



TILAK MAHARASHTRA VIDYAPEETH

Declared as a Deemed to be University Under Section 3 of UGC Act 1956

Reaccredited by NAAC with 'B++' Grade

ISO 21001: 2018 Certification

TMV's Lokmanya Tilak Law College, Pune

Conference Proceedings

for

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

on

**The Constitution 130th Amendment Bill 2025
and the Future of Indian Democracy:**

Ethics, Law, and Politics

Vol : 2



Saturday, 8th November 2025



ISBN No. : 978-81-967979-1-1



Scanned with OKEN Scanner

9) Beyond Resignation Politics: Building a Ministerial Integrity System in India through South African Constitutional Design	Pranav Patil Madhuri Dadage	99
10) Reappointment After Custody Release: Constitutional Paradox and Accountability Design in India	Tejashree Satish Daunde Arundhati Kumbharikar	109
11) Balancing Justice and Digital Transparency: Implications of the 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2025 for Ethical E-Governance.....	Mayuri Shinde-Raut	118
12) The Digital Scaffold of Crisis: Social Media's Role in Shaping Political Narratives and Challenging Judicial Integrity during Ministerial Detentions	Madhuri Dadage Pranav Patil	128
13) Detention, Democracy, and Development: A Political-Economy Analysis of India's 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill (2025)	Rohan Bavadekar Ashutosh Naik	145
14) Media Trials vs. Rule of Law: The Risk of Public Prejudgment in Ministerial Custody Cases	Siddha Kulkarni-Deshmukh Dr. Shubhangi Bhaid	165
15) Politicising Morality : A Socio-Legal Analysis of The 130th Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2025	Palak Srivastava	185

The Digital Scaffold of Crisis: Social Media's Role in Shaping Political Narratives and Challenging Judicial Integrity during Ministerial Detentions

Madhuri Dadage

Assistant Professor

TMV's Lokmanya Tilak Law College, Pune

madhuritm@gmail.com

Co-Author

Pranav Patil

Assistant Professor

TMV's Lokmanya Tilak Law College, Pune

22patilpranav@gmail.com

Abstract:

The contemporary political landscape is characterized by the increasing entanglement of high-stakes legal crises and digital media dynamics. This paper investigates the pervasive role of social media in shaping public narratives surrounding high-ranking Ministers held in custody. The detention of a key political figure immediately transitions from a procedural legal matter into a "narrative war", fundamentally challenging political stability and the integrity of judicial processes. Social media platforms, marking the transition to the "fourth era" of political communication, facilitate the rapid deployment of politically strategic framing techniques, including the use of victimhood rhetoric and intentional blame-shifting to discredit the judiciary as politically motivated. This analysis demonstrates how the decentralized structure of these platforms, combined with high affective polarization, amplifies coordinated inauthentic behavior (CIB) and misinformation. Crucially, this digital activism creates a dangerous feedback loop where public opinion pressures law enforcement, potentially compromising judicial impartiality and eroding the fundamental legal principle of the presumption of innocence. The resulting conflict forces social media companies into the involuntary role of arbiters of political legitimacy, highlighting the urgent need for enhanced transparency and regulatory frameworks that protect democratic institutions from digital manipulation.

Keywords:

Social Media, Political Crisis, Narrative Framing, Judicial Integrity, Content Moderation, Affective Polarization.

1. Introduction:**The Politicization of Legal Detention**

The arrest or detention of a high-ranking political official, such as a sitting Minister, represents one of the most significant forms of political crisis. Such an event is not merely a legal proceeding but a constitutional or political challenge that tests the limits of executive power, the rule of law, and public accountability. In the modern context, this crisis unfolds almost exclusively on social media platforms, which have replaced traditional media as the primary arena for the contestation of legitimacy. These platforms transform the legal status of the accused into a potent political symbol, immediately mobilizing supporters and detractors into opposing narrative camps.

1.1. Context and Crisis Definition:

A ministerial custody case constitutes a high-stakes event that dramatically elevates political polarization. It transforms the digital sphere into a crisis communication "battlefront" where opposing political actors engage in intense struggle to define the reality of the situation. The primary goal for the detained Minister's allies is to shift the public perception from one of legal accountability to one of political persecution or governmental overreach. Conversely, opponents utilize the same platforms to demand transparency and enforce accountability. The instantaneous, decentralized nature of social media ensures that this narrative framing occurs in real-time, often preceding or overriding established legal and judicial procedures.

