



SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIGITAL DEMOCRACY IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMPARED TO THAILAND^{*1}

ความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมกับการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัล
ของประเทศไทยเปรียบเทียบกับประเทศไทย²



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Abstract

This research aims to study the development, direction, and trend of social change and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea compared to Thailand. To suggest guidelines for developing digital democracy that responds to the challenges of modern society in the Republic of Korea and Thailand. This research is a mixed method research. The research results found that the emergence of digital technology, urbanization and demographic changes have created new platforms for political participation, leading to the development of digital democracy. However, there are still obstacles in the state structure and politics. Economic aspects and inequality and social and cultural aspects that are limitations to the development of digital democracy in both countries.

Keywords: Digital Democracy; Modern Society; Republic of Korea; Thailand

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² บทความวิจัยนี้เป็นผลจากงานวิจัยเรื่อง ความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมกับการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัลของประเทศไทย โดยได้รับทุนสนับสนุนจากศูนย์ส่งเสริมการวิจัยในภูมิภาคเอเชียของมูลนิธิเกาหลีเพื่อการศึกษาขั้นสูง ณ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



บทนำ

บทความวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาพัฒนาการ ทิศทาง และแนวโน้มความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมกับการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัลของสาธารณรัฐเกาหลีเปรียบเทียบกับประเทศไทย เพื่อเสนอแนะแนวทางในการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัลที่ตอบสนองต่อความท้าทายในสังคมสมัยใหม่ของประเทศสาธารณรัฐเกาหลีและประเทศไทย การวิจัยนี้เป็นการวิจัยแบบผสานวิธี ผลการวิจัยพบว่า การปรากฏของเทคโนโลยีดิจิทัล การเกิดความเป็นเมือง และความเปลี่ยนแปลงทางประชากรได้สร้างแพลตฟอร์มใหม่สำหรับการมีส่วนร่วมทางการเมือง นำไปสู่การพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัล อย่างไรก็ตาม ยังคงมีปัญหาอุปสรรคด้านโครงสร้างรัฐและการเมือง ด้านเศรษฐกิจและความเหลื่อมล้ำ และด้านสังคมและวัฒนธรรมที่เป็นข้อจำกัดของการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัลของทั้งสองประเทศ

คำสำคัญ: ประชาธิปไตยดิจิทัล; สังคมสมัยใหม่; สาธารณรัฐเกาหลี; ประเทศไทย

Introduction

Digital democracy, also known as e-democracy, refers to the utilization of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance political processes within a democratic system (Macintosh, 2004). It enables citizens to participate more directly in political decision-making, broadening the channels of engagement and fostering transparency. This research paper seeks to examine how digital democracy has evolved in the Republic of Korea and Thailand, countries with distinct political histories and cultures.

A study of social change and digital democracy development in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand which started from factors in social change that are similar. However, the direction and tendency of the relationship between social change and digital democracy development of the two countries are different. There is no research or comparative study on these issues that will lead to new knowledge or academic advancement. Develop a digital democracy that responds to the challenges in modern society of both countries. This will be crucial in developing the internet as a public space that further creates digital democracy.



Research Objectives

1. To study the development of social change and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand.
2. To study the direction and trend of the relationship between social change and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand.
3. To suggest ways to develop a digital democracy that responds to the challenges in the modern society of the Republic of Korea and Thailand.

Methodology

This research is a mixed method. The qualitative research identified key informants by using the theoretical sampling method. Key informants were divided into 4 groups, 2 people each, totaling 8 people (4 Thais, 4 Koreans), namely 1) representatives of government sectors involved on the Internet; 2) mass media; civil society 3) Internet service providers; social media and 4) academics.

For quantitative research, the sample was determined according to the approach of Taro Yamane to determine the level of statistical significance was 0.05 and the confidence level was 95 percent. The sample group was 400 Internet users using cluster sampling, divided into 200 Thais and 200 Koreans.

