

Polarization of Public Attitudes Toward the "Board of Peace" Policy on the @presidenrepublikindonesia Instagram Account

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Abstrak

Banyaknya perdebatan dan opini publik di media sosial terhadap kebijakan pemerintah khususnya keikutsertaan Indonesia dalam program Board of Peace menyebabkan polarisasi masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis arah sikap masyarakat serta pola polarisasi yang terbentuk dalam ruang diskursus digital. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif dengan analisis isi terhadap 200 komentar pada dua unggahan akun instagram @presidenrepublikindonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sikap penolakan mendominasi sebesar 73,5%, diikuti dukungan 23% dan netral 3,5%, yang mengindikasikan polarisasi kuat dengan minimnya posisi moderat. Implikasi penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa media sosial berperan dalam memperkuat pembelahan opini melalui mekanisme echo chamber dan tekanan konformitas sosial. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa diskursus publik di media sosial cenderung mengarah pada ekstremitas sikap dan berpotensi mengurangi kualitas dialog publik yang konstruktif.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Isi, Board of Peace, Instagram, Polarisasi

Abstract

The abundance of debates and public opinions on social media regarding government policies particularly Indonesia's participation in the Board of Peace program has led to public polarization. This study aims to analyze the direction of public attitudes and the patterns of polarization that have emerged within the digital discourse space. The method employed is a quantitative approach using content analysis of 200 comments on two posts from the Instagram account @presidenrepublikindonesia. The results indicate that rejection dominates at 73.5%, followed by support at 23% and neutrality at 3.5%, indicating strong polarization with a scarcity of moderate positions. The implications of this study suggest that social media plays a role in reinforcing the division of opinions through the mechanisms of the echo chamber and social conformity pressure. Thus, it can be concluded that public discourse on social media tends to lead to extremes in attitudes and has the potential to diminish the quality of constructive public dialogue.

Keywords: Content Analysis, Board of Peace, Instagram, Polarization

INTRODUCTION

The Gaza conflict is one of the sensitive and complex international issues in contemporary global political dynamics. Historically, this conflict has existed since the 19th century, stemming from the ideas of an Austro-Hungarian journalist from the Jewish Zionist movement named Theodor Herzl. This idea emerged based on the fulfillment of the British promise

to the Jewish people regarding their migration to Palestine and the 1917 Balfour Declaration (Wahidin & Wati, 2024). The Declaration stated that the Jewish people, as immigrants, must uphold the rights of the Palestinian people, *‘it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine’* (Balfour, 1917). However, the Israeli people continued their Aliyah mission by expanding their power, which drew massive protests from the Palestinian people (Nurjannah & Fakhruddin, 2019).

This recurring and deadly escalation of conflict not only intensifies hostilities between the two parties Palestine and Israel but also triggers an international response. This prolonged tension not only impacts the stability of the Middle East region but also sparks political, diplomatic, and emotional reactions from the international community (Febi et al., 2024). Various countries have taken different stances in responding to the conflict, whether through diplomatic support, humanitarian aid, or involvement in peace initiatives. Amid this situation, a program titled “Broad of Peace” emerged, conceived as a diplomatic effort to advance the peace process and de-escalate the conflict (Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 2026).

The Board of Peace program is envisioned as a platform for international collaboration aimed at fostering dialogue, expanding diplomatic networks, and bringing together various parties within the framework of peaceful resolution (The White House, 2026). Indonesia, as a country with a free and active foreign policy (Afriani & Jamilah, 2024) and a consistent supporter of Palestinian independence (Febrina et al., 2025), has decided to join the program. The government positioned Indonesia’s participation as a strategic step in pursuing peaceful diplomacy and strengthening Indonesia’s role on the international stage (Humas.Sekri, 2026). However, the decision was not fully accepted by the public. Some members of the public welcomed Indonesia’s participation in the organization, while others rejected it.

