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Meta-Analysis: Trends of Digital Democracy Research Publications

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ABSTRACT

Digital democracy has become a contemporary study in social and political science, but theoretically the term digital democracy does not yet have a definite pattern, this makes digital democracy fail to be understood both theoretically and practically. Therefore, this research has basic questions about; how the theoretical development of digital democracy through the trend of research publications based on the Scopus index. This article uses a qualitative description methodology, and data analysis techniques using research software; Vosviewer and NVivo 12 plus. The findings in this study see that scholars focus on the theme of e-government and digital political participation, in e-government the research theme focuses on government services through open government data and studies on the function of official government social media for public communication. While the research theme of digital political participation focuses on the study of e-voting and digital social movement. Digital democracy in a positive perspective can also encourage the character of a deliberative democratic system. Referring to the data of research publications that have been analyzed, the researcher concludes a new finding: that digital democracy can theoretically be categorized into two. First, the electoral aspect, which understands that digital democracy creates a digital transformation of government work, which is marked by open government data, digital services, and digital information. Second, the-non electoral aspect, which sees digital democracy as an opportunity for civil society to be involved in political participation in a country, such as electronic elections, online political participation, and digital activism.

Keywords: Digital Democracy, bibliometric, research publication

ABSTRAK

Demokrasi digital menjadi suatu kajian yang kontemporer dalam ilmu sosial dan politik, namun secara teoritis term demokrasi digital belum mempunyai pola yang pasti, hal ini menjadikan demokrasi digital gagal dipahami baik secara teoritis maupun praktis. Karena itu penelitian ini mempunyai pertanyaan dasar tentang; bagaimana perkembangan teoritis demokrasi digital melalui trend publikasi penelitian berbasis indeks scopus. Artikel ini menggunakan metodologi deskripsi kualitatif, dan teknik analisis data menggunakan software penelitian; Vosviewer dan NVivo 12 plus. Temuan dalam penelitian ini melihat para sarjana fokus pada tema e-government dan partisipasi politik secara digital, dalam e-government tema penelitian fokus kepada pelayanan pemerintah melalui open data government dan kajian fungsi media sosial resmi pemerintah untuk komunikasi publik. Sedangkan tema penelitian partisipasi politik digital fokus pada kajian e-voting dan digital sosial movement. Demokrasi digital dalam perspektif positif juga dapat mendorong karakter sistem demokrasi yang deliberatif. Merujuk data publikasi penelitian yang telah dianalisis, peneliti menyimpulkan temuan baru: bahwa demokrasi digital secara teoritis dapat dikategorikan menjadi dua. Pertama, aspek elektoral yang memahami bahwa demokrasi digital membuat transformasi kerja pemerintahan secara digital, yang ditandai dengan open data government, pelayanan digital, dan informasi digital. Kedua, aspek non elektoral,

yang melihat demokrasi digital menjadi peluang untuk masyarakat sipil terlibat dalam partisipasi politik dalam suatu negara, seperti pemilu elektronik, partisipasi politik onlline, dan aktivisme digital.

Kata Kunci: Demokrasi digital, bibliometrik, publikasi penelitian

INTRODUCTION

Digital democracy is in today's democracy and politics studies.The digital democracy theme indicates a transformation of the model in democratic practice globally (Andriadi, 2017). Referring to political thinkers such as Jurgen Habermas: democracy with good quality can occur if there is public space for people to participate in vertically active dialectical goals (Hardiman, 2009). It is the principle of public space, according to Habermas, to avoid the domination of political power or private political space. And in the context of a new life, Habermas's thoughts on the concept of public space need to be modified without losing its ideal value (Völker, 2019)

The fundamental element in a digital democracy is technology by the government (executive or legislative). Internet technology has become the primary tool for a more comprehensive and interactive public space between the government and the community with a wireless connection with territorial boundaries (Kostoska & Kocarev, 2019). As the primary tool of digital democracy, technology needs a platform as a virtual meeting room between government and society.

