THE INFLUENCE OF GROUPTHINK AND BOUNDED RATIONALITY IN DECISION-MAKING ON PUBLIC POLICY

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ABSTRACT

In public policy, the decision-making process can be influenced by several factors, including groupthink and bounded rationality. However, decision making must still be done with a systematic approach, thinking, and choosing the alternative with the lowest risk from the existing alternatives. Decision making without careful consideration, especially regarding public policy, will be very vulnerable to public criticism because it has political content and is related to the interests of many people. Based on literature studies, the existence of groupthink and bounded rationality can have a positive or negative influence on the decisions taken. This research is to describe the influence of groupthink and bounded rationality on decision making, the results show that groupthink and bounded rationality can influence decision making. Groupthink can influence positively and negatively in the decision-making process. The positive influence can improve group performance and show better results, while the negative influence limits people's thinking, power hierarchies and leadership pressure. Bounded rationality can cause bias in decision making.

| KEYWORDS | groupthink, bounded rationality, cohesiveness |

INTRODUCTION

The decision-making process involves selecting or determining the best alternative from several options systematically to address a problem. Obtaining a quality decision is not easy because it is influenced by internal and external factors. Some factors that can influence decision-making include groupthink and bounded rationality.

Public policy and services have a broad scope, as they encompass various fields such as economics, politics, education, trade, industry, social, cultural, legal,

and so on. Public policy is a series of wise decisions made by an individual or a group of people to achieve specific goals within society. There are two characteristics of public policy:

1. Public policy is something easy to understand because its meaning is the things done to achieve national goals;
2. Public policy is something easy to measure because its scope is clear, namely, the extent to which the goals have been achieved.

Thus, public policy is closely related to state administration, central government, local government, and governmental institutions in fulfilling the needs of society through public or general policies. Public policy is a government product aimed at solving public problems or anticipating potential issues that may become public problems. Decision-making in public policy-making can be influenced by the presence of groupthink and bounded rationality according to the situations and conditions that may occur. This article focuses on discussing the influence of groupthink and bounded rationality on the decision-making process in the public sector.

Theoretical Studies

Strategic management.

Strategic management is used as a guide in carrying out specific actions to achieve the expected goals. Strategic management is a series of decisions and actions formulated based on consideration of the internal and external environment of the organization to achieve organizational goals in the long term (Efri Novianto, 2019). Strategies are innovative and must be decided at all times taking into account the development of the situation to win the competition. The strategic components consist of setting goals in accordance with internal and external factors, determining the environment related to achieving the objectives that have been set, and creating competitive advantages in the scope of business, and formulating scenarios that actualize the realization of goals by combining these elements.

Strategy consists of aspects of future planning, which are designed through various considerations, selection, and implementation of strategic choices that are considered appropriate for environmental change (Mintzberg in Kasahara, 2015). Table 1 states the fundamentals of strategic management.

Table 1. Characteristics of Strategic Management

No	Information	Strategic Management
1	Assumption	Radical change, unpredictable unsustainability
2	Style	The environment must be influenced proactively and interactively
3	Process	Real Time
4	Equipment	Assumptions and responses
5	Competition	Chain of temporary competitive advantage
6	External	Scenarios/stories to achieve strategic goals
7	Person in charge	Leadership and staff

Strategic management that is targeted appropriately can cultivate the strength to exploit opportunities in achieving predetermined goals in line with the

established vision. On the other hand, it can reduce weaknesses through adaptation to changes in the external environment and mitigate the negative effects caused by potential threats.

Theory of change

An organization or institution is required to adapt to various external and internal changes. Organizations or institutions need to continuously innovate to meet changing consumer demands and face competitors (Winardi, 2004). Changes occur because organizations must adjust to various regulations set by the government, react to business and economic events, and respond to management perceptions, choices, and actions. Internal factors can be caused by organizational redesign to adapt to the strategies established in business growth. The purpose of change in organizations is to anticipate change itself through proactive actions. Decision making. Decision making is an important process for every organization and is closely related to the overall performance of the company (Yu and Raksong in Tarmo, 2020). Decisions are made on issues of better resource utilization, facing emerging challenges, enhancing organizational efficiency, facilitating innovation, and successfully competing in the business environment (Mutonyi et al., 2020). Organizations need to make decisions quickly and accurately according to changes in the environmental situation to achieve their goals.

