



CHILDREN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DIGITAL PUBLIC SPHERE: AN ANALYSIS OF NORMATIVE BOUNDARIES IN POLITICS A REVIEW OF FIQH SIYASAH



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Article History :

Submission : January 21, 2025
Revised : February 11, 2025
Accepted : March 11, 2025
Published : May 16, 2025

Keywords : Electric
Bicycles, Regulations,
Traffic Law

Abstract

This article analyzes forms of children's participation in the public sphere from the perspectives of legal and political jurisprudence. This is a qualitative study involving qualitative data analysis based on field research, utilizing descriptive qualitative data analysis techniques. The research findings reveal four forms of children's political participation in public spaces, including Expressive Participation (Opinions and Support). This is evident when children express political views on social media, such as by liking, commenting on, or sharing political content, as well as following the accounts of political figures or parties. Second, Symbolic Participation, which can be seen occasionally appearing in campaign photos/videos on social media, using political paraphernalia (T-shirts, flags) in digital content, and being used as an icon or symbol of support. Additionally, Digital Campaign Participation involves creating campaign content (TikTok, Instagram, etc.), helping to spread specific political messages, and becoming part of a digital team (informally). Based on research, the legal status of involving children in political campaign activities under positive law in Indonesia is implicitly regulated in Article 280(2) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections and Article 1(1) of the Child Protection Law; it is prohibited if the child is under 17 years of age. As for fiqh siyasah, the various forms of involving children in elections in the digital space violate the principle of *maslahah* (there is no m

Abstrak

artikel menganalisa bentuk partisipasi anak di ruang publik yang ditinjau dari batasan secara yuridis dan fiqh siyasah. Jenis penelitian ini kualitatif dengan analisa data kualitatif yang bersifat studi lapangan (field research) dengan teknik analisis data kualitatif deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan 4 bentuk partisipasi politik anak di ruang public diantaranya Partisipasi Ekspresif (Opini dan Dukungan. Hal ini diketahui dari anak menyampaikan pendapat politik di media sosial. selanjutnya Memberikan like, komentar, atau share konten politik serta Mengikuti akun tokoh/partai politik. Kedua Partisipasi Simbolik hal ini dapat terlihat terkadang muncul dalam foto/video kampanye di media sosial, Menggunakan atribut politik (kaos, bendera) dalam konten digital dan Dijadikan ikon atau simbol dukungan. Selain itu Partisipasi Kampanye Digital Terlibat dalam pembuatan konten kampanye (TikTok, Instagram, dll), Membantu menyebarkan pesan politik tertentu, Menjadi bagian dari tim digital (secara informal). Berdasarkan penelusuran maka Hukumnya melibatkan anak dalam kegiatan kampanye politik menurut hukum positif di Indonesia, secara implisit diatur dalam Pasal 280 ayat (2) Undang-Undang RI Nomor 7 Tahun 2017



*tentang Pemilu dan Pasal 1 angka 1 Undang-Undang
Perlindungan Anak, merupakan suatu hal yang dilarang jika anak
belum berumur 17 tahun. adapun menurut fiqh siyasah, dari
bentuk bentuk pelibatan anak pada pemilu di ruang digital
merupakan melanggar prinsip masalahah (tidak ada manfaat bagi
anak)*

INTRDUCTION

Children's involvement in politics is an issue that continues to evolve alongside the shift in public participation from conventional to digital spaces. (Saragih et al., 2026) Whereas in the past children's involvement was more commonly seen in open campaign events, demonstrations, or political activities in physical spaces, in today's digital era this involvement has shifted to social media and online platforms. This phenomenon is intensifying alongside the rapid development of information technology and the increasing use of social media by the public, including children. (Cahya, 2019) Digital platforms provide a vast, fast, and massive space for disseminating political messages; however, on the other hand, campaign oversight in the digital space under Indonesian law (the Election Law) has not yet been able to address this issue, particularly regarding children's involvement in the digital space. (Alfaruqy, 2025)

There are several journal articles, including written by fadjar trisakti (Fadjar Trisakti et al., 2022), maria skolastika (Skolastika et al., 2026), saifullah (Saifullah Samad et al., 2025), Farida (Farida & Dewi, 2018), Doni Yusra (Pebrianto, 2024), tresnani (Tresnani & Adhitya, 2023), dian berliansyah putra (Dian Berliansyah Putra, 2020), acnes (Acnes M sitorus et al., 2024), Muradi (Achmad, 2024), Isni indriyant (Hindarto, 2022) dari beberapa penelitian diatas

