

## The Threat of Virality Manipulation in Social Media towards Deliberative Democracy

Rendra Widyatama<sup>1</sup>, Vidya Ananda<sup>2</sup>, Liliek Budiastuti Wiratmo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>ORCID iD: 0000-0003-0448-3399, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Kragilan, Bantul, Yogyakarta 55191, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>ORCID iD: 0009-0003-7703-1542, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Jl. Farmako Sekip Utara, Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0308-1630, Universitas Diponegoro, Jl. Prof. Soedarto, SH., No. 13, Tembalang, Semarang, Central Java 50275, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author, e-mail: rendrawidyatama@fsbk.uad.ac.id

### Abstract

**Introduction:** The use of social media as a channel for political communication is becoming increasingly common in modern society. Some users seek virality to influence public opinion. Among them, some employ manipulative tactics to achieve virality, which can undermine deliberative democracy. Unfortunately, the impact of manipulative virality on deliberative democracy has not received sufficient attention. This study aims to describe how manipulative virality poses a threat to deliberative democracy. The researchers focus on five social media platforms--X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube, because Indonesians widely use these for political communication.

**Methods:** The researchers use a qualitative, exploratory approach, focusing on relevant documents using interpretive analysis and observation to study of X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube.

**Findings:** Research identifies four methods of manipulative virality that undermine deliberative democracy: using fake accounts, deploying bots, paying buzzers, and spreading hoaxes. These practices threaten and subvert deliberative democracy by creating false appearances of support, potentially distorting public opinion, misleading policymakers, and damaging society. Manipulative virality often benefits wealthy groups, as they can afford to pay buzzers and deploy bots, unlike poorer groups.

**Originally:** This study explores the role of social media in public discourse to promote deliberative democracy. It offers novelty by presenting an in-depth analysis that digital media has the potential to undermine deliberative democracy due to the use of bots, fake accounts, and paid influencers. The findings emphasize the importance of preserving authentic public dialogue while addressing unethical practices that manipulate social media for personal or political gain.

**Keywords:** Bots, Hijacking Democracy, Paying Buzzer, Social Media, Virality Manipulation.

### Introduction

In today's society, it is common for people to use social media to express their opinions. This method of communication has been proven to be effective in achieving various goals such as garnering public attention, influencing opinions, and obtaining solutions from relevant authorities (Forestal, 2023). Additionally, social media serves as a tool for social control, leading to the successful resolution of many societal issues in line with public expectations.

The effectiveness of communication is often achieved when a message goes viral on social media. Due to this, social media users usually try to make their posts go viral. This viral phenomenon occurs on various platforms, especially micro-blogging platforms like Twitter (now known as X after Elon Musk's acquisition in 2022), Instagram,

Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. These five platforms are highly popular for sharing opinions in Indonesia, which is the focus of this study.

One example of virality in Indonesia on the X platform is the rise of a K-pop fandom promoting Anies Baswedan for the 2024 presidential election through the account @aniesbubble (BBC News Indonesia, 2024). This account managed to capture public attention for several days, even creating new nicknames for Anies, such as Park Ahn Nis, Anies Ahjussi, and Anies Appa. Viral content on X wasn't limited to Anies; other candidates also gained traction, with one generating 614.556 public responses (Iradat, 2023). Similarly, Ganjar-Mahfud went viral with their free internet campaign, though not to the same extent (Sembiring, 2023).

The TikTok platform has been effective in making several cases go viral. For example, Bima Yudho Saputro's criticism of the badly damaged roads in Lampung gained widespread attention. Bima, a TikTok creator with the username @Awbimax Reborn and 712.000 followers (Putri & Pratiwi, 2023), referred to the Lampung government as 'Dajjal' in one of his videos. In Islam, 'Dajjal' is a term that refers to a figure believed to emerge before the apocalypse (Fatkhullah et al., 2018). This message caught the public's attention and led to government intervention. Initially, the local government responded negatively by summoning Bima's parents and urging them to reprimand their son. This action only increased the video's popularity, prompting the central government to step in and address the road infrastructure issue.

Virality can also occur on YouTube. For instance, the documentary "*Dirty Vote*" was seen as an attack on Prabowo-Gibran during the 2024 presidential election. This film garnered over 3.5 million views in a short time by February 2024 (ES, 2024). Moreover, other viral topics on YouTube included the disappearance of Kaesang following his private jet trip to America and old footage of students occupying the Indonesian parliament building during the 1998 reform movement. Similar viral cases also emerged on Facebook and Instagram, two closely integrated platforms.

The issues that go viral on social media are diverse. Beyond infrastructure problems, they often involve law enforcement matters, ranging from minor offences to serious crimes resulting in death. Examples include the sexual harassment case on the Jakarta-Bogor commuter train (Hardiantoro, 2022), an armed robbery by an individual posing as a police officer against a ride-hailing driver (Huda, 2023), the assault of Mario Dandy on David, which left the victim in a coma (Putri, 2023), and the shooting of Brigadier Joshua in Jakarta by his superior under suspicious circumstances, resulting in his death from multiple fatal gunshot wounds (R. K. Dewi, 2022). All of these cases went viral on social media, prompting authorities to respond.

The viral nature of these events also fueled public engagement and expanded into other areas, such as the doxing of Mario Dandy's personal life and his family after his case went viral. Doxing, the act of searching for and publishing someone's private information online without their consent, is often done with punitive intent (Chen et al., 2018; Douglas, 2016). The public engaged in doxing the personal life of Rafael Alun Trisambodo, Mario's father and a government tax official, which ultimately led to his dismissal from his position as Head of the General Affairs Division at the South Jakarta II Regional Tax Office and triggered a nationwide internal reform at the Ministry of Finance. Additionally, Rafael was arrested for economic crimes, and Mario Dandy's case was further investigated.

Beyond these cases, many other viral incidents have driven law enforcement and authorities to act swiftly, leading to the public perception that "*without virality, there is*

*no justice*" (Powell, 2015; Triono et al., 2022). This perception arises because authorities often do not act quickly unless an issue goes viral (Grecya & Yahya, 2022). Consequently, many members of the public exploit virality to gain attention and solutions for pressing issues. The use of virality to gain attention, influence opinions, garner support, and affect policies is essentially a form of 'pressure group' activity. Pressure groups are organizations that strive to influence government actions (Gabriela, 2015; Ganji & Ashtarian, 2019). While experts distinguish between interest groups and pressure groups, some view them as identical (Balyer & Tabancali, 2019). Both types aim to impact policy (Lagadec, 2014). Pressure and interest groups are modern phenomena in democracies (S. Singh, 2015). These groups can emerge from organizations or individuals with shared interests (Martini, 2012).

Interest groups can be categorized into several types: anomic, non-associational, institutional, and associational (Maiwan, 2016). Each category has distinct characteristics and functions. Anomic groups refer to situations where individuals feel alienated or directionless in society. Anomie is generally unstructured and spontaneous. In this context, individuals may feel disconnected from larger social groups, leading to deviant behaviours or social dissatisfaction (Raihani, 2012). Non-associational groups also lack formal structures or clear organizations. They form around shared interests or experiences but do not have organized goals or agendas. Despite being unstructured, non-associational groups can provide crucial social support and help in building social identity (Nitzgen, 2013).

Institutional groups are formally organized with clear structures, such as government bodies, educational institutions, or charities. These groups aim to achieve specific objectives and often have rules and procedures governing member interactions. Institutional groups play a critical role in public policy development, resource management, and facilitating public participation in decision-making processes (Pavitt & Johnson, 2001). In contrast, associational groups are formed based on common interests and have clear objectives. These groups are often involved in advocacy or campaigns to influence public policy or raise awareness on specific issues. Examples include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, and advocacy groups. They work to advance their members' interests and can drive social change (Pavitt & Johnson, 2001; Raihani, 2012).