The history of the term digital democracy occurred in 1994, which was started by Steven Clift when he continued the archives of the Minnesota *e-democracy project* on the page: *e-democracy.org*, Clift used internet technology to build the site in order to create a democratic public space digitally by sharing local political information to citizens of Minnesota, United States, it is intended by Clift to increase citizen participation or involvement in policy at the state level (Ambardi, 2021)

The emergence of digital democracy brings sociological consequences in the practice of political and democratic life, which empirically has an impact on the emergence of two phenomena: *First*, technological modernization which is directly proportional to the emergence platforms digital online media and social media). *Second*, the modernization and availability of media technology has brought a culture of increasing political participation. Citizen participation in the era of digital democracy has changed towards digital formats, internet technology and digital platforms that have a fast and interactive character, making the simultaneous relationship between democracy and participation increasingly integral, especially technocratic digital democracy is very supportive for active political participation, participation policy, and social participation (Andriadi, 2017)

The practice of digital democracy by a country is applied in the concept of electronic government or E-government, which is a service effort by the government with an electronic approach. Theoretically, E-government unites social and technological aspects because

sociologically, technology helps people access the government quickly. Furthermore, the technological features used in E-government work practices to arrive at the transformation of digital democracy are the use of web 2.0 and 3.0, which have multipurpose characters with displays such as blogs, websites, and social media (Nurmandi, 2020)

In his article, *Populism, Globalization, and Social Media*, Terry Flew explained that technology such as social media could increase the public's political participation or populist groups in a country's democracy. The reasons: First, social media can be an attractive democratic service tool for the community. Second, the dialectic in social media between the government and the community can be more interactive and fast. Third, social media can reach participants globally. Hence, the government can communicate directly with the public with the help of technology (Flew, 2019)

Julia Simon et al. attached a case study of seven countries that have used information technology to open up virtual public spaces for people to have ideal political participation. The data will be shown in Table 1 (Simon & Bass, 2017)

Tabel 1. Digital Democracy Tools Around the World

No	Name of Portal	State	Function
1	Better Reykjavik and Better Neighbourhoods	Islandia	Engagement platforms for improvements and budgeting in local neighborhoods
2	Decide Madrid	Spanyol	Local citizen engagement hub including debates, binding proposals, consultations, and participatory budgeting
3	Five Star Movement	Italia	The populist political party launched in 2009 advocating direct digital democracy via collaboration with representatives and voting on legislation, policy, and party matters
4	Estonian People's Assembly and Rahvvaalgatus	Estonia	Citizen proposals for new laws
5	Public Reading Stage	UK	Public review of proposed legislative text
6	LabHacker and eDemocracia Brazil	Brazil	LabHacker is a parliamentary in-house innovation unit that aims to improve the transparency and public understanding of the legislative process, including the eDemocracia portal
7	Taiwan	Taiwan	Large-scale engagement on controversial policy issues

The seven examples above are portals owned by worldwide countries for service efforts to the community to realize ideal political participation and have an intensive and interactive two-way communication relationship. This practice is a transformation of traditional services to a digital paradigm (Idris, 2018). Furthermore, the digital democracy paradigm principle is not only for services from the government to the community. However, digital democracy expands public space for the public to digitally participate so that activities such as digital activism in responding to political issues and public policies can be carried out as an effort to control social (Weiss, 2014). Referring to table 1, the *Public Reading Stage* (PRS) is a democratic tool originating from the UK government that is used to encourage the participation of ideas or public voices into the parliamentary process digitally so that the public can test or comment on the government's public policy product plans (Leston-Bandeira & Thompson, 2017). Furthermore, in Spain with Decide Madrid, as an example or experience of digital democratic participation, local citizens can consider, question, and propose draft legal products (Royo, Pina, & Garcia-Rayado, 2020)

For example, in 2011, civil society was a digital activism effort to bring down Tunisian president Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali, who had more than 30 years of political power. Tunisians made a large-scale consensus to demonstrate digitally using social media. After that, Ben Ali finally gave up political power and won over the Tunisian people. This case is an example of a revolution that started with digital consensus. Another example, in Indonesia in 2019, there was a demonstration by students called the Gejayan Calling action (*Aksi Gejayan Memanggil*). The activism by students appeared to respond to and reject national political policies in Indonesia. The movement also became a trend on Indonesian Twitter with the hashtag #gejayanmenggil. This phenomenon became one of the student actions with a digital protest approach.

