



The Collapse of the Digital Public Space: A Critical Examination of Speed Politics in the Information Mediation Space

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Received: 23 Mar 2024; Received in revised form: 01 May 2024; Accepted: 10 May 2024; Available online: 19 May, 2024
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Abstract— *Digital public space is a communication space formed by internet-based information media, such as social media, blogs, forums, and so on. Digital public space has the potential to become a space for democratization, participation and public deliberation, which can improve the quality of democracy and social welfare. However, the digital public sphere also faces challenges and threats from speed politics, namely communication practices dominated by the logic of speed, efficiency and competition, which can reduce the quality and depth of public discourse. The politics of speed can lead to the collapse of the digital public sphere, which is characterized by phenomena such as polarization, disinformation, populism, trolling, hate speech, and so on. This article aims to conduct a critical analysis of the politics of speed in the information media space, using the theoretical framework of Paul Virilio, Jürgen Habermas, and Manuel Castells. This article also provides several recommendations for overcoming the negative impacts of speed politics, such as increasing media literacy, strengthening regulations, and building inclusive and deliberative online communities.*



Keywords— *digital public space, speed politics, information media, democracy, critical*

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital public space is a communication space formed by internet-based information media, such as social media, blogs, forums, and so on. Digital public space is a development of the concept of public space introduced by Jürgen Habermas (1989), which describes public space as a social arena where citizens can interact, discuss and debate rationally and critically about public problems, without pressure from authorities, or private interests. For Habermas, public space can be said to be successfully formed and maintained in society when they have the freedom to voice their opinions or aspirations. In this case, everyone does not receive pressure, threats or intimidation when they want to express their voice or opinion to the public. Either within the scope of small group discussions or in a wider scope such as on social media. This view states

that public spaces, especially digital-based ones, have the potential to become spaces for democratization, participation and public deliberation that can improve the quality of democracy and social welfare. This is because digital public spaces offer convenience, affordability, diversity and interactivity in public communication, which can expand the space of voice, access and influence for citizens, especially those who are marginalized or minorities (Castells, 2008). This shows that digitalization is able to create potential space that can be utilized by everyone to express their thoughts. Even marginalized parties can have equal rights in the digital space to argue or express opinions on issues of their interest.

However, the digital public sphere also faces challenges and threats from speed politics, namely communication practices dominated by the logic of speed,

efficiency and competition, which can reduce the quality and depth of public discourse. The politics of speed is a consequence of the development of information and communication technology, which enables fast, massive and global transmission of data and information, but also gives rise to negative impacts such as noise, fragmentation and distortion of information (Virilio, 1999). Virilio's view stems from the rise of technology that relies on speed. Not only in the realm of communication and information technology. However, other technologies such as means of transportation also offer speed in moving human objects. This is seen as having the potential for various accidents caused by speed, so that the safety of each subject is threatened.

In this view, the speed of information that is disseminated and received by audiences has the potential to undermine the digital public space. This can occur as a result of the speed at which information is produced, distributed and received, which has the potential to give rise to a lot of disinformation, misinformation, hoaxes and even hate speech. This happens because of the lack of parties involved as gatekeeper in the information space, so that what is distributed is based on initial information from the producer. This condition has caused many social problems to emerge as a result of information spread in new media. Especially on social media where the information comes directly from the users directly. Especially when the subject does not fact check the information they want to disseminate.

The politics of speed, or in Virilio's view, dromology, is basically capable of destroying digital public space. Habermas envisioned the beginning of the public space as a safe and comfortable space for discussion in reaching a certain decision. Especially in the realm of democracy. However, this turned out to be a failure marked by phenomena such as polarization, disinformation, populism, *trolling*, hate speech, and so on. These phenomena can threaten democratic values, such as rationality, openness, tolerance and solidarity, which should be the basis of the digital public sphere (Papacharissi, 2010).

This article aims to conduct a critical analysis of the politics of speed in the information media space. Apart from that, the author also provides several recommendations for address the negative impacts of speed politics, such as increasing media literacy, strengthening regulations, and building inclusive and deliberative online communities. This is important considering that the development of communication and information technology is becoming increasingly powerful and complex. In fact, human needs for this technology are increasingly high, so there is a need for qualified human

resource capacity to skate in the speed space.

II. THEORETICAL STUDY

The Politics of Speed

Speed politics is a term coined by Paul Virilio, a French philosopher and media critic, who studied the impact of information and communication technology on society and culture. Virilio (1999) argues that information and communication technology has created a world dominated by speed, which he calls the dromosphere, namely spaces formed by the movement and acceleration of information. Virilio criticizes that speed has become the main logic of modern society, at the expense of other values such as quality, depth, and ethics. Virilio also warned that speed can cause danger and disaster, which he called dromology, namely the science of accidents caused by speed. Virilio pointed out that accidents such as war, terrorism, crime and natural disasters are becoming more frequent and severe as a result of the speed of information and communication technology, which allows the transmission and escalation of conflicts quickly, massively and globally.