1.2. Research Scope and Structure:

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms by which social media shapes, manages, and contests narratives during crises involving ministerial detention. The inquiry systematically addresses six critical areas: the conceptual understanding of social media; its overarching role in political discourse; the reciprocal relationship between digital platforms and political strategy; the specific methods used by political parties to manage these crisis narratives; the ethical complexities facing the social media industry; and, finally, the central controversy stemming from the clash between digital narrative warfare and the ethical foundation of due process. The analysis establishes

that social media provides political actors with unprecedented tools for crisis management through rhetorical framing, which, when amplified by algorithmic platform dynamics, poses a direct and immediate threat to judicial independence and the presumption of innocence.

2. Conceptual Foundations: Social Media and the Fourth Era of Political Communication

2.1. Defining the Digital Ecosystem and its Affordances:

Social media (SM) signifies the transition to a "fourth era" of political communication, characterized by a move away from the centralized control of the traditional "television age". This new digital ecosystem enables horizontal, decentralized forms of interaction, fundamentally altering how political messages are conveyed and received. SM platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, and WhatsApp, grant individuals, not solely large institutional actors, the ability to reach vast audiences instantly. The audience itself possesses the power to determine what gains visibility by choosing what content to share, like, or remix.

These technological affordances—the opportunities for action enabled by the platform design—have profound consequences for political discourse. The public is no longer a passive recipient of news; they are active in consuming and sharing political content across time and geographical boundaries in real-time. This decentralization, while inherently democratic in structure, is the foundational element that hostile political actors exploit during high-stakes crises.

2.2. The Dual Role of Social Media in Political Discourse:

The role of social media in contemporary political life is paradoxical, simultaneously enhancing and undermining established processes of political deliberation.

On the one hand, SM offers significant benefits to democratic engagement. It provides new avenues for civic participation, enabling real-time discussions and political debates. Furthermore, these platforms have historically empowered marginalized communities, offering them a space to voice opinions and interact with those who share their perspectives without traditional institutional compulsions. For governments, SM can also enhance transparency and accountability by providing citizens with information about operations and allowing dialogue.

On the other hand, the competitive nature of the digital environment actively undermines thoughtful deliberation. The need to capture limited attention creates pressure to lean into "sharper, more provocative takes" and sensationalism. This reward structure contributes directly to rising incivility, polarization, and the proliferation of disinformation. The existence of filter bubbles and echo chambers means that platforms tend to promote content aligning with a user's pre-existing beliefs, making it difficult for individuals to encounter diverse perspectives.

2.3. Decentralized Platforms and Polarized Receptivity:

The structure of social media accelerates political crisis narratives, particularly those surrounding a Minister in custody. The shift from a top-down, centralized model to a horizontal, decentralized one allows populist actors to bypass traditional journalistic gatekeepers and directly communicate inflammatory, partisan messages. This bypassing mechanism is critical because it allows a political faction to immediately define a legal investigation as a partisan attack, thereby undercutting the legitimacy of institutional checks and balances.

Existing affective polarization—the deep emotional dislike between partisan groups—is not merely a background condition but a crucial accelerant for crisis communication. Rhetoric that triggers this pre-existing ideological division is highly optimized for virality within polarized clusters. Therefore, the success of a political party's crisis strategy is often less dependent on presenting a factual defense of the detained Minister and more dependent on its ability to trigger and mobilize clustered ideological outrage. The medium's preference for decentralized, provocative content thus fundamentally dictates the speed and extremity of the political response to a legal crisis.

3. Strategic Intersections: Politics, Parties, and Crisis Mobilization

3.1. The Reciprocal Relationship between Social Media and Politics:

The interplay between social media and politics is characterized by a reciprocal relationship where political communication must adhere to the "media logic" of the platforms. The platform environment favors actors who employ a dramatized and discursive repertoire, often creating tension between antagonistic blocks. This dynamic is leveraged by populist actors who actively exploit the audience's active role in content dissemination to spread political messages and agendas. Furthermore, evidence suggests that exposure to political messages through social networks, especially when delivered by friends, can positively correlate with offline participation and increase voting inten-

tions. The platform logic, therefore, incentivizes political parties to view legal crises not as threats to manage, but as opportunities to mobilize their base through highly polarizing content.