Two case studies in Tunisia and Indonesia are examples of digital activism in the concept of digital democracy. Carpentier 2011, explained the idea of new media providing a support system for democracy. Citizen participation in democracy is an essential component for the dialectic of ideas between citizens and the ruling government (Idris, 2018). However, the main principle in a digital democracy is citizen participation for democracy using new media tools, various forms of participation in the practice of electronic participation by citizens such as: giving ideas, policy control, and digital activism as a protest movement (Weiss, 2014)

In academic studies, especially in the social and political sciences, there are statistical data on research with the theme of digital democracy or electronic government, as shown in Figure 1:
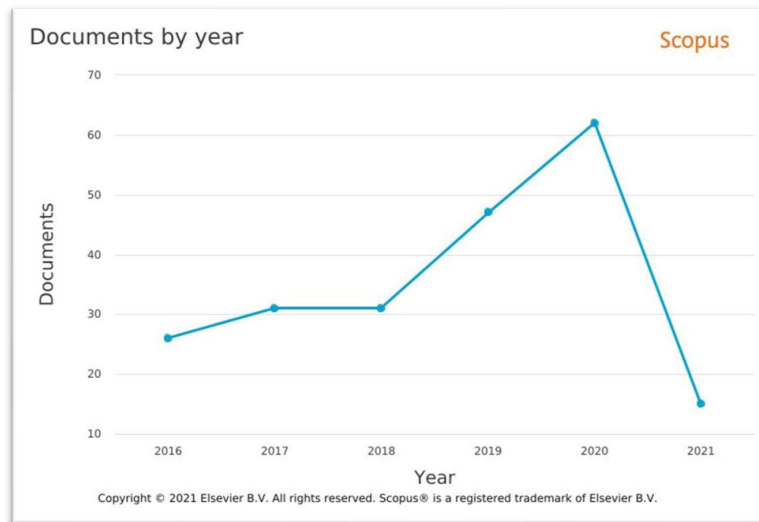
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Figure 1. Statistic Publication Trend in Scopus Index

Referring to Figure 1, the highest escalation of research publications occurs in 2020 with 62 document articles, and in early 2021 there are 15 articles in April. In the statistics above, starting from 2016 to 2020, there are interesting data for research. This article will answer the research question: how are the developments and trends of research publications with digital democracy. Therefore, it is vital to know and conduct digital democracy research trends and bibliometric analysis of digital democracy themes and keywords dynamics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach in this research was descriptive qualitative. The unit of analysis referred to data from international journals indexed by Scopus with digital democracy and social science studies. Furthermore, the journal search method used the data search engine from Scopus: *www.scopus.com*, and using keywords: ("Digital" and" Democracy"). From the search results using these keywords, the journals used as data and the unit of analysis were journals with a publicity duration of the last five years, 2016 to 2021.

Analysis and Picture Visualizations

From the search results, 266 social science journals had digital democracy as the central theme. Furthermore, the 266 journals were processed and analyzed using Vosviewer software to display bibliometric images or visualizations such as network analysis, dominant keywords or themes, author and co-author, and bibliographic data. To add to the research findings, journals as data and units of analysis in this study were analyzed using Nvivo 12 plus software to find the frequency of dominant words in publicity related

to digital democracy in Scopus indexed journals. The inclusion and execution processes were processed using Vosviewer software with a primary database of 266 published articles.
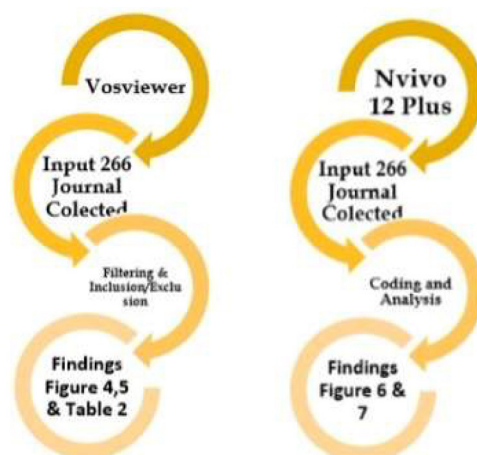
Step of Picture Visualization (Method)

