

***The Role of Social Media in Political Activism and Social Movements:
Mobilizing Support, Amplifying Voices, and Shaping Political Discourse***

Peran Media Sosial dalam Aktivisme Politik dan Gerakan Sosial: Memobilisasi Dukungan, Memperkuat Suara, dan Membentuk Wacana Politik

Meisuri

Universitas Negeri Medan

*meisuriw@yahoo.com

**Corresponding Author*

ABSTRACT

Social media has become a major force in political activism and social movements, significantly influencing mobilization, amplification of voices, and political discourse. This research aims to explore how social media influences the formation of public opinion and political discourse regarding controversial issues by using the PRISMA method for collecting articles. The research results show that social media expands the reach of political discourse and increases public engagement, but also raises challenges such as polarization and the spread of disinformation. The implications of this research include the need for better regulation and more careful platform design to reduce negative impacts and promote constructive communication in politics.

Keywords: Social Media, Political Activism, Social Movements, Public Opinion, Political Discourse

ABSTRAK

Media sosial telah menjadi kekuatan utama dalam aktivisme politik dan gerakan sosial, mempengaruhi mobilisasi, penguatan suara, dan wacana politik secara signifikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana media sosial mempengaruhi pembentukan opini publik dan diskursus politik terkait isu-isu kontroversial dengan menggunakan metode PRISMA untuk pengumpulan artikel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial memperluas jangkauan diskursus politik dan meningkatkan keterlibatan publik, namun juga menimbulkan tantangan seperti polarisasi dan penyebaran disinformasi. Implikasi penelitian ini mencakup perlunya regulasi yang lebih baik dan desain platform yang lebih hati-hati untuk mengurangi dampak negatif dan mempromosikan komunikasi yang konstruktif dalam politik.

Kata Kunci: Media Sosial, Aktivisme Politik, Gerakan Sosial, Opini Publik, Diskursus Politik

1. Introduction

Social media has become a powerful tool in political activism and social movements, significantly influencing mobilization, amplifier voice, and political discourse. Research shows that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter have changed the way political information is disseminated and political events develop (Chahbane, 2024). These platforms play an important role in mobilizing protests, increasing political engagement, and influencing government decisions (Getachew & Beshah, 2019). The impact of social media on political mobilization and civil society participation is widely acknowledged, with studies emphasizing its ability to increase citizen engagement and reshape political discourse (Kharel, 2024; Nazeer, 2023).

Additionally, social media facilitates direct communication between politicians and the public, leading to linguistic shifts in political rhetoric and discourse (Musasia, 2019). The participatory nature of social media, where users collaboratively create content, has revolutionized politics by increasing people's participation in the political process (Škorić et al., 2021). Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become central to political debates,

influencing discussions regarding free speech, corrective politics, and truth/fake news (Varis, 2020).

Research also shows that social media promotes open and two-way communication, providing opportunities for citizens to engage in political conversations and debates, ultimately increasing levels of participation and informed views (Taufiq et al., 2019; Daud, 2021). However, the role of social media is not without challenges, such as political polarization, the spread of misinformation, and the formation of filter bubbles and echo chambers (Kubin & Sikorski, 2021; Garrett, 2019; Otieno, 2024).

In conclusion, social media plays a complex role in political activism and social movements by mobilizing support, amplifying voices, and shaping political discourse. While increasing civil society engagement and facilitating the dissemination of information, social media also presents challenges such as political polarization and the spread of inaccurate information. Understanding the dynamics of social media in a political context is critical to understanding its broader impact on society and democracy.

In the current context, social media has become a major platform that influences political and social dynamics. This phenomenon not only includes the ability of social media to mobilize support and amplify voices in various political and social movements, but also to shape rapidly developing political narratives and discourses. Social media allows individuals and groups to actively participate in the discussion of controversial issues, which in turn significantly influences the formation of public opinion.

The relevant research question in this context is how social media influences the formation of public opinion and political discourse regarding controversial issues. Studies on the influence of social media in the context of political discourse still have significant gaps in knowledge. Although much research has been conducted on the impact of social media on public opinion in general, there is little research that specifically explores how particular social media platforms influence discussion patterns, opinion formation, and information dissemination in the context of controversial issues.

The identification of this knowledge gap highlights the importance of better understanding the mechanisms underlying the influence of social media in changing and shaping political discourse, as well as how this can impact broader social and political dynamics. The study of the impact of social media in changing the political and social dynamics of modern society is becoming increasingly urgent in line with the increasingly widespread penetration and intensive use of social media in various levels of society. Social media is not only a platform for conveying information and communicating, but also plays an important role in shaping public opinion, driving political activity, and significantly influencing social dynamics. Understanding how social media works influence The way people think, act and participate in political life is the key to responding effectively to the social and political changes occurring in this digital era.

This research makes a unique contribution by exploring the complex relationship between social media, political activism, and political discourse, particularly in the context of controversial issues. By filling a gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of social media on the formation of public opinion and patterns of political discussion, this study will reveal not yet fully understood dynamics in the way social media influences political processes and policy formation. It is important to inform political practitioners, policy makers, and the general public about the role played by social media in influencing political views and behavior.