Pressure groups are often temporary, focusing attention on specific issues and making them viral. Researchers define virality as the rapid and widespread dissemination of messages (Aroja-Martin et al., 2020; Denisova, 2020). Virality exerts significant pressure on governments. Once the issue is addressed as desired, the pressure from interest groups diminishes. These groups then shift their focus to new and different issues. In their quest for virality, many employ various tactics, including bots, fake accounts, memes, misinformation, paid influencers, and deepfakes.

The use of bots, fake accounts, memes, false information, paid buzzers, and deepfakes to achieve virality can be referred to as manipulative virality. Manipulative virality refers to the engineered spread of content to ensure its rapid and widespread dissemination online. It differs from a rapid spread in the empirical world, as one person may operate numerous accounts under fake identities. Therefore, manipulative virality constitutes a form of deception of public opinion. In this context, the virtual world is quite different from the empirical one, as the number of accounts involved in an issue does not correspond to the actual number of individuals in real life. This is especially true when virality is driven by bots designed to disseminate specific information, whether true or

false, quickly and widely. For instance, in elections, these accounts can be used to amplify certain voices while reducing the visibility of others, creating the illusion of greater support for a particular candidate or ideology (Pastor-Galindo et al., 2021; Shao et al., 2018).

The pursuit of virality has become a recurrent pattern. People intentionally create viral content to achieve their goals. Virality is no longer a natural occurrence based on genuine public sentiment but a result of social media manipulation. It has evolved into a sophisticated industry with manipulative tendencies (Fredheim et al., 2020). Several politically motivated viral cases have involved fake news, such as the misinformation about the assault on Ratna Sarumpaet (Prasongko & Chairunisa, 2018), the false reports of seven containers of ballots in the 2019 Indonesian election (Farisa, 2024), claims of electoral fraud in Indonesia in 2019, and opposition to the omnibus law (Rustiani, 2021). Many other instances of misinformation and fake news, especially during elections, are likely to be found in the political sphere. This phenomenon is not exclusive to Indonesia but occurs in developed countries as well. For example, in the United States, Donald Trump's supporters spread information about Hillary Clinton's poor health during the 2016 presidential election to influence voters against him (Cillizza, 2016). The purpose of the information was to influence the public not to vote for Hilary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election.

The pursuit of online virality will likely continue in the future, especially with the development of artificial intelligence, which enables the creation of deep fakes--manipulated audiovisual content that can deceive the public (Appel & Prietzel, 2022). Such manipulative virality can have serious negative impacts on society, including in deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a political theory emphasizing that political decisions should result from fair and rational discussion and debate (Scudder, 2021). Its main principle is to ensure meaningful participation in political decision-making, where diverse opinions are openly expressed and carefully considered before final decisions are made. Thus, deliberative democracy prioritizes not just the outcomes but also a transparent and inclusive process (Berg & Lidskog, 2018).

Despite the potential dangers, public awareness of virality remains varied. Many view it simply as a tool to disseminate information and raise awareness of social issues. However, there is also a lack of awareness about the negative aspects of virality. Similarly, the academic focus on virality remains limited. A review of peer-reviewed articles over the last five years using keywords such as 'social media,' 'manipulation,' 'deliberative democracy,' 'public policy,' and 'virality' in both Indonesian and English on Google Scholar reveals that this topic is still underexplored.

The scarcity of descriptions of manipulative virality's impact on deliberative democracy limits public understanding of this issue from a democratic perspective. This limited understanding may foster a permissive attitude toward manipulative virality. Worse, the public may come to see manipulative virality as a normal part of democracy. This is detrimental to both society and deliberative democracy as a whole. Therefore, it is essential to publish knowledge about virality from the perspective of deliberative democracy. This article finds relevance and significance in that context, as it offers a novel and comprehensive description of virality within the framework of deliberative democracy.

**Methods**

The article aims to explore the concept of manipulative virality on social media within the framework of deliberative democracy, using a qualitative, exploratory research approach. Data was gathered through document analysis, focusing on both digital and internet-related materials concerning the viral spread of content in the context of democratic deliberation. Additionally, non-participatory observation was conducted on social media accounts actively engaging in political discussions. The researchers analyzed the profiles and posts from these accounts, applying sentiment analysis to determine positive or negative reactions across different topics. The social media platforms examined included X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube--chosen due to their popularity for expressing public opinions and frequently hosting viral phenomena with significant social impact. These platforms are widely used in Indonesia for sharing political views. A literature review was also conducted, with Google Scholar serving as the primary tool for sourcing academic references. The sample included accounts with regular posting on public and political issues but without commercial motives.

Data was analyzed using interpretative techniques, a well-known method in qualitative research (Alhoussawi, 2023; A. S. Dewi et al., 2022). This approach was selected for several reasons: it allows for in-depth exploration, identifies patterns not evident in other analyses, and offers flexibility (Permatasari et al., 2021), producing richer data (Nabilah et al., 2022). Although valuable for theory development, the study faced limitations due to the sheer number of social media platforms and accounts, which could affect the findings.

**Results**

Social media users, from elites to everyday people, often manage multiple accounts across platforms, sometimes even on the same platform. Accounts are categorised as original, fake, and a mixture. Original accounts feature verified user details, while fake ones use false information. A mixture of accounts mixes real and fake elements. Users are generally more cautious with original accounts, avoiding problematic posts. Conversely, fake accounts encourage freer, often negative, and unethical behaviour. These trends are seen across all platforms.

Across all platforms, there are authentic, fake, and hybrid accounts. The image below shows a screenshot of an authentic account on each platform. Figure 2 presents a screenshot of a fake account, while Figure 3 displays a screenshot of accounts that use both fake and real data in their profiles, referred to as mixture accounts.

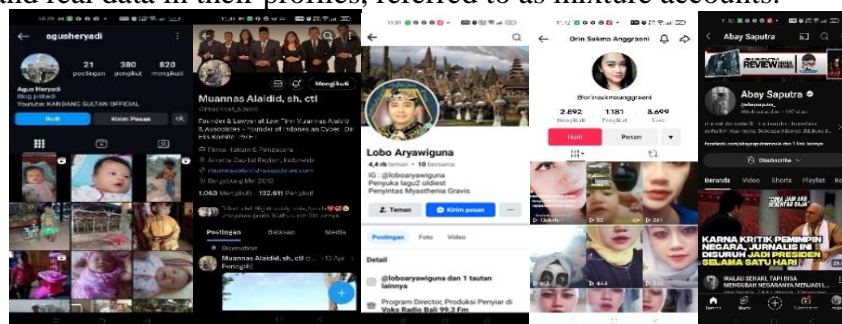


Figure 1. Some Examples of Real Social Media Accounts. Left to right, account in Platform X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube (source: Researchers)

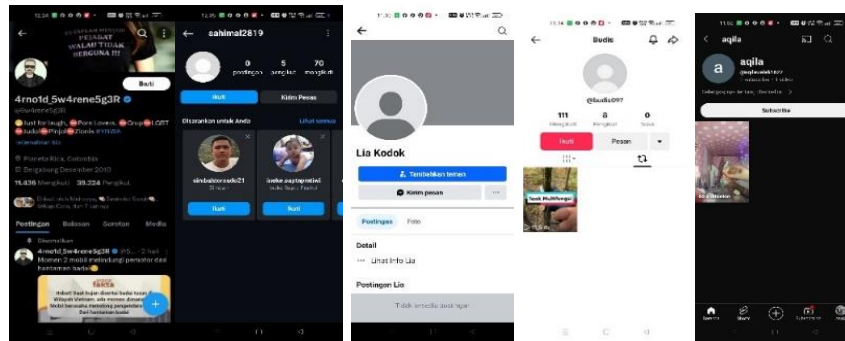


Figure 2. Some Examples of Fake Social Media Accounts. Left to right, account in Platform X, Instagram, Facebook, TikToc, and YouTube (source: Researchers)