There are two objectives for writing this article: first, to examine the forms of children's political participation in the digital sphere during elections; second, to explore the legal and normative limitations on children's involvement in politics, as well as an analysis of fiqh siyasah. Children are subjects who must be protected from various forms of exploitation, including in political activities. The involvement of children in political activities that are manipulative or exploitative may conflict with the principle of child protection, as it has the potential to disrupt children's psychological development, education, and character formation. Therefore, regulations governing the limits of children's involvement in politics are crucial, particularly in the context of the digital space, which is difficult to control directly. (Muhamad Lucky Souma, 2024)

METHODS

Methodology this study employs several approaches, namely the legal approach, the conceptual approach, and the analytical approach, within the framework of qualitative research. The data collection techniques used include interviews and documentation. After the data is collected, it is analyzed using

descriptive analysis techniques related to children's involvement in politics in the digital space in relation to laws and fiqh siyasah (Dahyul Daoipn, 2024)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Children's Political Participation in the Digital Space and Legal Normative Limits

Children are being used as political propaganda; such content goes viral and remains online indefinitely. Indicators of this include children reciting campaign slogans, mentioning candidates' names, and mimicking adult narratives for example, saying "I'm voting for Candidate X." This constitutes the use of children as "political messengers," even though they lack the capacity to make rational voting decisions.(Marzuki et al., 2025)

In addition, children are used as "symbols of innocence" to influence emotions. This is typically seen in content designed to tug at the audience's heartstrings such as children crying, hoping for a better future, or speaking about poverty, education, etc. which is then linked to a candidate or framed with the narrative "for the future of Indonesia's children."(Dkk, 2026) There is also the form of children participating in politically themed TikTok trends. TikTok is highly trend based (sounds, dances, challenges). Children are often involved in dancing to campaign songs, participating in challenges with political paraphernalia, or lip syncing speeches or candidate slogans. This also takes the form of children wearing political paraphernalia, sometimes in visually striking ways such as wearing T shirts, hats, or candidate symbols, appearing in campaign settings, or carrying flags or posters.(Nabilah et al., 2025)

Next, there is family content that shapes children's opinions. This can also be seen in parents or content creators who, for example, guide children in answering political questions or create scenarios that make it seem as though the children's opinions are "genuine."(Albarzand et al., 2024). The rules governing general elections, as stipulated in Article 1(1) of Law No. 7 of 2017 of the Republic of Indonesia on General Elections, state that:(Apriel Simanullang & Prayetno, 2025)

"General Elections ("Pemilu") are the means by which the people exercise their sovereignty to elect members of the People's Representative Council ("DPR"), members of the Regional Representative Council ("DPD"), the President and Vice President, and to elect members of the Regional People's Representative Council ("DPRD"), conducted in a direct, universal, free, secret, honest, and fair manner in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia."

It is also important to note that the election campaign period is one of the stages in the conduct of elections. An election campaign is an activity conducted by election participants or other parties designated by them to persuade voters by presenting the participants' vision, mission, platform, and/or image. According to Article 268 of Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections, election campaigns are conducted

by campaign organizers and carried out by campaign participants, subject to the following provisions.(Radjak & Rahim, 2025)

The campaign organizers for the presidential and vice presidential elections consist of the leadership of the political party or coalition of political parties nominating the candidates, individual campaigners, and organizations designated by the presidential and vice presidential candidates.(Budifebrianto & Delliana, 2020) The campaign organizers for the House of Representatives (DPR) elections consist of the leadership of the political parties participating in the DPR elections, DPR candidates, individual campaign managers, and organizations designated by the DPR candidates. The campaign organizers for the election of members of the Provincial People's Representative Council (DPRD) consist of officials from the political parties participating in the Provincial DPRD election, candidates for the Provincial DPRD, election campaign managers, individuals, and organizations designated by the participants in the election for members of the Provincial DPRD.(Azis, 2025)

Election campaign organizers for district/city DPRD members consist of the leadership of political parties participating in the district/city DPRD elections, candidates for district/city DPRD members, individual campaign managers, and organizations designated by the participants in the district/city DPRD elections. Election campaign organizers for DPD members consist of candidates for DPD members, individual campaign managers, and organizations designated by the participants in the DPD elections.(Oktadini, 2025)