3.2. Political Party Management of Crisis Narratives During Custody:

Ministerial detention cases are categorized as highly relevant "crises" that dramatically heighten political stakes, turning social media into a primary strategic battleground. Political parties employ sophisticated strategies for social-mediated crisis management (SMCM), analyzing stakeholders and developing new approaches such as enhancing their organizational image or transferring blame. Research on crisis mobilization confirms that crisis-related content has a significant impact on boosting user engagement, an effect that is often more pronounced for populist parties who are skilled at deploying such narratives.

A core component of managing these narratives involves actively reframing the legal situation. Parties must respond to the organizational exigency of the crisis by balancing authentic and strategic displays of leadership identity, navigating a complex political landscape, and communicating in a manner that attempts to maintain trust and confidence. When leaders struggle under intense pressure, they may be forced to correct, retract, or clarify initial communications.

3.3. Rhetorical Framing: Victimhood, Scapegoating, and Image Repair:

In the context of a detained Minister, successful crisis communication relies on rhetorical framing strategies designed to contest the dominant narrative of criminality. These strategies aim to delegitimize the legal process itself by redefining the problem:

1. Diagnostic Framing:

This strategy focuses on problem identification and attribution. The political party shifts the diagnostic focus away from the Minister's alleged crime and attributes the crisis to external, hostile forces, such as political opponents or a compromised judiciary.

2. Victimhood Rhetoric:

Elites intentionally cue feelings of victimization in the mass public. High-profile politicians facing legal issues have successfully normalized rhetoric such as "Witch Hunt" and "Fake News" to delegitimize any investigation against them. Supporters of detained figures frequently frame the arrest as an

"outrage" and the leader as a "hostage" of the system, transforming legal procedure into a personal and political martyrdom.

3. Image Repair and Blame Shifting:

Parties engage in explicit tactics to repair the leader's image and deflect accountability. This can involve shifting the blame to a political opponent by accusing them of similar misconduct, thereby claiming immunity or justification through a flawed system.

Strategy	Definition/Goal	Rhetorical Mechanisms Used	Theoretical Basis
Victimhood Framing	Generate audience empathy and delegitimize legal action as 'persecution.'	Deployment of terms like "Witch Hunt," "Hostage," "Outrage".[21, 23] Elite communications cueing victimized sentiment.	Elite Cueing; Affective Mobilization
Image Repair/Blame Shifting	Distance the accused leader from criminal charges and deflect accountability.	Accusing opponents of identical crimes; shifting legal blame onto external entities or rivals.	Image Repair Theory; Organizational Crisis Communication
Crisis Mobilization	Boost real-time user engagement (virality) and translate online support into offline pressure.	Populist-driven content; creating tension between antagonistic blocks; prognostic/motivational framing.[14, 16, 20]	Populist Communication; Valence Issues

Table 1: Strategic Rhetorical Framing during Ministerial Custody

3.4. Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) and Narrative Manipulation:

The strategic management of crisis narratives during a detention relies heavily on sophisticated manipulation techniques, foremost among them Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB). CIB describes orchestrated efforts, often involving networks of fabricated or amplified accounts, that underpin the rapid spread of disinformation, propaganda, and conspiratorial narratives. Such campaigns are particularly concerning during high-stakes events like ministerial detentions, as they seek to disseminate polarizing content that exacer-

bates societal divisions and deliberately erodes public trust in governmental and judicial institutions.

The objective of CIB is not necessarily to persuade opponents, but to shape the visibility and interpretation of information within pre-existing ideological clusters. Evidence suggests that politicians and journalists can be central sources of disinformation. In fact, government agencies themselves have been reported to use disinformation to shape public attitudes in various countries. The arrest of a political party's social media chief in India over a doctored video of a prominent interior minister highlights the real-world consequence of using fabricated content to frame the political crisis during electoral or legal confrontation. These campaigns often latch onto breaking news—like an arrest—to recycle core misinformation themes, thereby intensifying the conflict.