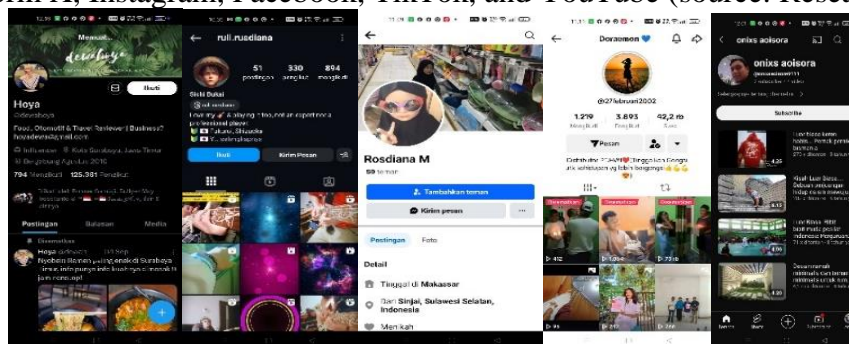


Figure 3. Some Examples of Mixture Social Media Accounts. Left to right, account in Platform X, Instagram, Facebook, TikToc, and YouTube (source: Researchers)  
Media Sosial X

Initially, social media platform X was limited to sending short messages and was classified as a microblogging platform. However, since 2023, X has introduced features for sharing photos and videos, participating in discussions, and live broadcasting. These updates have made X's functionality similar to other social media platforms, allowing users to share text, photos, and videos, as well as participate in online discussions and live streaming. Platform X categorizes accounts into two types: free and paid. Free accounts can only post messages up to 280 characters, including spaces and punctuation. However, users can post up to 25.000 characters and upload videos up to 3 hours long with a premium subscription. Paid accounts are divided into three tiers: blue check, gold check, and grey check. The blue check is available for a subscription fee of \$8 per month, the gold check for \$1.000 per month, and the grey check is reserved for government and official institution accounts (Putri & Kurniawan, 2022). As a result of paid verification, fake accounts on platform X can also acquire blue and gold checks as verification marks (Media Indonesia, 2024).

On platform X, many accounts frequently engage in political discussions. Examples of authentic accounts include @muannas\_alaidid, @yunartowijaya, and @DokterTifa. There are also notable fake accounts such as @partaiSocmed, @wave\_entusiast, @logicapolitikid, @WagimanDeep212, and @\_\_AnakKolong. Additionally, there are hybrid accounts that mix real and counterfeit identities but often go viral, such as @Dennysiregar7, @yusuf\_dumdum, @Leonita\_Lestari, @AirinDatangLagi, and @kurawa. The number of fake accounts is vast, especially when smaller accounts are included. Many users own more than one account, as creating an account on platform X is very easy. Findings indicate that accounts frequently attack and report each other to be taken down due to differing viewpoints.

### Media Sosial Instagram

Instagram is a social media platform that allows users to share photos and videos and interact with others through various features such as Instagram Stories, Direct Messages, and IGTV for sharing long-form interactive content. Instagram posts are primarily visual. Similar to platform X, users on Instagram can create authentic, fake, or hybrid accounts. On this platform, only authentic accounts can apply for verification to receive the blue checkmark. However, the public can also create fake accounts that appear authentic and are difficult to detect. Authentic accounts represent real individuals, brands, or organizations, while fake accounts often have distinct characteristics, such as using fake profiles, limited engagement on posts, impersonating celebrities or public figures, and generally having fewer followers.

Officially, Instagram offers three types of accounts: personal, creator, and business/professional. Personal accounts are intended for individuals who want to share personal content. Creator accounts are used for sharing specific content like motivational posts or tips and tricks. Professional accounts are aimed at business purposes. Users can post text, photos, graphics, and videos. They can also set their accounts to private to control who can view and respond to their posts or set them as public accounts, allowing anyone to see and engage with their content. Instagram also allows users to broadcast live. Generally, Instagram users aim to have a large following and receive significant public engagement to appear popular and appealing. With a large follower base, users can leverage their accounts for business purposes. As a result, there are services on Instagram that offer to increase followers and likes on posts. Field observations indicate that many accounts compete to create engaging content, sometimes even using pranks that disregard ethical and normative standards, including employing deepfake technology.

### Social Media: Facebook

Facebook (FB) is a social media platform that predates many other social media platforms. Its main focus is on connecting and enabling interaction between users. This includes providing a platform for individuals to share information, communicate, and form social networks. FB facilitates these interactions through various features such as status updates, comments, and sharing multimedia, allowing users to actively engage in their virtual communities. Initially, users could only share photos, but the platform has since evolved to include video sharing and live streaming capabilities. Additionally, FB offers business features, allowing companies to create accounts to promote products and services.

The platform also ‘allows’ the creation of fake accounts, which, according to Kitchgaessner (2017), played a role in Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 U.S. Presidential election, along with Twitter, FB distinguishes between personal accounts, business accounts, and public accounts. Personal accounts are for individual use, enabling users to connect with friends and family. Business accounts are used by companies to promote their products and services and interact with customers. Public accounts are typically used by public figures or organizations to reach a broader audience. However, the ease of creating FB accounts poses challenges, particularly regarding the prevalence of fake accounts.

### Social Media TikTok

TikTok is the youngest social media platform, featuring mostly entertainment videos, although users can also share political opinions and discuss other issues. Due to its short audiovisual messages that do not require deep thinking skills, TikTok has

attracted a large number of users. The content on TikTok is highly varied, and many messages eventually go viral.

TikTok offers various ways for users and businesses to generate income, including ads, affiliate marketing, and other innovative features. In addition to ads, TikTok provides an affiliate program that involves collaborations between content creators or influencers and marketers to promote products or services through video content. Influencers can earn commissions whenever a product they promote is sold via affiliate links. Another monetization feature is virtual gifts, where users can give gifts to creators during live streams, which can later be converted into cash. TikTok has also developed an e-commerce feature, allowing users to shop directly through the app, increasing revenue potential for businesses participating on the platform. These features encourage users to create engaging content to go viral. Research shows that TikTok users strive to gain more followers and attract public viewership for their content, aiming for virality, sometimes even resorting to unethical practices that disregard social norms and ethics, such as creating prank videos.

#### Social Media YouTube

YouTube is the largest social media platform today, where users can upload, watch, and share videos. The platform not only serves as a source of entertainment but also as a marketing tool, a medium for education, information dissemination, and discussion on various topics. YouTube has long been a significant platform for marketing and monetization. Content creators can earn money through the YouTube Partner Program, allowing them to generate revenue from ads displayed on their videos. Additionally, Super Chat and channel subscriptions provide extra ways for users to financially support their favorite creators.

Many YouTubers have succeeded in earning substantial financial gains. For instance, Klara Tania, with 18.8 million subscribers, earns between Rp1.6 billion and Rp26.5 billion per month; Vilmei, who regularly uploads entertainment content, earns around Rp1.1 billion to Rp18.7 billion per month, along with many other successful YouTubers (Detikfinance, 2024). YouTuber earnings are primarily measured through Cost per Mille (CPM), which calculates revenue per thousand views and clicks on ads displayed in the videos. The more engaging the content, the higher the views, resulting in more ads being displayed. This success inspires other users to follow suit, creating a wide variety of engaging content. It's not uncommon for users to produce prank videos, impersonate public figures, parody advertisements or movies, or create other fabricated videos mainly to attract viewers, even if the content is false.