Qualitative research tools were in-depth interviews that were tested for validity and reliability by having experts examine the research tools. The tools used in quantitative research are structured questionnaires, validity checks by Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), and reliability checks by trying out the samples to determine their reliability using the correlation formula (Cronbach's Alpha Efficiency) (α -Coefficient). For qualitative research, data was analyzed by descriptive analysis. For quantitative research, data were analyzed by statistical analysis using descriptive statistic.

Results

1. The development of social change and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand Republic of Korea: Rapid Technological Advancement Fuels Democratic Participation The



development of digital democracy in Republic of Korea can be understood by examining the role of digital media in introducing political systems and influencing public opinion. Digital diplomacy, facilitated by digital media, has emerged as a new tool to change attitudes and beliefs without resorting to conflict or war. The effectiveness of digital media in shaping public opinion means that it plays a crucial role in social developments and discourse changes (Asadi, 2017).

Republic of Korea's resilience in utilizing digital platforms to foster a more participatory democracy offers several lessons. One key takeaway is the importance of civil society. For digital democracy to thrive, there must be a robust civil society that can leverage these platforms effectively, as witnessed in the Candlelight Movement (Lee et al., 2023). Moreover, the government's willingness to embrace digital platforms and ensure transparency, as observed in their open-data policies, is vital for trust-building (OECD, 2020). Digital platforms, especially social media, played a crucial role in mobilizing the masses. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and KakaoTalk (a popular messaging app in Republic of Korea) were used to disseminate information, coordinate protest locations, and share updates in real-time. As noted by Liana Chua in her study on the influence of social media on political mobilization, the capacity of these platforms to influence behavior and fuel protests has been evident in various global movements (Chua, 2018). This digital leap paralleled political reforms, democratization efforts, and the liberalization of media spaces.

The development of digital democracy in Republic of Korea is consistent with the opinions of a sample group of Koreans who expressed the opinion that level of freedom on the Internet was at an average level of 4.04, while the Thai sample group had an opinion that it was only at an average level of 3.59 (see Table 1

Table 1 Internet freedom of the sample group

level of freedom on the Internet	Thailand				Republic of Korea			
	quantity	percentage	mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)	quantity	percentage	mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)
Very low	7	3.5%	3.59	0.998	2	1.0%	4.04	0.937
Low	20	10.0%			11	5.5%		
Moderate	55	27.5%			39	19.5%		
High	84	42.0%			74	37.0%		
Very high	34	17.0%			74	37.0%		



Thailand: A Complicated Interplay of Monarchy, Military, and Digital Spaces
Thailand's experience with digital democracy is entwined with its unique political landscape marked by the monarchy's reverence and recurrent military coups. The 2010 Red Shirt Protests, mobilized through community radios and online platforms, showcased the growing role of digital tools in Thai politics (Hewison, 2014).

However, the Thai military, post the 2014 coup, enacted measures like the Computer Crimes Act, effectively suppressing online dissent (Nyblade et al., 2015). Yet, the 2020 student-led protests, facilitated by platforms like Twitter, highlighted the resilience of digital activism against state suppression.

The phenomenon of political conflict and coup d'état in Thailand is consistent with the results of the study. Direct experience of any unsafe event because the use of the Internet on political issues among the Thai sample, for example, they had to "self-censor" because they feared harm to themselves or their family members, 29.5 percent, and 23.0 percent had been threatened or slandered by fellow internet users, while that the Korean sample has never been arrested and prosecuted according to law, 100 percent, and has never been threatened by government agencies or government officials, 98.5 percent, reflects that factors of state structure and politics including social and cultural factors affecting success or obstacles to the development of digital democracy in both countries (see Table 2).

Shared Challenges: Misinformation and Cybersecurity From the opinion survey of the sample group, it was found that the majority of the Thai and Korean sample group agreed that direct and indirect control over the internet is necessary including computer laws and other laws that cause blocking and suppression of expressing opinions. It is noted that the mean of the sample group agrees that there is direct and indirect control over the Internet including computer laws and other laws that cause blocking and suppression of expressing opinions. The Thai sample group had a higher mean than the Korean sample group (see Table 3).

The Impacts of Global Digital Platforms The top 5 social media used by the Korean sample group to receive information, discuss, express opinions, create content, present demands, vote/complaint or participate in the political issues including 1) YouTube 2) Kakao talk 3) Line 4) Naver 5) Instagram (see Table 4).



