

REVIEW PAPER

The Efficacy of Public Opinion in Policy Formation in The Infosphere Era

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ABSTRACT

Democracy and democratic values have had a profound impact on the policy process in developed and developing democracies. Often described as a government of all the people, by all the people, and for all the people, democracy places a crucial importance on the impact of the populace on the decision-making process. Exacerbated by recent technological advancements, aggregating the populace's opinion has become easier and more streamlined, with these opinions having a more pronounced influence on the policy process. This review seeks to elucidate on the vital role public opinion plays today which policymakers must take into consideration in the policy process. It explains the role new media plays in shaping and swaying public opinion, as well as the importance of considering both domestic and foreign public reaction. By exploring this, public support's ability to bestow legitimacy on government policies is examined, particularly as it operates in developed and developing democracies. The review concludes by recommending policymakers and academia take into cognizance this new battlefield of public opinion and its national security implications in the face of the current technological evolution, in which civil societies, interest and lobby groups, advocacy think tanks, political factions and ultimately policymakers all contend in..

Keywords: Behavioral science, Cognitive biases, Decision-making, Digital communication, Information overload, social media, Public perception, Socio-cultural context.

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INTRODUCTION

The spread of democracy in contemporary history has transformed the political landscape (Casero-Ripolles, 2020) By way of definition, one proffered by heavyweight American statesman, Abraham Lincoln states that any point in time, democracy should connote: "Direct self-government over all the people, by all the people, and for all the people" (Osuji, 2006; (Nyssönen & Metsälä, 2021). Elucidating on a need for the presence of public and their right to be actively involved in the decision-making process, democracy is a system of government in which all the people of a country can vote to elect their representatives (Olayinka, 2011). An alternative but generally accepted definition states thus: "*democracy relies on procedural indicators of electoral*

democracy: universal suffrage, elections registering voter preferences faithfully, unbiased choice among alternatives, and these choices or preferences become the basis for constituting holders of public office” (Albritton & Burekul T, 2009; Dahl, 2008; Holst & Molander, 2019). Democracy comes in two variants: direct democracy and representative democracy. Direct democracy is a variant of democracy in which citizens participate actively and directly in the government’s decision-making process. On the other hand, representative democracy variant connotes a situation in which sovereign power remains firmly vested in the citizens as a collective, who exercise their political power indirectly by electing representatives.

The scope of definitions of democracy has lived up to its tenets in most democratic states. Governmental policies today have their central focus the welfare of citizens. As a result, the masses have become important stakeholders in politics. Public participation in government has expanded; elections are predominant across board; serving as a hallmark of participation, as citizens of the country can directly as individuals have a say in determining political office holders and governmental decisions (Dahl, 2008; Holst & Molander, 2019). In addition, democracy has given rise to non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, interest groups, union groups, who play an ever-increasing role in policymaking in democratic states. The roles that these new players play have been heightened by audio-visual involvement of the public through the revolution of Information and Communication Technology. The speed, reach and vast amount of information available on new media have changed the dynamics of the relationship involving the normal governmental media output and psychological operations (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020). With a more interconnected and informed world, the distinctions between press and information activities on the one hand and psychological operations on the other have become intertwined. Today, as never before, governments, specifically democratic governments are forced to uphold the principles of the maximum candour and consistency of the message to prevent undermining the credibility of the government. Owing to this, it has become pertinent to include a new factor in politics. Nowadays, the psychological factor, that is, the psychological ramification or implications of governmental policies or decisions has become an invaluable consideration in the decision-making process. It takes into consideration the information shared or message sent, the medium employed, and feedback or reaction received from hostile, neutral, or friendly audiences. It fosters an avenue to have a clearer outlook on the attitudes of opposing groups or proponents of opposing ideology and ascertain the influence wielded by such group on the decision-making process (Zartman, 2019).

“It is no longer enough that a nation develops constructive political, economic, and legal policies. They must also be psychologically sound, and this presents an entirely new set of problems to those responsible for national security planning” (Delaney, 1973)

Delaney’s points are buttressed by the actions of companies such as Cambridge Analytica who have revolutionised new media, data mining and targeted marketing through its touted ‘Psychographic Profiling’ also known as Psychometrics with its metrics: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism (OCEAN scores) (Usher & Dondio, 2020). In demonstrating the revolutionised sphere of operations, Cambridge Analytica is credited with playing vital roles in major world events including the 2016 US elections and

