

Vol. 8 No. 2 (2024)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25139/jsk.v8i2>

PUBLISHED: 2024-07-24

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Kutipan dari Keputusan Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, Riset dan Teknologi
Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia

Nomor 158/E/KPT/2021
Peringkat Akreditasi Jurnal Ilmiah Periode 1 Tahun 2021

Nama Jurnal Ilmiah

Jurnal Studi Komunikasi

E-ISSN: 25497626

Penerbit: Fakultas Ilmu Komunikasi Universitas dr. Soetomo

Ditetapkan Sebagai Jurnal Ilmiah

TERAKREDITASI PERINGKAT 2

Akreditasi Berlaku selama 5 (lima) Tahun, yaitu
Volume 5 Nomor 1 Tahun 2021 Sampai Volume 9 Nomor 2 Tahun 2025

Jakarta, 09 December 2021

Plt. Direktur Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi,
Riset, dan Teknologi



Prof. Ir. Nizam, M.Sc., DIC, Ph.D., IPU, ASEAN Eng
NIP. 196107061987101001



Public opinion on Indonesia's capital relocation policy: a netnographic analysis

Gatut Priyowidodo^{*)}, Chory

School of Communication, Universitas Kristen Petra
121-131 Siwalankerto Street, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: gatpri@petra.ac.id and Phone Number: + 6231 8439040

How to Cite This Article: Priyowidodo, G. & Chory, C. (2024). Public opinion on Indonesia's capital relocation policy: a netnographic analysis. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi*, 8(2). doi: 10.25139/jsk.v8i2.6936
Received: 12-09-2023, Revision: 22-03-2024, Acceptance: 19-06-2024, Published online: 24-07-2024

Abstract The pros and cons of relocating the National Capital City have remained an unresolved issue across different regimes. When President Joko Widodo took concrete action to relocate IKN legally, the DPR approved through Law (UU) Number 3 of 2022 concerning the National Capital City (IKN), which was passed on January 18, 2022; the public immediately responded with acceptance and rejection. The dynamics of public conversations and comments through social media are intense. This research aims to answer public responses regarding the new relationship between the centre and the areas after passing the IKN Law. Using the netnography method, data were downloaded from the comment section of eight (8) YouTube accounts- CNBC Channel, detik.com, Narasi, TV One, Metro, RH Channel, RG Channel, and ILC Channel. This study employed thematic analysis and data processing with NVIVO 14 application. The research findings show that the eight YouTube accounts with more than 25,000 comments were categorised into two major themes. The first is an optimistic theme that expresses approval for the relocation of IKN. The reason is to improve welfare (Java-outside Java), long-term development planning, pro to the people, and show strong leadership to bridge the centre and regions. The two pessimistic themes expressed rejection, citing concerns about natural damage, potential corruption due to limited government finances, social inequality, and not being pro-people. This research recommends that the IKN relocation policy be understood optimistically and holistically, especially in central-regional relations and equitable distribution of economic access for a more prosperous Indonesia.

Keywords: central government; netnography; pros and cons of public opinion; relocation of the national capital; regional government

INTRODUCTION

Decision-making certainly does not meet the expectations of all parties (Rose, 2019). There must be those who feel their interests are accommodated, as well as those who do not. That is the risk of decision-making (van der Voort et al., 2019). President Joko Widodo's decision to relocate the national capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan is not only a bold decision but can also be considered as risky. In this regard, a new approach is advised to further understand Indonesia's long-term geopolitical and geostrategic interests.

^{*)} Corresponding Author

Indonesia's position, coinciding with many international interests, is prone to conflict, threats, crime, and territorial conflicts (Suratman, Nasruddin, 2013). This fact is reinforced by an important dimension that Indonesia is a multicultural nation that geographically occupies an archipelago. For this reason, Indonesia must have the courage to deconstruct its pattern of interaction and relationship. The position of the island of Java as the epicentre of economic activity, power, and politics, must be willing to shift outside Java in order to achieve equality in all aspects.

President Jokowi's announcement at the Merdeka Palace on 26 August 2019 marks the starting point to relocate the National Capital into a real action not just a recurring discourse. Since the era of President Soekarno, Soeharto to SBY, all proposals seemed to stop at the discussion stage and there were no further executions. No doubt, the decision made by President Jokowi was then responded to by positive and negative reactions (Pebrianto, 2021).

Apart from being endorsed by local media, a number of foreign media have also questioned this decision. Media organisation such as the Washington Post (Westfall, 2022), The Guardian (Ratcliffe, 2022), CNN (Jamaluddin & Ryan, 2022), and BBC (Editor, 2019), seem to be in coherence that the Indonesian capital will move to a forest area in Borneo. Equally strong reactions came from PKS, Indonesia's opposition force, and a number of figures who strongly opposed the relocation of the national capital (Nurjannah, 2022), although eight other political parties agreed.