These platforms provide an avenue for politicians, activists, and influencers to communicate directly with the populace, reshaping political campaign strategies and public engagements.

Global platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter, have become pivotal tools for political mobilization in Thailand. The top 5 social media used by the Thai sample group to receive information, discuss, express opinions, create content, present demands, vote/complaint or participate in the political issues including 1) Line 2) Facebook 3) YouTube 4) Instagram 5) Twitter (see Table 4).

These platforms played a vital role in organizing the youth-led protests of 2020-2021, fostering not just local but also international solidarity. However, the vast reach of these platforms also means they're vulnerable to manipulation and fake news campaigns, challenging the integrity of public discourse.

Table 2 Direct experience of any unsafe event because the use of the Internet on political issues of the sample group

Direct experience of any unsafe event because the use of the Internet on political issues	
1.	Being threatened by government agencies or government officials
2.	Being threatened or slandered by fellow internet users
3.	To be arrested and prosecuted according to the law
4.	Being monitored by spy technology to monitor social media behavior
5.	Being incited by "Cyber Troops" to stir up content, facts, and public opinions on social media
6.	Must "censor oneself" because of fear of danger to oneself or one's family members
7.	Being dealt with or using violence in the real world
8.	Was attacked by rhetoric saying that he was not patriotic, had betrayed the nation, accepted foreign money, sell yourself to a foreigner
9.	Discourse attacked as destroying democracy, have backward thinking
10.	Being "cyber bully" by bullying, slandering, scolding, or bullying on social media
11.	Personal information exposed by posting or forwarding it to others, such as leaked pictures and funny pictures, to shame and embarrass
12.	Being impersonated by secretly entering an online account or create a new account using your name and/or picture and then use the account in an inappropriate way
13.	Attacked by groups created in the online world, such as various anti-community pages, to find fault, criticize, discuss, curse, and cause feelings
14.	Being attacked by political groups, political movements, political parties
15.	Information operations (IO)

**Table 2** Direct experience of any unsafe event because the use of the Internet on political issues of the sample group (continue)

Thailand				Republic of Korea			
ever		never		ever		never	
quantity	%	quantity	%	quantity	%	quantity	%
11	5.5%	189	94.5%	3	1.5%	197	98.5%
46	23.0%	154	77.0%	27	13.5%	173	86.5%
2	1.0%	198	99.0%	0	0.0%	200	100.0%
31	15.5%	169	84.5%	8	4.0%	192	96.0%
23	11.5%	177	88.5%	9	4.5%	191	95.5%
59	29.5%	141	70.5%	37	18.5%	163	81.5%
3	1.5%	197	98.5%	4	2.0%	196	98.0%
27	13.5%	173	86.5%	13	6.5%	187	93.5%
26	13.0%	174	87.0%	13	6.5%	187	93.5%
24	12.0%	176	88.0%	18	9.0%	182	91.0%
13	6.5%	187	93.5%	10	5.0%	190	95.0%
22	11.0%	178	89.0%	18	9.0%	182	91.0%
18	9.0%	182	91.0%	7	3.5%	193	96.5%
17	8.5%	183	91.5%	5	2.5%	195	97.5%
22	11.0%	178	89.0%	8	4.0%	192	96.0%

Table 3 Direct and indirect control over the Internet including computer laws and other laws that cause the blocking and suppression of sample group opinions.

level of direct and indirect control over the Internet that cause the blocking and suppression	Thailand				Republic of Korea			
	quantity	percentage	mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)	quantity	percentage	mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)
Strongly Disagree	27	13.5%	3.00	1.199	18	9.0%	2.91	0.998
Disagree	44	22.0%			53	26.5%		
Uncertain	49	24.5%			60	30.0%		
Agree	62	31.0%			67	33.5%		
Strongly Agree	18	9.0%			2	1.0%		