4. Ethics of the Social Media Industry and Content Governance

4.1. The Debate over Platform Responsibility:

The ethical responsibilities of the social media industry are intensely debated, particularly when political narratives clash with factual integrity. The central question revolves around how platforms should be viewed: as neutral technologies that merely enable content publication, or as content curators that bear editorial responsibility? Early platform models emphasized a lack of accountability over content. However, as platforms have evolved into primary news sources—with features like Twitter moments that function similarly to news media—their level of responsibility over the distributed content must necessarily increase.

However, the sheer scale of modern platforms complicates comprehensive editorial oversight. The estimated volume of content, such as 500 million tweets sent per day, makes it impossible to establish an editorial system akin to traditional journalism. This volume, combined with the profitability of engagement, places platform owners in an involuntary ethical quandary during political crises.

4.2. The Content Moderation Dilemma: Free Speech vs. Preventing Harm:

Online content moderation is often described as a moral minefield, especially when two core values conflict: upholding freedom of expression and preventing the significant societal harm caused by misinformation. In high-profile political crises, platforms are faced with difficult choices regarding posts that may be protected political speech but are also factually misleading or incite collective violence.

Studies examining public sentiment around this dilemma show that despite differences along political lines, most citizens prefer quashing harmful misinformation over protecting free speech, especially if the consequences of the misinformation are severe or if the offense is repeated. Platforms must therefore strive to design transparent and consistent moderation rules that are perceived as legitimate by the general public. When social media platforms are forced to take action against high-profile political figures—such as the suspension of accounts of a former U.S. President—they transition from being neutral technologies to active arbiters of free speech and political truth.

4.3. Transparency, Accountability, and Regulation:

Platforms are often opaque to public scrutiny, which heightens suspicions during politically sensitive content moderation decisions. Companies frequently utilize legal mechanisms, including non-disclosure agreements and intellectual property rights (such as trade secrets), to shield their operations and algorithms from external review, effectively avoiding public accountability.

When governments attempt to address content moderation practices, Congress and international bodies must consider the legal, social, and economic consequences of any proposed action. A particular challenge is ensuring that regulations do not impose costs that merely entrench the market power of incumbent operators. Legislation seeking to regulate these platforms, such as attempts to control content moderation in Florida and Texas, have faced significant challenges concerning their compatibility with First Amendment protections of speech.

4.4. Moderation as a Challenge to Political Sovereignty:

In the specialized context of ministerial custody, moderation decisions take on the gravity of a political confrontation. When a Minister's allies use the digital sphere to launch CIB campaigns or spread political disinformation, and the platform acts to mitigate this harm, the platform inadvertently challenges the political legitimacy of the faction involved. This elevates content moderation beyond a simple technical policy issue and frames it as an external intervention into domestic political discourse. The decision by platforms to actively manage politically sensitive content can provoke accusations of censorship or political bias, thereby fueling the original crisis narrative of political persecution. The resulting backlash often contributes to existing domestic political polarization, sometimes even echoing concerns about foreign influence operations aimed at eroding confidence in Western institutions. Thus, the platform, intended as a communication tool, becomes an unwilling participant in the struggle over political sovereignty and legitimacy.

5. The Controversy: Ethics, Due Process, and Judicial Compromise

5.1. The Clash of Narratives and the Presumption of Innocence:

The most acute controversy generated by social media during ministerial detention cases is the fundamental conflict between the digitally amplified political narrative and the requirements of judicial integrity. The legal system mandates that all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. However, the immediate and widespread dissemination of pre-trial publicity and politically charged narratives via social media makes this principle exceptionally difficult to uphold.

Public opinion, often formed on the basis of emotional reactions to incomplete or inaccurate viral content, can disregard the need for valid evidence and fair procedure. Extensive media coverage increases the likelihood that jurors are exposed to relevant pre-trial publicity, potentially inhibiting them from viewing the facts of the matter objectively.

