

# The Presence of Electronic Democracy (E-Democracy) as a Democratization of The Philippines Government in Obtaining a People's Vote

Riyo Rachman Gushardana<sup>1</sup>, Siwach Sripokangkul<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Kamil<sup>3</sup>  
and Tri Sulistyaningsih<sup>4</sup>

Received : February 7, 2020; Revised : April 7, 2020; Accepted : April 12, 2020

## Abstract

Along with the times, we know that information technology is developing very fast, not least in the field of government. In general, technological developments in the field of government have a system, namely electronic government. In this article, the authors will discuss the part of the existence of electronic government (*e-government*), namely electronic democracy. The presence of e-democracy in the Philippines was the topic of discussion in this article and took one of the issues, namely electronic voting (*e-voting*) in the Philippines. The method that will be used in this study is a qualitative research method, because it is considered by researchers to have characteristics that are in accordance with existing problems. This research departs from social problems in society and develops every time. The data collection techniques used in this study are first, literature study, which is collecting data

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Government Science, Faculty of Social and Politics, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia; e-mail : riyorachman89@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University, Thailand; e-mail : siwasri@kku.ac.th

<sup>3</sup>Department of Government Science, Faculty of Social and Politics, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia; e-mail : kamil@umm.ac.id

<sup>4</sup>Department of Government Science, Faculty of Social and Politics, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia; e-mail : sulis226@gmail.com

sourced from books, literature, and statutory regulations that have relevance to the topic. In this article, later will be discussed on how the Philippine government to realize democratization in terms of general elections in order to obtain the people's voice in terms of the electronic voting system implemented in the Philippines.

**Keywords :** e-government, e-democracy, e-voting, Democratization, Election

## Introduction

We know that technology is currently developing very fast. This technological development is one form of the development of the era. Today, the use of technology throughout the world and all walks of life is increasingly widespread. With the development of this technology has a positive impact on all users. One of the most developed technologies is web-based technology or often referred to as the internet. Along with the presence of internet technology in the midst of society, people are able to meet the need for information very quickly, precisely, and accurately. In addition, we know that before the advent of the internet or technology all activities were carried out manually and took a long time, now with the help of internet technology and a sophisticated computerized system making these jobs can be completed in a short time. Usually such a system is referred to as an online system or in an increasingly popular network in the world, including the Philippines.

Current internet technology can be utilized in various fields, whether in business, government, health, education, and so on. Talking about the field of government, the use of information technology in this field is known as electronic government or e-government. With e-government as a form of government activity using information technology support in providing services to the public. The importance of e-government is, among others, namely (1) encouraging the government to be more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the community; (2) encouraging the utilization side of information disclosure or in this case transparency; and (3) encourage the level of public or public participation in the government administration system.

Along with the rapid development of the world of technology today, no doubt has increased the use of the internet in various parts of the world, one of which is the Philippines. Based on data from the Internet World Statistics (2019), it is stated that in 2019 it tends to increase from 2017, which is 79 million internet users or growing by 22 million. So, it can be said that the Philippines is the thirteenth country of the largest internet users with an average age ranging from 18-24 years. The data explains that the highest internet users in the Philippines are the younger generation. The younger generation with that age range can be classified into millennial groups, namely those born in 1995-2010. This millennial generation is a digital generation that often uses social networks in this case social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and so on to communicate.

In this article, the author discusses information technology in the field of government or e-government in the electronic democracy or e-democracy section. Before discussing further about e-democracy, we need to know first if the existence of internet technology is able to guarantee the administration of the country to be democratic? The answer can be "yes" and "no", or even both paradoxes, of course, with their respective reasons. E-voting is a new innovation from the development of e-democracy in politics and government. E-democracy itself aims to improve the structure and process of a country's democratic system through electronic media. The development of these new innovations gives the active role of the community in a democratic system to be improved and the quality of public policies will also be better. With the involvement of electronic media in the democratic process, it is possible for public debates, public discussion, criticism and analysis of various public decisions.