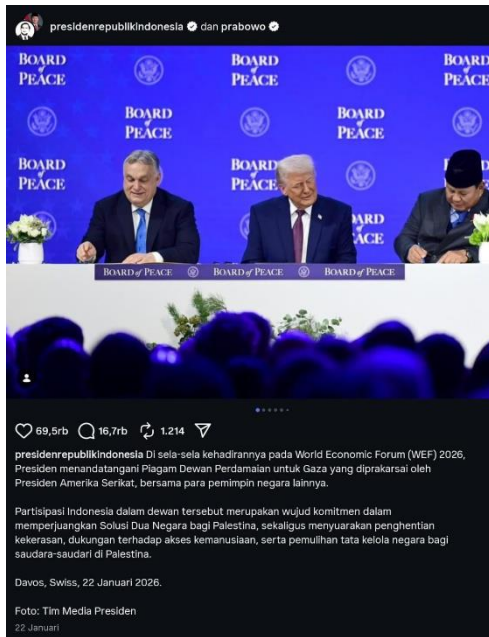


Figure 1. First Post



Figure 2. Second Post 2

In today's information age, information is easily accessible and can be quickly consumed by everyone. This is also true for the information regarding Indonesia's participation in the Board of Peace, which was posted directly by the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto. The post, uploaded on January 22, 2026, shows President Prabowo signing the charter of the Peace Council for Gaza, which was directly initiated by the President of the United States, Donald Trump. The post successfully captured the public's (publics') attention, garnering 69,500 likes, 16,700 comments, and 1,214 reposts as of March 4, 2026. On the same account, on February 20, 2026, President Prabowo posted another update regarding the program's progress. In the second post, President Prabowo is seen delivering a speech among other members. In the caption accompanying the post, the president stated Indonesia's commitment to achieving peace in Palestine, ensuring a ceasefire, and being ready to deploy 8,000 troops to support Gaza's reconstruction alongside the International Stabilization Force (ISF).

Public engagement and enthusiasm for this second post were greater than for the first. This second post received 120,000 likes, 30,900 comments, and 1,600 shares over a 12-day period. This indicates that in today's era, social media in this case, Instagram has become a space for public discussion and expression. In the discussion space (comment section), significant differences of opinion emerged. Some members of the public expressed critical views and even outright rejection of Indonesia's participation in the program. As written by

one account: “*admin akun! Sampein ke Pak Prabowo jangan bawa-bawa nama Indonesia apalagi masyarakat Indonesia kami gak akan gabung dengan mereka,*” This rejection uses the word “them,” implying that the “Board of Peace” program is directly initiated and spearheaded by the United States and Israel entities viewed by some as not neutral.

Concerns have arisen that Indonesia’s participation could be perceived as support for a particular side, which might make Indonesia’s long-standing strong stance in defense of Palestine appear to be weakening. Additionally, some publics have commented in support of Indonesia’s participation in the peace organization (BoP) and fully endorse the steps taken by the president. One account offered appreciation, praise, and support, stating, “*‘Presiden terhebat yang pernah saya punya., bukan hanya melindungi rakyatnya tetapi juga memikirkan perdamaian dunia..’*” The differing viewpoints from each camp then evolved into an intense public discourse.



Figure 2. public’s comments about BoP

Social media, particularly the official Instagram account @presidenrepublikindonesia, has become the primary space for the public to express opinions, support, and criticism regarding government policies. In the digital age, social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a platform for shaping public opinion and directing support and opposition (Juditha, 2025). The Instagram platform enables the rapid and widespread dissemination of information (Aini & Soegiarto, 2022), while also fostering dynamic interaction among users (Sutrisni, 2024). In the context of the Board of Peace issue, conversations in the comment section of @presidenrepublikindonesia’s posts reveal a range of sentiments, ranging from support for the government’s diplomacy, strong opposition, to a neutral stance that emphasizes the government’s need for caution in decision-making and the

demand for transparency. This phenomenon indicates that public opinion on social media can reflect broader social and political dynamics. Furthermore, the intensity of debates in digital spaces also has the potential to create polarization of opinion, especially when the issues discussed relate to national identity (Sutrisni, 2024), ideology (Amri & Yandri, 2025), and humanitarian solidarity (Gea & Rambe, 2025). Polarization can be seen in the formation of opposing opinion groups, the use of emotional language, and the tendency to reinforce one's own views without room for constructive dialogue (Rianadiwa et al., 2024).