On the YouTube platform, the presence of fake accounts and bots is also widespread. Researchers have found that fake accounts are often used to artificially inflate follower counts or video views, creating an illusion of popularity for certain content, making it seem as though the videos have been viewed by many people. Fake accounts are frequently involved in spreading false information, particularly during major events like elections or public health crises, such as Covid-19. These accounts disseminate misinformation about vaccines and treatments, which pose risks to public health. They manipulate information so that the content appears engaging and credible. This way, creators can attract more attention from other users, increasing their chances of monetizing through ads and sponsorships.



## Discussion

Based on research findings, the public utilizes social media for various purposes. These include forming friendships, expressing opinions, influencing public sentiment, spreading information, entertainment, and engaging in public discussions, including political matters, alongside business interests. Public discussions related to politics on social media tend to increase significantly during major events like elections. During these events, people from all walks of life, from well-known figures to ordinary citizens, actively participate in the discussions. These discussions also involve all types of accounts, whether real, fake, or those with mixed identities blending false and real information. The public's engagement in discussions via social media demonstrates that platforms like X, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube play an important role in democratic life. The public interacts, communicates, exchanges ideas, and provides suggestions and critiques through digital channels such as social media, websites, and blogs, unrestricted by physical boundaries (Mulyono et al., 2022). This form of democracy on social media can be seen as an evolution from face-to-face democracy to democracy in the digital space.

Some members of the public engage in well-reasoned, rational discussions, embodying what can be described as deliberative democracy. This form of democracy emphasizes active citizen participation, collaboration, and the development of public opinion through meaningful dialogue and discussion (OECD, 2020). Deliberative democracy prioritizes equality, participatory decision-making that is free and fair, and the common good. It is based on thoughtful discussion and consensus among society (N. N. Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2017).

In digital democracy, the public can observe emerging aspirations and trends in public opinion through viral content, reflected in the number of likes, shares, and comments on a particular issue. The public categorizes each issue with hashtags (#) to easily find related posts. The number of social media users employing the same hashtag indicates that the topic has gained significant public attention. This form of deliberative democracy provides legitimacy to authorities to make binding decisions that involve all parties (N. N. Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2017).

In public discussions, many parties attempt to influence public opinion and policymakers. One of the strategies used to achieve this is by creating viral content. Researchers interpret virality in different ways, but fundamentally, it carries the same meaning: information that spreads faster than others. Aroja-Martin et al. (2020) refer to virality as a message that spreads globally. Other researchers describe viral content as information disseminated from one source to another via the internet, both online and offline (R. N. Abdullah & Azman, 2019). The virality of content on social media is not determined by the number of accounts involved, but by how quickly and widely the content spreads across platforms (Boppolige & Gurtoo, 2017; Denisova, 2020).

The literature review indicates that the term 'viral' originated in the marketing world under the name 'viral marketing,' where viral strategies were employed for promotional purposes. The term 'viral marketing' was first introduced by Steve Jurvetson and Seth Godin in the mid-1990s, with Godin defining it as a marketing strategy that relies on the concept of 'word of mouth' amplified by the internet (Wong, 2017). This approach leverages the interconnectedness of online users to spread messages rapidly, much like a virus. The early examples of viral marketing included campaigns that encouraged users to share content via email, which was a popular medium at the time. For instance, the Hotmail email service famously included a signature line in every

outgoing email that invited recipients to sign up for their own free account, effectively utilizing its users as a marketing channel (Sharma & Kaur, 2020). Viral marketing can create explosive growth in a short period, reaching a broad audience (Ethelda et al., 2022).

In recent years, the rise of mobile technology and the proliferation of smartphones have further accelerated the growth of viral marketing. emphasize that the prominence of digital technology has made viral marketing campaigns more cost-effective and efficient, allowing brands to reach targeted audiences rapidly (Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021). The integration of influencer marketing into viral strategies has also become a key trend, as brands collaborate with social media influencers to amplify their messages and reach wider audiences (Erwin et al., 2023).

In general, viral content can be divided into two categories: positive and negative virality (R. N. Abdullah & Azman, 2019; Widyatama & Mahbob, 2024). Positive viral content refers to social media content that spreads widely and generates a positive response from users, such as admiration, happiness, or entertainment. On the other hand, negative viral content triggers negative emotions like anger, anxiety, or fear. Negative viral content can spread harmful messages, such as hoaxes or demeaning material. Some researchers view virality as one of the internet's great mysteries, making it difficult to explain why certain songs, movies, video clips, or news articles suddenly and widely become popular, while seemingly higher-quality content remains unnoticed (Al-Rawi, 2019).

Although many believe that virality is a mystery, it can be engineered. In the pursuit of virality, many social media users create diverse and creative content. Aside from humour, social media content can go viral if it has social value. Researchers suggest that information with practical or informational utility is more likely to spread widely (Berger & Milkman, 2012; Rudat & Buder, 2015). Emotions also play a significant role in virality; content that evokes stronger emotional engagement tends to be more viral than less engaging material (Nelson-Field et al., 2013). Berger and Milkman (2012) found that positive emotions are more effective in driving virality than negative emotions. Additionally, other researchers propose that content can become viral through shared fantasy, humour, parody, mystery, controversy, and rumours (Al-Rawi, 2019). All these efforts to achieve virality essentially represent a form of engineering.

Virality extends into broader fields, such as politics and social issues, to gain public support. Deliberate viral engineering on social media is carried out not only by individuals but also by organizations and government institutions. Building virality involves a level of manipulation by various parties, creating social media messages that appear unnatural. Viral engineering on social media is especially prominent in politics, where many political figures, public officials, and political parties engage multiple social media accounts to create specific viral content in the digital world. During elections, whether at the regional level (e.g., legislative or local elections) or national level (e.g., legislative elections, the Regional Representative Council, the People's Consultative Assembly, and presidential elections), viral engineering has become a lucrative business opportunity. Individuals within society actively participate in influencing voters via social media, helping to build a public image with various motivations, whether voluntarily due to political alignment or for business purposes.

An example of viral engineering can be seen on social media when hundreds or even thousands of accounts suddenly publish content about a particular political figure or public official simultaneously, delivering uniform messages, even though these accounts had previously shown little interest in the subject. Notable public figures who frequently

go viral on social media include Eric Tohir, Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, Ganjar Pranowo, and others. These accounts often post identical messages, indicating that the similarity in wording is not coincidental. This phenomenon demonstrates an effort to build virality as a form of engineered communication, which has become essential for some to achieve their desired outcomes.

The need for viral success has given rise to services that increase followers (fake followers), likes, shares, and comments on posts, as well as comprehensive social media management. These services often create artificial realities, shaping communication through strategic manipulation. Consequently, individuals with significant financial resources can generate viral messages. The extent to which these services are utilized depends on one's financial capacity. Data searches reveal numerous services offering follower growth, likes, shares, and comments on all social media platforms (Fastwork, 2024; Herco Digital, 2024; Jasa All Sosmed, 2024; Raja Komen, 2024). These services are easily accessible online, complete with pricing information and contact details, allowing the public to choose based on their preferences and financial means.

Field findings identify five unethical models of engineering used to create virality. *First*, the creation of fake accounts that act as buzzers, tasked with amplifying content from feeders (Afriyadi, 2019). In addition to hiring follower-increasing services, some individuals intentionally create their fake accounts. Fake accounts not only emerge to create an illusion of support but also arise due to social media platforms' regulations, which provide loopholes for the creation of fake accounts. For example, the verification process on platform X allows fake accounts to obtain a blue checkmark simply by paying for verification (Kleinman, 2023).

