

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

**Syarifuddin \*<sup>1</sup>**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Papua  
[syarif1572@gmail.com](mailto:syarif1572@gmail.com)

**Indah Sulistiani**

Universitas Muhammadiyah Papua  
[indahsulistiani175@gmail.com](mailto:indahsulistiani175@gmail.com)

**Bikah Kusti Noviani**

Komisi Pemilihan Umum Kabupaten Bantul  
[bikah.kustinoviani@gmail.com](mailto:bikah.kustinoviani@gmail.com)

**Al-Amin**

Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia  
[al.amin-2024@feb.unair.ac.id](mailto:al.amin-2024@feb.unair.ac.id)

**Rahma Helal Al\_ Jbour**

Mutah University, Jordan  
[rahmajboor@yahoo.com](mailto:rahmajboor@yahoo.com)

### Abstract

Social media plays an important role in increasing public participation. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram enable the rapid and widespread dissemination of information among the public, so that people become more informed about important issues. In addition, social media provides a space for people to express their opinions and interact directly with policymakers, creating a more inclusive and democratic form of participation. Through social media, individuals are able to engage in public discussions, contribute to social movements, and influence societal decision-making processes. However, the positive impact of social media on public participation must also be managed wisely due to significant challenges. The spread of inaccurate news and misinformation through social media can cause confusion and conflict in society. Algorithms that favor controversial or extreme content also have the potential to exacerbate political polarization and divide communities. To face these challenges, good digital literacy is needed so that people can be more critical in evaluating the information they receive and share. In addition, collaboration between the government, social media platform administrators and the public is needed to ensure that social media can be utilized positively and constructively to increase public participation. With the right approach, social media has the

---

<sup>1</sup> Correspondence author

potential to be an effective tool to create a more inclusive, transparent and responsive public decision-making process.

**Keywords:** Role, Social Media, Public Decision, Community Participation

## **Introduction**

In today's digital age, social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of people around the world. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube are not only utilized for social interaction and entertainment, but are also increasingly becoming important tools in supporting communication, information dissemination, and the formation of public opinion. (Luckner, 2022). This development has a significant impact on various aspects of life, including politics and governance.

The public decision-making process is complex and involves various stakeholders, ranging from the government, non-governmental organizations, to the general public. Decisions made in this context have a major influence on the welfare of the community and the sustainability of development. (Weng et al., 2021).

In a democracy, power is vested in the people, and public decision-making is the formal mechanism through which people's aspirations, needs and interests are met. Public decision-making covers various aspects of life such as the economy, health, education, and security that affect the well-being of society as a whole. (Rone, 2023). The process involves the participation of various stakeholders, including government, non-governmental organizations, and civil society, thus ensuring that decisions are more understandable, transparent, and accountable. This is important because these decisions have a direct impact on people's daily lives and can affect quality of life and equality in society. (Paunu et al., 2020).

In addition, inclusive and participatory public decision-making can strengthen political legitimacy and stability. When people feel that they have a voice in the decision-making process, they are more likely to support and comply with implemented policies. Public participation can also help prevent corruption and abuse of power by allowing the public to scrutinize government actions and hold them accountable (Stabler, 2020). Therefore, effective public decision-making is not only important to produce better policies that meet the needs of the public, but also to strengthen the trust and relationship between government and society, which in turn strengthens the foundation of democracy itself.

Social media has opened up new opportunities for public participation in public decision-making processes. With its interactive, fast and broad nature, social media makes it easier for people to express their opinions, have discussions and organize social movements. In addition, these platforms also facilitate transparency and accountability of public institutions by providing direct access to information and enabling two-way communication between government and citizens. (Osawa, 2024).

Through social media, it is also easier for people to voice their opinions, organize social movements, and support specific campaigns. These platforms have provided tools for people to take part in public discussions and influence political and social decision-making. (Sagaris, 2021). However, on the other hand, social media also presents challenges such as the spread of misinformation, social polarization, and potential manipulation by certain actors. Nevertheless, the role of social media in strengthening community participation and engagement cannot be ignored and continues to be an important element in contemporary communication dynamics. (Jackson, 2022).

Thus, given the important role of social media in this context, this research aims to examine how social media influences public decision-making processes and community participation.