BREXIT, where the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union, amongst others. The effectiveness of the foregoing has alluded to the role of public opinion in democracies and has necessitated the need for psychological factoring in politics. Contemporary world events have brought to limelight the volatile involvement of public attitudes and the mass media in decision-making. With companies like Cambridge Analytica claiming to have been 4 and 5 thousand data points on every adult in the US, coupled with the ability to influence and sway them, the vital role played by public opinion in both domestic and international politics has increasingly become evident today in numerous ways (Smyth, 2019). Exacerbating the possibilities of new tech in the infosphere, now, more than ever, the world is constantly scrutinizing the gap between pronouncement/promises and performance. This recent development has called for a re-evaluation and review of the input of psychology of public opinion into policy formation, hence this review. This review adopts a secondary data analysis approach, leveraging on existing data sources to critically evaluate the subject matter, provide valuable insights, and contribute to the existing body on knowledge on this topic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Decision-Making in Democratic States

Typically, there are three basic formal political institutions common to most democratic states in which power is divided that serve as the pillars of government. The Executive (Presidency/Chancellery), the Legislature (Law-making body) and the Judiciary (Law enforcement body). The executive is the top echelon of the government, comprising of the President, Vice President, and members of cabinet. It has as its primary responsibility the implementation and administration of public policy enacted by the legislative branch. This branch in turn enacts the laws of the state and appropriate the financial resources the government needs to function (Baba, 2019). They could be unicameral like in Israel with the Knesset or bicameral as in the United Kingdom's parliaments comprising of House of Commons and House of Lords, or in the United States of America's congress with the House of Representatives and Senate. The members in the aforementioned branches come into government by way of elections by the citizens. The Judicial branch of the government interprets the laws and constitution and apply these interpretations to issues tabled before it. It includes Supreme courts, State, Customary and other types of courts. The president has the power to veto legislation created by the parliament as well as nominate heads of federal agencies. A parliament's responsibility includes confirming or rejecting nominees put forward by the president and in extenuating circumstances, can remove the President from office. Justices of Supreme Courts are not elected but rather, nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate, and have the power to overturn unconstitutional laws. To ensure a system of checks and balance, these organs of government do not function in isolation, but rather are interdependent, which helps to ensures proper and systematic functioning of the government.

It is important to state that formal institutions such as parliamentary, educational institutions must be studied in tandem with a country's informal institutions. These could include intangible but sacrosanct elements of one's community such as customs, culture, social habits,

laws, and mode of thinking (Wang et al., 2018). Both institutions have become increasingly intertwined. Informal institutions such as interest groups, public opinion, unions influence both legislative and executive arms of government. They do so by mounting pressure on their representatives in the legislature to sign or introduce policies that would benefit them. Public opinion or sentiments are able to influence the executive through a variety of means including strikes, protests, etc. to veto or proffer policies that benefit, sit well or is widely accepted by the public. Thus, in democratic states, as posited by Bobbio who asserts that:

the only way a meaningful discussion of democracy, as distinct from all forms of autocratic government, is possible is to consider it as characterized by a set of rules (primary or basic) which establish who is authorized to take collective decisions and which procedures are to be applied in making collective decisions (Bobbio, 2005).

The above assertion highlights that democracy is not only about elections but also about how government decision-making and procedures are applied (della Porta, 2019). The other democratic institutions and actors that participate in decision-making include civil society, political parties, the media, public opinion and most especially, a strong opposition in parliament (Sellers et al., 2020).

Public Opinion, Public Support, Decision Making and Legitimacy

Democracy possesses vital tenets that underline the concept of democracy. Cogent among these include transparency, accountability, and respect for public opinion. Traditionally, in democracies, there is a constitution which is a body of principles and precedents; constitutes the legal foundation for the country and sets out how the country is governed. These can be either be codified (that is a single comprehensive document) or uncoded (treaties or court cases, fundamental Acts of a legislature,) or mixed as in Australia.