2. The direction and trend of the relationship between social change and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand Republic of Korea 1) Early Stages of Digitalization and Democratization: Republic of Korea's journey into the digital era began with its transformation into a democratic state in the late 1980s. With its economic growth and rapid technological advancement, the state heavily invested in building a robust information and communication infrastructure (Castells, 2009). The digital revolution promoted transparency and civic participation consistent with the political participation or engagement in politics of the Korean sample, it was found that 79.5 percent of the sample followed political news on the internet (see Table 5). 2) Digital Campaigns and Movements: Platforms like Twitter and Naver facilitated the rise of citizen journalism, allowing ordinary Koreans to participate in



democratic processes. For instance, the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD), to mobilize citizens, advocate for policy changes, and hold corporations accountable. The use of digital petitions, online fundraising campaigns, and webinars has expanded their outreach and democratized participation. This phenomenon is consistent with a sample of Koreans using the Internet for political movements on the internet and investigating corruption, 12.5 percent, and investigating the use of state power, 12.0 percent (see Table 5). 3) Digital Democracy in Governance: The Republic of Korean government has utilized digital platforms to improve its services. The e-People system is a notable example, enabling citizens to propose ideas and complaints directly to the government (Kim & Kim, 2021). A robust e-governance system can be the backbone of digital democracy. Republic of Korea's e-government initiative has been instrumental in offering transparent and efficient services, reducing bureaucracy, and fostering trust (Turner, 2022).

Thailand 1) Digital Expansion amid Political Turbulence: Unlike Republic of Korea's relatively linear trajectory, Thailand's digital democracy has been punctuated by political instability. Even as digital tools became pervasive, Thailand faced a series of coups, notably in 2006 and 2014 (BBC, 2019). This phenomenon corresponds to the opinion that the Thai sample expressed that the political situation had the most serious effect on the development of digital democracy (see Table 7). 2) Online Activism and the Royalist-Republican Divide: social media has provided a platform for diverse voices in Thailand. However, the lese-majeste laws, which protect the monarchy from criticism, have been a contentious issue. Many online activists have faced legal consequences for their posts, bringing international attention to the limits of digital freedom in the country (Freedom House, 2020). The clash of different opinions was reflected by both Thais and Koreans in the sample agreeing that the use of the internet has caused conflict and increased political polarization in society (see Table 6). 3) Government Surveillance and Digital Rights: The cybersecurity act of 2019 has been criticized for curbing digital freedoms, as it gives authorities broad powers to monitor and censor online content (Tanakasempipat, 2019). This point corresponds to the opinions of the majority of Thai sample who agree that the state controls the internet both directly and indirectly. Including computer laws



and other laws that cause blocking, suppression, and expression of opinions (see Table 3

Table 4 Using social media to receive information, discuss, express opinions, create content, present demands, vote/complaint or participate in the political issues of the sample group.

Using social media to receive information, discuss, express opinions, create content, present demands, vote/complaint or participate in the political issues	Thailand					Mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)	Interpret results	Seq.
	rarely	sometimes	often	usually,	always				
Issues									
Facebook	5.6%	6.1%	14.7%	14.2%	59.4%	4.16	1.212	usually	2
Twitter	31.2%	21.2%	17.6%	16.5%	13.5%	2.60	1.420	sometimes usually	5
Youtube	5.8%	13.8%	22.2%	28.0%	30.2%	3.63	1.212	always often	3
Line	3.6%	5.1%	7.7%	9.7%	74.0%	4.45	1.068	rarely	1
Instagram	25.7%	17.7%	21.1%	16.6%	18.9%	2.85	1.455	rarely sometimes sometimes	4
Kakaotalk	63.5%	16.9%	10.1%	1.4%	8.1%	1.74	1.209	sometimes sometimes	11
BAND	64.2%	17.6%	8.8%	1.4%	8.1%	1.72	1.201	sometimes rarely	13
Whatsapp	51.0%	22.3%	13.4%	3.8%	9.6%	1.99	1.291	rarely	7
Telegram	58.7%	18.7%	12.7%	3.3%	6.7%	1.81	1.191	usually	10
Clubhouse	54.9%	21.6%	14.4%	2.6%	6.5%	1.84	1.170	sometimes usually	9
Wikipedia	28.2%	25.0%	27.6%	7.7%	11.5%	2.49	1.293	always often	6
Change	46.4%	27.8%	17.2%	2.0%	6.6%	1.95	1.148	rarely	8
NAVER	63.8%	18.1%	7.4%	1.3%	9.4%	1.74	1.247	rarely sometimes sometimes	11
DAUM	66.0%	18.4%	6.8%	0.0%	8.8%	1.67	1.195	sometimes sometimes	14