Inclusion and Exclusion

The inclusion and exclusion methods in this article were used to select Scopus indexed journals. Inclusion was intended to find journal articles included in the faculty of social science with the theme of digital democracy, with the findings of journal articles as many as 266 recent research publications within 2017 to 2020. Furthermore, the exclusion process was screening journal findings that were not relevant to the research topic, such as journal articles other than the social science faculty and review findings, research reports, notes, and conference papers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Documents by Subject Area

The subject area of social science has the most significant portion of publications and research on digital democracy compared to other science faculties. To see the data, the researchers present them in Figure 2:
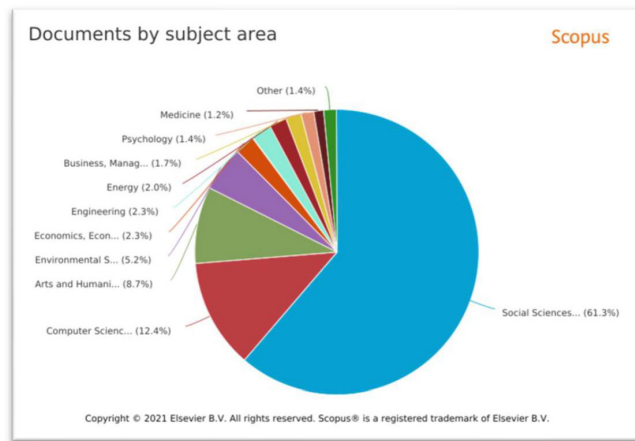
Figure 2. Document Publication on a Subject Area of Science

In Figure 2, research with the theme of digital democracy and electronic democracy is dominated by the social science family with 61.3%, followed by Computer Science 12.4%, and Art and Humanity 8.7%. These three science clusters have the highest publications on digital democracy because social science, computer science can be interrelated with social science to form an e-government system. Computer science can supply systems or tools to create a valuable digital system for citizens' government service efforts and digital space for democratic participation. Social science has a large percentage of research publications compared to other disciplines, especially democracy. Digitalization is the main point in studies such as politics, government, and democracy to become material objects in social science, especially political science and government.

Document by Country
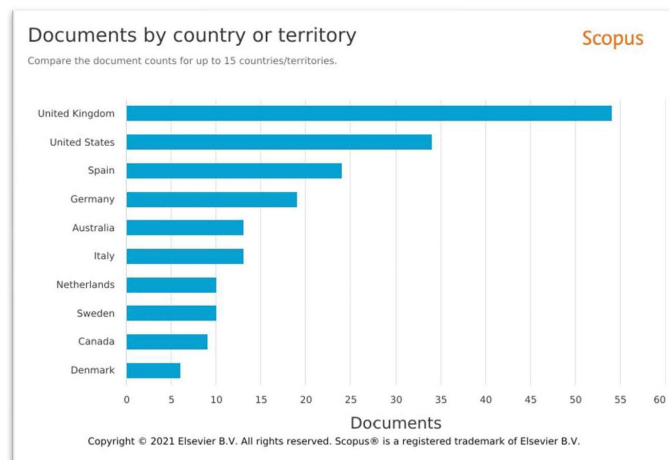
Figure 3. Document by Country Territory

After the researchers explored research publications on the Scopus search engine database about digital democracy in Scopus indexed journal articles, the number of journal article documents is presented from various countries related to publication delegations. Referring to Figure 1, countries entering the territory of the European continent dominate the quantity of research. The UK has the highest publication with 54 journal articles, followed by the USA with 34 journal articles. Julian Simon (2017) conducted the transformation of digital democracy in European countries. Julian Simon also explored countries such as England, Spain, Germany, which already have systems or digital tools as a space for citizen participation. Sociologically, countries in Europe that have carried out the digital transformation of democracy or electronic democracy will be directly proportional to the number of research and publications related to democracy and its digital transformation. The frequency of publication of research on digital democracy when viewed from the topic of study is dominated by the phenomenon of democracy in Europe as a case study for later research by scholars, and this is certainly related to the experience and development of democracy in European countries, if referring to a report from The Economist Intelligence Unit in 2020, regarding the Global Democracy Index, countries on the European continent dominate the digital transformation of democracy, in the index using indicators such as; political processes, pluralism, civil liberties, the function of government, political participation and political culture(Economist, 2021)