Fake accounts are social media accounts deliberately created with false identities (Kareem & Bhaya, 2018). Other researchers refer to fake accounts as anonymous, fictitious, or ambiguous accounts used by individuals to express themselves, exploit social media, and engage in various online activities without revealing their true identities (Wanda et al., 2021). The creators of these fake accounts use false names, and profile pictures taken from the internet, and provide fabricated personal information.

Researchers note that fake accounts are often involved in criminal activity and the spread of false news (Abid et al., 2022). Others reveal that social media owners use fake accounts for various cyber-attacks, psychological information operations, and social opinion manipulation (Voitovych et al., 2022). Some researchers also state that fake accounts are often created to resemble real ones (Chrisendo M.S., 2023). These fake accounts frequently serve specific purposes, such as spreading false messages or information, influencing public opinion, attacking or defaming individuals, or gaining certain advantages. Posting inappropriate or irrational content, making offensive and hateful comments (based on race, gender, religion, et cetera), sharing violent messages, damaging someone's reputation, insulting or shaming others, and tarnishing the image of opposition parties are common reasons for using a fake identity (Wani Ahmad et al., 2017). Such irrational behavior undermines deliberative democracy, as the discussions within this form of democracy emphasize rationality (Cini & Felicetti, 2018).

*Second*, the use of bots to support the virality of certain information. The term 'bot' (short for robot) refers to software systems that engage in conversations with humans (Orabi et al., 2020). A bot account is a social media account whose content and behaviors are controlled by specific software programs designed to influence certain opinions (Fatmala et al., 2020). These software bots operate hundreds to thousands of accounts simultaneously, generating buzz around particular issues and creating virality. Bot

accounts can shape public opinion and manipulate public discourse, making it appear as though a topic is widely discussed by the public, thereby undermining deliberative democracy (Fatmala et al., 2020). Deliberative democracy emphasizes equality, participatory and fair decision-making, the common good, and reasoned discussions for society at large (N. N. Abdullah & Abdul Rahman, 2017). Research from the Oxford Internet Institute indicates that social media bot accounts tend to be active only when there are specific interests at stake, including during elections (Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). A study by the University of Southern California and Indiana University estimated that in 2020, 9-15% of Twitter users were bot accounts (Fatmala et al., 2020). The use of bots to create virality undermines deliberative democracy by distorting the equality of voices, as dominant voices are driven by controlled and fabricated software robots.

*Third*, virality is often achieved by paying buzzers. Buzzers are individuals on social media who engage in word-of-mouth activities (Mustika, 2019). Researchers describe buzzers as accounts that amplify, promote, or campaign for certain issues on social media, intending to expand reach and impact (Fransisco, 2021). The term ‘buzzer’ originally comes from buzz marketing, which involves consumer interactions and product or service users who amplify the original marketing message (Soundararaj et al., 2015). Today, buzzers operate in various fields. The term ‘buzzer’ is derived from the English word meaning bell or alarm (Mustika, 2019). According to Oxford Dictionaries, a buzzer is an electrical device that emits a buzzing sound to signal something specific (OUP, 2023). Buzz marketing is often equated with gossip-spreading (Dasari & Anandakrishnan, 2010). Buzz refers to information passed through word-of-mouth, often involving famous endorsers (Rimenda et al., 2019). Buzzers not only promote specific issues but also engage in campaigns and spread information to their followers, making them similar to brand ambassadors (Yuliahsari, 2016). Paid buzzers can manipulate deliberative democracy by making issues go viral for business interests, prioritizing profit over social responsibility (Sarumaha et al., 2022). An exploratory study by Juliadi revealed that buzzers receive significant compensation depending on their missions and objectives (Juliadi, 2017). Buzzers can be volunteers, party members, or individuals paid for their services (Handini & Dunan, 2019). While individuals have the right to promote issues based on awareness and opinion, promoting issues for business motives undermines the inclusive nature of deliberative democracy (Aubert, 2021). The use of paid buzzers allows wealthy groups to dominate public influence by hiring numerous buzzers to amplify their messages, while those without financial resources struggle to have their opinions heard.

*Fourth*, virality is often achieved through the creation of hoaxes. In short, a hoax refers to false information or news spread in the digital world with certain predictable or unpredictable motives (Meinarni & Iswara, 2018). The term ‘hoax’ itself means false information, fake news, or deception. Hoaxes aim to create public opinion, manipulate perceptions, or simply provide entertainment (Nuzirwan & Sukandar, 2021), besides altruism, which refers to caring for others' well-being without self-revelation (Apuke & Omar, 2021), though unfortunately, using inaccurate information. Thus, the creation of hoaxes is an attempt to manipulate public opinion and harm deliberative democracy, which emphasizes the use of rational arguments in discussions (Cini & Felicetti, 2018). Hoaxes are a global problem that has become more rampant with the rise of social media. This phenomenon occurs worldwide (Balakrishnan et al., 2022; K. Singh et al., 2022), including in Indonesia (Nasir et al., 2020; Rahmawati et al., 2021). Hoaxes infiltrate public spaces through various social media platforms. They have a wide-ranging negative

impact on society (Kabha et al., 2020), pose risks to communities, and even cause deaths (Lim et al., 2021). Research shows that even educated individuals struggle to identify fake news (Syam & Nurrahmi, 2020). Other researchers argue that education does not guarantee people's ability to distinguish between scientific and non-scientific information about Covid-19 (Abdulai et al., 2021).

Although the researchers have successfully identified and described aspects that threaten deliberative democracy, the study has limitations. *First*, the vast number of objects studied with a limited sample size may impact the findings. *Second*, the use of interpretative analysis techniques, which tend to be subjective, means that the depth of analysis is influenced by the researchers themselves. These two main limitations should be noted by other researchers interested in studying similar issues to address these weaknesses. The researchers recommend that future studies combine other analytical techniques as a form of triangulation to achieve more objective conclusions.

## Conclusion

Fake accounts, bots, paying buzzers, and hoaxes pose a threat to deliberative democracy, which is considered the most suitable modern system for accommodating the interests of all individuals in society. Deliberative democracy encompasses several principles, namely 'of the people, by the people, and for the people' (Becker & Raveloson, 2011), inclusivity (Aubert, 2021), rational use of arguments in discussions (Cini & Felicetti, 2018), and equality of voices (White, 2022). Within the principles of deliberative democracy, there is the meaning that all citizens should receive recognition and respect without discrimination. The principle of recognition and respect also implies upholding the human rights of each individual, which is the most fundamental principle universally. Therefore, the implementation of deliberative democracy must consistently serve as part of efforts to respect human rights. Consistent implementation of deliberative democracy will build a healthy and civilized society. Freedom of expression is a cornerstone of deliberative democracy, ensuring that opinions are voiced without manipulation, and aligning high-level decisions with grassroots aspirations. However, the proliferation of fake accounts, bots, paying buzzers, and hoaxes distorts individual opinions, eroding the foundations of deliberative democracy. Addressing these challenges requires proactive solutions to curb their detrimental effects and enhance the quality of deliberative democracy. Allowing the practice of viral manipulation through bots, fake accounts, and paid accounts will enable wealthy groups to dominate public opinion by hiring buzzers and using bots, while poorer groups will struggle to gain influence and win over public opinion. Viral manipulation has the potential to hijack deliberative democracy and undermine democracy. Governments, as stewards of digital democracy, must enact regulations to safeguard against the misuse of social media, preserving its integrity and ensuring democratic processes remain robust. Deliberative democracy is considered the most suitable system of democracy in the modern world. In expressing their opinions, the public can utilize social media. Therefore, theoretically, social media can be used to support the development of effective deliberative democracy. In deliberative democracy, everyone is allowed to influence public opinion. Unfortunately, practices of communication engineering, such as manipulative virality, have emerged. A small group can control public opinion through bots, paid buzzers, and fake accounts. This situation undermines the functioning of deliberative democracy via social media, especially when manipulative virality practices occur. The consistent implementation of deliberative democracy should be part of efforts to respect human rights. Consistent application of

deliberative democracy will foster a healthy and civilized society. Researchers recommend that all parties, particularly the government, work to prevent manipulative virality practices. Addressing these challenges requires proactive solutions, including a strict ban on the use of bots, fake accounts, paid buzzers, and hoaxes. The government, as the guardian of digital democracy, must implement regulations to protect against the misuse of social media, maintain its integrity, and ensure robust democratic processes. However, such regulations must be crafted carefully, as virality also has positive aspects. Therefore, researchers recommend further investigation into how regulatory boundaries can be set to avoid being counterproductive to other interests, such as marketing communication and public service advertising. This calls for more in-depth studies, as this research is limited in scope.