Table 4 Using social media to receive information, discuss, express opinions, create content, present demands, vote/complaint or participate in the political issues of the sample group. (continue)

Republic of Korea								
rarely	sometimes	often	usually,	always	Mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)	Interpret results	Seq.
29.5%	14.2%	11.1%	15.3%	30.0%	3.02	1.639	often	6
55.4%	14.7%	13.6%	10.2%	6.2%	1.97	1.290	sometimes usually	9
7.3%	6.3%	14.1%	18.8%	53.4%	4.05	1.262	often	1
24.0%	11.5%	12.5%	9.4%	42.7%	3.35	1.663	often	3
22.4%	13.8%	23.0%	13.2%	27.6%	3.10	1.508	often	5
28.7%	9.1%	6.1%	5.5%	50.6%	3.40	1.782	rarely	2
57.8%	23.0%	9.3%	5.6%	4.3%	1.76	1.111	rarely	10
61.0%	20.8%	11.9%	1.9%	4.4%	1.68	1.051	rarely	11
64.8%	19.8%	8.0%	3.1%	4.3%	1.62	1.052	rarely sometimes rarely	12
64.6%	20.5%	9.9%	2.5%	2.5%	1.58	0.946	often	13
30.5%	26.8%	29.3%	7.9%	5.5%	2.31	1.149	sometimes	7
62.7%	23.6%	9.3%	1.2%	3.1%	1.58	0.939		13
28.0%	12.2%	10.4%	12.8%	36.6%	3.18	1.680		4
46.9%	21.6%	16.7%	6.8%	8.0%	2.07	1.278		8

Table 5 Political participation or Political engagement of the sample group

Political participation or Political engagement	Thailand		Republic of Korea	
	Quantity	Percentage	Quantity	Percentage
Follow political news on the Internet	148	84.0%	159	79.5%
Post or create political topics on the internet	37	18.5%	22	11.0%
Vote in elections	100	50.0%	124	62.0%
Participate in decision-making on government policies or actions	28	14.0%	19	9.5%
Participate in a political rally	30	15.0%	17	8.5%
Political Movement on the Internet	40	20.0%	25	12.5%
Propose a law	46	23.0%	20	10.0%
Participate with political parties	26	13.0%	12	6.0%
Investigating the use of state power	57	28.5%	24	12.0%
Corruption investigation	58	29.0%	25	12.5%
Monitoring the internet usage of those destroying the nation	26	13.0%	4	2.0%
Create groups on the internet to track down those who undermine national security	7	3.5%	2	1.0%
Report legal action against any illegal actions	11	5.5%	19	9.5%
Inspect, prevent, and suppress those who destroy the nation	18	9.0%	8	4.0%
Monitor the internet usage of those who violate people's rights and freedoms	20	10.0%	10	5.0%
Establish groups on the internet to track down those who destroy democracy or people's rights and freedoms	10	5.0%	1	0.5%
Report legal action against any acts that violate the law, defamation of a person, or laws related to computer crimes	12	6.0%	4	2.0%
Inspect, prevent, and suppress those who destroy democracy or violate human rights	20	10.0%	10	5.0%



Table 6 The use of the internet has caused conflict and increased political polarization in society among the sample group.

