

The Influence of Social Media on the Formation of Public Opinion in the State Policy Making Process

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Abstract: *Modern life today is inseparable from information technology, one of which is the use of social media, where everyone can access various things they want to know. Social media is used to facilitate daily life, especially in terms of accessing information such as socio-political and economic. Along with the rapid development of information technology, social media has become a powerful platform for sharing information, interacting, and seeking public support. This phenomenon raises important questions about how social media shapes public opinion and, ultimately, influences the political process and policymaking. With social media, anyone can increase or show one's popularity and can also create narratives that are less accurate and objective about someone. Despite the various positive impacts of social media, it also has negative impacts. If users are unable to properly filter news or information containing divisions, hoaxes or fake news, issues of ethnicity, religion, and others carried out by irresponsible people, such information can cause chaos and can certainly divide unity. Therefore, the problem of this research is the level of influence of social media on public formation and what role social media plays in the formation of public opinion in the state policy process, whether constructive or critical. With the normative method, namely the normative legal research method (normative juridical), namely studying the legal rules, theories and principles that regulate freedom of opinion, the right to information and public participation in the process of forming state policy.*

Keywords: *Freedom; Information; Media; Policy; Technology.*

1. Introduction

The development of information technology in the modern era has significantly impacted human life, particularly in terms of communication. With the advancement of modern technology, people have become increasingly

comfortable with communication, including through social media. The presence of communication tools such as social media has made it easier for people to access various types of information. What was once accessible through television and radio, can now be accessed by seeking out the information or news themselves. The internet represents a fusion of communication flows and technological advancements. One of the most accessible web-based services is social networking sites. The development of social media-based technology has made it easier for people to participate, share information, exchange messages, and access other services (Evizal Abdul Kadir, Sri Listia Rosa, and Sonya Parlina Rizki 2020).

The development of digital information has fundamentally changed the way humans communicate, bringing about major changes in social interactions, information dissemination, and the formation of public opinion. Rapid advances in information and communication technology have given rise to a variety of social media platforms that have now become an integral part of global society. This development not only influences communication patterns between individuals but also has a broad impact on social, political, and cultural aspects (Yusuf and Kusnanto 2024).

With the advancement of information technology, social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and other social networks have become the most frequently used forms of social media by Indonesians. These applications allow users to easily access information ranging from the latest on education, socio-political issues, culture, and other topics to viral trends. Furthermore, social media serves as a platform for expressing opinions, building networks, and serving as a strategic tool in disseminating public opinion and shaping public perceptions of issues.

The current trend of social media usage has penetrated all levels of society, from adults to children. Access to information has become very easy and wide open, allowing anyone to obtain and share various types of information in just seconds. However, this ease is not always accompanied by the ability to sort and critically understand the content of the information. Many users, especially young people, often spread information without verifying the source, without considering the benefits or negative impacts that may arise. As a result, social media has become not only a means of disseminating useful information, but also a place for irresponsible people to provide invalid information. This is what ultimately misleads those who want to read it. This phenomenon has given rise to the popular term among digital communities, namely *fake news* or *hoaxes*, which describes the spread of false information without a clear basis in fact and can influence the public's perspective on an issue. The existence of the fake news trend has given rise to problems in using social media, becoming a crucial issue in shaping public opinion (Rahmadhany, Aldila Safitri, and Irwansyah 2021).

The impact of social media or mass media is very complex, one of the most influential of which is the formation of public opinion. Public opinion itself can be understood as the result of a social interaction process in which various individuals in society exchange views, assess, and discuss a particular issue until a common understanding or perspective is formed that is considered to represent the collective voice of society. This process is often triggered by social, educational, cultural, and other issues that emerge and are developed through social media, which serves as a primary source of information dissemination. Thus, the existence of social media is a crucial factor in creating and shaping the direction of public opinion (Dwi 2024).

One theory that explains the important role of media in the process of forming public opinion is *Agenda Setting Theory*. This theory is based on the assumption that mass media has great power in determining which issues are considered important by society. By highlighting, positioning, and giving different portions of attention to each issue, the media indirectly shapes public perception regarding which issues are worthy of attention and priority. This means that the media not only plays a role as a conveyor of information, but also as an actor capable of directing public awareness and attention to certain topics, while ignoring other issues that are considered less relevant (Mccombs and Shaw 1972).