### **Research Methods**

The study conducted in this research uses the literature research method, which is to understand the impact of social media on community participation. The literature research method is an approach that examines and analyzes relevant secondary sources such as books, journal articles, research reports, and other digital sources. (Setiowati, 2016); (Syahran, 2020); (Helaluddin, 2019).

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Social Media, Public Decisions and Community Participation**

Social media is an internet-based platform or service that allows users to create, share, and interact with content in the form of text, images, videos, and other multimedia. Social media includes various types of platforms such as social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn), micronews services (Twitter), photo and video sharing platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), and discussion forums (Reddit). (Diaz, 2020). One of the main features of social media is the ability to interact in real time with other users through comments, likes, shares, and messages, which supports the rapid and extensive exchange of information. Social media also enables the creation of virtual communities based on shared interests, strengthens connectivity between individuals, and plays an important role in modern communication and social dynamics. (Feng et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, community decision-making is a process that involves various parties in determining policies, regulations, or other actions that affect the general public. This process usually includes a number of steps such as data collection, policy analysis, stakeholder consultation, and the determination of the most appropriate option to achieve a particular goal. (Fikry & Hermawan, 2024). In the context of government,

public decision-making often begins with the identification of a problem or need by authorities, such as the central government, local governments, or legislative bodies. Next, alternative solutions are evaluated based on their effectiveness, efficiency, and impact on society. Community consultation and public participation are also important components, allowing people's voices to shape the direction of policy decisions (Kilic et al., 20). (Kilic et al., 2022)..

The effectiveness of community decision-making relies heavily on transparency, accountability and participation. Transparency ensures that the processes and bases for decision-making are known to the public, thereby reducing the potential for abuse of power and corruption. Accountability involves mechanisms through which policymakers can be held accountable for the decisions they take (Nmere et al., 2020). Public participation, on the other hand, allows people to express their views, concerns and needs, resulting in more comprehensive and equitable policies. When this mechanism works well, community decision-making can increase legitimacy and gain public trust, creating more effective and sustainable policies (Chichua & Matchavari, 2020). (Chichua & Matchavariani, 2024)..

Public participation is essential as an integral part of the public decision-making process that ensures that policies reflect the aspirations and interests of the people. (Carrigan & Fatsis, 2021).. By actively involving the public in discussions and decision-making, the process will not only become more transparent and accountable but will also strengthen legitimacy and trust in public institutions. Participation that is inclusive and representative of all groups will contribute to the formulation of more equitable and sustainable policies and promote comprehensive and participation-oriented social development. (Brown et al., 2022).

Community engagement can occur in a variety of ways from providing input in public discussions, attending board meetings, to participating in rallies or social campaigns. (Kopf, 2023). Through these channels, individuals and groups can express their views, interests, and expectations which can then be considered by decision makers. Public participation is not only limited to formal processes at the government level but can also occur at the local community level, non-governmental organizations, and various community forums. (Giriwati, 2020).

In the long run, active public participation supports sustainable development by enhancing a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for outcomes and motivating continued engagement in efforts to improve the quality of life together. Public participation also helps ensure that policies are more inclusive and equitable, reducing the risk of marginalization of certain groups. (Kamolov & Smagina, 2021)..

### **The Influence of Social Media in Public Decision Making**

Social media is changing the way people get information and participate in public decision-making. Unlike traditional media, social media allows for two-way interaction

and the rapid and widespread dissemination of facts. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram allow individuals to express their opinions, organize social movements, and influence society's agenda. (Canter & Knox, 2020). With its speed and reach, social media has become a powerful tool to motivate people's participation in public decision-making processes. (Sarpong et al., 2024)..

For example, social media can give people direct access to politicians and policymakers, allowing for a more open and transparent dialog. Issues that may have previously been ignored or limited to a specific sphere can now quickly gain widespread attention, thanks to the popularity and potential of social media to spread information. As such, social media can raise public awareness of important issues and motivate action faster than traditional channels. (Zanudin et al., 2021)..

However, the influence of social media on public decision-making is not always positive. Misinformation and fake news can easily spread on these platforms, leading to misunderstandings and confusion among the public. The algorithms used by social media often reinforce "echo chambers", where individuals are only exposed to views that align with their beliefs. This can reduce the quality of public discussion, make political polarization sharper, and make it difficult for policymakers to accurately assess support or opposition to a policy. (Zhang et al., 2021).