In this analysis, the theory proposed by DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson is considered relevant for explaining the phenomenon of societal polarization emerging in the digital sphere, particularly in the comment section of the official @presidenrepublikindonesia account regarding Indonesia's participation in the Board of Peace. This theory assumes that polarization is not merely a political phenomenon, but a process of cultural division in which society splits into groups with distinct and contrasting social values and symbols (DiMaggio et al., 1996). According to the theory of DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson, comment sections are not merely spaces for public discussion but also spaces for representing culture and stages for expressing the values they uphold (Usman et al., 2025). Public reactions to posts regarding the Board of Peace can be interpreted as a form of negotiation between the state's symbolic legitimacy and the public's personal perceptions of the BoP. In this context, the attitudes reflected in comments whether supportive, neutral, or rejecting can indicate a deeper contestation of cultural meaning between the government's official narrative and the public's interpretation of the value of peace.

Furthermore, this theory is also relevant to the post-democratic Indonesian society, which is becoming increasingly diverse and open to global political discourse (Putri et al., 2024). The openness of digital spaces enhances opportunities for the public to express their views, yet simultaneously amplifies the risk of value segregation among social groups (Merchán & Motos, 2026). The polarization evident in the comment sections of the president's account, therefore, cannot be understood merely as a difference of opinion, but as a reflection of differences in cultural values and levels of trust in political institutions. Thus, this study not only describes the state of public opinion but also provides insight into the patterns of discourse emerging on social media (Maisaroh, 2024).

A study conducted by Amri and Yandri (2025) titled '*Algoritma Media Sosial dan Polarisasi Politik dalam Demokrasi Digital di Indonesia*', shows that social media algorithms play a significant role in reinforcing political polarization through filter bubble and echo

chamber mechanisms that limit the diversity of information received by users (Amri & Yandri, 2025). In this study, polarization analysis was conducted on comment sections, which serve as public discussion spaces regarding Board of Peace policies. Research by Maulidia and Saragih (2024) indicates that analyzing Instagram comments effectively reveals patterns of public attitudes toward government policies. Additionally, this study also found a dominant rejection (77%) of the policy on the destruction of imported used goods (Maulidia & Saragih, 2024). Meanwhile, Vernanda and Rahmawati (2024) reported 85% negative attitudes toward the People's Housing Savings (Tapera) policy, with only 15% of comments being positive or supportive (Vernanda & Rahmawati, 2024). This reflects how digital polarization on strategic issues has become a common phenomenon. This study is significant as it uncovers patterns of digital polarization regarding government policies, where negative comments on social media have the potential to erode public legitimacy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach using content analysis. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study aims to objectively measure and describe how Instagram content is presented. According to Bernard, content analysis is a scientific research technique designed to identify the characteristics of content and draw inferences from it in a systematic, objective, valid, and reliable (Eriyanto, 2011). The object of this study is the Instagram account @presidenrepublikindonesia's posts regarding Indonesia's participation in the Board of Peace Program. On this account, there are two posts dated January 22, 2026, and February 20, 2026. From this population, the researcher employed purposive sampling, selecting 100 comments from the top followers on each post, including comments with positive, negative, and neutral tones. This selection was based on the content of the messages, their relevance to the issue, and the level of interaction from other users.