Social media functions as a center for determining truth, with the ability to transfer two key elements, awareness *and* information to the public agenda. Through this process, the media plays a strategic role in shaping society's orientation toward various social, political, and cultural issues. In other words, what the media deems important ultimately shapes what society deems important, making mass media a highly influential force in the process of forming public opinion in the modern era. In this regard, it has been found that social media plays an algorithmic role in determining and shaping the type of information received by its users. Social media algorithms are essentially designed to customize the content that appears on a user's homepage or timeline based on their interests, search history, and previous interactions. In other words, this algorithmic system functions to filter and display information deemed most relevant to the user's preferences and habits (Tufekci 2015).

This finding is in line with the results of research conducted by bakshy which revealed that algorithms in social media have a tendency to create a phenomenon known as *filter bubble*. Under these conditions, users are only exposed to views, opinions, or information that supports their personal beliefs and perspectives, while information that contradicts those views tends to be ignored or hidden by the system. As a result of this mechanism, the information space, which should be a forum for the open exchange of ideas, can instead become a narrow and homogeneous space. This *filter bubble phenomenon* has the potential to strengthen *confirmation bias*, namely the tendency of individuals to trust

information that aligns with their own opinions more, and fosters opinion polarization within society (Pratiwi and Suhendra 2024).

Indonesia is one of the Asian countries showing remarkable growth in social media usage, ranking second only to Malaysia. This phenomenon indicates that Indonesians' participation in the digital world is steadily increasing. One of the main factors driving this rapid growth is the increasingly widespread and equitable access to the internet across various regions. This is inextricably linked to the continued innovation of mobile phone manufacturers, who offer devices with cutting-edge technology, and the support of communication service providers, who are competing to offer fast and stable internet connections to their users (Judijanto et al. 2023).

Before the digital era developed as it is now, television was known as the most popular electronic mass media and had a major influence on people's lives. This media became the main source of entertainment and information that was effective in shaping the knowledge, motivation, and attitudes and behavior of its viewers. The power of television lies in its ability to present an interesting combination of audio and visuals, so that it can create a deep emotional and psychological impression on the audience. The influence of television even reached all groups regardless of age, gender, educational background, or social status, making it a very dominant communication medium at that time. Along with the advancement of information and communication technology, the position of television is slowly being displaced by the presence of smart devices such as *smartphones*. The presence of *smartphones* with increasingly sophisticated modern features makes them not only a communication tool, but also a primary means of accessing various forms of information and entertainment. With a practical size and easy to carry anywhere, *smartphones* allow people to connect with the digital world whenever and wherever they are. Through various social media applications, users can now obtain information in real time, watch videos, read news, and interact with other users around the world. This situation shows that *smartphones* have taken over, and even surpassed, many of the functions of television, offering greater flexibility and access to information. As a result, modern society is now more reliant on digital devices to meet its daily information, entertainment, and communication needs (Research and Lecturers 2015) .

2. Research Methods

This research uses the normative legal research method (normative juridical), namely the method or the method used in study the law that is carried out with research method material existing libraries (Soekanto, Soerjono; Mamudji 2004). Research examines the legal rules, theories, and principles governing freedom of speech, the right to information, and public participation in the process of forming state policy. This method focuses on study of positive legal norms which regulates freedom of expression, the right to information, and the role of the media in the

democratic system and public policy process. This approach examines laws and regulations such as the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 28F Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights and Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the Press, to understand the legal basis for freedom of expression through social media.

This research can also be supplemented with a conceptual approach and sociological approach (socio-legal approach). The conceptual approach is used to examine concepts such as *public opinion*, *freedom of expression*, and *digital civic participation*. Meanwhile, the sociological approach helps explain how the real influence of social media on society can impact the process of forming state policy (Nalle 2015).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Role of Social Media on Public Opinion in the Process of Forming State Policy

Social media as a means of shaping public opinion. Social media has become a key instrument in shaping public opinion in the digital age. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube enable people to express opinions, discuss issues, and disseminate information quickly and widely. The speed of information flow and ease of access allow public issues to spread rapidly. Through the mechanisms of comments, *likes*, *shares*, and reposts, public views on a policy can develop into collective opinion. This activity reflects a shift in communication patterns from the previous top-down approach. down (from government to society), to bottom-up (from society to government) Thus, social media not only functions as a communication tool, but also as a forum for public participation in assessing and influencing the direction of government policy (Weeks and Arde 2021).