This research has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of the interactions between social media and political dynamics. By analyzing the effects of social media on the formation of public opinion, the possibility of polarization, and its role in expanding or limiting the space for political discussion, this study can provide in-depth insights for researchers, political practitioners, and policy makers to develop more effective strategies in facing these challenges. new challenges facing modern democracy.

2. Methods

2.1. Article Collection

The method used in this research is PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), which has been proven effective for systematically collecting articles from reputable international databases such as Scopus. PRISMA allows researchers to conduct systematic searches, selection, and presentation of scientific articles to a high standard, thereby ensuring accuracy and comprehensiveness in literature data collection.

2.2. Keywords

Definitions of keywords used in article searches include: "social media", "political activism", "social movements", "public opinion", and "political discourse". These keywords were chosen to ensure searches for articles that are relevant to the research topic of the influence of social media in political activism and political discourse regarding controversial issues.

2.3. Number of Articles

The total articles found that are relevant to the research topic will be reported after the article search and selection process is complete. This number will reflect the number of articles successfully included in this literature review, based on the established inclusion criteria.

2.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Techniques

The criteria used to select articles to be included in this literature review include the most recent year of publication, direct relevance to the research topic of the influence of social media in the formation of public opinion and political discourse, and the quality of the methodology tested. Articles that meet these criteria will be selected for further analysis in an effort to present a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the role of social media in contemporary political dynamics.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Relevant Theories

Social media has become a powerful tool in political activism and social movements, influencing public opinion, shaping political discourse, and mobilizing support. Research shows that social media plays a crucial role in facilitating political mobilization by providing a platform for communication and organization among protesters (Xinyue, 2023). Its significant impact on the formation of public opinion can be seen in its influence on political and cultural views (Sjoraida, 2024). The unique features of social media that enable two-way communication are revolutionizing political engagement, allowing individuals to actively participate in discussions and interact with political content (Sapar, 2024).

Furthermore, social media is very important in shaping public opinion during significant events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacts national defense and shapes public perceptions (Riyanto et al., 2023). Studies show that voters are frequently exposed to political communication through social media, show a preference for this media compared to mainstream media and actively engage in political discussions through these platforms ("The Use of Social Media and Participation in Political Communication in the 2019 General Election in Nigeria ", 2020). Social media also helps in disseminating information, analyzing public and government opinion, and influencing the formation of public opinion (Uthirapathy & Domnic, 2022).

In addition, social media networks play a vital role in shaping global communication patterns in various societies (Tayer, 2023). Mass media, including social media, play a fundamental role in shaping public opinion by determining discussion topics and emphasizing

certain issues (Pinto et al., 2019). Cues from social media can influence audiences' perceptions of news and politics, contributing to the fragmentation of the media agenda and ongoing polarization (Tomas et al., 2021). Social media platforms are increasingly used as channels for expressing public opinion, leveraging natural language processing to analyze extremist behavior and sentiment during crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic (Barachi et al., 2022; Karami & Mackenzie, 2020).

However, it is important to recognize that social media can also be manipulated for disinformation campaigns such as political astroturfing, where coordinated efforts deceive the public, potentially influencing election outcomes and political behavior (Keller et al., 2019). Despite these challenges, social media's widespread influence on public opinion, political activism, and social movements underscores its significance in contemporary society.

3.2. Social Media and Public Opinion Formation

Social media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, especially on political issues. Research shows that digital technology and social media have a major influence on the formation of public attitudes and perceptions, including political and cultural views (Sjoraida, 2024). Social media not only shifts traditional communication paradigms, but also allows the emergence of new voices, diverse views, and creative thinking in public discourse (Ausat, 2023). Platforms such as Twitter provide a direct picture of public sentiment in real-time, capture reactions to political events as they occur, and offer temporal sensitivity in gauging public opinion (McGregor, 2019).

Research shows that social media facilitates open and two-way communication, allowing citizens to engage in political conversations and debates, leading to higher levels of participation and more informed views (Daud, 2021). In addition, social media has played an important role in influencing public opinion during critical events such as the Covid-19 pandemic, influencing national defense strategies (Riyanto et al., 2023). The influence of social media influencers in shaping public perception is clear, with their content influencing political attitudes, lifestyle choices, and even consumer behavior (Alexander, 2024).

However, the dynamics of social media platforms can also lead to the amplification of certain voices while marginalizing others, creating echo chambers and polarizing public opinion (Jha, 2023). Reliance on social media data to infer public opinion provides rapid insight into opinion but is limited to specific audiences, such as Twitter users or viewers of political debates (Dubois et al., 2024). In addition, the application of social bots significantly influences the formation and change of public opinion (Xu, 2023).

In conclusion, the impact of social media on the formation of public opinion is multifaceted, influencing political engagement, public discourse, and even consumer behavior. While social media offers a platform for diverse voices and views, it also poses challenges such as echo chambers and the spread of disinformation. Understanding the role of social media in shaping public attitudes is very important in today's digital era.