Virilio (1999) also criticized that speed has damaged the quality and function of public space, which he called critical space. Critical space is a communication space that allows citizens to interact, discuss and debate rationally and critically about public issues, without pressure from authority or private interests. Virilio argues that critical space has been replaced by transmission space, namely a communication space dominated by the logic of speed, efficiency and competition, which reduces the quality and depth of public discourse. The transmission space is a space that does not allow reflection, dialogue and consensus, but only offers fast, abundant and varied information, but also noise, fragmentation and distortion. Virilio gave the example that internet-based information media, such as social media, blogs, forums, and so on, are examples of transmission space, which can cause the collapse of digital public space.

Public Space

Initially, the concept of public space was an area that emerged in the space of bourgeois society, a space that mediates between civil society and the state, where the public organizes itself and where public opinion can be built. This kind of public space category can be found in the historical reality of British and French society in the mid-17th century, where coffee shops became the center of criticism in which a new group began to emerge among bourgeois intellectuals and aristocratic society giving birth to an educated group that had similarities in ways of

thinking. Space concept The public entered a new dimension with the decline of the bourgeoisie in the context of increasingly advanced industrial society and the emergence of mass democracy (Habermas, 2010). Public space is an important requirement in democracy, public space is a place where citizens communicate about citizens' political anxieties (Hadirman, 2010: 185).

Apart from that, public space is a place where citizens can freely express their attitudes and arguments towards the state or government. Public space must be free, open, transparent and there is no government or autonomous intervention in it, because public space is also a democratic space or vehicle for community discourse, where citizens can voice and express their opinions, interests and needs discursively (Hadirman, 2009: 128). From this public space, the strength of community solidarity can be gathered to voice aspirations regarding the anxiety and social injustice that occurs in society. Habermas divides public space, where community actors build public space, plurality (families, informal groups, voluntary organizations, etc.), publicity (mass media, cultural institutions, etc.), privacy (area of individual and moral development), legality (general legal structures and basic rights) (Hadirman, 2009: 128). So it can be concluded that there is not just one public space, but there are many public spaces in society. Public space has no boundaries, because public space can be anywhere. If there are people who gather together and discuss relevant topics or themes, then there is a public space. Apart from that, public space is not tied to market or political interests. Therefore, public space is unlimited.

Digital Public Space

Digital public space is a communication space formed by internet-based information media, such as social media, blogs, forums, and so on. Digital public space is a development of the concept of public space introduced by Jürgen Habermas (1989), which describes public space as a social arena where citizens can interact, discuss and debate rationally and critically about public problems, without pressure from authorities. or private interests. Habermas argues that public space is an important condition for deliberative democracy, namely a form of democracy based on participation, dialogue and public consensus, which can improve the quality of democracy and social welfare. Habermas also criticized that public space has experienced crisis and degradation, as a result of the domination of mass media, capitalism and bureaucracy, which reduces the space for voice, access and influence for citizens, especially those who are marginalized or minorities. Technology has developed so rapidly that it has begun to influence social life. In the last few days, technology has increasingly developed to have new types of social relations, which are

very different from social relations in previous times (Subiakto: 2023).

Digital public space has the potential to overcome the crisis and degradation of public space, by offering convenience, affordability, diversity and interactivity in public communication, which can expand the space of voice, access and influence for citizens, especially those who are marginalized or minorities (Castells, 2008). Digital public space can also be a space for innovation, creativity and collaboration, which can produce new knowledge, ideas and solutions to public problems (Benkler, 2006). Public area Digital can also be a space for education, literacy and conscientization, which can increase citizens' knowledge, skills and critical awareness about public issues (Jenkins, 2009).

However, digital public spaces also face challenges and threats from the politics of speed, which can reduce the quality and function of digital public spaces. Several phenomena that can show the collapse of digital public space as a result of speed politics are polarization, disinformation, populism, *trolling*, and hate speech. Polarization can be seen as a condition in which citizens are divided into conflicting groups and are unwilling to compromise in their views and attitudes on public issues.

Polarization can occur as a result of the speed of information media, which can influence the process of forming public opinion, which should be based on rational and critical discussion and deliberation, but becomes based on spontaneous and impulsive emotions and affection. The speed of information media can also amplify the effect of the filter *bubble* and echo *chamber*, namely the phenomenon in which citizens are only exposed to information that matches their views and preferences, and ignore or reject information that differs or contradicts them. This can cause citizens to become less open, tolerant, and empathetic towards other groups, and more fanatical, radical, and extreme in their views and attitudes (Sunstein, 2017).