The legal basis that regulates the role of the media in influencing and shaping public opinion is contained in the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, specifically Article 28F. This article states that everyone has the right to communicate and obtain information to develop their personality and social environment, and has the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information. This constitutional provision confirms that the right to communication and information is part of the human rights guaranteed by the state (the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia nd).

In this article, the media plays a primary role in realizing the public's right to obtain and disseminate information. With this constitutional guarantee, the media has the legitimacy to function as a public channel for conveying various views, criticisms, and aspirations of the public, which in turn can influence the formation of public opinion on state policies. Furthermore, this article also demonstrates the importance of freedom of information in a democratic life, where openness and

access to information are prerequisites for active and rational public participation in the political decision-making process and public policy. Social Media on Public Perception and Agenda. Social media has the power to shape public perception of an issue through what is called agenda-setting theory . Issues that receive widespread attention on social media are more likely to enter the public discussion agenda, and can even encourage the government to respond or make policy changes. This suggests that social media algorithms contribute to this phenomenon. Content that is frequently interacted with tends to appear more frequently in other users' timelines, thus increasing its reach and influence on public opinion. However, this algorithmic system can also create a filter bubble phenomenon , where users are only exposed to information that aligns with their views, thereby strengthening confirmation bias and increasing opinion polarization in society. For example, issues such as rising fuel prices, education policies, or the environment often go viral on social media and generate a wave of opinion that then pushes the government to provide clarification or even review its policies.

Social Media as a Tool of Social Control over Government Social media now serves as an effective tool of social control over government administration. The public can directly criticize, provide input, or express dissatisfaction with policies deemed unfavorable to the public. Massive public criticism often impacts the government's power and image in the eyes of the public. Currently, the large amount of public opinion formed through social media can pressure policymakers to be more responsive to public needs and aspirations. In some cases, policies initially rejected by the public on social media have been revised or even canceled after receiving pressure from digital public opinion. This demonstrates a shift in symbolic power where the public, through social media, plays a significant role in political dynamics and the decision-making process (Ichsa 2022).

Social media is a communication instrument that plays a strategic role in disseminating information to a wide audience. From a mass communication perspective, media not only functions as a communicator delivering messages but also as an agent of social change , acting as a pioneer in driving transformation in society. Through the dissemination of various types of, including information, entertainment, education, and other persuasive messages, mass media contributes to shaping public mindsets, attitudes, and behavior in an increasingly open social environment. The position of mass media in modern society is vital, as its existence is the primary means of information exchange and the formation of public opinion. The success of mass media in carrying out its role as a social communicator can be observed from the rapid development of the media industry in its various forms, including print, electronic, and digital. This is marked by the increasing number of broadcast stations, media companies, news websites, and various programs managed by communications industry players. This phenomenon reflects that mass media not only survives but also continues to

evolve as a vital pillar in the dynamics of social, political, and cultural life of society (April et al. 2024).

Prophetic social media is used to describe the function of social media as a means that not only disseminates information but also promotes moral values. Social media plays a very significant role in influencing the formation of public opinion and awareness. Social media plays a crucial role in shaping public recognition and conclusions regarding issues developing in the public sphere. Through this digital platform, the public gains broad access to a variety of open information and can interact actively in conveying views and arguments. Social media has prophetic potential, namely the ability to become an instrument of social change that is constructive and oriented towards the advancement of society. The terms, social justice, and collective awareness in building a better social order In this context, social media has the capacity to shape public opinion and influence policies through a dynamic two-way communication process between individuals, groups, and institutions. Social media is also an important platform for public discourse and the exchange of ideas on relevant and crucial social issues. Thus, it can be concluded that social media has great potential to have a positive impact on social life, as well as contributing to encouraging progressive, sustainable, and participatory social change (Triono and Sangaji 2023).