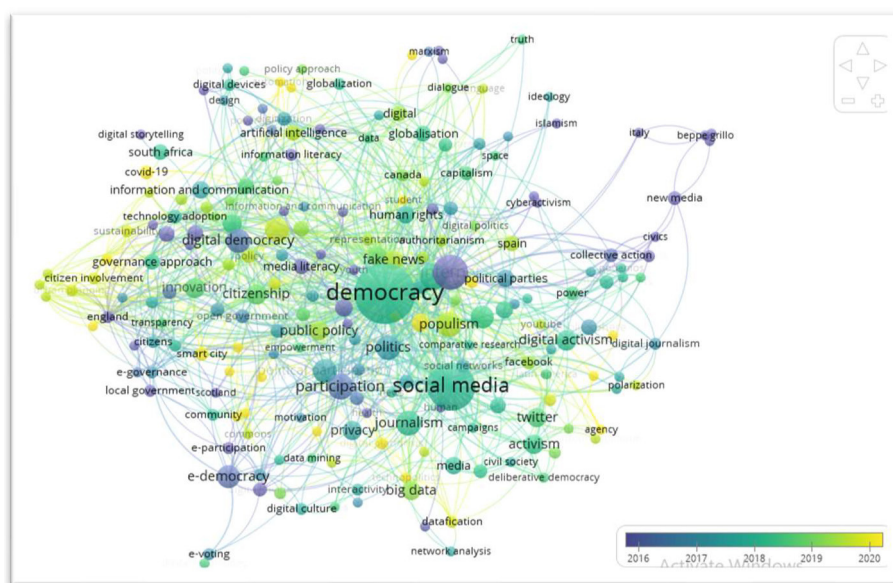**Theme Classification on Digital Democracy Research Publication**

Figure 4 Visualization Themes of Digital Democracy

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Digital democracy is a general term in social science studies in developing digital democracy studies. Many topics that academics can develop. Variants of themes or issues of digital democracy develop according to sociological conditions in a country in practicing the transformation of democracy or e-democracy. The network visualization of research topics will be presented in Figure 4. The figure above is a variant of a research publication with the theme of digital democracy. The yellow theme has a new meaning in research topics about digital democracy. The yellow theme on figures has a relationship with digital democracy, such as smart city, COVID-19, Twitter, activism, and polarization. Furthermore, to see more details about the network visualization analysis with these variants, it can be seen in Figure 5.

In Figure 5, digital democracy or e-democracy can be developed in many variants. E-democracy is related to social media that can access citizen participation, in this case, e-participation. E-voting has been included in the e-democracy cluster, which relates to the election in each period. E-voting is a form of election transformation from a conventional to a digital system. In addition, e-democracy is also associated with open government, as an example of the government's crowdsourcing mechanism for citizen participation. The theme of interactivity is also an essential cluster, which can be interpreted as e-democracy having the principle of providing a space for dialogue or interaction between the government and citizens in a democratic system. Referring to figure 5 again, populism is a theme that has a relationship with digital democracy. In the study of politics and democracy, populism is not a new study in itself, but has always been a contemporary issue and discourse, because it relates to various groups that represent citizens in participating in democracy (Ruth-Lovell, Lührmann, & Grahn, 2019). The emergence of digital technology and the internet brings hope to populist groups, and these claims are based on the rapid use of the benefits and characteristics of digital technology, it becomes an opportunity for every populist group to accelerate their representation and actualization of ideologies and ideas for democratic contestation (Bimber, 1998).
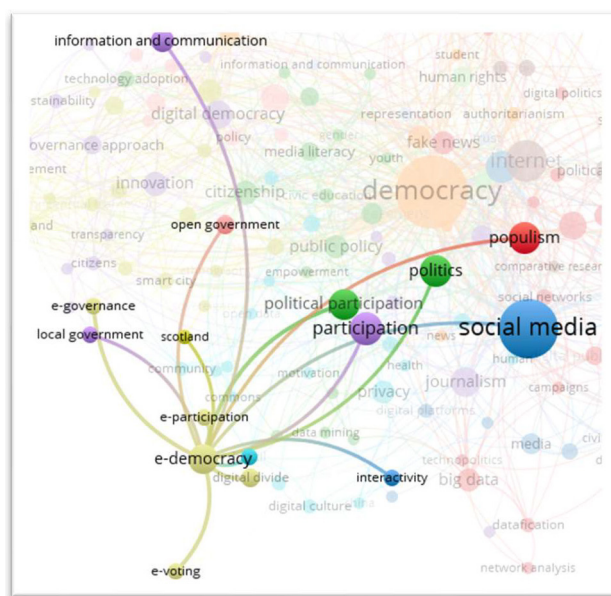
Figure 5. Visualization Themes of Digital Democracy

