indonesian society, through social media X, uses global communication networks to express their opinions on controversial political policies, such as the Constitutional Court's decision and the House of Representatives' response. This phenomenon demonstrates that online social networks enable individuals from diverse backgrounds to gather virtually, organize themselves, and shape public opinion without relying on traditional media such as television or newspapers. The *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag is an effective mass communication tool, creating dialogue between the public and authorities through a digital platform combining local and global communication.

Data analysis obtained by [Wijaya \(2024\)](#) from the Monash Data and Democracy Research Hub shows that there have been attempts to influence public opinion and directly affect politics through counter-hashtags against the people's aspirations. Several counter-hashtags have emerged, namely *#IndonesiaBaikBaikSaja* and *#RUUPerampasanAset*, which appeared alongside the popular hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat*. Data findings indicate that X users in Indonesia exhibit an uninfluenced attitude toward the emergence of counter-hashtags perceived as a distraction from the issue.

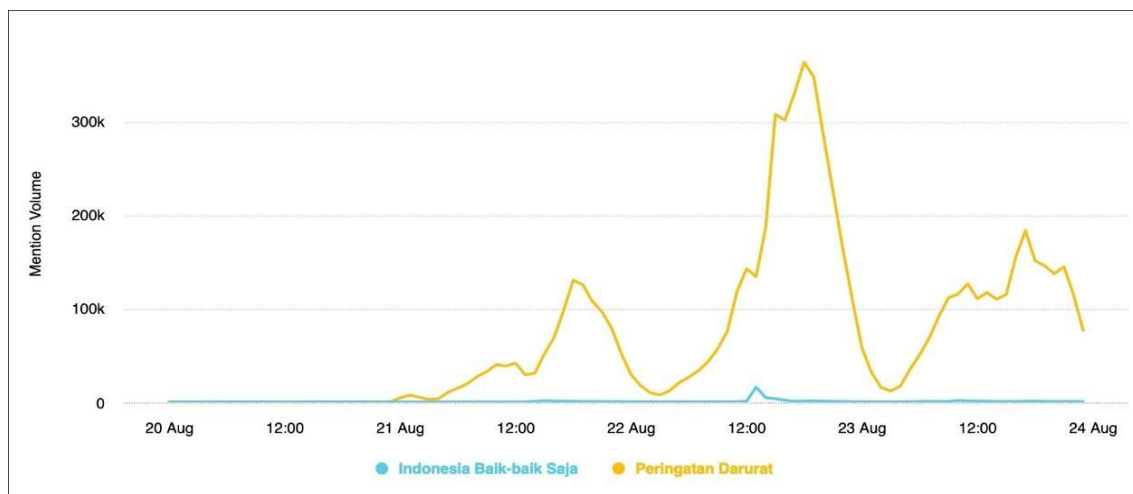


Figure 1. Counter-content with the hashtag *#IndonesiaBaikBaikSaja* did not impact the content volume with the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat*

Source: [\(Wijaya, 2024\)](#)

The number of tweets with the hashtag *#IndonesiaBaikBaikSaja* on the X platform only reached around 53,000 from 31,000 accounts. In contrast, tweets warning of an emergency marked with the hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat* exceeded 6.75 million from 123,000 accounts. This data highlights a striking disparity, indicating that the *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag is far more dominant and receives significantly more attention. This phenomenon may also reflect public distrust in official narrative control efforts and reveal the more complex dynamics of public opinion in the digital space.

These tweets came from various circles, including major accounts such as those of celebrities and influencers and community accounts such as fan bases, which joined in to enliven the *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag. Not only did it become a trend in the virtual world, *#PeringatanDarurat* also had a major impact on the wider community, creating

collective awareness of political, social, and democratic rights issues. This hashtag has also sparked critical discussions across various platforms, mobilized public opinion, and encouraged greater engagement, both in the form of digital support, such as sharing information and real-world actions like demonstrations or protests.

Unjuk Rasa Penolakan Revisi UU Pilkada di Sejumlah Daerah



Figure 2. Distribution of demonstrations against the revision of the Regional Election Law in Indonesia

Source: [Kompas News](#)