Furthermore, disinformation is seen as false, misleading, or false information, which is spread intentionally or unintentionally, with the aim of influencing citizens' opinions, attitudes, or behavior regarding public issues. Disinformation can occur as a result of the speed of information media, which can reduce the quality and accuracy of information, which should be based on valid, reliable and verified facts, data and evidence, but becomes based on opinions, speculation and rumors that are unclear, not complete, or incorrect. The speed of information media can also accelerate the spread and virality of disinformation, which can create confusion, distrust, and fear among citizens, and can damage the reputation, credibility, and

authority of official, professional, and responsible sources of information, such as governments, media, and academics (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Then populism is seen as a political ideology that claims to represent the interests and aspirations of ordinary people, who are considered victims of the political, economic and cultural elite, who are considered enemies and traitors to the people. Populism can occur as a result of the speed of information media, which can influence the process of forming political identity. The speed of information media can also strengthen the mobilization and persuasion effects of populism, which can attract and captivate citizens, especially those who feel dissatisfied, angry or afraid of social, political and economic conditions, and can offer easy, fast, solutions. and radical, but also has the potential to threaten democratic values, such as pluralism, human rights and law (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

The next explanation is trolling which relates to provocative, disturbing, or insulting communication behavior, carried out with the aim of causing negative reactions, conflict, or controversy among citizens in the digital public space. Trolling can occur as a result of the speed of information media, which can reduce communication ethics and norms, which should be based on courtesy, respect and responsibility, but become based on fun, sensation and anonymity. The speed of information media can also strengthen the destructive effects of trolling, which can damage the atmosphere, quality and function of digital public spaces, which should be spaces of deliberation, dialogue and consensus, but instead become spaces of confrontation, aggression and violence (Hardaker, 2010).

The last is related to hate speech which is an expression of hatred, hostility or discrimination against certain groups. This hatred can be based on their identity, such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and so on. Hate speech can occur as a result of the speed of information media, which can reduce tolerance and solidarity among citizens, which should be based on respect, recognition and protection of diversity and human rights, but become based on fear, prejudice and stereotypes against groups. other. The speed of information media can also strengthen the effects of intimidation and marginalization of hate speech, which can cause pain, trauma and injustice for targeted groups, and can lead to conflict, violence and human rights violations (Gagliardone et al., 2015).

III. DISCUSSION

Information Accidents in Digital Space

The process of disseminating and consuming information in the digital space has become an activity that is currently a primary need for every human being. This is accompanied by the increasing number of internet users in the world. Indonesia is no exception. Based on reports from We are Social and Meltwater (2023), internet users in Indonesia reached 212.9 million out of a total population of 276.4 million people. Apart from that, active social media users were recorded at 167 million users. However, in the report there are quite interesting things related to the number of cellular mobile connections. The number is 353.8 million and is recorded to be 128% greater than the total population of Indonesia.

This phenomenon is certainly very interesting because it is related to the number of people connected to the internet. The assumption of this condition is that almost everyone in Indonesia has an internet network in their hands. Even if you look at the numbers cellular *mobile*-This indicates that each person has the potential to hold more than one device *smartphone*. The reported data also explains the internet usage time of Indonesian people. It is recorded that people in Indonesia spend an average of 7 hours 42 minutes surfing the internet every day. Apart from that, the highest reason people access the internet is to search for information with a percentage of 83.2%. Of course, this is the most common reason. But by understanding From this, it can be seen that the potential for digital accidents related to this dromological context is large.

Public spaces can basically be used as a vehicle for people to express their opinions (Simarta, 2014). This includes everyone's efforts to provide all information in new media, whether through personal websites, blogs, social media, and so on. Of course, with the existence of digital space, providing this information has become very easy. In fact, anyone can do it without needing to look at the rules for the production and publication of this information. Moreover, in this case speed is an important aspect so that the information can be immediately disseminated and read by the audience.

But in the end this convenience brought humans into a state of war. In this case, information war on a digital basis. Quoting Sun Tzu's statement (Virilio, 2006) who said speed *is the essence of war*. This statement refers to a concept where speed has the essence of warfare. Speed can refer to a party's ability to strengthen its power in a political context. Especially in an effort to gain power and influence in the social sphere. In this case, the development of digitalization is of course very significant related with the condition of speed as a tool of war. Especially when seeing information can be a powerful propaganda tool in shaping public opinion in the wider community.

Based on this view, Virilio (2006) then emphasized the fact that strategic value can be shifted in the context of war. Because strategic values that only talk about place can be overridden by speed that can also control space. Place value is ultimately related to the issue of ownership of time in territorial grabbing efforts. This shows that mastering information quickly to convey, especially being able to influence the public will certainly have a big impact on social life. Especially when certain information is full of interest from the producer.