The use of the internet has caused conflict and increased political polarization in society	Thailand		Republic of Korea	
	quantity	percentage	quantity	percentage
Strongly Disagree	17	8.5%	17	8.5%
Disagree	43	20.0%	37	18.5%
Uncertain	39	19.5%	41	20.5%
Agree	75	37.5%	87	43.5%
Strongly Agree	29	14.5%	18	9.0%

Table 7 Opinions on the problems and obstacles in the development of digital democracy among the sample groups

	Thailand					Mean (X)	standard deviation (S.D.)	Interpret results	Seq.
	least serious	slightly serious (2)	fairly serious (3)	very serious (4)	most serious (5)				
Opinions on the problems and obstacles in the development of digital democracy									
Problems and obstacles in the state and political structure									
The centralized state structure affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	4.0%	22.5%	36.5%	36.5%	4.05	0.893	very serious	5
Bureaucracy affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	3.5%	20.0%	39.5%	36.5%	4.08	0.864	very serious	3
The political regime affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	3.5%	18.0%	41.0%	37.0%	4.11	0.853	very serious	2
The political situation affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	3.5%	15.0%	35.5%	45.5%	4.22	0.863	most serious	1
Laws related to computers and the internet affect the development of digital democracy	1.0%	3.5%	20.5%	37.0%	38.0%	4.08	0.902	very serious	3
Economic problems and obstacles and inequality									
Poverty affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	5.0%	18.0%	39.0%	37.5%	4.08	0.893	very serious	4
Income distribution affects the development of digital democracy	0.5%	5.0%	16.0%	41.5%	37.0%	4.10	0.877	very serious	3
The economic status of individuals affects the development of digital democracy	0.0%	2.5%	17.0%	39.0%	41.5%	4.20	0.806	very serious	2
Economic inequality affects the development of digital democracy	0.0%	4.0%	11.5%	34.0%	50.5%	4.31	0.829	most serious	1
Social and cultural problems and obstacles									
Differences between generations affect the development of digital democracy	0.5%	4.0%	23.0%	41.5%	31.0%	3.99	0.865	very serious	5
Technological advance affects the development of digital democracy	1.5%	4.0%	20.0%	38.5%	36.0%	4.04	0.926	very serious	3
Inequality in access to digital technology (Digital Divided) affects the development of digital democracy	0.0%	2.5%	16.5%	38.0%	43.0%	4.22	0.807	most serious	2
Urbanization affects the development of digital democracy	1.0%	4.0%	25.0%	40.5%	29.5%	3.94	0.891	very serious	7
The education system affects the development of digital democracy	0.0%	3.5%	12.0%	41.0%	43.5%	4.25	0.799	most serious	1
Nationalist ideology and nationalism affect the development of digital democracy	2.5%	3.5%	21.0%	39.5%	33.5%	3.98	0.956	very serious	6
Culture affects the development of digital democracy	2.0%	5.0%	22.5%	40.5%	30.0%	3.92	0.950	very serious	8
Globalization affects the development of digital democracy	2.0%	5.0%	17.5%	41.0%	34.5%	4.01	0.951	very serious	4
Problems and obstacles in the state and political structure	0.5%	4.0%	22.5%	36.5%	36.5%	4.05	0.893	very serious	5

**Table 7** Opinions on the problems and obstacles in the development of digital democracy among the sample groups (continue)

Republic of Korea							
least serious	slightly serious (2)	fairly serious (3)	very serious (4)	most serious (5)	Mean (\bar{X})	standard deviation (S.D.)	Interpret results
1.0%	10.0%	37.5%	34.0%	17.5%	3.57	0.927	very serious
1.0%	11.0%	35.5%	35.5%	17.0%	3.57	0.933	very serious
0.5%	9.5%	32.0%	34.5%	23.5%	3.71	0.949	very serious
0.5%	7.0%	23.5%	42.0%	27.0%	3.88	0.905	very serious
0.5%	6.0%	26.5%	33.5%	33.5%	3.94	0.941	very serious
1.0%	7.5%	24.5%	43.5%	23.5%	3.81	0.915	very serious
1.5%	4.5%	30.0%	41.0%	23.0%	3.80	0.898	very serious
1.5%	4.0%	22.5%	48.5%	23.5%	3.89	0.863	very serious
0.5%	4.0%	22.0%	42.0%	31.5%	4.00	0.862	very serious
1.5%	2.5%	22.0%	45.5%	28.5%	3.97	0.862	very serious
2.0%	2.0%	22.0%	40.5%	33.5%	4.01	0.905	very serious
2.0%	1.0%	18.5%	41.5%	37.0%	4.11	0.876	very serious
1.5%	6.0%	25.5%	41.5%	25.5%	3.84	0.928	very serious
1.0%	1.5%	20.0%	42.5%	35.0%	4.09	0.834	very serious
1.0%	3.0%	30.5%	39.5%	26.0%	3.87	0.872	very serious
2.5%	2.5%	22.5%	40.5%	32.0%	3.97	0.935	very serious
3.0%	2.0%	23.5%	40.0%	31.5%	3.95	0.950	very serious
1.0%	10.0%	37.5%	34.0%	17.5%	3.57	0.927	very serious