Election campaign participants consist of members of the public. Election campaigns are part of the public's political education and must be conducted responsibly. Election campaigns are conducted simultaneously for the presidential and vice presidential elections and for the elections of members of the House of Representatives (DPR), the Regional Representatives Council (DPD), and the Regional People's Representative Councils (DPRD).(Mulyani & Sukimin, 2020) Election campaigns may be conducted through: limited meetings, face to face meetings, distribution of election campaign materials to the public, display of campaign materials in public places, social media, advertisements in print media, electronic media, and the internet, public rallies, debates between candidate pairs regarding their campaign platforms, and other activities that do not violate election campaign prohibitions or applicable laws and regulations.(Niswaty & Yulis, 2025)

Based on the survey, the following data was obtained

No	Temuan Utama	Deskripsi
1	On – the – Ground Phenomena	The involvement of children in political activities is still common in public spaces, whether in the form of campaigns, demonstrations, or the use of political paraphernalia.
2	Public Attitudes	The majority of the public opposes the practice of involving children in politics.

No	Temuan Utama	Deskripsi
3	Reasons for Rejection	The rejection is based on the belief that the involvement of children involves exploitation and has a negative impact on their development, both psychologically and educationally.
4	Legal and Ethical Perspectives	The public tends to view the involvement of children in politics as a violation of children's rights and inconsistent with social ethical values.

Please note that the campaign is facilitated by the General Election Commission (KPU), which may be funded by the State Budget (APBN). Therefore, when conducting the campaign, participants are expected to comply with the laws and regulations established by the government and avoid any prohibited activities. Furthermore, Article 280(2) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections stipulates that campaign organizers and/or campaign teams are prohibited from involving, among others, the chairperson, vice chairperson, and deputy chairperson of the Supreme Court, as well as justices of all judicial bodies under the Supreme Court, and constitutional judges at the Constitutional Court the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and members of the Supreme Audit Agency the Governor, senior deputy governor, and deputy governor of Bank Indonesia; the Board of Directors, commissioners, supervisory board members, and employees of state owned enterprises or regional owned enterprises; State officials who are not members of political parties and who serve as leaders in non-structural institutions; Civil servants; Members of the Indonesian National Armed Forces and the Indonesian National Police; Village heads; Village officials; Members of village consultative bodies; and Indonesian citizens ("WNI") who do not have the right to vote. (Avci & Pekince, 2018)

Indonesian citizens who participate in elections are referred to as voters. Voters are Indonesian citizens who have reached the age of 17 (seventeen) years or older, or who are married or have been married. Meanwhile, a child is defined in Article 1, point 1 of Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, as amended by Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 35 of 2014 regarding amendments to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, and amended a second time by Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 1 of 2016 regarding the second amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection, as enacted into law by Law No. 17 of 2016 on the Enactment of Government Regulation in Lieu of Law No. 1 of 2016 on the Second Amendment to Law No. 23 of 2002 on Child Protection into Law is a person who has not yet reached the age of 18 (eighteen) years, including a child still in the womb. (Herman et al., 2023)

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the legal status of involving children in political campaign activities under Indonesian positive law is implicitly regulated in Article 280(2) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections

and Article 1(1) of the Child Protection Law; such involvement is prohibited if the child is under 17 years of age. In addition, there are various forms of child participation in the digital space.(Djama et al., 2025) First, Expressive Participation (Opinions and Support). This is evident when children express political views on social media, give likes, comments, or share political content, and follow accounts of political figures or parties. Second, Symbolic Participation, which can be seen when children appear in campaign photos or videos on social media, use political paraphernalia (Tshirts, flags) in digital content, and are featured as icons or symbols of support. Additionally, Digital Campaign Participation involves creating campaign content (TikTok, Instagram, etc.), helping to spread specific political messages, and becoming part of a digital team (informally).