However, with the right approach, social media still has great potential to improve public decision-making processes. Improving digital literacy and efforts to strengthen regulations on online information are crucial (Lin & Zhang, 2023). Governments and other institutions can also utilize social media as a tool to engage the public in public consultations, policy surveys, and information transparency. By managing risks and maximizing positive potential, social media can be a valuable component in public decision-making that is more inclusive and responsive to people's needs. (Razon & Levin, 2021).

In utilizing social media to solve public problems, the government and relevant agencies should develop a comprehensive strategy. This includes building digital literacy skills among the public to help them identify credible information and avoid the pitfalls of disinformation. (Rajiah & Venkataraman, 2020). Education programs and awareness campaigns can be run to empower social media users to participate effectively and wisely. In addition, collaboration with social media platforms to identify and address the spread of malicious or false content is also an important step. (Pierce, 2020).

Policymakers can utilize social media to conduct short surveys, receive feedback, and engage the public in the policy consultation process. For example, the government can hold live Q&A sessions on social media platforms, allowing people to ask questions and get answers directly. (Rajulapati, 2023). In addition, social media can be used to disseminate up-to-date information on policy developments, and document the decision-making process in a more transparent manner. (Petunia & Selepe, 2020)..

While there are challenges such as disinformation and increased polarization, a cautious approach can help overcome these obstacles. For example, engaging independent fact-checkers or utilizing artificial intelligence technology to identify and mitigate the spread of fake news. In addition, strengthening regulation and law enforcement against negative and manipulative content on social media can help create a healthier and more constructive digital environment. (Indriawati & Rochmaniah, 2022).

As such, social media has great potential to increase public participation and transparency in public decision-making. While there are risks such as disinformation and polarization, the right strategy and good digital literacy can help mitigate these negative impacts. By utilizing social media wisely, governments and policymakers can create processes that are more inclusive and responsive to people's needs, making it a powerful tool to strengthen democracy and social development.

### **The Impact of Social Media on Community Participation**

Over the past few years, social media platforms have seen a significant increase in usage and have become a key tool for public participation. The obvious positive impact this has had is increased access to information. Previously, people may have only relied on traditional media such as television, newspapers and radio to get news. (Helinsha & Margawati, 2022).. However, with social media, information can be spread quickly and widely, allowing people to know more about important issues. Systems such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram provide a platform for individuals to keep up to date with the latest news, follow policy issues, and participate in public discussions that were previously difficult to access. (Chanie & Parappagoudar, 2024).

Social media also creates spaces for people to express their opinions and interact directly with decision-makers. This results in a more inclusive and democratic form of participation, where individual voices can be heard without having to go through official channels that are often cumbersome and formal. The ability to comment on posts, take part in online polls, or even launch digital petitions gives citizens a powerful tool to influence public decision-making. (Bell & Reed, 2021).

However, while social media increases participation rates, the challenge is the spread of misinformation and fake news that often spreads easily across these platforms, causing confusion and conflict among the public. In addition, social media algorithms tend to promote content that gets a lot of reactions, often controversial or extreme content. This can exacerbate political polarization and divide society. (Habib et al., 2023). Therefore, digital literacy is very important so that people can be more critical in evaluating the information they receive and share on social media.

Ultimately, the impact of social media on public participation is a two-sided coin. On the one hand, social media opens up more channels for inclusive, real-time communication and participation. On the other hand, challenges such as disinformation

and increased polarization should not be ignored. With concerted efforts between the government, social media platforms, and the public to improve digital literacy and develop effective regulations, social media can become a more positive and constructive tool in enhancing people's participation in public decision-making processes.

As such, social media has a significant impact on public participation. On the one hand, social media facilitates increased access to information and provides a platform for people to express their opinions and interact directly with policy makers. It creates a more inclusive and democratic form of participation, allowing individuals to engage in public discussions and participate in social movements.

However, on the other hand, social media also brings challenges such as the spread of misinformation and fake news that can cause confusion and conflict among the public. Algorithms that encourage controversial content can also exacerbate political polarization and divide society.

To overcome this challenge, digital literacy is very important, so that people can be more critical in evaluating the information they receive and share. Joint efforts between the government, social media platforms and the public are also needed to improve digital literacy and develop effective regulations.