Theme Cluster's on Digital Democracy Research Publication

Table 2. Cluster's Classification

Cluster	Quantity	Themes of clusters
Cluster 1	11 Items	Citizen participation, deliberation, deliberative democracy, filter bubble, Habermas, influence, political engagement, politician, public engagement, representative democracy, voice
Cluster 2	9 Items	Bottom, digital communication, digital democracy, e-government, e participation, government, smart city, website
Cluster 3	8 Items	Big data, contemporary democracy, covid, digital era, e-democracy online environment, personal data, Podemos
Cluster 4	6 Items	Activism, candidate, connection, internet voting, voter, web
Cluser 5	5 Items	Digital literature, disinformation, Facebook, new technology, responsibility
Cluster 6	4 Items	Audience, hashtags, news, political hashtags
Cluster 7	4 Items	Digital literacy, digital public sphere, tweet, Twitter
Cluster 8	4 Items	Direct democracy, political action, populism, youtube
Cluster 9	3 Items	Digital activism, Indonesia, misinformation.

The meaning of the clusters in the table above is the trend of themes in research publications. Research interest in digital democracy presents new variables related to digital democracy. The cluster data in Table 2 is processed using Vosviewer software,

while clusters 1 to 9 are connected to Figures 5 and 6. All clusters in the research on Scopus indexed articles synthesize the relationship between technology, media, and democracy related to the working principle of e-democracy. Cluster 4 shows a theme of internet voting or e-voting. This theme refers to Figure 5, which is the latest research theme. In the sociological aspect, the application of e-voting for elections in various countries has begun to be discussed to transform democratic participation.

One of the contents in cluster one is the theme of deliberation included in the discourse related to digital democracy, which is certainly interesting because the discourse of deliberation is the term used by Jurgen Habermas for his thoughts on deliberative democracy, the meaning of deliberative democracy is the active involvement of citizens in a democracy (Davidson & Elstub, 2014; Fishkin, 2011). The context of privatization to democracy can be avoided and creates a new public space for citizens. Although deliberative democracy and digital democracy are different, both have the same relation, namely opening access for citizens to be involved in democracy, for example, public testing of public policies by the state through the government, and dialectic or active criticism vertically between citizens state to the government for a reasonable and rational democracy.

Referring to cluster 7, the digital public sphere is an important theme in digital democracy. The important value of digital democracy is the momentum of the formation of a new public space, which is useful for the sustainability of the democratic process (Priyono, 2014; Simon & Bass, 2017). Furthermore, cluster 9 is about digital activism and cluster 6 is about political hashtags, the two clusters have a technical relationship, the emergence of digital activism is one of the sociological consequences of digital democracy. The wave of digital activism can also be interpreted as a community, social movement, or populism that uses social media technology to voice political aspirations. For digital activism actors, social media is a tool and has a representation of identity, citizens' ideas. Digital activism is also part of the social impact of the development of internet technology and digital democracy, but on the one hand it is important to view that digital activism is a dialectical process or organic interaction between technology and citizens (Lim, 2013).

Social media platforms are not only a space and context for the movement, but also as a tool or instrument in conducting digital activism. Twitter has become an example *of a platform* that is close to activism because of its *connective action*. In the context of Twitter, the hashtag facility or function is useful for communicating public issues at large. More than just a symbol or sign in a communication, the hashtag (#) is a tool in the context of digital communication., especially in social media platforms. As for the use of hashtags as: content grouping, branding interests, for campaigns (Juditha, 2018).