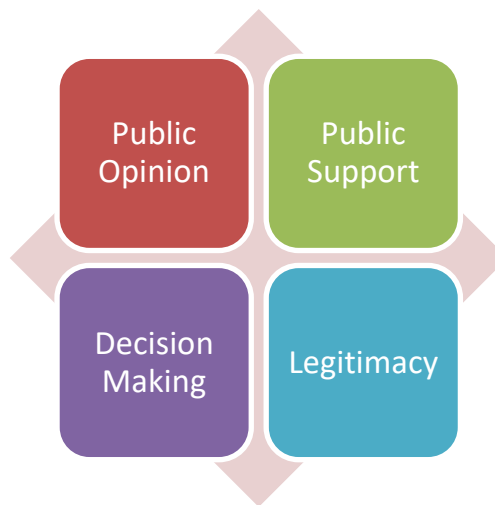


Figure 1: The role of public opinion in democracies

Public Opinion, over the years has become a vital player in politics (figure 1). For policies to gain public acceptability, and by extension be effective, the psychological dimension as a component in policy formation has become central, measurable, and ever-present (Rasmussen et

al., 2019). This is exacerbated by the words of Carl von Clausewitz who posited the expression: “Paradoxical Trinity,” stressing the importance of a balance in a mutually supportive relationship between the public, its government, and the military.

New media’s effect in mass communication fulfils the salient role of informing the public about the activities of the government, be it neutral, biased, or unbiased reporting. The outcome is communal public support for or against governmental policies, both on the domestic as well as foreign fronts. Consequently, government leadership is oft measured by its continued existence and capacity to attain its goals based on public support. The extent to which the public and government harmonise has grown to be of vital importance (Cheravitch J., 2020)

Additionally, a fundamental aspect of a representative democracy is the importance of competitive elections. It is vital that these elections are fair and seen to be fair both procedurally and substantively. Basic rights such as the freedom of press, freedom of speech, freedom of the expression, amongst others are essential as they keep citizens adequately informed to properly inform their voting choices. Consequently, an integral tenet of democracy is the ability for citizens to participate fully and freely in their societies (Bob-Milliar & Paller, 2018). As a result, it becomes pertinent that members of the public feel that whatever actions taken by the individuals they elected conform to their desires and interests; since democracy is of the people, for the people and by the people. Country wide acceptance, public support for proposed policies or governmental decisions confers on the governmental policies, legitimacy that allows the government stay in power, formulate and implement policies on behalf of the general public.

The ‘businesses or process of garnering public support for political and military endeavours has become more complex. Of paramount importance is the manner in which public support through public opinion is constantly being manipulated by what is often termed ‘biased media’ (Francis, 2018). To corroborate this, the Toffler & Toffler stresses the current media landscape is coalescing into “an interactive, self-referencing system in which ideas, information, and images flow in continuously from one medium to another” (Toffler & Toffler, 1993) Furthermore, it is posited that “a major new factor in information war results directly from the worldwide infosphere of television and broadcast news”(Toffler & Toffler, 1993). Many people have begun to realize that governmental decisions are becoming increasingly reactive to a ‘fictive’ (not a whole, relevant, or contextual truth) universe created by CNN and its various international competitors”(Vacca, 2006). This is what is more commonly referred to today as the CNN effect (Cheravitch J., 2020). Another perspective of this discourse is the use of new media as a tool for influencing opinion by the government to achieve receptiveness from the public, swaying public opinion in its favour to confer upon such policies or decisions, legitimacy.

New Media and Public Opinion

Revolutionary changes in the world's infosphere have profoundly altered the ground rules governing political competition among all nations acting in the international arena. As this applies also to internal political dynamics, actions and inactions of governments are no longer the private preserve of the expert, foreign and defence policies of all nations. Most particularly the superpowers, are subjected to immediate, intense, and almost continual exposure before the ‘court

of public opinion' (Rasmussen et al., 2019). Today, more often than before, the ability of the governments such as the U.S., and Israel to present its programs and policies both at home and abroad in a clear, compelling, and consistent fashion may well prove to be the margin of difference between success and failure (Blue, 2018)

"Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion, can change the government, practically just as much" (Abraham Lincoln) (Schramm & Wilson, 1993)

The advent and revolution of information and communication technologies has greatly impacted democratic political environments (Choi & Jee, 2021). Democracies are expected to be open and transparent, which also applies to the information sphere in these states. It is pertinent that there is free access to and freedom of information. Novel Media in general and social media has become an avenue that greatly facilitates the foregoing. The real-time feature of this new media allows direct access, unfiltered information to all and sundry. As a result, government actions are harder to obscure from the public; this has been greatly exacerbated by whistle-blowers. As opposed to governments giving out statements in newspapers and information trickling only came when it came, the government had the ability to filter out what information the public had access to. But today, for government to operate in the absence of transparency and openness has become increasingly difficult. For example, Vietnam war, was perhaps the first war 'fought on television', watched by many (Hirth, 2016) American public opinion exacerbated the American government's decision to end the war and withdraw from the country (Komiya et al., 2018). The fact that the American public could see the loss of lives of American troops and were not convinced of the benefits of engaging in the war led to public opinion that was against the war. To quote a common phrase, it was "a mean, dirty war" and without any clear-cut redeeming purpose accepted by all (Israel, 2013)