### Conflict of Interest

We certify that there are no conflicts of interest, financial, personal, or otherwise, with any individuals or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

### Acknowledgements

We extend our sincere gratitude to the proofreader for their invaluable assistance in reviewing and refining this article, enhancing its clarity and quality. We also thank the organizers of the 1st International Conference on Social and Political Sciences in Bali for the opportunity to present our research and for providing recommendations to publish this article in an academic journal.

### References

- Abdulai, A.-F., Tiffere, A.-H., Adam, F., & Kabanunye, M. M. (2021). Covid-19 information-related digital literacy among online health consumers in a low-income country. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, *145*, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijmedinf.2020.104322>
- Abdullah, N. N., & Abdul Rahman, M. F. (2017). The Use of Deliberative Democracy in Public Policy Making Process. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, *5*(3), 221–230. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2769105>
- Abdullah, R. N., & Azman, M. N. A. (2019). Viral in Social Media: the Viralor and the Viralee. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, *23*(4), 1068–1076. <https://doi.org/10.37200/ijpr/v23i4/pr190434>
- Abid, R., Rizwan, M., Vesely, P., Basharat, A., Tariq, U., & Javed, A. R. (2022). Social Networking Security during Covid-19: A Systematic Literature Review. *Wireless Communications and Mobile Computing*, *2022*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/2975033>
- Afriyadi, A. D. (2019). *Modal Bisnis Buzzer: Ribuan Akun Palsu buat Giring Isyu*. Detik Fincance.
- Al-Rawi, A. (2019). Viral News on Social Media. *Digital Journalism*, *7*(1), 63–79. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1387062>
- Alhoussawi, H. (2023). Perspectives on Research Paradigms: A Guide for Education Researchers. *International Research in Education*, *11*(2), 106–124. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ire.v11i2.21445>
- Appel, M., & Prietzel, F. (2022). The detection of political deepfakes. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *27*(4). <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcmc/zmac008>
- Apuke, O. D., & Omar, B. (2021). Fake news and Covid-19: modelling the predictors of

- fake news sharing among social media users. *Telematics and Informatics* 56, 101475, 1–17.
- Aroja-Martin, J.-B., Mendiz-Noguero, A., & Victoria-Mas, J.-S. (2020). Virality as a paradigm of digital communication: Review of the concept and update of the theoretical framework. *Profesional de La Informacion*, v(29), e290607.
- Aubert, I. (2021). Social inclusion, a challenge for deliberative democracy? Some reflections on Habermas's political theory. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 24(4), 448–466. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431020983781>
- Balakrishnan, V., Ng, W. Z., Soo, M. C., Han, G. J., & Lee, C. J. (2022). Infodemic and fake news - A comprehensive overview of its global magnitude during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021: A scoping review. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction : IJDRR*, 78(December 2021), 103144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2022.103144>
- Balyer, A., & Tabancali, E. (2019). The roles of interest and pressure groups in developing sustainable educational policies in Turkey. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(24), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11247052>
- BBC News Indonesia. (2024). “Aniesbubble” ramaikan kampanye - Sebesar apa kekuatan fandom K-pop dalam membuat gerakan politik. *BBC News Indonesia*, 1–17. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/clme51pe842o>
- Becker, P., & Raveloson, J.-A. A. (2011). O Quê É Democracia? In *Frederich Ebert Stiftung* (Vol. 36, Issue 106). <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0103-4014.2022.36106.001>
- Berg, M., & Lidskog, R. (2018). Deliberative democracy meets democratised science: a deliberative systems approach to global environmental governance. *Environmental Politics*, 27(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644016.2017.1371919>
- Berger, J., & Milkman, K. L. (2012). What makes online content viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49(2), 192–205. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.10.0353>
- Boppolige, A. A., & Gurtoo, A. (2017). What Determines Viral Phenomenon? Views, Comments and Growth Indicators of TED Talk Videos. *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 8(2), 83–89. <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijtef.2017.8.2.544>
- Bradshaw, S., & Howard, P. N. (2019). The Global Disinformation Order: 2019 Global Inventory of Organised Social Media Manipulation. In *Comprop*.
- Chen, Q., Chan, K. L., & Cheung, A. S. Y. (2018). Doxing victimization and emotional problems among secondary school students in Hong Kong. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 15(12), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15122665>
- Chrisendo M.S., L. (2023). Analisis Yuridis Penegakan Hukum Terhadap Tindak Pidana Penipuan dengan Modus Lowongan Kerja Melalui Media Sosial Berdasarkan Hukum Positif di Indonesia. *COMSERVA : Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 2(12), 3195–3218. <https://doi.org/10.59141/comserva.v2i12.707>
- Cillizza, C. (2016). Hillary Clinton's health just became a real issue in the presidential campaign. *The Washington Post*, 2. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/11/hillary-clintons-health-just-became-a-real-issue-in-the-presidential-campaign/?utm\\_term=.61b50766a0c5](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/09/11/hillary-clintons-health-just-became-a-real-issue-in-the-presidential-campaign/?utm_term=.61b50766a0c5)
- Cini, L., & Felicetti, A. (2018). Participatory deliberative democracy: toward a new standard for assessing democracy? some insights into the Italian case. *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10(2), 151–169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23248823.2018.1477239>