Talking about the electoral system which is one proof of the current democracy. The United States became the pioneer of the formation of democracy in the Philippines during the 1898 colonial period. The United States makes Philippine democracy resemble American democracy. This can be seen in the American and Philippine parliaments having a Senate and House of Representatives. The two

countries elect the President through general elections. In the presidential election, the Philippines uses a plural system, where candidates who have the most votes will certainly win the election. In the current electoral system in the Philippines using electronic voting (e-voting) to elect the President and MPs (Parliamentarian). With this e-voting, it became a tangible manifestation of the democratization of the Philippine government in order to gain popular votes.

## Methodology

The method that will be used in this study is a qualitative research method, because it is considered by researchers to have characteristics that are in accordance with existing problems. This research departs from social problems in society and develops every time. By using qualitative research methods, this research will be flexible or can adapt to existing changes. Qualitative method is a method that refers to research procedures that produce descriptive data. Descriptive research here is research intended to investigate the circumstances, conditions, or other things that have been mentioned. In this case the researcher only photographing what happened to the object or region under study, then describes what happened in the form of a research report straightforward (Arikunti, 2010 : 3).

The data collection techniques used in this study are first, literature study, which is collecting data sourced from books, literature, and statutory regulations that have relevance to the topic. Second, documentation, which is data retrieval obtained through certain documents. Documents can be in the form of writing, for example diaries, life history, verita, biography, regulations and policies that are relevant and related to this research.

## Literature Review

### E-Democracy Concept

The Philippines as a country that adopts a democratic system of government, where the highest power in the Philippines is actually in the hands of the people, as

many other democracies. Then we know the popular term of democracy, namely from the people, by the people, and for the people. Of course this must be demonstrated by the participation given by the people in the life of the nation and state. The manifestation of this participation is a support and demand from the community as a form of supervision and public concern for the running of the government. We know that before democracy in the Philippine government system, society was very difficult to control and supervise the running of a government.

We know that the digital world that is connected through the internet has indeed penetrated all levels of society. Along with the presence of internet technology in the community, people are able to meet the need for information very quickly, precisely, and accurately. Democracy also slowly develops with the existence of information technology. So that now in various countries, people have begun to recognize the term "e-voting". Democracy in the Philippines has entered a development and renewal. This is what is known as e-Democracy. E-Democracy is a tangible form of a combination of technology and community participation in a democratic system. E-Democracy can be interpreted as the relationship between the political elite and the community that is carried out in a network (online) with a variety of methods.

E-Democracy is a combination of two words, electronic or abbreviated "e" and "democracy", which in these two words have different meanings. According to Stephen Coleman & Donald F. Norris (2005), "e-democracy is the use of ICT or information communication and technology to facilitate and improve the structure and process of democracy". A study agency on the Local e-Democracy National Project, defines e-democracy as "Harnessing the power of the new technology to encourage citizen participation in local decisions making between election times". Meanwhile, according to Mohd. Shafiq bin Abdullah & Zulkapli bin Mohammed (2015), defines e-democracy as a way of using information technology system applications to guide, improve, and implement the principles of democracy.

### **E-Voting System In General**

In the term e-voting (electronic voting) we usually understand the voting process which allows voters to vote securely and confidentially through information technology or the internet. There are several definitions of e-voting proposed by experts, among others, according to Smith and Clark (2005) defines that "e-voting enhancement of I-voting is one of the latest and extremely popular methods of casting votes, and is usually performed by using either a PC via a standard web browser; touch-tone telephone or cellular phone, digital TV, or a touch screen at a designated location. " Meanwhile, according to Zafar And Pilkjaer (2007) states "e-voting combines technology with the democratic process, in order to make voting more efficient and convenient for voters. E-voting allows voters to either vote by computer from their homes or at the polling station".

In the application of e-voting in various countries carried out with various models and in this decade it turns out that the adoption of e-voting as a system of democratic parties has been widely applied, not only in the United States but also in a number of other countries that embrace a democratic system. The adoption model of this e-voting technology system turned out to be very diverse, for example in Belgium and the Netherlands using smart cards and touch-screen computers. In the expert's opinion, Zamora (2005), stated that the electronic election system is inseparable from the importance of confidentiality and security, meaning that if confidentiality and security are met, then e-voting is very appropriate to use.