Data collection was conducted through digital documentation and social media observation. The researcher observed comments from both posts on the @presidenrepublikindonesia account and created a coding sheet to facilitate the data categorization process. The categories for analyzing the tone of the comments (positive, neutral, and negative) were used to assess public participation. Data analysis was conducted using quantitative content analysis, specifically by identifying units of analysis consisting of each Instagram post relevant to the research issue. Next, the content was categorized based on predetermined indicators, and its frequency was calculated to identify patterns in the

occurrence of each category. The tabulated data was presented in the form of a frequency distribution table showing the dominance of themes, message types, and levels of public participation that emerged; the data was then interpreted to understand the nature of content exposure.

To ensure the accuracy of the research results, an intercoder reliability test was conducted by comparing the coding results of the three different researchers, as well as a content validity test to ensure that the analysis categories align with mass communication theory and public participation. The variable in this study is public attitude toward the Board of Peace's policies. A comment is considered supportive if it contains words of support, oppositional if it contains words of rejection, insults, and neutral if the comment consists of sentences whose direction is unclear neither supporting nor opposing. The main variables in this study are Instagram content exposure through comments, measured by frequency, theme, and message type, as well as public participation, measured based on user engagement levels such as comments, hashtag usage, and content-sharing activity using Holsti's formula (Eriyanto, 2011).

$$CR=2M/N1+N2$$

Notes:

CR = Reliability Coefficient

M = Number of samples approved by the second coder and the researcher

N1 = Number of samples approved by the second coder

N2 = Number of samples approved by the researcher

This study identified 2 posts, with the top 100 comments from each post analyzed. Using this method, the study aims to provide an empirical understanding of the extent to which content from the @presidenrepublikindonesia account influences public participation regarding Indonesia's involvement in the Board of Peace Program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A quantitative content analysis of 200 comments on two posts from the official @presidenrepublikindonesia Instagram account regarding the Board of Peace policy revealed an uneven distribution of attitudes, with a tendency toward a dominance of negative sentiments.

Table 1 Attitude Distribution Comment Crosstabulation

Attitude Distribution Comment Crosstabulation

			Comment Policy			
			positive	neutral	negative	Total
Post	1	Count	42	6	52	100
		Expected Count	23.0	3.5	73.5	100.0
		% within Postingan	42.0%	6.0%	52.0%	100.0%
	2	Count	4	1	95	100
		Expected Count	23.0	3.5	73.5	100.0
		% within Postingan	4.0%	1.0%	95.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	46	7	147	200
		Expected Count	46.0	7.0	147.0	200.0
		% within Postingan	23.0%	3.5%	73.5%	100.0%

Overall, the comments were divided into 46 supportive comments (23%), 7 neutral comments (3.5%), and 147 opposing comments (73.5%). These proportions indicate that the majority of the government's digital audience opposes Indonesia's involvement in the program, with a much higher level of opposition compared to support. The dominance of rejection (73.5%) reflects the pattern of digital public response to foreign policies deemed controversial, particularly when related to international involvement that potentially conflicts with national interests. Viewed through Entman's framing theory which states that how an issue is presented influences audience interpretation (Priyanata & Srikandi, 2026) .

Research conducted by Maulidia and Saragih (2024) shows that analyzing comments on Instagram is effective in revealing patterns of public attitudes toward government policies. Furthermore, this study also found a predominance of opposition (77%) toward the policy of destroying imported used goods (Maulidia & Saragih, 2024). Meanwhile, Vernanda and Rahmawati (2024) reported 85% negative attitudes toward the People's Housing Savings (Tapera) policy, with only 15% of comments being positive or supportive (Vernanda & Rahmawati, 2024). This study also found a relatively small proportion of neutral or non partisan comments, accounting for 3.5% of the total. From the perspective of Noelle Neumann's (1974) "Spiral of Silence," the extremely low proportion of neutral comments indicates social conformity pressure, where the audience tends to follow the majority opinion

(rejection). When 73.5% of comments express rejection, other users are reluctant to voice support for fear of being labeled “pro-government.”