- Dasari, S., & Anandakrishnan, B. (2010). Viral Marketing of Retail Products: A Study on the Influence of Attributes of Web Portals and Incentives Offered on User Registrations. *The IUP Journal of Marketing Management*, IX(1 and 2), 99–110.
- Denisova, A. (2020). How to define “viral” for media studies? *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 15(1), 1–4. <https://doi.org/10.16997/WPCC.375>
- Detikfinance. (2024). 10 Youtuber Terkaya di Indonesia 2024 , Ada yang Penghasilannya Capai Miliaran. *DetikCom*, 1–6.
- Dewi, A. S., Fitriani, E., & Amelia, L. (2022). Modal Sosial Tradisi Rewang pada Masyarakat Jawa Desa Beringin Talang Muandau Riau. *Culture & Society: Journal Of Anthropological Research*, 4(1), 19–29. <https://doi.org/10.24036/csjar.v4i1.102>
- Dewi, R. K. (2022). *Kronologi Pembunuhan Brigadir J, Kapolri: Penembakan atas Perintah Ferdy Sambo*. Kompas.
- Douglas, D. M. (2016). Doxing: a conceptual analysis. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 18(3), 199–210. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-016-9406-0>
- Erwin, E., Suade, Y. K. M., & Alam, N. (2023). Social Media Micro-enterprise: Utilizing Social Media Influencers, Marketing Contents and Viral Marketing Campaigns to Increase Customer Engagement. In *International Conference of Economics, Business, and Entrepreneur (ICEBE 2022)* (Vol. 1). Atlantis Press SARL. <https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-064-0>
- ES, E. (2024). Wow Film Dirty Vote Trending Topic Youtube dan Twitter. *IdeJabar*, September, 9–12.
- Ethelda, V. R., Yusuf, D., Hanun, S. S., & Sewaka. (2022). Tinjauan literatur viral marketing. *Jurnal Economina*, 1(4), 938–944.
- Farisa, F. C. (2024). *Kronologi Terungkapnya Hoaks 7 Kontainer Surat Suara Tercoblos*. Kompas.
- Fastwork. (2024). *Jasa Tambah Followers Twitter Indonesia Aktif, Tertarget dan Murah Kategori yang terkait dengan Jasa Tambah Followers Twitter Indonesia Aktif , Tertarget dan Murah*.
- Fatkhullah, F. K., Nur, T., & Darsa, U. A. (2018). The Reception of Dajal Story in the Saifu Ad-Dharib. *Humanus*, 17(1), 37–52. <https://doi.org/10.24036/humanus.v17i1.8779>
- Fatmala, D. R., Amelia, A., & Trianingsih, F. A. (2020). Penggunaan Akun Bot Media Sosial untuk Mempengaruhi Opini Publik : Sebuah Tinjauan Hukum di Indonesia. *Ajudikasi : Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 4(1), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.30656/ajudikasi.v4i1.2210>
- Forestal, J. (2023). Social Media, Social Control, and the Politics of Public Shaming. *American Political Science Review*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055423001053>
- Fransisco, W. (2021). Legal Consequences for Political Buzzers in Indonesia. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, 04(02), 222–228. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v4-i2-15>
- Fredheim, R., Bay, S., Dek, A., Dek, I., & North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence. (2020). *Social media manipulation 2020 : how social media companies are failing to combat inauthentic behaviour online*.
- Gabriela, N. (2015). Pressure Groups Psychology in a Democratic State. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 205(May), 356–360. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.09.011>
- Ganji, N., & Ashtarian, K. (2019). Comparative Public Policy and Religious Pressure



- Groups in Turkey and Pakistan. *International Journal of Economics and Politics*, 1(1), 99–116.
- Greya, E., & Yahya, I. E. (2022). Improving Civic Engagement through “No Viral No Justice” Phenomenon. *Journal Civics and Social Studies*, 6(1), 51–59. <https://doi.org/10.31980/civicos.v6i1.1629>
- Handini, V. A., & Dunan, A. (2019). Buzzer as The Driving Force for Buzz Marketing on Twitter in the 2019 Indonesian Prsidential Election. *International Journal of Science, Technology and Science*.
- Hardiantoro, A. (2022). *Unggahan Viral Aksi Pelecehan Seksual di KRL, Ini Kronologi dan Respons KCI*. Kompas.
- Herco Digital. (2024). *Kami Mewujudkan Pertumbuhan Social Media an Amazing Social Media Impact Corporate Communication Officer of PT Pupuk Kalimantan Timur*.
- Huda, L. (2023). *Kronologi Pengendara Berpelat Dinas Polri Aniaya dan Todongan Pistol ke Sopir Taksi "Online": Tak Terima Disalip*. Kompas.
- Iradat, D. (2023). Gibran Jadi Trending Topic di Twitter Saat Debat, Berikut Alasannya. *Cnn*, 1–6. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20240123172617-192-1053385/gibran-jadi-trending-topic-di-twitter-saat-debat-berikut-alasannya/amp>
- Jasa All Sosmed. (2024). *Jasa Peningkatan Likes dan Autolike Instagram*.
- Juliadi, R. (2017). The Construction of Buzzer Identity on Social Media (A Descriptive Study of Buzzer Identity in Twitter). *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Transformation in Communications 2017 (IcoTiC 2017)*, 150(ICoTiC 2017), 337–334.
- Kabha, R., Kamel, A. M., Elbahi, M., Hafiz, A. M. D., & Dafri, W. (2020). Impact of Fake News and Myths Related To Covid-19. *Journal of Content, Community and Communication*, 12(December), 270–279. <https://doi.org/10.31620/JCCC.12.20/25>
- Kareem, R., & Bhaya, W. (2018). Fake Profiles Types of Online Social Networks: A Survey. *International Journal of Engineering & Technology*, 7(4.19), 919–925. <https://doi.org/10.14419/ijet.v7i4.19.28071>
- Kitchgaessner, S. (2017). Cambridge Analytica used data from Facebook and Politico to help Trump. *2017, October 2016*, 1–8. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/oct/26/cambridge-analytica-used-data-from-facebook-and-politico-to-help-trump>
- Kleinman, Z. (2023). Twitter gives fake Disney account verified status. *BBC News*, 8, 11–13. <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-65374723>
- Lagadec, G. (2014). Optimal Endogenous Tariffs with Implicit Campaign Contributions. *Theoretical Economics Letters*, 04(04), 296–304. <https://doi.org/10.4236/tel.2014.44040>
- Lim, A. J., Tan, E., & Lim, T. (2021). Infodemic: the effect of death-related thoughts on news-sharing. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-021-00306-0>
- Maiwan, M. (2016). Kelompok Kepentingan (Interest Group), Kekuasaan Dan Kedudukannya Dalam Sistem Politik. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mimbar Demokrasi*, 15(2), 75–91. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jimd.v15i2.8815>
- Martini, M. (2012). Influence of interest groups on policy-making. *U4 Expert Answer*, 335(June), 1–9.
- Media Indonesia. (2024). Twitter Beri Centang Biru ke Akun Palsu Disney. *Media Indonesia*, 1–11.
- Meinarni, N. P. S., & Iswara, I. B. A. I. (2018). Hoax and its Mechanism in Indonesia.