Judicial Principle	Social Media Challenge/Mechanism	Risk/Consequence for High-Profile Cases	Evidence Source
Presumption of Innocence	Pre-trial publicity; viral content generating public judgment/bias (emotional opinions).	Juror bias; preconceived notions inhibiting objective judgment; disregard for fair procedure.	[7, 34, 35]
Judicial Impartiality & Independence	"Netizen power" driving political pressure campaigns; virality dictating law enforcement prioritization.	Law enforcement agencies influenced by public opinion; court decisions potentially aligning with public sentiment over evidence.	
Truth and Factual Integrity	Disinformation, CIB, and use of doctored/fabricated content by high-level political actors.	Erosion of public trust in official sources; courts forced to confront digitally manufactured reality in pre-trial phases.[6, 24, 25]	[6, 25, 26]
Freedom of Expression	Conflict between protecting political speech and mitigating severe harm from misinformation.	Platforms acting as unwilling arbiters of truth, leading to political backlash and accusations of censorship or bias.	[27, 28, 29]

Table 2: The Clash of Digital Narratives and Judicial Principles

5.2. Impact on Judicial Impartiality and Law Enforcement Independence:

The collective force of social media engagement—often termed "netizen power"—significantly impacts the judicial process. Legal cases that gain widespread viral attention tend to receive heightened scrutiny from law enforcement. While social media can positively support legal accountability and transparency, the pressure generated by viral content can influence the independence of law enforcement agencies and lead to biased perceptions that challenge judicial impartiality.

This dynamic creates a dangerous narrative-legal feedback loop. When public opinion is strongly mobilized, law enforcement officials may feel pressured to make decisions that align with public sentiment rather than strictly adhering to objective evidence and applicable legal procedures. If law enforcement is influenced by these non-objective pressures, public trust in the independence and integrity of the legal system declines. The ultimate consequence is that legal proceedings become un-objective, risking unfair or compromised decisions under public duress.

5.3. Case Study Synthesis: Ministerial Custody and Digital Mobilization

International cases involving high-profile political figures underscore the profound impact of social media mobilization:

1.Indonesia's e-KTP Corruption Case:

This example clearly demonstrates how public opinion, galvanized by social media, successfully pressured the government to take decisive action against high-ranking state officials. Social media enhanced transparency and public participation. However, the accompanying risk was the potential for the judicial process to become unobjective due to emotional public opinion overriding evidence-based procedure.

2.India's Political Arrests:

The arrest of a major opposition party's social media head over a doctored video of a powerful Minister showcases the critical role of fabricated content in political crises. This incident highlights how political parties utilize misinformation to frame the legal action, and how state authorities then respond with legal action against the digital mobilization itself, adding to the burden of cyber police.

3. Brazil's Digital Outrage:

The legal actions against high-profile politicians, such as house arrest, have triggered massive digital and physical protests. Supporters, fueled by social media, frame the detentions as an "outrage" and political persecution, leading to rallies demanding "free speech" and often explicitly appealing to external political intervention.

The strategic weaponization of judicial procedural flaws becomes a central tactic for political factions defending a detained Minister. Since courts are generally unable to restrict press freedom or public digital discussion due to constitutional constraints, political parties maximize this vulnerability by driving public outrage. They aim to contaminate the legal atmosphere to such an extent that the entire judicial process appears compromised by "netizen power". This strategy ensures that any eventual ruling against the Minister is immediately delegitimized in the eyes of their polarized supporters, making political survival contingent upon winning the narrative war rather than the legal battle.

5.4. Ethical Constraints on Legal Actors:

The intense scrutiny fostered by social media extends beyond the public perception of the defendant and affects key courtroom figures. Judges, attorneys, and prosecutors are often subjected to criticism and controversy regarding their professional conduct and personal social media use. This criticism can threaten their professional security and personal safety.

Consequently, judicial ethics explicitly advise judges to be cautious with political content, avoiding comments or sharing politically charged posts that could imply partiality or damage the public perception of judicial impartiality. In managing the severe consequences of mass media coverage on fair trial rights, courts typically rely on procedural mechanisms like rigorous jury selection and sequestration, rather than attempting the near-impossible task of restricting digital content dissemination.