The development of social media use in Indonesia has shown very rapid progress and has had a significant impact on the social and political dynamics of society. Social media has extraordinary power in shaping public opinion and influencing the political behavior of individuals and groups. In the context of political communication, political communicators utilize social media as a strategic channel to convey messages, build images, and influence public perceptions and preferences on certain issues. The ability of social media to disseminate messages quickly, widely, and interactively makes it an effective instrument in the process of forming public opinion. Implementing a good public communication strategy through social media is a crucial aspect in efforts to gain public support for policies or political decisions taken. In addition to functioning as a medium for disseminating political politics, social media also serves as a means of dialogue and public participation, where the public can access information, express aspirations, and provide criticism and input on government policies. Thus, social media does not only function messages as a one-way communication tool, but also as a space for participatory and deliberative social interaction. This role makes social media an important element in the modern democratic system, because it is able to strengthen the relationship between the government, political actors, and the public in a more transparent and inclusive public decision-making process (Waluyo, Riset, and Publik n.d.).

Legally, the role and function of the mass media are regulated in Law Number 40 1999 concerning the Press , specifically Article 3 paragraph (1) which states that "The national press has a function as a medium for information, education,

entertainment, and social control." This provision emphasizes that the existence of the press and mass media is a vital element in the democratic system, because it plays a role in ensuring the openness of information, improving the quality of public literacy, and being a tool for monitoring the implementation of state power. (Press 1999) . The mass media does not merely function as a news provider, but also as the fourth pillar of democracy (*the fourth estate*) which has the responsibility to maintain a balance between public interests and government interests. Through this function, the media contributes to creating a critical, participatory, and empowered society in facing the ever-evolving social and political dynamics.

3.2. The Influence of Social Media on the Formation of Public Opinion in the State Policy Making Process

As part of the development of information and communication technology, social media has transformed the interaction pattern between government and the public from one-way to two-way, and even multi-way. Through social media, the public becomes not only a recipient of information, but also one that can shape collective perceptions of a policy issue (Suharyanto 2011).

The freedom of every individual to express their opinion is expressly regulated in the provisions of Article 23 paragraph (2) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights (HAM Law) . This article states that *"Everyone is free to have, express, and disseminate opinions according to their conscience, both verbally and in writing through print and electronic media, while still paying attention to religious values, morality, order, public interest, and the integrity of the state."* This provision emphasizes that freedom of opinion is a fundamental part of human rights guaranteed by the state. However, this freedom is not absolute, but must be exercised with attention to the ethical, social, and legal limitations that have been established. These limitations are intended to maintain a balance between the individual's right to express their opinion and the interests of society at large, and to ensure that freedom of expression is not misused to the point of violating moral values, public order, and the integrity of the state. The regulation in Article 23 paragraph (2) of the Human Rights Law is an important legal basis in upholding the principle of responsible freedom of expression, especially in the context of the use of social media as a means of expressing opinions in the current digital era (Government of the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 39 of 1999).

Advances in information technology have strengthened the role of social media as a platform for public participation in government performance. This digitalization aligns with the concept of New Public Management, which emphasizes transparent and accountable connections between government structures and society. In this context, its application aligns with the concept of crowdsourcing , a mechanism for problem-solving and idea generation through the use of

information technology that involves the collective participation of individuals and groups with diverse backgrounds.

Based on real-life examples, through the change.org platform, the public feels more comfortable participating in public policy decision-making due to shared perceptions from other communities. The public can form groups to oppose policies or hear proposals with the government through a number of actions or joint actions by individuals with a common goal to achieve the desired goal. In recent decades, advances in information and communication technology have brought significant changes to the pattern of interaction between the government and the public. The government, which previously relied on conventional media as the primary means of conveying information and policies, is now shifting to using various social media platforms as a more effective, fast, and interactive instrument for public communication. This shift reflects the government's adaptation to the dynamics of a digital society that demands information transparency, active participation, and high responsiveness to public issues (Padang 2019).

For government institutions, these technological developments provide substantial benefits, particularly in terms of increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and accessibility of communication with the wider public. Social media enables government agencies to disseminate policy information in real time, receive direct input from the public, and establish two-way dialogue that strengthens the relationship between the government and citizens. In the context of good governance, transparency and timeliness are key prerequisites for providing quality public services, accompanied by clear accountability for every action and decision taken by state officials. The existence of social media functions not only as a means of communication but also as a participatory instrument that allows the public to play an active role in the governance process. Through digital platforms, the public can channel aspirations, criticism, and support for policies that are or will be implemented. This creates a deliberative space that encourages public involvement in the oversight and evaluation of government policies. Social media is an important vehicle for strengthening the principles of participatory democracy, where the public has broader opportunities to participate in the formation and oversight of public policies to realize a government that is transparent, accountable, and oriented towards the common good. This has resulted in every event occurring in a region becoming widely known and becoming a significant topic of discussion, particularly regarding public services, development conditions, social and political issues, and various government policies. Various government institutions, including several regional heads, such as the Mayor of Bandung, now have official websites and accounts, both managed by government agencies and owned privately by regional heads. Utilization of the technology is one of the forms of implementation of *electronic government* (e-government). The presence of e-government is able to push the realization of