Word Count Analysis Related Digital Democracy Publication

Figure 6. Visualization themes of digital democracy

Figure 6 shows the frequency of words that often appear related to digital democracy research in Scopus indexed journals. From the frequency above, research topics and publications related to digital democracy have various variants. In the study of discourse analysis, which sees every text, sound, image has a specific purpose and discourse, the text in this case has a context relation, meaning that the text is part of the reproduction of social reality (Fairclough, 2010). In the study of linguistics text or language is also a tool to convey and insert discourse and ideology (Keane, 2018).

For example, there are words 'digital' and 'politics.' There has been a transformation of the political process in practice today, This event is a new reality in social and political life, borrowing John Palfrey's term to call it a "*digital native*" or the condition between politics, citizens and digital technology that are intertwined simultaneously, giving birth to a new style of political participation (Plafrey, 2008). The transformation is caused by the development of technology that can help the political process marked by the words 'communication', 'public' and 'accessed,' in a sense, digital political discourse is an electronic service for easy access or participation of citizens the government. Furthermore, the words technology and government have a high frequency. In the study of electronic government, technology and government have a relationship to create a new government service system, namely e-government (Nurmandi, 2020).

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Another sub-theme that is the object of research is digital activism which is included in cluster 9. The phenomenon of digital activism is related to the democratic process in a country. It is also related to the sub-themes in cluster 7, namely the public sphere and Twitter. Digital activism can be associated with the public sphere because populist groups contextually carry out digital activism activities by providing digital criticism of political policies. This criticism is part of saving democracy from being carried out privately by power. If you look at the cluster in the table above, there are sub-themes about hashtags, Twitter, and Facebook. The three sub-themes are related to digital activism, its function as a tool for digital protests or demonstrations. Social and political science researchers have widely studied the sub-theme of digital activism with hashtags or Twitter. It is often done because there are contextual facts that have occurred in various democratic countries. From the explanation above, research publications with the theme of digital democracy have many subthemes. They can produce two references, namely digital democracy with the issue of service by the government through a technology approach and digital democracy with the case of the phenomenon of digital activism.

ANALYSIS

Digital democracy as a discourse and research in the world has led to a transformation towards massive digitalization. Referring to Figure 8, digitalization in government appears as a result of the times by including technology in government affairs or what is often referred to as e-government, such as; information and data, electronic services, and official social media as public communication. While the impact of digital discourse, democracy has hopes of transformation towards an increasingly deliberative direction, digital technology allows democracy to create an electronic voting system in elections, online citizen participation in public policy matters, and social movements that move digitally (Khutkyy, 2019)
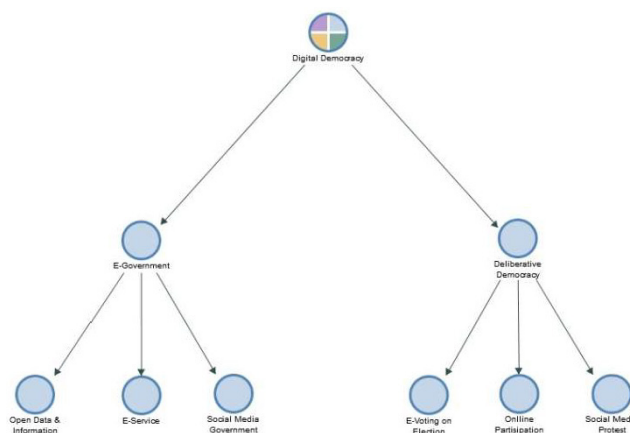

Figure 7. Rules model of digital democracy research on Scopus publication

Two terms discussed in digital democracy studies, electronic government and deliberative democracy, such as the mind map above (Figure 7), have been widely studied, for example, e-government in the framework of research problems such as; implementation, evaluation, and challenges. However, attention to e-government is not only by academics and researchers. This attention also arises from citizens who have hopes for the digitalization of government. Jean Damascene, in his findings in *The Public Value of E-Government*, explained that there are public values or citizens' interest in transformative and massive e-government implementation, which is mapped into three parts, namely; improving public services, improving administration, and increasing social values(Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019)