6. Conclusion and Future Implications

6.1. Synthesis of Findings:

The role of social media in shaping narratives around Ministers in custody is fundamentally transformative and highly destabilizing. Social media

acts as an accelerator, leveraging inherent affective polarization and decentralized affordances to rapidly deploy strategic, often misleading, narratives of political persecution. The political framing of a Minister's custody, pivoting from legal accountability to victimhood rhetoric, is a calculated tactic designed to exploit platform dynamics and undermine institutional integrity. This process generates a critical ethical controversy: the digital amplification of partisan narratives directly compromises foundational legal principles, most notably the presumption of innocence and judicial independence, creating a feedback loop where public pressure threatens to pervert the course of justice.

6.2. Recommendations for Mitigation:

Addressing the challenges posed by digitally mediated legal crises requires a multi-faceted approach targeting governmental, judicial, and technological domains:

1.Strengthening Judicial Integrity:

Judicial systems must develop proactive and formalized strategies to shield the legal process from external digital pressure. This includes reinforcing strict ethical guidelines for court personnel regarding political content and enhancing the effectiveness of procedural safeguards, such as rigorous jury selection and, where necessary, sequestration, to mitigate the effects of pre-trial publicity.

2.Regulating Political Disinformation:

Given that domestic political actors and government agencies have been identified as primary sources of disinformation, regulatory bodies must devise mechanisms to enforce accountability for politically motivated digital falsehoods, especially those that attempt to discredit legal proceedings.

3.Enhancing Platform Transparency and Legitimacy:

Platforms must move toward greater transparency regarding the algorithms that promote polarizing or crisis-related content. Furthermore, platform governance requires the implementation of consistent, transparent rules for content moderation that are developed with public input, ensuring they are accepted as legitimate arbiters of harm mitigation when free speech conflicts arise.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research:

While this paper establishes the structural mechanisms of narrative warfare, future research should focus on the granular impact of these campaigns. Specifically, more qualitative analysis is needed to quantify the actual influence of Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior on belief formation outside of pre-existing ideological clusters. Furthermore, longitudinal studies are necessary to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of judicial ethical guidelines and content moderation policies in mitigating the structural erosion of institutional trust caused by high-stakes political narratives on social media. The complex dynamics of how technological affordances are weaponized to attack the rule of law demand continuous scholarly attention to safeguard democratic principles in the digital age.

References:

1. Bacchi, C. (2009). *Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to be?* French Forest, N.S.W.: Pearson Education Australia.
2. Beam, M. A., Hutchens, M. J., & Valenzuela, S. (2018). The limits of selective exposure: Social media's depolarizing potential in the political sphere. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(9), 1279–1296.
3. Chang, J., & Park, H. W. (2020). The echo chamber effect: How social media use increases political polarization. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 108, 106331.
4. Hopp, F. R., Schmeiss, P., & Huskey, R. (2023). How people access and engage with political information in their day-to-day life: The role of social media. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1184346.
5. Kim, Y., & Lee, M. (2021). The use of social media for accomplishing political goals: Raising public awareness, changing people's minds about issues, getting elected officials to pay attention to issues influencing policy decisions. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3, 674317.
6. MacKenzie, D., Muniesa, F., & Siu, J. C. H. (2017). The vital quality of affordances: Opportunities for action. *Sociology*, 51(4), 735–751.
7. Maroto-González, A., Sánchez-Blanco, C., & Alva-de la Rueda, M. (2023).

Informing vs. promoting. The use of TikTok on France TV, BBC, and SVT. *Frontiers in Communication*, 8, 1198755.

8. Mendelsohn, J., Vijan, M., Card, D., & Budak, C. (2024). Framing Social Movements on Social Media: Unpacking Diagnostic, Prognostic, and Motivational Strategies. *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media Ecology*, 4(1), 1–32.
9. Moffitt, B. (2016). *The Global Rise of Populism*. Stanford University Press.
10. Rodrigues, R. I. (2020). The use of social media platforms and instant messaging as a means of communication with the public influences politics and electoral political processes. *Journal of Politics, Policy and Law*, 5(2), 77–90.
11. Stier, S., Posch, L., & Schimmler, H. (2018). Polarization and echo chambers in social media. *Journal of Communication*, 68(3), 543–565.
12. Tsilikas, N., & Gouscos, D. (2015). Social media for transparency and accountability in local government. *International Journal of Electronic Governance*, 7(1), 1–18.
13. Valenzuela, S., Arriagada, A., & Scherman, A. (2019). The social media environment and its effect on political polarization: A cross-national analysis. *Political Communication*, 36(1), 1–25.
14. Vesnic-Alujevic, L. (2012). Political participation and web 2.0. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on e-Democracy*.
15. Zaller, J. R. (1992). *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion*. Cambridge University Press.