Other examples include the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the United States against racial injustice which today has spread all over the world (Cross et al., 2022). Yellow Vest protests in France which started out initially against governmental policy of a green tax on fuel before becoming broader in scope (Blavier, 2022). In Israel, the proposed annexation efforts announced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and slated for July 1, 2020, were postponed. In addition to other factors, this was largely due to public opinion, domestic and international condemnation in addition to other factors (Cavari, 2022). Another instance lies in examining the 1956 push by U.K. Prime Minister Anthony Eden to initiate the Suez Crisis (Olmstead, 2022). Besides from the fact that England was superior to Egypt, it is also pertinent to factor in the Prime Minister's belief that England was experiencing a period of decline compared to other great powers. Thus, to preserve its great power status and restore the confidence of the public in the country (Olmstead, 2022).

Furthermore, novel media has proven to be a great avenue for swaying public opinion. Partisan politics, interest groups as well as governmental administrations employ new media to tactfully put out messages or information in manners that work to their advantage. Examples are evident in American politics. Actions of Republican backed conservative think tanks and groups such as Americans for Prosperity who are Climate Change Deniers (Dunlap & Brulle, 2020). The Republican party is then financed by industries such as the Koch Industries who depend on fossil

fuel. Correspondingly, the percentage of American climate deniers has risen over the years standing at 13% as at 2019; only led by Indonesia and Saudi Arabia (Sachs, 2019). Study shows that as of 2017, 71% of Americans believe that the earth is experiencing a global warming, but just 56% said this is human induced. human induced (Ballew et al., 2019). Using the media to sway public opinion consist of efforts to paint their policies, actions in ways that convince the citizens in a bid to garner support for these policies and actions and by extension legitimacy from the masses. It has become very important that special attention be paid to new media as it does the following: allow free unrestricted access to real-time information on governmental policies, events in the government; and it serves as a battle ground for opinions and ideologies in which public support can be achieved or lost (Baum & Potter, 2019).

However, this is not to state that due to the newly found power the populace has to influence public opinion and government policies, the netizens of a state should be allowed to operate unchecked and spread intentional, malicious, misleading news or disinformation capable of tearing the social fabric of the community. A government's ability to effectively do this while not infringing upon fundamental human rights such as freedom of expression portends one of the gravest issues of our time that many democracies battle with.

The development of new media is also seen in advancements in harnessing and analysing big data and activities such as targeted advertising carried out by Cambridge Analytica where vast troves of data were harnessed, and tailored advertisements were made to sway voters (Smyth, 2019). In addition, when the revelations of whistle-blower Edward Snowden, former NSA analyst, revealed the depth of surveillance of the National Security Agency on US citizens, it garnered a lot of public blowback and condemnation that caused the government to revise its policies. Since governments have reduced abilities to filter or restrict the access of information to the public, it has become important for governments to add a new element in their considerations when making decisions or policies as the public determines the legitimacy of such. A critical factor in understanding the role media and public opinion play in shaping public policy is based in recognising that both old and new media form an arena in which government agencies, rival political actors, interest groups, and even news media organisations, compete to prioritise and frame issues. Ward asserts that 'going public' is no longer a last resort pursued by outsider interest groups without direct access to decision-makers and the influence that this confers. 'Insiders' treated by governments as stakeholders now also seek favourable media coverage and mount advertising campaigns in an effort to secure their preferred policy outcomes (Ward, 2015).

"It makes sense to ask not about the influence of media upon policymaking, but about the nature and consequences of the public discussion that media allow, and to which governments, interest groups, politicians, public servants, experts, think tanks, activists, individual journalists and media organisations, among others, may contribute" (Ward, 2015)

Typically, policymakers have invariably a lot of workload and busy schedules. A glaring motive that interest groups of the public often have for 'going public' is the ability to generate sufficient public and media attention to elevate their agenda to the top of the policymaker's agenda: those 'interested in influencing policy may first need to influence the media' (Aral & Eckles, 2019). In the same vein, Schudson went ahead to describe the news media as an amplifier: "When

the media offer the public an item of news, they confer on it public legitimacy” (Schudson, 2019). Consequently, public debate of issues typically happens in both old and new media, and it is a continuous struggle between stakeholders to gain support from both the polity and policymakers.