The following term related to the big theme of digital democracy is deliberation in democracy or deliberative democracy, which is the big idea of the philosopher Jurgen Habermas. Axiologically, the concept of Jurgen Habermas in the theory of deliberative democracy is the opening of public space for the participation or contribution of ideas from civil society in building the state by the government, or the political policy affairs of a country are not only monopolized by the ruling elite but there is an accommodation of ideas and deliberation by the government. Government and civil society (Asy'ari Muthhar, 2016). It means providing accommodation for citizens to be involved in the formulation of political policies and opening doors of access to public opinion that need to be considered by the state in the principles of democracy. The relevance between digital democracy and deliberative democracy is the ultimate goal, namely the existence of a public space that the state or government opens to citizens (Fishkin et al., n.d.).

For example, this public space helps contest ideas between the government and citizens in an ideal democratic system, both conventionally and digitally. The form of the practice of deliberative democracy is an electoral system to seek and elect the executive and legislature. Citizens have the role and right to vote and determine democratically. Developments in the digital era, in addition to affecting social and cultural life, also affect citizens' political life and democracy, related to online participation through social media. Twitter, as an example, was born in 2006 is used by Egyptians to mobilize the masses in digital demonstrations to bring down the regime. Mubarak 2011, showed that social media could be a tool for protest and a facility for citizens' political participation (Lee, Chen, & Chan, 2017)

From the findings on the map above (Figure 7), the author will bring together the results of research from academics in the social and political sciences who have tested the development of dynamic digital democracy. Referring to the research: *Rethinking Digital Democracy: From the Disembodied Discursive Self to New Materialist Corporealities*, written by Hans Asenbaum, explaining that digital democracy has had a debate in the epistemological realm, namely between the old materialism and poststructuralist schools, both of which are used as views to understand digital democracy, such as the old style of

materialism which believes that democratic contestation cannot be replaced virtually because it has the potential to reduce ideas. Meanwhile, poststructuralists view that access to virtual technology can encourage democracy to be more open to digitally subjecting itself to identities such as; race and gender. The debate is enhanced by a new materialism view that is correlated with poststructuralists who think that virtual technology is able to create online social interaction in the contestation of a democracy (Asenbaum, 2021)

Digital democracy, when viewed from the side of government administrators, is a digital service and data disclosure from the government, according to the author's findings in Figure 7. Referring to the map in figure 7, in addition to digital public services as a form of digital democracy, one of which is digital citizen political participation in an effort to contribute ideas and thoughts to the state and government that can carry out in the form of digital social movements, and online criticism. Another phenomenon of citizen political participation in elections, which are closely related to the issue of digital democracy, elections are a sector that has the opportunity to be affected by the phenomenon of disruption, meaning that technological developments allow elections in the world to have transformation and innovation, especially about how to access politics and citizen participation through elections can use a digital approach, and improve the quality of elections to minimize election fraud (Counsell, Laplante, Kshetri, & Voas, n.d.).

CONCLUSION

Referring to metadata related to research publications with the theme of digital democracy, in international journal articles indexed by Scopus, digital democracy research conducted by social science academics has many topics such as; e-government, open data information, and social media government. The three themes are digital adaptations to create digital government services for the public. In addition, topics such as public participation in a democracy are also of concern to researchers, such as research on e-voting to digitally modernize the electoral system. Besides, the digital social movement research theme has also emerged as part of the digital democracy discourse.

Figure 7, as the researchers have put above, is the thesis or conclusion of this research that can be used as a reference to understand the development of research related to digital democracy. Figure 7 is the Rules model of digital democracy research, which describes the theme as having two significant sub-themes: electronic government and deliberation democracy. Both are related discourses to support the existence of digital democracy. In electronic government, three focuses are often the attention of researchers, such as open data information, electronic services, and official social media by the government. Furthermore, on the sub-theme of deliberation democracy, the researchers focused on discourses such as; electronic elections, online participation, and social media as test tools. All the themes and sub-themes in figure

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