openness of public information in Indonesia. The government, through delivery information on the official website, also provides a complaint room as a means of delivery complaint community. Delivery of complaints from the public can become a basis for consideration for government in setting more policies responsive to public needs. When this, every agency has an official website as part of commitment To realize openness of information to society (Yovinus nd) .

Public participation is a fundamental prerequisite for the realization of an effective and sustainable democratic system. From a political theory perspective, participation is understood not only as the right of citizens to participate in the general election process but also includes active involvement in every stage of the political process and public policy. This is in line with Robert A. Dahl's view, which emphasizes that participatory democracy provides equal opportunities for all citizens to influence every phase of the political process, from the identification and formulation of public problems, through the decision-making process, to the policy implementation stage. Through this participatory mechanism, the public plays a role not only as an object of policy but also as an active subject that helps determine the direction and substance of public policy. In the context of modern society, especially among the younger generation, forms of political participation are no longer limited to conventional activities such as deliberation or voting, but have expanded into the digital realm through the use of social media. The intensity of youth involvement in responding to political issues through comments, posts, and online discussions indicates the emergence of a new deliberative space in cyberspace that represents the political awareness of the younger generation. These activities can be seen as concrete manifestations of participatory democratic practices, where social media serves as a political communication medium that allows for the open exchange of ideas, criticism, and support for government policies. Political participation in the digital era not only broadens the reach of public involvement in the democratic process but also enriches the quality of public dialogue. Teenagers' involvement through social media is an important indicator of the growing political awareness of the younger generation, who are critical, adaptive, and reflective of the socio-political dynamics around them. This phenomenon demonstrates that social media has transformed into a strategic instrument in strengthening inclusive and responsive participatory democratic practices (Dahl 1989).

The formulation of policymaking processes has traditionally been the responsibility of citizen representatives in various organizations. However, this process must now anticipate shifts in traditional policymaking as the development of the internet and technologies such as social media sites has become a new medium for citizens to participate in government policymaking. Teenagers, as well as other age groups, are citizens who have the right to express their opinions. Social media sites were chosen because of their simplicity. Accommodating youth participation will ensure that formulated policies are more realistically based on

citizen preferences, and the public will be more sympathetic evaluators of important decisions made by government leaders. In any case, increasing public support will likely create a less controversial public policy regime that is easier to govern and regulate. The advantage of understanding citizen voice is the belief that citizen involvement in democracy will result in policymaking with public preferences on the part of administrators and better appreciation by the wider public. Furthermore, seeing an increase in citizen voice can increase public trust in the government policymaking process. Therefore, the debate surrounding citizens is no longer a debate between government representation and citizen participation, but rather a debate about which type of citizen participation process is best (Konisky 2015).

The process of formulating public policy is the primary responsibility of representatives and government officials within the state's organizational structure. These representatives act as decision-makers, channeling public aspirations through established political and bureaucratic mechanisms. However, with the rapid development of information and communication technology, particularly through the internet and various social media platforms, a paradigm shift has occurred in the policy-making process. Social media now functions as a new public space that allows the public, including younger age groups such as teenagers, to participate directly in policy discourse and express their views on government issues (Suharyanto 2011).

Participation through social media marks a transformation from a top down policymaking model to a more participatory and inclusive approach, where every citizen has broader opportunities to engage in the policy formulation process. The use of social media as a means of public participation was chosen because of its simplicity, easy access, and ability to reach a wide audience without limitations of space and time. This makes social media a strategic instrument for the government to obtain direct input from the public, especially from the younger generation, who are known to be adaptive to technology and possess a high level of social awareness. By accommodating the participation of youth and other age groups in the policy formulation process, the government can formulate policies that are more realistic, responsive, and aligned with community needs. This participatory approach also strengthens the legitimacy of public policy, as decisions taken are not only based on the considerations of political elites but also reflect the preferences and aspirations of citizens. Active public participation in the digital space makes them not only policy recipients but also evaluators and co-creators, namely parties who participate in assessing, correcting, and even collectively shaping policies (Kusuma et al. 2024).