Decision making according to Baron and Byrne (2008) is a process involving a combination of individuals or groups and integrating existing information with the aim of choosing one of several possible actions. Thus, decision making is the process of selecting the best or most relevant alternative for overall performance improvement by integrating acquired information, to face challenges in achieving success in business competition. Groupthink. Groupthink is a phenomenon that occurs when individuals in a group agree on certain decisions that disregard critical reasoning and evaluation of decisions (Baptis, 2015; Janis, 1991). Psychologist Irving Janis (1972) argued that groupthink occurs when a group becomes too cohesive and vulnerable to suppression when differences of opinion arise, resulting in a lack of consideration of alternative actions. According to Mulyana in Pamungkas et al. (2018), groupthink can be understood as a decision-making process that shows a decrease in mental efficiency, reality testing, and moral judgment due to group pressure. Another idea proposed by West and Turner in Pamungkas et al. (2018) is that groupthink refers to the decision-making method used by group members when their desire to reach agreement outweighs their motivation to achieve consensus. The presence of overly cohesive individuals in a group may lead to a decrease in consideration of alternative options in the decision-making process.

There are three main assumptions (West & Turner in Pamungkas et al., 2018) in groupthink: (1) there are conditions in which the group has a high level of cohesion. This assumption states that the group has cohesive characteristics that lead to high morale, to work together within a certain time frame. This unity makes group members feel like one, as if glued together. (2) Problem-solving is essentially an integrated process. All members of the group will try to connect with each other and participate, for fear of rejection. This condition makes group members tend to resist feedback from others. They tend to maintain relationships between group members rather than focus on issues that are the group's considerations. (3) The

decision-making process by the group is a complex activity. This refers to situations that occur in group decision-making and tasks that are group-oriented. The decision-making process of small groups is often more complex due to age differences, competitive nature, group size, intelligence, gender composition, and leadership style.

Bounded rationality

Simon (1957) as cited in Bazerman (2006) introduced the term bounded rationality and observed limitations on individuals in making rational decisions. Rationality is defined as the process in decision making that is expected to achieve optimal results, based on accurate assessments of decision-makers' values and risk preferences. The limitations of rationality include limitations in obtaining information about problem definitions, data, time constraints, and costs that affect the quantity and quality of information, limited memory, as well as limited intelligence and perception. Rationality serves as the basis or core value as optimal decisions are made in ideal situations and conditions. Bounded rationality leads to decision-making processes under situational and conditional limitations in obtaining relevant input or information using cognitive abilities to make optimal decisions.

Rationality in the context of decision making refers to "the decision-making process that is logically expected to produce optimal outcomes, with accurate assessments of decision-makers' values and risk preferences" (Bazerman in Drugova, 2019). This position is also known as the framework of bounded rationality, where individuals can be better understood by considering their complex real-life situations, rather than normative decision-making processes (Simon in Drugova, 2019). People tend to simplify decisions, and this often occurs in heuristics. Kahneman (2011) explores three common types of heuristics, namely influence heuristics, availability heuristics, and representativeness heuristics. Heuristics occur when emotional evaluation overlaps with cognitive reasoning and forces individuals to rely on pre-formed stereotypes. Some cognitive, psychological, and behavioral characteristics that contradict rational approaches will emphasize their limitations in decision making.

Cohesiveness

This reflects the level of shared importance held by a group. Cohesion becomes important when members of a group prioritize group harmony and solidarity by investing their energy in maintaining cohesion rather than making the right decision (Baptis; Janis; and Taman in Tarmo, 2020). Group cohesion has been proven to be beneficial because it can bring benefits to group members together, thus reducing conflicts within the group (Mullen et al. in Tarmo, 2021). However, cohesion has limitations when there is pressure to maintain this unity, thus overriding individual confidence and freedom to gather, present, and digest different information, resulting in groupthink (Banwo et al.; Baptis; and Brawley et al. in Tarmo, 2020). So, cohesiveness is a group that prioritizes harmony and solidarity that can bring benefits in reducing conflicts that lead to groupthink.