The importance of implementing an e-voting system for every country that adopts a democratic system has arisen various speculations including threats related to secrecy and security. Many cases in various countries that have implemented e-voting did not significantly increase voter participation. Therefore, according to Schaupp and Carter stated that the importance of understanding from all parties before the adoption of e-voting so that the implementation of the e-voting system itself can be accepted by all parties without any threats or negative views. Apart from the various e-voting system models that are applied in various countries and the

development of the electoral process that occurs in various countries with various procedures, it is very important to know the advantages and disadvantages of each system used for the election.

## Result

### Phillippine Electoral System

Elections according to Harris G. Warren are Elections are the accostions when citizens choose their officials and decide, what they want the government to do. In making decisions, citizens determine what rights they want to have and keep. The elucidation of electoral theory states that elections are used by the community as a moment to elect leaders who are later expected to bring good change into a country. Elections can also be used as a barometer of the success of a democracy in a country. The people and government in the current democracy can fill each other in order to maintain the sustainability of a country.

The Philippines has become one of the countries that embraced the democratic system very strongly. Every 6 years the people are given the freedom to choose the President. This election certainly goes through various stages. This stage begins with the registration of elections, election campaigns, voting, vote counting and election results determination. Elections are always synonymous with holding campaigns by candidates. This campaign aims to convey the vision and mission of the candidates so that people can easily choose candidates who will later fulfill the aspirations of the people in government.

Elections in the Philippines are held once every 6 years. Philippine's elections are conducted to elect the President directly, elect Senate members, and also members of the House of Representatives every 3 years. As a democratic country, Philippine elections are conducted by people who are at least 18 years old at the time of the elections. Elections of President and Vice President are held for a term of 6 years, this is stated in the 1987 constitution and the President is only allowed to hold office for 2 terms.

## **The Presence of E-Democracy as a Manifest of Democratization of the Philippine Government in Gaining the Voice of the People**

The Philippines is an ASEAN country that has implemented e-voting nationally since the election six years ago. E-voting was implemented because the Philippines has a bad history of electoral fraud. We know that e-voting is part of e-democracy in the Philippines. In the 1986 elections, Ferdinand Marcos was found guilty of cheating, so that since 2010, the Philippines adopted e-counting for three elections from 2010, 2013, and 2016. E-counting allows electoral institutions to vote faster than the manual method (Manik Sukoco, 2017).

In terms of voter participation in the application of e-voting, e-voting plays a major role in increasing public participation, especially the Philippines. Electronic-based electoral system in the Philippines succeeded in increasing voter participation from 74.99% in 2010 to 77.57% in 2013, and 81.62% in 2016. In terms of speed, an increase in the speed of obtaining election results with the adoption of e-Voting is very significant. With the speed of vote counting is able to reduce the number of conflicts due to the general election. After the 2010 elections, the Philippine police noted incidents related to the General Elections fell by 50% compared to the 2004 Elections and dropped by 65% compared to the 2007 elections.

**Table 1** Number of Registered Voters by Age Group

Age Group	Number of Registered Voters
18-19	1,653,732
20-24	7,641,186
25-29	8,124,984
30-34	6,824,073
35-39	6,248,091
40-44	5,398,720
45-49	5,056,190
50-54	4,373,209
55-59	3,762,569
60 above	8,295,626
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,378,380</b>

**Source** : Committee on Election of Philippines (2018)

In the Philippines, filing of ballots during the election process is done by blackening the circles in the ballot paper to elect certain officials. After that, the ballots are entered into the Precinct Count Optic Scan (PCOS) machine provided at the Polling Station for scanning. PCOS machines that use Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology, aka optical scan voting system, also read signs on ballots. After the polling station is closed, the PCOS machine then counts the votes won by the candidates, prints the results, and sends them to the Commission on Election (Comelec) for recapitulation.