Community involvement in digital spaces has the potential to strengthen public support towards the resulting policies. When the public feels involved and their aspirations are accommodated, trust in the government will increase, resulting in

a more harmonious relationship between those in power and citizens. In the context of democratic governance, this can create a more stable and legitimate political order, where public participation is a key pillar for the sustainability of an open, transparent, and accountable government regime. While social media has made a positive contribution to increasing public participation and transparency, its use in the context of shaping public opinion also has a number of negative impacts that require critical examination. The open, fast, and unconstrained nature of social media makes it a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it strengthens the democratization of communication, but on the other hand, it has the potential to cause information distortion, social polarization, and instability in public opinion, which can irrationally influence the state policymaking process. Social media is often a vehicle for the spread of disinformation, hoaxes, and hate speech, which can influence public perception of government policies. Unverified and provocative information can quickly spread massively, forming erroneous public opinion, and leading to misunderstandings about the substance of policies. This phenomenon undermines the credibility of government communications and hinders decision-making processes based on data and rational considerations (Masyarakat 2017).

Social media can lead to opinion polarization and social fragmentation. Interactions in digital spaces often occur in homogeneous groups or *echo chambers*, where users only interact with individuals who share similar views. This condition leads to the formation of conflicting opinion groups and makes it difficult to reach consensus on public issues. As a result, policy formulation is hampered by extreme group pressure or public opinion bias that does not reflect the aspirations of society as a whole. The rapidly changing dynamics of public opinion on social media often puts excessive political pressure on policymakers. Governments are sometimes encouraged to make populist decisions solely in response to viral public opinion, without undergoing a process of in-depth policy analysis and consideration. This can lead to the emergence of policies that are reactive, unsustainable, and potentially detrimental to the long-term interests of the state. The misuse of social media for political gain, such as the manipulation of public opinion through buzzers or digital bots, also poses a serious threat to the integrity of democracy. Such practices can create the illusion of public support for certain policies, when in fact, the opinion is engineered to serve the political interests of certain groups. As a result, the policy-making process becomes less objective and does not reflect the true aspirations of society (Rahajeng, Harapan, and Karlin 2022).

This, while social media has significant potential to strengthen public participation and communication, its negative impact on public opinion formation cannot be ignored. Serious efforts are needed from the government, society, and educational institutions to improve digital literacy, social media ethics, and legal

awareness , so that social media use can be directed constructively to support rational, transparent, and public-interest policy processes

4. Conclusion

Social media plays a highly strategic role in shaping public opinion and influencing the state policy-making process in the digital era. As a new, participatory public space, social media not only serves as a means of communication between the government and the public, but also serves as a platform for expression, oversight, and social control over governance. Through interactions across various digital platforms, the public can convey aspirations, criticism, and support for public policies, thereby strengthening the principles of transparency, accountability, and participatory democracy in modern governance. Legally, the role of social media in shaping public opinion has a strong constitutional basis as stated in Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia and Article 23 paragraph (2) of Law Number 39 of 1999 concerning Human Rights. Both regulations affirm the right of every individual to obtain and convey information freely and responsibly. Within a democratic framework, freedom of expression on social media is an important pillar for creating active and rational public participation in the political process and public policy. The influence of social media also presents serious challenges. The spread of disinformation, hoaxes, algorithmic bias, opinion polarization, and information manipulation through buzzers or digital bots has the potential to disrupt public rationality and pressure policymakers to make populist decisions that are not based on in-depth analysis. Therefore, the constructive potential of social media needs to be balanced with increased digital literacy, communication ethics, and public legal awareness so that social media can be used wisely and responsibly. Social media also presents serious challenges in the form of the spread of disinformation, opinion polarization, populist political pressure, and manipulation of public opinion through buzzers or digital bots. These phenomena can obscure public rationality and disrupt objectivity in the state policymaking process. Therefore, the use of social media must be accompanied by increased digital literacy, strengthened communication ethics, and legal awareness among the public so that social media can function constructively as an instrument of a healthy and just democracy.

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