Based on research: Forms of children's political participation in the digital space

Forms of Participation	Law
Political Education	Sure
Light interactions (likes, comments)	May be limited
Active Campaign	Disliked / prohibited (depending on the consequences)
Child exploitation	Forbidden

An Analysis of the Forms of Children's Political Participation in the Digital Sphere and the Normative Limits from the Perspective of Fiqh SiyasaH siyasah

In political studies, children are positioned in two ways: first, as subjects of participation, and second, as objects of protection. These two positions form the core of theories regarding children in politics. Political participation refers to an individual's involvement in the political process. According to this theory, children can participate in limited ways, primarily through the expression of opinions, political education, and civic awareness. Their participation does not extend to formal political decision making.(Jailani et al., 2024)

According to the Protection Theory, children are a vulnerable group and must be protected from political exploitation, manipulation of public opinion, and pressure from adults. The law stipulates that elections are one of the means through which the people exercise their sovereignty, and that they must be conducted directly, universally, freely, secretly, honestly, and fairly. Following the third amendment to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 1, paragraph (2), states that "sovereignty resides with the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution." Based on this provision, a state with popular sovereignty is one that empowers its people, so that they have the ability to shape their lives and their future. In short, popular sovereignty can also be described as democracy.(Amalia et al., 2025)

As a democratic nation, citizens are expected to actively participate in the administration of government and the state, including through political participation. Political participation refers to actively engaging in political life by exercising one's right to vote whether directly or indirectly to elect national leaders and influence government policy, typically through political campaigns during elections. (Subekti, 2022)

According to Article 267 of Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, election campaigns are part of the public's political education and must be conducted responsibly. Election campaigns are conducted simultaneously for the election of the President and Vice President and for the election of members of the DPR, DPD, and DPRD. Election campaigns are carried out by campaign organizers. Election campaigns are participated in by campaign participants. Based on these provisions, it can be said that the implementation of campaigns, which are supposed to be accountable, often faces problems. (Destri, 2022)

According to Refli Harun, the problems frequently encountered in the conduct of elections in Indonesia can be grouped into six categories: first, election administrative violations; second, election-related criminal offenses; third, election disputes; fourth, disputes regarding election public administration; fifth, violations of the code of ethics for election administration; and sixth, disputes over election results. Of the six issues mentioned above, this discussion will focus on violations of the code of ethics for election administration, particularly in the conduct of political campaigns. A violation that is frequently observed yet often overlooked involves the participation of children in political campaign activities. In fact, children under the age of 17 are not permitted to participate in political campaign activities. (HamdiR & Soros Setiawan Day, 2024)

The legal instrument governing the protection of children's rights is contained in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has been ratified by more than 191 countries, including Indonesia as a member of the United Nations through Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 on the Entry into Force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Indonesia. Thus, this UN Convention has become Indonesian law and is binding on all Indonesian citizens. There are 4 (four) principles of child protection based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which serve as the foundation for every country in implementing child protection, including the principle of non-discrimination, the principle of the best interests of the child, the principle of the right to life, survival, and development, and the principle of respect for the views of the child (Respect for the Views of the Child). (Hariyanto, 2016)

When considering the protection of children's rights in relation to the concepts of the rule of law and democracy, it is evident that under the principle of the rule of law, every child has the right to protection against exploitation in political activities; however, under the concept of democracy, every person has the right to participate in government. This does not preclude the possibility of the exploitation of children in the exercise of democracy through general elections. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) stated that there were at least 15 types of

campaign violations committed by political parties involving children during the 2024 election campaign, including: first, manipulating the data of children under 17 years of age and unmarried to register them as voters. Second, using children's playgrounds, daycare centers, and educational institutions for open campaign activities. Third, mobilizing groups of children by political parties or candidates.(Nawawi, 2025)

Next, using children as advocates or campaigners to promote a specific party or candidate. Fifth, featuring children as the main stars of a political advertisement. Sixth, featuring children on a political party's campaign stage as part of an entertainment act. Seventh, using children to display political party paraphernalia. Eighth, using children to make payments to adult voters as part of money politics by political parties or candidates. Nine: arming children or providing them with certain objects that endanger themselves or others. Ten: forcing, persuading, or coaxing children to do things that are prohibited during the voting campaign or vote counting.(HamdiR & Soros Setiawan Day, 2024)

Next, bringing a child to a campaign venue that endangers the child. Twelfth, committing acts of violence or acts that can be interpreted as violence during a campaign, voting, or vote counting (e.g., painting a political party symbol on a child's body). Thirteenth: engaging in exclusion, humiliation, intimidation, or discriminatory acts against a child whose parents or family have different or are suspected of having different political preferences. Fourteenth: provoking a child to harbor hostility or hatred toward a specific candidate or political party; and involving a child in disputes over vote counting results. Despite evidence that children have already been involved in the campaign.(Asriadi et al., 2025)