There have been three elections in the Philippines using OMR-PCOS technology, namely in the 2010, 2013 and 2016 elections. However, with the success of the Philippine government using this technology, there has been speculation about public protests that the use of this technology has made the election not transparent. For example, in 2016 e-voting technology improvements were made, namely by adding Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) technology. So, there is evidence

similar to ATM receipts given to voters, after the ballot paper reads the PCOS machine. This paper evidence will later be useful for voters to check that their ballot papers are actually processed as what the voters choose, as well as to prevent fraud in the voting process. Because, if there are problems in counting votes electronically, proof of receipt can be calculated manually.

## Conclusion

In this article, the authors discuss information technology in the field of government or e-government in the electronic democracy or e-democracy section. The initiation of the application of electronic democracy (e-democracy) in the Philippines is not just a combination of democracy and information technology. Basically, implementing a technological system with a government system needs to be seen from various factors that exist in implementing electronic democracy, especially in the electronic voting system (e-voting). An important factor in implementing e-voting is the confidentiality and security of the system. Although there are various negative factors and assumptions of the existence of an e-voting system, this system plays a major role in increasing public participation in general elections in a country, especially the Philippines. The presence of e-democracy, especially electronic voting is a form of democratization of the Philippine government in gaining public votes in general elections. From an increase in public participation in participating the electoral process, this is the success of a government in implementing a democratic system in the country. Because, the concept of democracy itself, namely from the people, by the people, and for the people.

## References

- Anak, S. P. (2009). Arikunto, Suharsimi. (1993). Research Procedure: A Practical Approach. Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta. Universitas.
- Caldow, J. (2004). E-democracy: Putting down global roots. Institute for Electronic Government, IBM, 12.

- Coleman, S., & Norris, D. F. (2005). A new agenda for e-democracy. OII Forum Discussion Paper.
- García-Zamora, C., Rodríguez-Henríquez, F., & Ortiz-Arroyo, D. (2005, September). SELES: an e-voting system for medium scale online election. In Sixth Mexican International Conference on Computer Science (ENC'05) (pp. 50-57). IEEE.
- Internet World Statistic, 2019. Level of Internet Users in the Philippines in <https://www.internetworldstats.com/asia.htm#id> (accessed 4 February 2020).
- Karan, K., Gimeno, J. D., & Tandoc Jr, E. (2009). The Internet and mobile technologies in election campaigns: The GABRIELA Women's Party during the 2007 Philippine elections. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 6(3-4), 326-339.
- Landé, C. H. (1996). Post-Marcos politics: A geographical and statistical analysis of the 1992 presidential election. Institute of Southeast Asian.
- Lauer, T. W. (2004). The risk of e-voting. *Electronic Journal of E-government*, 2(3), 177-186.
- Macintosh, A., & Whyte, A. (2006, September). Evaluating how eParticipation changes local democracy. In *Proceedings of the eGovernment Workshop* (pp. 1-902316).
- Manik Sukoco. (2017). Mengkaji Sistem Pemilu Elektronik in <http://m.kumparan.com/manik-sukoco/mengkaji-sistem-pemilu-ele> (accessed 1 February 2010).
- Statistic Data From Commite on Election of Phillipines. (2019). <https://www.comelec.gov.ph/php-tpls-attachments/2018BSKE/Statistics/QuickStatisticsBRGY2018.pdf>, (accessed 3 February 2020).
- Schaupp, L. C., & Carter, L. (2005). E-voting: from apathy to adoption. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management* 18, No. 5, 586-587.

- Siau, K., & Long, Y. (2005). Synthesizing e-government stage models – a meta-synthesis based on meta-ethnography approach. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 105(4), 443-453.
- Slamet, S., Hamdan, A. R. B., & Deraman, A. (2015, July). E-demokrasi di Indonesia, antara Peluang dan Hambatan Pendekatan Fenomenologis. In *Seminar Nasional Informatika (SEMNASIF)* (Vol. 1, No. 5).
- Smith, A. D., & Clark, J. S. (2005). Revolutionising the voting process through online strategies. *Online Information Review*.
- Suárez, S. L. (2006). Mobile democracy: Text messages, voter turnout and the 2004 Spanish general election. *Representation*, 42(2), 117-128.
- Zafar, C., & Pilkjaer, A. (2007). E-voting in Pakistan. Master Thesis, Departement of Business Administration and Social Sciences, Lulea University of Technology.