Additionally, freedom of expression and the courage to post negative comments are influenced by social media’s role as an anonymous space. Consequently, people are more willing to speak out on social media than to comment directly to the government (Zordi et al., 2024). This relates to the online disinhibition effect phenomenon described by Mulya where Instagram’s anonymity allows for freer expression of opposition compared to offline media (Mulya & Susianti, 2026). Within the conceptual framework of DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson (1996) themselves, opinion polarization is identified through four main indicators: 1) increased dispersion, 2) a decrease in moderate positions, 3) increased distance between groups, and 4) the occurrence of bimodality (DiMaggio et al., 1996).

Increased Dispersion

The phenomena of social conformity and online disinhibition are increasingly evident in the dynamics of public responses in social media comment sections. Statistical analysis reveals a significant difference in the distribution of attitudes across posts ($\chi^2 = 47.541$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that public responses are not random but are influenced by the context of the published content. These findings suggest that message characteristics, issue framing, and the timing of publication can significantly influence the direction of digital discourse. In the early stages, the discussion on the first post still showed a relatively deliberative pattern with a wider variety of opinions. However, in the second post, the discourse shifted toward a more massive pattern of resistance, where comments of rejection became increasingly dominant and the discussion space tended to lead to expressions of collective opposition.

This shift in discourse patterns can be explained through the concept of the online disinhibition effect proposed by John Suler. This concept explains the tendency for individuals to express opinions more freely, emotionally, or even extremely when in a relatively anonymous digital communication environment that does not present direct social pressure (Pranata, 2014). In the context of social media, this condition often reinforces mechanisms of social conformity, where users observing the dominance of a particular attitude tend to align their responses with the majority opinion. The combination of social conformity and online

disinhibition has the potential to accelerate the consolidation of public attitudes, particularly when the issues discussed are sensitive or highly politically charged.

From a polarization analysis perspective, the distribution of attitudes in both posts also

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	47.541 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	53.316	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	45.975	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.50.

Figure 5. Chi-Square Tests Result

meets the dispersion criteria as described by DiMaggio, Evans, and Bryson (1996). The concept of dispersion refers to the degree of attitude spread within a population, indicating how widely opinions are distributed across the available attitude spectrum (DiMaggio et al., 1996). Although social media presents a wide range of perspectives (heterogeneity), this does not guarantee fair and balanced discussion. On the contrary, this diversity often serves as a temporary phase before opinions cluster and become uniform (homogeneous) within their respective (Benton & Schmidt, 2024).

Decline in Moderate Positions

The decrease in the proportion of neutral comments from 6% in Post 1 to 1% in Post 2 equivalent to an 83.33% decline indicates a significant decline in the public opinion formation process within the digital space. This finding exceeds the 50% threshold proposed by DiMaggio et al. (1996) as an indicator of polarization, where an increase in opinion extremity exceeding half of the moderate positions indicates the loss of the ambivalent space (DiMaggio et al., 1996). Further analysis of the data also reveals a low overall proportion of neutral comments (only 3.5%), reflecting the dynamics of emotional polarization where the audience tends to avoid the middle ground to align with the majority group (Rabb et al., 2023).

This phenomenon aligns with Sunstein's theory of group polarization, which states that discussions among like-minded individuals actually reinforce the extremity of opinions, thereby eroding moderate viewpoints (Sunstein, 2008). In the context of social media, opinions

tend to become increasingly extreme due to pressure to conform to the majority group, as demonstrated in Asch's experiment, where participants chose to follow the group even though they knew the answer was wrong (Alhamdika, 2025). This social pressure is reinforced by algorithms that prioritize emotional and controversial content, causing users to see opinions aligned with their own beliefs more frequently. Consequently, neutral or ambivalent comments appear less often not only because extremists are more active but also because the pressure pushes people away from the middle ground (neutrality).