Each group member will be very careful not to express opinions different from other members. Typically, group members are unwilling to object to solutions they consider inappropriate. Each member is unwilling to take risks, and if they

disagree with the decision made by the group, they will be considered strange and may be excluded by other members.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article is prepared using *literature review* with *literature search* either international or national referring to journal databases such as www.scholargoogle.com, https://publish-or-perish.en.softonic.com, and www.semanticsholar.org. The journal database was chosen because of its easy-to-use features in article search. The keywords used are "*groupthink*", "*bounded rationality*", "*decision making*", and "*government*". At the beginning of the search, there were around 230 articles from 2016 to 2023, then screened so that 11 articles were selected that were considered relevant in supporting the writing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Government organizations at the central and regional levels, and government agencies (departments) certainly have interests related to public policies that will be decided or determined. Central or local government leaders have an important role in this, so the potential to force ideas or ideas can be very strong (*groupthink*). Information needed in the public policy-making process sometimes lacks internally or externally (*bounded rationality*).

The articles selected as references in this study have a time span of 2016 - 2021. The most articles in 2020 were 3 articles, articles in 2021, 2018, and 2019 were 2 articles each, and articles in 2017 and 2016 each had one article each from the total articles (Figure 1).

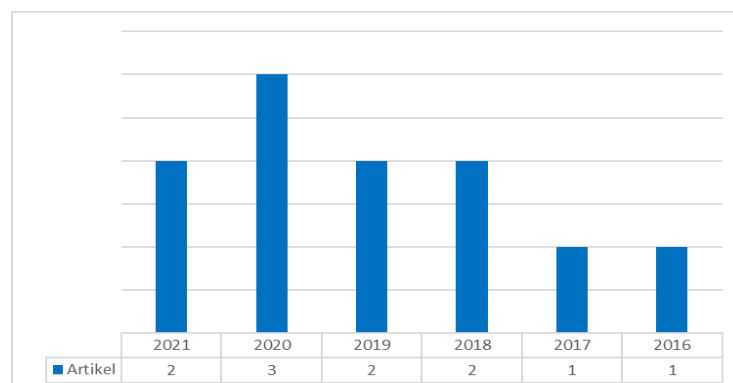|	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
■ Artikel	2	3	2	2	1	1

Figure 1. Distribution of the number of articles in the range of 2016-2021

The topic used as a discussion in this review is the influence of groupthink and bounded rationality on the decision-making process, so that it can be described in three variables (Table 2).

Table 2. Variable data

Number of articles discussing	Number of articles discussing	Percentage (%)
Decision Making	7	39
Groupthink	8	44
Bounded rationality	3	17

The variables that are widely discussed in the article are decision making (7 articles or 39%), groupthink variables (8 articles or 44%), and bounded rationality (3 articles or 17%), while some related articles can be presented in the following table 3.

Table 3. Review Articles

Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
Jakub Rybacki, 2020, Are Central Banks' Research Teams Fragile Because of Groupthink in the Area of Monetary Policy? Evidence on Inflation Targeting, The Polish Journal of Economics, DOI: 10.33119/GN/128216, Gospodarka Narodowo	*Decision making, groupthink,* and *big data*	Research organized in major central banks, research organizations. Research that conducted by the US Federal Reserve, Bundesbank, and Bank of England.	Greater diversity would theoretically protect the retrieval process decisions from *psychological* biases. If there are benefits from diversification, research that Concentrated will most likely be susceptible to *groupthinker biases*, i.e. make decisions based on the opinions of a narrow group of people. *Groupthinking bias* is concerned with confirmation of views joint and censorship of dissent.	There is a positive relationship between the implementation of research and deviation of inflation from the target. Conclusions based on the equation not statistically strong.
Ethan S. Wilt, 2021, A Study of Groupthink and Multiple Advocacy in Presidential Foreign	*Decision making* and *groupthink*	Study literature on the decision-making of several US presidents	Groupthink is crippling Deliberation by engendering conformity, cohesion,	This framework provide reference to cases of past and future foreign policy crises.