3.3. Social Media and Political Discourse

Social media plays a significant role in shaping political discourse and ideological narratives in contemporary society. These platforms have become centers of political dialogue, influencing the inclusivity or exclusivity of discussions. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter not only amplify political discourse but also facilitate real-time updates on political events, as well as encourage online communities that engage in political activism (Kharel, 2024). These platforms enable direct communication between politicians and citizens, allowing political parties to convey their ideologies directly to the public, often without going through traditional news media (Sharma & Sivakumar, 2023).

Additionally, social media has revolutionized the global communications landscape, providing unprecedented opportunities for individuals and communities to connect, share

information, and engage in discourse (Musa, 2023). Social media has become a battleground for political candidates, supporters, and opponents, changing the way political discourse is delivered, especially at local levels that were previously underserved by national media outlets (Musasia, 2019). Discourse on social media is not only limited to national politics but also includes international conflicts, shaping the political landscape and power dynamics in regions such as the Middle East (Katz, 2020).

Furthermore, social media platforms have democratized participation in the public sphere, allowing new voices to emerge and challenge traditional norms in political discussions (Agana & Prempeh, 2022). Discourse on social media is not only limited to text but also includes visual elements such as political memes, which criticize government policies and provide channels for public participation (Haqqi et al., 2022). However, it is important to note that the influence of social media is not always positive, as it can contribute to political misperceptions and polarization, especially during election periods (Garrett, 2019).

In conclusion, social media has become a powerful tool that influences political discourse, shapes ideological narratives, and redefines the dynamics of political communication in the digital era. Social media has the potential to increase political participation and dialogue, but also faces challenges such as disinformation and polarization that need to be addressed in the evolving landscape of online political engagement.

3.4. Comparative Study between Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms have become integral in shaping political discourse and influencing political engagement. Studies show that these platforms play a significant role in political mobilization, civic participation, and public opinion formation (Kharel, 2024; Otieno, 2024; Jafari, 2022). The influence of social media on political discourse varies across platforms and contexts. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter have become centers of political debate, with their content moderation policies influencing political communication and narratives of truth and falsehood (Varis, 2020). Social media analysis reveals how these platforms shape public opinion, influence political dynamics, and contribute to social polarization (Farid, 2024). In addition, social media also has an impact on electoral strategies, voter engagement, and the changing role of mainstream media in setting the political agenda (Liçenji, 2023; Sharma & Sivakumar, 2023).

Furthermore, social media platforms have been identified as important arenas for political activism, the initiation of political change, and the promotion of active engagement in political discourse (Salam, 2021; Macharia, 2024). The design and policies of social media platforms can also influence political tensions and power structures, impacting the nature of political discussions (Dym et al., 2022). Studies have highlighted the role of social media in exposing users to diverse political viewpoints, facilitating collaboration, and potentially promoting depolarization (Zhou, 2023). Additionally, social media platforms provide channels for public discourse, allowing individuals to engage with political issues, express opinions, and connect with others (Gamaliel, 2024; Eniayejuni, 2023).

In conclusion, social media platforms have a profound impact on political discourse by influencing political mobilization, public opinion, civic participation, and activism. The context in which these platforms operate can shape political communications, truth narratives, and social polarization. Understanding the complex relationship between social media and political engagement is critical to understanding the evolving landscape of political discourse in the digital age.

4. Conclusions

Social media has established itself as a key tool in shaping political and ideological discourse, as well as influencing public opinion and political engagement. Various social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, not only expand the reach of political discourse but

also facilitate direct communication between politicians and the public. They enable real-time updates on political events and provide space for more inclusive and diverse discussions. However, social media use also poses challenges such as disinformation, polarization, and echo chambers that can exacerbate political misperceptions. Thus, social media plays a complex and multifaceted role in the contemporary political landscape.

4.1. Implications

This research reveals several important implications for the study of political communication and public policy. First, the role of social media in political mobilization and civic participation highlights the need for better oversight and regulation to address the potential spread of disinformation and polarization. Second, a deeper understanding of how social media influences public opinion can help policymakers and organizations design more effective and ethical communication strategies. Third, social media platforms should consider their designs and policies to reduce negative impacts such as echo chambers and the influence of social bots in political discourse.

4.2. Limitations

This research has several limitations. First, a focus on specific platforms such as Facebook and Twitter may not reflect the dynamics of the entire broader social media ecosystem, including newer or niche platforms. Second, the data used for analysis is often limited to a specific audience and may not fully represent the views of the general public. Third, the long-term impact of social media on public opinion and political discourse still requires further research to understand its deeper and longer-lasting effects.

4.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should explore the following aspects:

1. Comparative Study between Platforms: Conduct a more in-depth analysis of the differences in impact between various social media platforms, including emerging or lesser-known ones.
2. Long Term Effects: Examining the long-term impact of social media on public opinion and political dynamics to get a more complete picture of the lasting effects.
3. Regulations and Policies: Evaluate the effectiveness of various policies and regulations implemented to address disinformation and polarization on social media, and identify best practices that can be implemented widely.
4. New Platform Role: Analyze how new or niche social media platforms influence political discourse and public engagement compared to more established platforms.

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