Increasing Distance Between Groups

Chi-Square test results ($\chi^2 = 47.541$, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$; linear association $\chi^2 = 45.975$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.001$) indicate that the distribution of public attitudes in comments on posts related to the BoP issue is not independent across posts. This shift is reflected in an increase in the mean distance of 0.81 units on the 1-3 attitude scale, indicating a dominance of negative attitudes in the digital discourse. These findings demonstrate that social media comment sections function not only as spaces for expression but also as arenas for the formation of public consensus that can shift rapidly. In the context of digital political communication, these findings align with various studies showing that foreign policy issues and the use of the national budget often trigger polarization of opinion on social media (Durrheim & Schuld, 2025). Public rejection of the Board of Peace policy linked to costs of approximately Rp 17 trillion and the discourse surrounding the deployment of troops to Gaza reinforce these dynamics. Surveys by statistic institutions indicate that approximately 50.9% of respondents oppose the policy (AlFarisi & Carina, 2026).

The dominance of rejectionist attitudes, reaching approximately 81% in digital discourse, has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of executive policies in the online public sphere (Abdul Rahman HI, 2025). Several studies in political communication indicate that when digital polarization increases without inclusive dialogue mechanisms, the quality of public deliberation may decline and heighten the risk of opinion conflict (Avrilia et al., 2025).

Bimodality (Two-Peak Distribution)

The measurement results show a value of 0.94 for Post 1, increasing to 0.99 for Post 2; both values are close to the maximum value of 1, indicating strong bimodality in the distribution of opinions. These values suggest that the distribution of public attitudes is not concentrated in the moderate position but rather at two extreme poles. In Post 2, the distribution of comments even approaches a pure bimodal pattern with a composition of approximately 4% support and 95% rejection. Conversely, Post 1 still exhibits a weak trimodal

pattern, where the moderate attitude category remains relatively visible despite its limited number. From the perspective of digital communication analysis, these findings suggest that the social media comment section has the potential to reinforce a polarized opinion structure. When opinion distribution exhibits a bimodal pattern, the discussion space tends to be dominated by two opposing camps without a stable middle ground (Insanukamil et al., 2025). Comments in the middle (moderate) account for only about 3.5% of the total comments, meaning that discussions on social media lean more toward a division into two opposing camps rather than open, rational, and mutually respectful dialogue (deliberative). This pattern aligns with previous research indicating that social media interaction dynamics tend to encourage more extreme opinion expression compared to face-to-face discussions (Padila, 2025). Dominant comments, particularly those with a negative tone, tend to spread more quickly and are replicated by other users creating a recursive process of attitude reinforcement that further deepens the polarization gap in digital discourse.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that significant polarization of public opinion regarding the “Broad of Peace” policy on the Instagram account @presidenrepublikindonesia has occurred, as evidenced by the Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 47.541$; $p < 0.001$), confirming the dominance of rejection (73.5%), the scarcity of neutral positions (3.5%), and the widening gap between opinion groups. These findings confirm that the social media comment section is not merely a platform for expression but has transformed into an arena for the formation and consolidation of collective attitudes influenced by framing factors, algorithms, and user psychological dynamics. More specifically, the findings of this study confirm the four indicators of polarization according to DiMaggio, namely 1) increased dispersion marked by initial variation in opinions before leading to consolidation, 2) a reduction in moderate positions reflected in a drastic decline in neutral comments, 3) an increase in the distance between groups, evident from a shift in the mean attitude of 0.81 toward rejection, and 4) the emergence of bimodality with opinion distribution concentrated at two extreme poles.

The novelty of this study lies in reinforcing the relevance of DiMaggio’s polarization theory within the context of Indonesian digital communication, particularly through empirical validation of the four polarization indicators (dispersion, erosion of moderation, group distance, and bimodality) in a single integrated study. The strengths of this study include the use of a systematic quantitative approach with reliability tests that reinforce the validity of the

findings, while its limitations lie in the limited sample size and the focus on a single platform and only two posts. Therefore, future research is recommended to 1) expand the sample size and analysis period, 2) integrate qualitative analysis to understand the meaning of discourse more deeply, and 3) conduct cross-platform comparisons to obtain a more comprehensive picture of polarization within the digital communication ecosystem.

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