Of the 15 forms of children's political participation, there is still a perception that this is one way to provide political education to children from an early age; however, it should be adapted to their age specifically, children under the age of 18 and prioritize the principle of child protection. Every child has rights that must be protected. According to Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Indonesia, children's rights fundamentally encompass four categories of rights that must be fulfilled: first, the Right to Survival, second, the Right to Protection, third, the Right to Development, and fourth, the Right to Participation.(Rahma, 2025)

The four categories of rights stipulated in Presidential Decree No. 36 of 1990 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in Indonesia constitute the fundamental elements that every child must be guaranteed. Therefore, if campaign organizers involve children in political campaign activities, various legal consequences will arise, as Article 280(2)(k) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections explicitly states that "Campaign organizers and/or campaign teams are prohibited from involving Indonesian citizens who do not possess the right to vote in election campaign activities." Furthermore, Article 1, Point 34 of Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections further explains the qualifications for voters as follows: "A voter is an Indonesian citizen who has reached the age of 17 (seventeen) years or older, is married, or has been married." Based on the wording of this article, it is made

clear that "children may not be involved in political campaign activities." (Benyamin & Al – Fatih, 2023)

According to political jurisprudence (fiqh siyasah), various forms of children's participation in elections in the digital space violate the principle of *maslahah* (there is no benefit for the child). Conceptually, *maslahah* refers to any action that brings benefit (good) and prevents harm (*mafsadah*) to humanity. Therefore, if an action causes more harm than benefit, it is not *maslahah*, but *mafsadah*. Indirectly, the involvement of children in digital campaigns benefits political actors, such as by increasing their popularity; thus, children do not gain any benefit. Consequently, the benefit accrues to the political actors, not to the children. Conversely, the involvement of children in campaign activities especially in the digital space indirectly impacts children's psychology because, due to their limited ability to think critically and process opinions, it affects them indirectly, and children may be exposed to political bias from an early age. (Rofiq, 2021)

Furthermore, in the digital space during campaign activities, there is a risk that children may be exposed to negative comments or reactions, which could take the form of bullying; this is clearly a matter of child protection, for which there are existing laws. In Islamic law, if an action results in both benefit and harm (damage), the principle applies that "Avoiding harm takes precedence over seeking benefit." Thus, involving children in digital campaign activities indirectly opens the door to cyberbullying, digital social pressure, and emotional exploitation. This practice is prohibited because it causes harm to children; therefore, government policies particularly regulations governing digital campaigns, especially those involving children are necessary. (Istinbath & Basid, 2024)

Therefore, based on the above fiqh principle, the involvement of children in digital campaigns cannot be justified because it predominantly entails harm rather than benefit and opens the door to broader harm within the social and political systems. These fiqh principles, in essence, provide protection for children, reject all harm, and require that authority be oriented toward the public good. Although such practices are sometimes disguised as voter education for first time voters or early election awareness campaigns, the harm they cause is more evident and significant. Consequently, this principle serves as the basis for rejecting all forms of child involvement, as the potential for harm outweighs the potential benefits.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and analysis regarding children's involvement in political campaign activities in the digital space, the following conclusions can be drawn: there are four forms of children's political participation in the public sphere, including Expressive Participation (Opinions and Support). This is evident when children express political views on social media, as well as when they like, comment on, or share political content and follow the accounts of political figures or parties. Second, Symbolic Participation, which can be seen occasionally appearing in campaign photos or videos on social media, using political paraphernalia (T – shirts, flags) in digital content, and being made into an icon or

symbol of support. Additionally, Digital Campaign Participation involves being involved in the creation of campaign content (TikTok, Instagram, etc.), helping to spread specific political messages, and becoming part of a digital team (informally). Based on research, the legal framework regarding the involvement of children in political campaign activities under positive law in Indonesia is implicitly regulated in Article 280(2) of Law No. 7 of 2017 on Elections and Article 1(1) of the Child Protection Law; such involvement is prohibited if the child is under 17 years of age.

According to political jurisprudence, any form of involving children in elections in the digital sphere violates the principle of *maslahah* (there is no benefit for the child)

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