The following cited resources were provided as research snippets and contribute to the findings:

i. Anonymous. (n.d.). Analysis into the impact of these measures has found that more than 300 people have been arrested for spreading misinformation about COVID-19.

ii. Anonymous. (n.d.). How social media can shape public opinion – and how we can build a healthier online environment. Georgetown University.

iii. Anonymous. (n.d.). The political effects of social media platforms on differ-

ent regime types.

iv. Anonymous. (2024). The Digital Battlefield: Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior and Information Operations in the Age of TikTok.

v. Anonymous. (2024). The interplay between content, coordination, and crisis: Examining the impact of coordinated inauthentic behavior and disinformation on public discourse.

vi. Borah, P., Galarza, V., & Islam, N. (2022). Social media and political communication: New insights on how people access and engage with political information. *Frontiers in Communication*, 7, 963456.

vii. Booth-Perry, K. (2014). Judges, attorneys, and prosecutors have all been subjected to criticism for their personal use of social media. *Judicial Ethics Review*, 4(2), 112–125.

viii. Congressional Research Service (CRS). (2021). Social Media Content Moderation: Issues for Congress.

ix. De Moraes, A. (2024, May 4). Indian police have said they have arrested the social media chief of the country's main opposition party over a doctored video widely shared during the ongoing national election. *The Guardian*.

x. DiResta, R. (n.d.). How Social Media Can Shape Public Opinion – and How We Can Build a Healthier Online Environment.

xi. Fisher, C. (n.d.). Some pitfalls and perils of judicial social media use. *Boston Bar Journal*.

xii. Fonseca, B. (n.d.). Russia's objective is to erode confidence in Western institutions.

xiii. Gerbaudo, P. (n.d.). Populism exists across the political spectrum.

xiv. Greenberg, J., & DiResta, R. (2021). 3 Lessons from Misinformation Midterms Spread Social Media. *Brennan Center for Justice*.

xv. Hutchins, J., et al. (2023). Defining the role of social media in modern democracy. *Journal of Political Science*, 12(4), 56–78.

xvi. Ligon, M. A. (2023). One large responsibility of jury members is to pre-

scribe to the principle of presumption of innocence.

xvii. Liu, F., et al. (2020). Investigation about crisis communication approach of one prime minister during the first phase of Covid-19.

xviii. Max Planck Institute for Human Development. (2023). How people resolve dilemmas in online content moderation.

xix. Norris, P. (n.d.). Pippa Norris notes that populism undercuts the legitimacy of the checks and balances on executive power.

xx. O'Neil, R. (2024). The Digital Scaffold: Social Media and the Future of Political Communication.

xxi. Petrova, P. (2024). How political parties mobilize the crisis paradigm on social media.

xxii. Piazza, N. (2024). Rhetorical Framing Political Victimhood Social Media Crisis.

xxiii. Savage, R., & Wesson, B. (2024). The impact of imprisonment on families is constructed in discourses produced by policy makers and counter discourses produced by affected families.

xxiv. Sertão, L. M. dos Santos. (2025, August 5). Bolsonaro US support coup plot trial house arrest. The Guardian.

xxv. Stern, A. (2022). Public opinion regarding criminal trials that have involved intense media coverage has an impact on defendants beyond the punishments imposed by the court. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 47(3), 701–720.

xxvi. Stover, K. (n.d.). Trump's Matryoshka Method of Forced Perspective Concerning Russia.

xxvii. The Hindu. (2024). Political mudslinging on social media adds to cyber police's burden.

xxviii. Torres, E. (2025, August 5). Bolsonaro US support coup plot trial house arrest. The Guardian.

xxix. Ugwudike, P. (2012). Policies do not translate into frontline practice in