Efficacy of Public Opinion in Developed Versus Developing Democracies

It is important to state that democracies differ from one another. Although being regarded as a democratic state, democracies are not always on the same par as other democracies, hence they function or operate differently. A distinguishing feature is the perceived level of development of these democratic states. In the words of Delaney, psychology as a component in policy formation including policy making, public opinion evidently plays a more germane and obvious role in more industrialised countries than their less industrialised counterparts (Copelovitch & Pevehouse, 2019). In this discourse, democracies like that of the USA and predominantly western Europe are regarded as developed democracies while democracies encompassing the African and South American continents and also some eastern European countries, are regarded as developing democracies (Zezeza, 2019). The level of openness and transparency in developing democracies such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, differ greatly from developed democracies such as France, the United Kingdom, USA (Isbell & Appiah-Nyamekye, 2018; Ollerton et al., 2019). Developing democracies are plagued by a considerably lower level of openness and transparency with fundamental human rights often infringed upon with impunity, such as, freedom of the press and information. Journalists or citizens who speak out against the government are often imprisoned without due process; platforms such as twitter and other new media platforms are routinely shut down. When public protests government actions are carried out such as in Belarus currently after a contested election, a large number of these protests end up with cases of police brutality, indiscriminate arrests and generally more harm than good is often the outcome. The police and law enforcement agencies become tools of political elites who act as though more powerful than law courts and the constitution. As a result, although these states officially are democracies and hold elections, the influence that public opinion confers on the political elites is far less and perhaps in some cases negligent.

Therefore, the public has reduced powers to hold the government accountable or act as some a check and balance system. Consequently, they are unable to effectively be included in direct and indirectly, decision making, such as elections as they are seldom conducted free and fair, due to election rigging and malpractices. From the foregoing, developed democracies tend to give public opinion more importance and prevalence than in developing democracies; they take into consideration potential public reaction, specifically domestic reactions when making decisions and policymaking. Owing to this, Burstein asserts that the truth in the commonplace assumption: that policymakers in strong democracies are strongly influenced by shifts in public opinion. Such policymakers upon a democratic assumption monitor and respond to public opinion showing that public opinion can influence policy, sometimes powerfully so (Burstein, 2010).

In Nigeria, there are a few notable examples. Cogent among which include the arrest and continual detention of the leader of a secessionist group, Nnamdi Kanu by the Nigerian government for fomenting unrest within the country through his online presence and radio programs. Another example is the End SARS protests police brutality, that took place in October

2020 (Uwazuruike, 2020). It started as an aggregation of youth frustrated with the status quo of police-community relations. It started online on social media applications like twitter and spilled over into the offline world having enormous repercussions. In other African countries, the internet access to social media platforms are routinely blocked (Freyburg & Garbe, 2018; Papadopoulou & Maniou, 2021).

Matters pertaining to securitisation, policymaking and public opinion are also a cogent distinguishing factor and are expounded upon. The securitisation policy refers to when a government terms a matter a national security issue. As a result, the usual procedures, bureaucracy, steps involved in a typical issue are often suspended. This policy is usually at loggerheads with widespread receptibility. The dilemma lies in national security decisions where actions or policies being proposed by the governmental elites may not be as widely accepted by the populace but are supposedly for the good of national security and securing national interests (Black et al., 2016). Often times, at this juncture, the government do not seek to obtain legitimacy from public opinion on decisions or policies pertaining to national security. More often than not, fundamental human rights championed by democracies are often infringed upon or suspended during such periods. Examples of this include the initial privacy concerns on contact tracing for the COVID-19 virus, and revelations from former NSA staff and whistle-blower Edward Snowden.

In national security issues, there is less transparency and flow of information. Terrorists be it lone wolves or terrorist groups capable of inflicting insecurities on a national security grave danger in a society tend to hide amidst the populace. As a result, to effectively combat them, information or intelligence acquired by the security architecture often has to remain highly confidential. Most governments of developed democracies operate with the realisation that the information leaking out to the public is a strong reality or a possible ensuing Commission of Inquiry; thus, they put into consideration the potential domestic and international reactions. In developing democracies where there is a generally less available flow of and access to information, during securitisation, this available information is restricted even further. But when this information becomes available, any form of public opposition is often met with an iron fist by the government and when taken to court as Barzilai posited, the court is often inclined to side with the government on national security issues (Barzilai, 2003). Conversely, in (Giles et al., 2008) they posit that certain decisions reached by the Supreme Court have been shown to coincide with public opinion (Badas, 2021; Barnum, 1985; Casper, 1976). From a study carried out by Black et al., “the empirical results indicate that when justices anticipate public opposition to their decisions, they write clearer opinions when their rulings contradict popular sentiment in an effort to maintain public support as best as they can”. Their research results suggest public opinion has an influence on the Court (Black et al., 2016).