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Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
Policy Fiascos, The Cupola, Student Publication 923, Scholarship at Gerttyburg College.		regarding foreign policy.	and replacing critical thinking with irrationality.	
Dennis C. Grube and Anna Killick, 2021, Groupthink, Polythink and the Challenges of Decision-Making in Cabinet Government, Published by Oxford Ubiversity Press of the Hansard Society.	*Decision making, groupthink,* and *polythink*	Study the literature on the psychology of group decision-making by conducting interviews with ministers, civil servants and special advisers in the UK.	Study the literature on the psychology of group decision-making to examine the extent to which groupthink is still inherent in the process of cabinet government in the UK. The strongest driver of groupthinking is the psychological factor of the tendency towards the conflict of each prime minister.	Blair's government, as Chilcot and others have pointed out, is clearly vulnerable to groupthink. The government is led by a strong leader, with a tendency for short, closed-door cabinet discussions rather than open debates.
Estining Pamungkaa, Ismi Dwi Astuti, Andre Novi Rahmanto, 2018, The Problem of Tagline and City Branding Formulation in Purbalingga Regencies: Bureaucracy Groupthink Domination and the Cohesiveness Illusion of Stakeholders, International Journal of Progressive Sciences and Technologies, Vol.9.No.1 June 2018.	*Groupthink, cohesiveness, tagline, domination,* and *bureucracy*	This research is a qualitative research with an interpretive approach. Primary data is taken from texts or discourses about the purpose of problems that occur in society, especially those expressed through social media. Secondary data were obtained from relevant	Structural factors are another factor that causes this group to think. These factors include: isolation and lack of leadership communicative groups. Group isolation means the moment when a group tries hard not to be influenced by the situation and that world of thought is beyond that. This condition is deliberately taken, and results in the group structure becoming	Showing from stakeholders shown by groupthink theory, so that the mentality of criticism or just comparative opinions from other stakeholder members is not accommodated. This group deliberately illustrates how stakeholders actually do it. This illusion of maximum cohesiveness negates the possibility of other ideas and creativity.

Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
		literature and previous research	limited immune to external reality or situations that occur outside the group.	
Daisuke Asaoka, 2018, Collective Intelligence or Groupthink? Group Decision Making Under The Japanese Companies Act, Corporate Board: Role, Duties el Composition/ Volume 14, issue 2, 2018	*Decision making, groupthink*, Self-confidence, and polarization	The Companies Act requires that the board of directors have three or more directors, and thus requires group decision-making within the company.	The group's decision-making model suggests that this can lead to a lack of investment in the company. Providing flexibility to managers in organizational design is desirable because it can accommodate the internal characteristics and tendencies of the company as well as facilitate the establishment of start-ups, new subsidiaries, and joint ventures.	This section shows the results of empirical studies on the positive and negative aspects of group and individual decision making and offers theoretical models of group and individual decisions. First, we show findings for collective intelligence, then findings for groupthink. Finally, we build a decision model.
Lisa Adhrianti, 2016, Kondisi Pendahulu dan Gejala Groupthink dalam Dinamika Komunikasi Politik	*Groupthink, Political group communication*, and *draft law kip*	This study is postpositivist with qualitative approximation. The method used in this study is a case study. In general, this study confirms that groupthink occurs in the dynamics of communication in the Drnft Legislation, KIP Group Law, Committee of	Discussion and decision-making of public bodies. There are several that produce group symptoms in the DPR RI, namely group cohesiveness is not based on factors of fear or reluctance of the group leader figure in the science group, the presence of pressure (for task completion, fatigue and the will of interest	The phenomenon of groupthink in the context of political communication within the scope of a legislative group in the Indonesian parliament whose members are multipar has a heterogeneous background, but often results in controversial and unpopular decisions.

Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
		People's Representatives, Commission I	of the group executive)	
Crecencia Godftey Tarmo, Faisal H. Issa, 2020, An analysis of groupthink and decision making in collectivism culture: the case of a public organization in Tanzania, International Journal of Public Leadership, Vol.18, Emerald Publishing Limited.	*Decision making, Groupthink, cohesiveness*, Trust, and Conformity	The study population is Directors, Managers, Unit Heads, District Registration Officers and other officials in 12 administrative regions including among the 27 regions that make up mainland Tanzania.	Shows that there are predictors of groupthink about high trust, suitability and leadership promotion in group decision-making in the organization. Moreover, the diversity of group members alone suggests there is not enough reason to avoid Groupthink.	The results also showed no significant relationship between members' past experiences in decision-making and current members' behavior to choose or not choose critical analysis of alternatives before taking decisions in groups. This suggests that past experiences do not influence current member behavior or encourage critical analysis of alternatives before making decisions.
Dina, Sugeng Rusmiwari, 2017, Pengambilan Keputusan Rasional dan Bounded Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai, Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Politik, Vol.6 No.2, ISSN. 2442-2962	*bounded rationality*, *Rational Decision,* and *employee performance*	This study used a quantitative type of research. The sample used *purposive sampling*, so that it obtained 15 respondents consisting of 5 employees and 10 representatives from each RT / RW in Beji Village, Junrejo	Rational decision making is able to influence other people or groups through several alternative solutions to problems or the achievement of desired goals in an existing situation and condition. Rational decision making is formed by seven indicators, namely rational decision-making	The results of this study prove that rational and *bounded* decision making has a very positive influence on employee performance, known as with calculated values (2,521 and 3,624) there is an increase in performance of 66.7%. Based on these results, in improving employee

Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
		District, Batu City.	models, behavior, level of support, tasks, relationships, abilities and information.	performance, a quick and decisive decision-making process is needed so that it plays an important role in creating employee behavior.
Rita Yuliana, Rahman Hakim, Hanif Yusuf, 2020, Determinan Bias Boundary dan Bias Pengambilan Keputusan: Perspektif Bounded Rationality Theory, Jurnal Bisnis dan Akuntansi, Vol.16 No.1 Juni 2020.	*bounded rationality* and *Bias*	The review literature was used to analyze thirty-four articles from 1986 to 2018 from well-known journals such as science direct, emerald, & Jstor related to decision-making by auditors and accountants	A decision may have gone through a series of systematic and logical processes, but not necessarily the decision or opinion given is completely free of bias. This bias can arise due to cognitive factors inherent in human interaction. Decision makers consider determining factors such as task complexity, format of information presentation, quality and quantity of information/data, situation/environment, competence, methods, experience, personality traits and motivation before making a decision.	The results showed that there are nine determining biases, namely the complexity of the task, the format of information presentation, the quality and quantity of information/data, situation/environment, competence, methods, experience, personality and motivation.
Elena A. Drugova, Olga N. Kalachikova, 2019, Bounded Rationality, Uncertainty, and Complexity as	*Decision making, bounded rationality,* Uncertainty, dan complexity	Empirical case study related to the launch of a new postgraduate education	Case analysis shows unclear authority of the institutions involved, unclear regulations, non-involvement of	Decision making in universities cannot be implemented in a completely rational way due to the impact of limited rationality

Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making	Research results
Decision Making Contexts: A case of One Ubiversity in Russia, European Journal of Contemporary Education, Publised in the Slovak Republic, E-ISSN 2305-06746		program as an in-depth investigation of the chain of related decisions at one of the universities in Russia.	important stakeholders in the decision-making process, lack of experience and expertise, and unclear procedures. This case is interpreted through the lens of organized anarchy theory; perspectives of power and authority; risk aversion perspective; and a limited rationality perspective.	and the high levels of ambiguity, novelty, and movement inherent in social and organizational contexts.
Distra Asniar, Sarwititi Sarwoprasodjo, 2019. *Relationship between Groupthink Phenomena and Neighborhood Leadership Style in Cikarang Village*, Jurnal Komunikasi Pembangunan, Volumne 17, No1.	*Leadership style, groupthink, neighborhood leader*	This research uses a quantitative approach supported by qualitative data with respondents as many as 30 RT groups located in Cikarawang Village, Dramaga District, Bogor Regency.	The provoking factor of *groupthink* is the high cohesiveness in In groups, which can be seen through the presence of members in meetings, namely As many as 50% of the group mentioned that few members were present at the when the RT meeting was held. Further groupthink trigger factors is a provocative situation measured through an indicator of anxiety with As many as 43.3% of the group said they rarely felt anxious in the face	The results showed that there is no relationship between the leadership style of the RT chairman and the phenomenon groupthink in RT meetings. This condition is due to the dominant leadership style The chairman of RT is *laissez faire*, so it has no connection with the decline critical ability of RT group members in the phenomenon of groupthink.

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Article identity	Variables used	Object of study	The role of *groupthink* and *bounded rationality* towards decision-making problems in RT meetings.	Research results

Discussion

Groupthink in decision-making processes has both positive and negative impacts. According to Kinicki (2000), the positive impacts of groupthink on decision-making processes are: (1) group decisions can provide more experienced and diverse information to address existing problems, (2) group decisions can view situations from various different perspectives, (3) group decisions can understand the rationale behind the final decision to be made, (4) group decisions can solve problems through consensus, and (5) group decisions can train less experienced decision-makers and actively involve them. According to Syamsi (2000), the benefits of group decisions (groupthink) include: (1) the decision is perceived as fair to all group members overall, (2) a means for each member to express their opinions even if they differ, (3) providing opportunities for members to express how to solve a problem according to their own opinions, (4) training group discipline through social pressure, and (5) being able to cooperate in solving organizational problems.