3. The ways to develop a digital democracy that responds to the challenges in the modern society of the Republic of Korea and Thailand Key informants and samples of both Koreans (28.0 percent) and Thais (29.5 percent) agreed that the level of digital democracy development in the Republic of Korea was 8 out of 10. Meanwhile, key informants and sample groups of both Koreans (29.0 percent) and Thais (27.0 percent) agreed that the level of digital democracy development in Thailand was 5 out of 10 points. In addition, key informants and samples of both Koreans (54.5 percent) and Thais (50.0 percent) agreed that the development of digital democracy that responds to the challenges of modern society in the Republic of Korea is highly feasible. Meanwhile, the key informants and the sample groups, both Koreans (42.5 percent) and Thais (36.0 percent), agreed that the development of digital democracy that responds to the challenges of modern society in Thailand is still possible.

Discussion

A key finding of this analysis is the central role of digital infrastructure and literacy in shaping the trajectory of digital democracy. In Republic of Korea, the advanced state of digital infrastructure and literacy has facilitated the adoption of digital democracy, with the government leveraging technology to engage with citizens and promote transparency (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). However, challenges persist, including digital misinformation and a digital divide among certain population segments (Boulianne, 2015).



Across both cases, the analysis underscores the dynamic interplay between digital democracy and social change. While social changes, including technological advancements and shifts in societal values, shape the path of digital democracy, digital democracy itself can drive social change by empowering citizens, enhancing transparency, and reshaping political landscapes (Macnamara & Zerfass, 2012).

Body of knowledge

This research has the knowledge to explain social changes and the development of digital democracy in the Republic of Korea in comparison with Thailand which can be defined as a model as shown in Figure 1

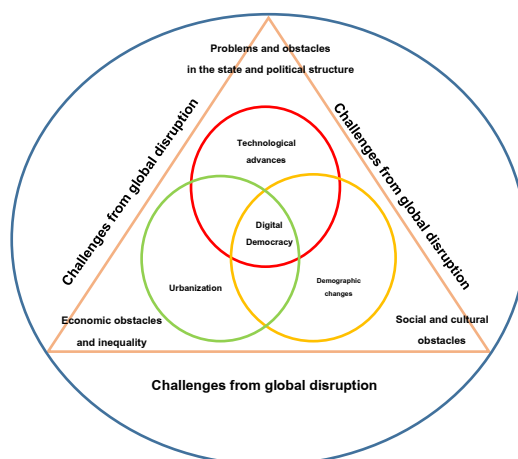


Figure 1 Digital Democracy Development Model

Recommendations

1) Prioritize Digital Infrastructure: A robust digital infrastructure is foundational to digital democracy. Governments should prioritize investments in high-speed internet access and digital technologies, particularly in underserved areas (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). 2) Promote Digital Literacy: Digital literacy is crucial for meaningful participation in digital democracy. Education and outreach initiatives should be developed to improve digital skills, particularly among vulnerable groups (Boulianne, 2015). 3) Foster Government Transparency: Digital technologies offer opportunities to enhance government transparency and accountability. Governments should leverage these tools to engage with citizens



and respond to their needs (Howard & Parks, 2012). 4) Mitigate Digital Misinformation: Digital misinformation poses a serious threat to digital democracy. Governments should collaborate with tech companies and civil society to develop strategies to combat fake news and misinformation (Macnamara & Zeffass, 2012). 5) Leverage Civil Society: Civil society plays a crucial role in promoting digital democracy. Governments should partner with civil society organizations to promote civic participation, transparency, and accountability (Al-Saggaf & Simmons, 2015).

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