According to Kompas Daily on August 23, 2024, protests against changes to the Regional Election Law occurred in various regions. Besides sparking online discussions, the issues raised in *#PeringatanDarurat* also led to real action. It serves as evidence and answers the questions that form the focus of this study. People from various backgrounds, including academics, influencers, celebrities, and others, took to the streets to express their opposition to policies they believe threaten the democratic rights of the public ([Tokan et al., 2024](#)). Various digital platforms, such as non-digital and pre-digital media, have rhythms that influence how social movements utilize them to awaken collective memory ([Merrill & Lindgren, 2020](#)). This incident demonstrates how social media can drive real social change. Moreover, with large-scale protests spreading across various regions, the government, particularly the House of Representatives (DPR), eventually addressed the issue. According to [Yahya \(2024\)](#), the DPR, which had originally scheduled a plenary session to approve the Regional Election Bill on Thursday morning, August 22, 2024, decided to postpone the approval amid the protests occurring in various regions across Indonesia. However, as public protests continued, the DPR ultimately decided to cancel the approval of the Regional Election Bill. Deputy Speaker of the DPR, Sufmi Dasco Ahmad, then confirmed that the approval of the Regional Election Bill had been officially canceled. Dasco emphasized that the Constitutional Court's (MK) decision would serve as the basis for the Regional Election registration scheduled for August 27, 2024.

In this case, *#PeringatanDarurat* has demonstrated the enormous potential of digital activism. This activism mobilized the masses to stage demonstrations in less than 24 hours. The role of key influencers in disseminating information has become crucial, as they can accelerate the spread of messages and effectively mobilize the public. Influencers have become a significant force in the modern political landscape. Influencers are active on social media and have a large following due to their unique skills and genuine

relationships with their followers. Influencers leverage their power to support certain causes, such as promoting brand products or advocating for various social and political issues (Riedl et al., 2023).

The *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag made real-time information more accessible to the general public. This situation allowed the public to monitor the progress of the action directly, including incidents that occurred during the demonstrations. For example, incidents involving students being beaten by authorities or the use of tear gas in certain areas can quickly go viral. Through this hashtag, social media serves as a space for the public to express opinions and voice criticism, while also functioning as a tool for social control over those in authority.

This situation shows how social media has evolved into a dynamic digital democracy space where everyone has the opportunity to be a catalyst for major social change. Hashtags such as *#PeringatanDarurat* serve as effective mobilization tools, bringing critical issues to the public sphere nationally and internationally. Amid this global influence, authorities are pressured to act more honestly, responsibly, and responsively to public aspirations. More than just a communication tool, *#PeringatanDarurat* demonstrates that digital technology can be a strategic instrument in supporting democracy and strengthening freedom of expression. Hashtags such as *#PeringatanDarurat*, *#KawalPutusanMK*, *#TolakPolitikDinasti*, and *#IndonesiaEmergencyDemocracy* also serve as tools for social control that promote justice and facilitate the rapid and real-time dissemination of information, enabling the public to track the progress of protests directly.

This phenomenon demonstrates how social media has evolved into a tool for change in digital democracy, where the collective power of society can have a significant impact. However, the dedication of all stakeholders, including the public, activists, governments, and technology companies, to use social media ethically and responsibly is crucial to its success as a platform for digital democracy. Creating a positive impact depends heavily on the active participation of all parties, the dissemination of accurate information, and the avoidance of misinformation. The power of the *#PeringatanDarurat* hashtag on social media platform X in mobilizing large crowds is clear evidence that in the digital age, society is not merely a consumer of information but also an agent of social change, driving the development of a more democratic and inclusive Indonesian society.

CONCLUSION

This study showed that social media, particularly the X platform, plays a significant role as a catalyst in the process of digital democracy in Indonesia. The hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat* is concrete evidence of how digital technology can effectively mobilize the masses, foster public dialogue, and influence government policy. By applying Manuel Castells' theories of the Network Society and Communication Power, this study reveals that social media enables rapid and efficient mass mobilization, transcending geographical and social boundaries through horizontal communication. Digital activism can create significant political pressure, as seen in the cancellation of the revision of the Regional Election Law by the Indonesian House of Representatives. The hashtag *#PeringatanDarurat* serves as a space for counter-power, where the public can challenge authority and influence public opinion through digital media. The role of key actors, such as influencers and public figures, accelerates the spread of messages and strengthens mass solidarity within social movements. Overall, this study confirmed that social media is a communication tool and a strategic medium for supporting democracy, strengthening freedom of expression, and promoting social justice.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations need to be considered to strengthen the role of social media in digital democracy. First, strengthening digital literacy is crucial to ensure that information disseminated on social media is accurate and free from misinformation. This effort requires synergy between the government, educational institutions, and community organizations in educating social media users about the importance of validating information. In addition, collaboration between activists, policymakers, and technology companies is also important to develop ethical guidelines for social media as a tool for digital democracy, so that the digital public sphere can remain healthy and inclusive. The government also needs to improve its response to the aspirations voiced on social media by creating more direct and transparent dialogue mechanisms, so that the public feels heard and changes can be realized more quickly. To deepen understanding, further research should be conducted to analyze how digital mobilization can be translated into sustainable real-world actions and evaluate its impact on long-term policy changes. In this way, social media can continue to be optimized as a strategic tool to support democracy, strengthen freedom of expression, and promote social justice.

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