With the right approach, social media can be a positive and constructive tool in enhancing people's participation in public decision-making processes, making it a more inclusive, transparent and responsive space to people's needs.

## **Conclusion**

Social media has played a very significant role in engaging the wider public in public decision-making processes by increasing access to information and allowing diverse opinions to be heard. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram allow information and breaking news to be disseminated at a moment's notice across the country, keeping people up to date on important issues. In addition, social media allows people to engage directly in public discussions and interact indirectly with policymakers through features such as comments, polls or online petitions.

However, the positive impacts are also accompanied by severe challenges. The spread of fake news and inaccurate information often leads to confusion and conflict in society. Social media algorithms that tend to promote controversial or extreme content can exacerbate political polarization and break the bonds of community solidarity. Therefore, a joint effort is needed between the government, social media platform managers and the active participation of the community in improving digital literacy to ensure that social media can be used constructively in realizing quality community participation.

## References

- Bell, K., & Reed, M. (2021). The tree of participation: A new model for inclusive decision-making. *Community Development Journal*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsab018>
- Brown, M., Pyle, C., & Ellison, N. B. (2022). "On My Head About It": College Aspirations, Social Media Participation, and Community Cultural Wealth. *Social Media + Society*, 8(2), 2147483647-2147483647. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221091545>
- Canter, L. W., & Knox, R. C. (2020). Public Participation in Aquifer Restoration Decision-Making. *Ground Water Pollution Control*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 295-345. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781003069775-10>
- Carrigan, M., & Fatsis, L. (2021). Making Platforms Public. *The Public and Their Platforms*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 149-172. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529201055.003.0008>
- Chanie, M., & Parappagoudar, S. (2024). The Practice of Decentralization in Terms of Community Participation in Decision-Making. *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Social Science, Humanity and Public Health, ICoSHIP 2023*, November 18-19, 2023, Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.18-11-2023.2342567>
- Chichua, M., & Matchavariani, L. (2024). Legal Tools for Public Participation in the Environmental Decision Making Process. Case Study: Republic of Georgia as a Developing Country. *International Journal of Research Publications and Reviews*, 5(1), 1170-1174. <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0124.0208>
- Diaz, C. (2020). *Decision Making in Child and Family Social Work*. Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447354444.001.0001>
- Feng, L., Wu, Q., Wu, W., & Liao, W. (2020). Decision-Maker-Oriented VS. Collaboration: China's Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making. *Sustainability*, 12(4), 1334-1334. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041334>
- Fikry, M., & Hermawan, P. (2024). Enhancing Community Participation in Corporate Social Responsibility Activities at PT Prima Bara Nusantara through Improved Decision-Making Process. *International Journal of Current Science Research and Review*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijcsrr/v7-i3-44>
- Giriwati, N. S. S. (2020). Perception, Preference, and Participation: Community Social Inclusion and Involvement as Decision Making Process in Archi-tourism. *Proceedings of the International Conference of Heritage & Culture in Integrated Rural-Urban Context (HUNIAN 2019)*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aer.k.200729.012>
- Habib, M. A., Madajewicz, M., & Tompsett, A. (2023). When Does Community Participation in Decision-Making Improve Outcomes? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Bangladesh. Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.56506/feqw6636>
- Helaluddin. (2019). *Getting Closer to the Phenomenological Approach: A Qualitative Research*. Query date: 2024-05-25 20:59:55. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/stgfb>
- Helinsha, M., & Margawati, M. (2022). The Influence of Social Media Instagram Toward Purchase Decision Making Process in Organicsupplyco. *Journal of*