In addition to the positive impacts, groupthink also has negative impacts. According to Syamsi (2000), the weaknesses of group decisions (groupthink) in the decision-making process are: (1) if there is no consensus and each member insists on their own opinions, it will create tension, (2) the tension often leads to discomfort, so in many cases, members will always try to undermine each other, (3) group decisions usually take quite a long time, (4) group decisions, if made frequently, will reduce the credibility of top leadership, especially if top leadership plays a lesser role in the decision-making process, (5) individual responsibility decreases, and (6) in case of failure, blame or responsibility will be thrown around. According to Immamiyah (2013), the final analysis of Janis's work shows several negative impacts of groupthink in decision-making, namely: (1) discussions are very limited to only a few decision alternatives, (2) problem-solving options that were originally selected tend not to be re-evaluated or reconsidered, (3) alternative problem-solving options that were originally rejected are never reconsidered, (4) never seeking or soliciting opinions from experts in the field, and if there are other advice or considerations, they are selected based on members' preferences, (5) tend not to see the possibility of other groups opposing actions, thus not being prepared to anticipate them, and (6) policy targets are not surveyed thoroughly and comprehensively.

Groupthink is actually beneficial for decision-making processes because with group thinking, information is more comprehensive and considerations can be discussed together and thoroughly, resulting in quality decision-making outcomes. In certain situations and conditions, aiming to dominate the decision-making process

due to specific interests by exerting pressure, leadership domination, and cohesiveness, then groupthink becomes less beneficial in achieving quality decision-making. Decision-making for public policies is influenced by groupthink due to the inherent power of local officials, departments, or governments.

Rational decision-making has a positive impact on performance. Identifying limited will as one of the causes of biased decision-making presented by Thaler (2000) in Bazerman (2006). Limited will refers to the tendency to prioritize current attention over future attention. This behavior leads to temporary and inconsistent motivation. Thaler (2000) in Bazerman (2006) also identifies limited personal interests as one of the causes of biased decision-making. Limited personal interests are related to the assessment of fairness that arises when decision-makers are required to interact with others in the social community, thus affecting emotions and behavior. Situational problems such as wage gaps, limited budget distributions, promotions, rankings, and pricing are triggered by limited personal interests.

Identifying limited awareness as a factor causing decision bias is proposed by Chugh, et al. in Yuliana et al. 2020. This factor refers to the failure to identify clear warnings and important information that is already available. Forms of limited awareness include (1) ignoring clear information, (2) not paying attention to real environmental changes, (3) tending to focus only on some of the problems being faced, because limited awareness is faced by (4) groups, (5) negotiators, and (6) third-party bidders. Limited knowledge about possible alternative selections and the lack of clear decision-making rules, the absence of risk assessment, and understanding of its consequences. Stakeholders cannot identify criteria and accurately weigh all relevant alternatives, calculate, and choose among these alternatives (Bazerman, 2006)

CONCLUSION

Power relations within bureaucratic structures that are intertwined with the authority of local leaders or governments make decision-making centralized. The design of decisions that concern the public is often elaborated in power relations aimed at achieving established goals. This is what makes groupthink rooted because it is actually closely related to the political dimension. The existence of bureaucratic systems and bureaucratic structures allows groupthink to spread to society, and the manifestation of groupthink is a political manifestation.

Group decision-making does not necessarily result in better performance compared to individual decision-making, and instead potentially leads to low public trust. This means that organizations no longer need to mandate group decision-making, so there needs to be situations where group decisions are necessary and certain situations are handled individually. Phenomena like groupthink can actually be prevented by taking several steps. This prevention effort is intended to make the group decision-making process run in an egalitarian and democratic manner.

Decision-making in public policy cannot be fully rationalized, as it has impacts from limited rationality and high levels of ambiguity, novelty, and movement

inherent in social and organizational contexts. Limited rationality affects the quality of decision-making, hence strategic thinking is needed in the process of selecting strategic alternatives in the decision-making process.

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