Factors Influencing the Collapse of the Digital Public Space

Looking at the collapse of the digital public space today, the quality is decreasing in terms of meaningful information exchange, healthy opinion formation, and constructive discussion. This can threaten the integrity of democracy and hinder the development of an inclusive and cultured society. The author looks at several factors that influence the collapse of the digital public space, including:

- i. Dissemination of False or Unreliable Information, where In the era of social media and the internet, information can easily be spread without adequate verification. When false or unreliable information is widespread, the digital public space can be filled with rumors, hoaxes or damaging narratives.
- ii. Existence of Platform Algorithms: Algorithms used by social media platforms and search engines can influence what users see. These algorithms are often designed to increase interaction and engagement, which can result in more controversial or sensational content being promoted, rather than content that supports healthy, quality discussion.
- iii. Echo Chambers and Filter Bubbles: Internet users tend to be exposed to views that align with their own beliefs, due to algorithms that amplify echo chambers and filter bubbles. This can lead to polarization and the formation of narrow opinions, as users tend to only be exposed to the same viewpoints over and over again.
- iv. Use of Manipulative Tactics: where certain actors, including governments, political groups, or commercial entities, may use manipulative tactics such as disinformation, propaganda, or cyberattacks to influence public opinion and manipulate discussions in the digital public sphere.
- v. Information Noise: seen in The surge in the volume of information available on the internet can make it difficult for individuals to sort important and relevant information from that

which is not. This information noise can obscure credible and useful voices.

- vi. Lack of Ethics in Communication: Non-compliance with online communication ethics, such as personal attacks, insults, or verbal harassment, can create a hostile and unhealthy environment in digital public spaces.

Efforts to Build Healthy Public Spaces

The politics of speed in the information media space has a negative impact on the quality and function of the digital public space, which can lead to the collapse of the digital public space. Therefore, efforts need to be made to overcome the negative impacts of speed politics, and rebuild a digital public space that is democratic, deliberative and inclusive. Some recommendations that can be given are as follows:

- Increase media literacy: Media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create media in various forms. Media literacy can help citizens to become critical, intelligent and responsible media consumers and producers, who can differentiate between facts and opinions, between information and disinformation, between arguments and propaganda, and so on. Media literacy can also help citizens to become active, creative, and productive media participants and collaborators, who can express their voices, opinions, and aspirations on public issues, and can contribute to new knowledge, ideas, and solutions to problems. - public problem (Buckingham, 2007).
- Strengthening regulations: Regulations are the rules, norms and standards that govern the practices and behavior of media and citizens in the digital public sphere. Regulation can help to maintain the quality, accuracy and ethics of the media, and to protect the rights, interests and welfare of citizens, especially the vulnerable or minorities. Regulations can cover various aspects, such as law, ethics, codes, certification, licensing, and so on. Regulation can be carried out by various parties, such as the government, media, civil society and citizens themselves. Regulations must be balanced, proportional and participatory, which does not sacrifice freedom of expression and human rights, but also does not ignore the responsibility and accountability of the media and citizens (Braman, 2006).
- Building online communities: Online communities are groups of citizens who connect, interact, and collaborate through internet-based information media,

based on shared interests, goals, or identities. Online communities can help to rebuild a digital public space that is democratic, deliberative, and inclusive, in the following ways: first, online communities can be a space for socialization, learning, and empowerment, which can improve citizens' skills, knowledge, and critical awareness state about public issues, and can provide support, motivation and inspiration for citizens to participate and contribute in the digital public sphere (Rheingold, 2000). Second, online communities can be a space for dialogue, discussion and deliberation, which can improve the quality and depth of public discourse, and can create consensus, cooperation and collective action for citizens to solve public problems (Dahlberg, 2001). Third, online communities can be a space of inclusion, recognition and protection, which can increase tolerance and solidarity among citizens, and can protect the rights, interests and welfare of citizens, especially those who are vulnerable or minorities (Nakamura & Chow-White, 2012).

IV. CONCLUSION

This article has carried out a critical review of the politics of speed in the information media space, using the theoretical framework of Paul Virilio, Jürgen Habermas, and Manuel Castells. This article has also provided several recommendations to overcome the negative impacts of speed politics, such as increasing media literacy, strengthening regulations, and building inclusive and deliberative online communities. This article hopes to contribute to understanding and overcoming the challenges and threats faced by the digital public sphere, and to rebuilding a democratic, deliberative and inclusive digital public sphere. The imbalance in digital public space results in an imbalance of information and speed. This can be seen from the speed in disseminating information in digital public spaces which can result in an unbalanced exchange of information. Poorly verified information can quickly spread, even if it is inaccurate or harmful.

Digital public space also Politics has an important role in how information is filtered, presented and accessed in digital public space. Political forces can utilize digital media to influence public opinion, either by using false information or by controlling the flow of information. Apart from that, speed in sharing information can hinder a healthy and quality public discussion process. Controversial or sensational content often dominates, while more weighty voices or differing opinions can be marginalized.

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