- Communication & Public Relations, 1(2), 31-31.  
<https://doi.org/10.37535/105001220224>
- Indriawati, N., & Rochmaniah, A. (2022). The Effect of Public Communication, Youth Participation and Social Media on Community Receptions About Covid Pandemic in Village. *Indonesian Journal of Cultural and Community Development*, 14 (Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27). <https://doi.org/10.21070/ijccd2023862>
- Jackson, D. (2022). Decision letter for 'An exploration of social participation in Caribbean student nurses' use of social media in their learning journey'. Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.15499/v3/decision1>
- Kamolov, S., & Smagina, A. (2021). Public Governance of Digital Social Media. *Future City*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 227-244. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85566-6\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-85566-6_12)
- Kilic, H., Ozturen, A., Banga, C., & Bamidele, R. (2022). Impacts of social media on travelers decision-making process. *Handbook on Tourism and Social Media*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800371415.00035>
- Kopf, S. (2023). Participation and deliberative discourse on social media - Wikipedia talk pages as transnational public spheres? *Social Media Critical Discourse Studies*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 78-93. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003371496-6>
- Lin, T., & Zhang, Q. (2023). Research on the Continuous Participation of Virtual Brand Community in Decision-Making Based on Social Influence Theory. *Proceedings of Business and Economic Studies*, 6(3), 20-30. <https://doi.org/10.26689/pbes.v6i3.5078>
- Luckner, K. (2022). #WhoseLawIsItAnyway - How Social Media Augments Civil Society Participation in International Law-Making. *Digital Transformations in Public International Law*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 235-260. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748931638-235>
- Nmere, O. N., Okolo, V. O., Abugu, J. O., Alio, F. C., & Anetoh, J. C. (2020). Influence of public relations' media public enlightenment campaign and community participation strategies on waste management. *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 18(1), 82-96. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18\(1\).2020.08](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18(1).2020.08)
- Osawa, T. (2024). Citizen Science for Social Decision-Making: Avoiding Missteps and Unlocking Potentials. *Ecological Research Monographs*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 173-180. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-0304-3\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-0304-3_12)
- Paunu, A., Pansio, J., Helander, N., & Käpylä, J. (2020). Challenges in Public Participation and Collaboration: A Case Study in Finnish Environmental Decision-making. *Proceedings of the 12th International Joint Conference on Knowledge Discovery, Knowledge Engineering and Knowledge Management*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.5220/0010128301720179>
- Petunia, T. A., & Selepe, M. (2020). Strengthening policy- and decision-making processes through community participation: A municipal perspective. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v8i1.409>
- Pierce, D. R. (2020). Social Media Lessons on the Nature of Political Decision Making. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.911>

- Rajiah, K., & Venkataraman, R. (2020). Social determinants associated with ethical decision-making among community pharmacists. *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health*, 14(Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27), 100512-100512. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jemep.2020.100512>
- Rajulapati, K. D. T. (2023). Social media usage for purchasing decision-making by consumers. Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.31274/cc-20240624-1302>
- Razon, S., & Levin, L. (2021). Shifting the focus inward: Israeli social workers' participation in decision-making and their inclusion of service users in intervention-related decisions. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13614>
- Rone, J. (2023). Beyond Brexit? Public Participation in Decision-Making on Campaign Data During and After Referendum Campaigns. *Media and Communication*, 11(1), 69-80. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v11i1.6200>
- Sagaris, L. (2021). Community participation in public transport decision-making. *The Routledge Handbook of Public Transport*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 107-122. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367816698-10>
- Sarpong, H. A., Stephens, C. G., Rolston, A., Getty, D., & Linnane, S. (2024). *Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making: An Implementation Science Perspective*. Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4890641>
- Setiowati, E. (2016). Understanding Research Quality Criteria: Application of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Thinking. *Indonesian Vocational Journal*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.7454/jvi.v2i2.42>
- Stabler, L. (2020). Children's and parents' participation: Current thinking. *Decision Making in Child and Family Social Work*, Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27, 15-42. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781447354444.003.0002>
- Syahrani, M. (2020). Building Data Trust in Qualitative Research. *PRIMARY EDUCATION JOURNAL (PEJ)*, 4(2), 19-23. <https://doi.org/10.30631/pej.v4i2.72>
- Weng, S., Schwarz, G., Schwarz, S., & Hardy, B. (2021). A Framework for Government Response to Social Media Participation in Public Policy Making: Evidence from China. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 44(16), 1424-1434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2020.1852569>
- Zanudin, K., Ngah, I., & Misnan, S. H. (2021). Public Planner's Perception of the Community Participation in Planning and Operational Decision-Making in Iskandar Malaysia. *Engineering Journal*, 25(1), 275-285. <https://doi.org/10.4186/ej.2021.25.1.275>
- Zhang, L., Yuan, J., Gao, X., & Jiang, D. (2021). Public transportation development decision-making under public participation: A large-scale group decision-making method based on fuzzy preference relations. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 172 (Query date: 2024-07-30 09:52:27), 121020-121020. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.121020>