Echoed by Casillas et al., court cases of national security nature, such as the issue of privacy in Israel, allude to the strategic model of judicial decision making which implies justices tend to take into cognisance public opinion when making decisions (Casillas et al., 2011; Enns & Wohlfarth, 2013). It is important to state that a consistent pattern of capitulating to public opinion has the propensity to cause damage to the legitimacy of the Courts.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

The role of the new media as a facilitator of public opinion that bestows legitimacy on decisions of policymakers faces a plethora of challenges. Amongst which include the very nature of new media that makes it efficient can also be counterproductive (Gimpel et al., 2021) That is, it's free and unrestricted access to vast amounts of information, and real-time characteristic. It often becomes a tool for misinformation and disinformation. As seen in the information warfare and psychological operations between Russia and the United States, computer bots, trolls, propagators of disinformation, conspiracy theorists, have grown in recent years (Guess & Lyons, 2020). As a result, foreign entities are able to considerably influence attitudes and public opinions within another country on internal, domestic matters. Therefore, it complicates the access to the truth because of an overflow of information.

In addition, typically new media that aids the formation of public opinion, information is passed disseminated by means of likes, share, .retweets, And as a result, the initial information because it has passed through the hands of numerous users can be adulterated, modified, rephrased and at the end of the long chain, its initial meaning may end up being lost in translation as with the BLM movement where it is not clear if the group is political and how broad the scope it covers is, as it has been seen to be vocal about seemingly unrelated events such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Dart, 2022).

Furthermore, another challenge is in the nature of media and “attention span”. Initial public reactions tend to die out or fade out after a period of time with people accepting such new changes as the norm and learn to live with it. News media tend to lose interest in an issue once it ceases to be newsworthy. It raises the question posed by Davis “Why do some problems attract national attention and others pass without comment?” (Davis, 2003). This school of thought is echoed by Miller and Reichert’s in the assertion that “the opportunity to shape a public conversation about policy in the media will vary, not because the public discussion of policy matters less at different stages of the policy cycle but because a winner will eventually emerge in any contest between elites to frame (or reframe) a policy issue” (Miller & Riechert, 2011).

Lastly, regardless of the advancement in the infosphere, there are still instances that despite being democracies, governments tend to disregard public opinion. Among which include the growing abuse of the securitisation policy particularly in developing democracies, giving the political elites in such countries leeway to infringe upon fundamental human rights, the tenets of democracy and act with impunity.

CONCLUSION

The need to take into cognisance and factor in the psychology as a component in policy formation including policymaking has grown in recent years with the revolution of the infosphere. The receptibility and acceptability of the public, i.e. public opinion, domestic and international reactions alike have become paramount in governance and politics. The public in democracies have obtained additional power, gaining the chance to be more involved in governance and decision making. Policies made despite passing through executive and legislature usually also have

to pass the ‘public acceptance test’ as this confers upon such decisions, particularly controversial policies legitimacy. When accepted, the chances of protests or riots are greatly lowered. However, owing to the revolution of infosphere, the ease of influencing and manipulating public opinion has become a new battlefield in which civil societies, interest groups, lobby groups, advocacy think tanks, political factions and ultimately policymakers all contend in.

Furthermore, in matters of national security, and the securitisation policy is enacted in matters the government decides are matters of National Security, public opinion, reactions still hold but not as efficient because such periods are marked by infringements upon fundamental human rights such as privacy. In summation, the words of would perhaps suffice. He attests to the assumption that policymakers in democracies are strongly and powerfully influenced by shifts in public opinion; underscoring that policymakers in democracies monitor and respond to public opinion.

This necessary introduction of idiosyncratic biased elements into the crux of a country’s decision-making process is plagued by, immense uncertainty, and substantial risk. These however give rise to the question of the possibility that exists for policy makers to make decisions of the highest quality regardless of the basic perceptions plagued by emotional alterations enshrined into the fabric of decision-making (Olmstead, 2022). Thus, it is becoming increasingly evident that a need exists for further research on this discourse. In addition, if psychological limitations corrupt the process of decision-making at basic elementary levels, steps or contingencies that can be embarked upon to aid decision makers in reaching such preferred decision outcome would have to be addressed.

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