- 2nd International Conference of Communication Science Research (ICCSR 2018)*, 165(Iccsr), 183–186. <https://doi.org/10.2991/iccsr-18.2018.39>
- Mulyono, B., Affandi, I., Suryadi, K., & Darmawan, C. (2022). Online civic engagement: Fostering citizen engagement through social media. *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 19(1), 75–85. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jc.v19i1.49723>
- Mustika, R. (2019). Pergeseran Peran Buzzer ke Dunia Politik di Media Sosial. *Diakom : Jurnal Media Dan Komunikasi*, 2(2), 144–151. <https://doi.org/10.17933/diakom.v2i2.60>
- Nabilah, F. S., Wiguna, J., Malafitri, N., & Zuhri, S. (2022). Optimalisasi Instagram @Siapdarling Sebagai Media Komunikasi Sosial Pembangunan Untuk Mengkampanyekan Generasi Muda Sadar Lingkungan. *Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi Makna*, 10(1), 17–27. <https://doi.org/10.30659/jikm.v10i1.18511>
- Nasir, N. M., Baequni, B., & Nurmansyah, M. I. (2020). Misinformation Related To Covid-19 in Indonesia. *Jurnal Administrasi Kesehatan Indonesia*, 8(2), 51. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jaki.v8i2.2020.51-59>
- Nelson-Field, K., Riebe, E., & Newstead, K. (2013). The emotions that drive viral video. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 21(4), 205–211. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2013.07.003>
- Nitzgen, D. (2013). Free Association, Group Association and Group Dialogue. *Group Analysis*, 46(2), 144–163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0533316413484125>
- Nuzirwan, I., & Sukandar, R. (2021). The Impact of Hoaxes to the Business of Information Technology Companies in Indonesia. *Journal of Communication & Public Relations*, 1(1), 41–50. <https://doi.org/10.37535/105001120215>
- OECD. (2020). *Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions: Catching the Deliberative Wave*.
- Orabi, M., Mouheb, D., Al Aghbari, Z., & Kamel, I. (2020). Detection of Bots in Social Media: A Systematic Review. *Information Processing and Management*, 57(4), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ipm.2020.102250>
- OUP. (2023). Oxford Dictionary. In *Oxford University Press* (Vol. 48, Issue 27). Oxford University Press.
- Pastor-Galindo, J., Zago, M., Nespoli, P., López Bernal, S., Huertas Celdrán, A., Gil Pérez, M., Ruipérez-Valiente, J. A., Martínez Pérez, G., & Gómez Mármol, F. (2021). A Review of Spotting political social bots in Twitter: A use case of the 2019 Spanish general election. *Colección Jornadas Y Congresos, June*, 103–105. [https://doi.org/10.18239/jornadas\\_2021.34.20](https://doi.org/10.18239/jornadas_2021.34.20)
- Pavitt, C., & Johnson, K. K. (2001). The association between group procedural MOPs and group discussion procedure. *Small Group Research*, 32(5), 595–624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104649640103200505>
- Permatasari, P. A., Linawati, L., & Jasa, L. (2021). Survei Tentang Analisis Sentimen Pada Media Sosial. *Majalah Ilmiah Teknologi Elektro*, 20(2), 177. <https://doi.org/10.24843/mite.2021.v20i02.p01>
- Powell, A. (2015). Seeking rape justice: Formal and informal responses to sexual violence through technosocial counter-publics. *Theoretical Criminology*, 19(4), 571–588. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480615576271>
- Prasongko, D., & Chairunisa, N. (2018). Begini Kronologi Kasus Hoax Ratna Sarumpaet. *Nasional.Tempo*, 1.
- Puriwat, W., & Tripopsakul, S. (2021). The role of viral marketing in social media on brand recognition and preference. *Emerging Science Journal*, 5(6), 855–867.

- <https://doi.org/10.28991/esj-2021-01315>
- Putri, D. L. (2023). *Fakta dan Kronologi Penganiayaan Anak Pengurus GP Anzor Berdasarkan Rekonstruksi*. Kompas.
- Putri, D. L., & Kurniawan, R. F. (2022). Twitter Akan Luncurkan 3 Warna Centang Verifikasi Baru , Apa Bedanya ? *Kompas.Com*, 1–8.
- Putri, D. L., & Pratiwi, I. E. (2023). Siapa Bima Yudho TikToker yang Sebut Lampung Tidak Maju-maju? *Https://Www.Kompas.Com*, 1–8. <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2023/04/16/113000565/siapa-bima-yudho-tiktoker-yang-sebut-lampung-tidak-maju-maju-?page=all>
- Rahmawati, D., Mulyana, D., Lumakto, G., Viendyasari, M., & Anindhita, W. (2021). Mapping Disinformation During the Covid-19 in Indonesia: Qualitative Content Analysis. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 6(2), 222–234. <https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v6i2.907>
- Raihani, R. (2012). Islamic Schools and Social Justice in Indonesia: A Student Perspective. *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 50(2), 279–301. <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2012.502.279-301>
- Raja Komen. (2024). *Jasa Pemberian Komen di Media Sosial*. <https://www.eramuslim.com/info/tentang-kami>
- Rimenda, T., Warsini, S., & Mirati, R. E. (2019). The Influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) Promotion of Student Interest in Buying Shares: Study on PNJ Inversment Galleries. *Account*, 6(1), 957–961.
- Rudat, A., & Buder, J. (2015). Making retweeting social: The influence of content and context information on sharing news in Twitter. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 46, 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.01.005>
- Rustiani, R. (2021). Mengantisipasi Fenomena Hoaks bagi Pendidik dengan Mengembangkan Rasionalisme Kritis. *Mindset : Jurnal Pemikiran Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 1(2), 35–40. <https://doi.org/10.56393/mindset.v1i2.427>
- Sarumaha, M. T., Sariyatun, & Susanto. (2022). ... Urgethe Urgency of Historic Digital Literacy As an Effort To Build Students Historical Awarenessncy of Historic Digital Literacy .... *2nd International Conference on Media And Communication Surabaya*, 43–52.
- Scudder, M. F. (2021). Deliberative Democracy, More than Deliberation. *Political Studies*, 7(1), 238–255. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00323217211032624>
- Sembiring, K. (2023). Program Ganjar-Mahfud Jadi Trending Topic Twitter. *Sindonews*, 1–13.
- Shao, C., Ciampaglia, G. L., Varol, O., Yang, K. C., Flammini, A., & Menczer, F. (2018). The spread of low-credibility content by social bots. *Nature Communications*, 9(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-018-06930-7>
- Sharma, R. R., & Kaur, B. (2020). E-mail viral marketing: modeling the determinants of creation of “viral infection.” *Management Decision*, 58(1), 112–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MD-03-2017-0215>
- Singh, K., Lima, G., Cha, M., Cha, C., Kulshrestha, J., Ahn, Y. Y., & Varol, O. (2022). Misinformation, believability, and vaccine acceptance over 40 countries: Takeaways from the initial phase of the Covid-19 infodemic. *PLoS ONE*, 17(2 February), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263381>
- Singh, S. (2015). Political Development and Pressure Groups: Revisiting their Theoretical Underpinnings. *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, 61(3), 565–575. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0019556120150317>

- Soundararaj, J. J., Baskaran, A., & Sivaprakash, S. (2015). The Power of Buzz Marketing. *Journal of Exclusive Management Science*, 4(3), 1–13.
- Syam, H. M., & Nurrahmi, F. (2020). “I Don’t Know If It Is Fake or Real News” How Little Indonesian University Students Understand Social Media Literacy. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 36(2), 92–105. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2020-3602-06>
- Triono, A., Saputra, R. A., & Refsi, B. (2022). *The “ No Viral No Justice ” Paradigm In Getting Access To Justice In Indonesian Community*. 27(8), 50–55. <https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2708035055>
- Voitovych, O., Leonid Kupershtein, L., Kupershtein, L., & Holovenko, V. (2022). Detection of Fake Accounts in Social Media. *Cybersecurity: Education, Science, Technique*, 2(18), 86–98. <https://doi.org/10.28925/2663-4023.2022.18.8698>
- Wanda, P., Hiswati, M. E., Diqi, M., & Herlinda, R. (2021). Re-Fake: Klasifikasi Akun Palsu di Sosial Media Online menggunakan Algoritma RNN. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Sains Teknologi Dan Inovasi Indonesia (SENASTINDO)*, 3(November), 191–200. <https://doi.org/10.54706/senastindo.v3.2021.139>
- Wani Ahmad, M., Ahmad Sofi, M., & Yousuf Wani, S. (2017). Why Fake Profiles: A study of Anomalous users in different categories of Online Social Networks. *International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research*, 4(9), 320–329.
- White, S. K. (2022). Agonism, Democracy, and the Moral Equality of Voice. *Political Theory*, 50(1), 59–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591721993862>
- Widyatama, R., & Mahbob, M. H. (2024). The Potential Hazards of Fake Accounts and Buzzer Behaviour on Deliberative Democracy. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 40(1), 324–341. <https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2024-4001-18>
- Wong, K. J. (2017). Influences of viral marketing in social networking sites on consumerism. *Jurnal Pengajian Media Malaysia*, 19(1), 89–104.
- Yuliahsari, D. (2016). Pemanfaatan Twitter Buzzer Untuk Meningkatkan Partisipasi Pemilih Muda dalam Pemilihan Umum. *Jurnal The Messenger*, 7(1), 41–48. <https://doi.org/10.26623/themessenger.v7i1.288>