Regardless of all the negative reactions citing reasons such as it being not yet in the right time, costly, and the controversy over the design of the palace, the decision certainly was not dampen. Calls for rejection are dominated by the emotionality and subjectivity of individuals and groups (Nurjannah, 2022). Several studies related to the relocation of IKN focus on spatial planning and disaster (Subagyo, 2019), (Kurniadi, 2019), demographic aspects (Hutasoit, 2018), law (Aditya & Fuadi, 2021), tourism potential (Hakim et al., 2020), migration and deforestation (Salsabila & Nurwati, 2020). None of the research examined the dimension of public opinion with a netnography approach.

Based on these phenomena and research results, the research gap lies at the epistemological level (theoretical perspective) that has yet to be studied. All studies are directed at the axiological dimension (usefulness). The research problems formulated in this study are first, how is public opinion related to the relocation of the national capital (IKN) from the perspective of netnography-based policy communication? Second, how to address the pros and cons of relocating the national capital in Indonesian cyber society, especially through comments on YouTube channels as a reflection of online communities?

The specific objective is to obtain an explanation and understanding of the YouTube online community's public opinion regarding the relocation of the national capital (IKN) from the perspective of netnography-based policy communication. Second, to find out more about public responses and opinions both positive and negative regarding the relocation of the new national capital.

Often the notions of policy communication and public policy need to be understood. Policy communication concerns the communication elements and processes that create, implement, interpret and evaluate policies of any kind. Policy communication as a specialised field of research focuses on policies about communication, such as how communication can occur, with whom, and so on (Canary & Taylor, 2020). Meanwhile, Jenkin states that public policy consists of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve (Panday, 2004). Another definition states that public policy emphasises input-output processes (Jagers et al., 2020) and is made and implemented by the government.

One of the main dimensions of policy communication concerns how people develop new policies. The ways in which issues rise to the level of awareness and concern leading to the creation of policies constitutes one dimension of policy communication theory and research (Canary & Taylor, 2017). According to LeGreco, there are five components to the operation of policy communication. Figure 1 shows the interaction of these five components.

2012). Citizen participation is made easier by the internet of everything (IoE) era. Public involvement is not limited to conventional formats but has evolved accustomed to all-digital participation for expression.

The concept of 'rational choice' is the backbone for any rational assessment and evaluation of economic and social practices. In particular, the theory can be used to explain the prediction of choice sequences and outcomes (Do et al., 2021). Or it can be said that Rational Choice Theory, has a basic assumption that rational people will consider and evaluate all possible costs and benefits associated with their actions. Therefore, Rational Choice Theory is generally regarded as a practical and legitimate framework that facilitates achieving the best outcomes with limited resources and effort (Do et al., 2021).

The concept is aligned with the view that people can make rational choices, and they do so by weighing their options based on preferences and beliefs. An agent is said to choose rationally if he chooses the option that best satisfies his desires based on his beliefs (Herfeld, 2020), (Rutar, 2019). In the context of this research, Rational Choice Theory (RCT) is very relevant as a frame of perspective to interpret the radical decision of the Jokowi government to relocate IKN.

Participative Decision Making (PDM) is defined as a process in which influence is shared between superiors and their subordinates (Mitchell, 1973; Wagner & Gooding, 1987) or as joint decision making (Vroom, 1960) (Sagie et al., 1995). The effect of participation on participants' attitudes and behaviours is explained by motivation (e.g., increased commitment to the organisation; sense of control) as well as cognitive (e.g., more information and knowledge about the change). Empirical studies support the expected influence of PDM on the attitudinal outcomes of the change. However, the effect of PDM on performance remains unclear (Sagie et al., 1995).

PDM have six important dimensions, such as: 1) Rationale namely makes the assumption that people have the capacity for, or at least the possibility for, informed participation. The "pragmatic" or "human relations" rationale was dubbed as the second main justification. According to this argument, using participatory decision-making is a key strategy for increasing productivity, efficiency, profits, or other important organisational outcomes. According to some academics, rationale can affect other factors including how formally structured participation is. 2) Structure. PDM can have a formal or informal structure. This argument is in addition to PDM's justification. PDM systems or programs that are formally designed have clear rules and processes governing who can participate, which decisions are open to participation, how participation is carried out, etc. On the other hand, PDM may be loosely structured, with only a few specific guidelines governing who may participate, which choices may be made with participation, and how participation will take place. According to certain data, formal structures are more prevalent when democratic principles are used to justify participation. 3) Form. Direct versions of PDM allow participants to get involved in the decision-making process right away and to communicate their data, preferences, and opinions to the other participants in person. As opposed to direct types of PDM, indirect PDM involves a small group of people who are either elected, rotated, or appointed as representatives. Individuals can directly communicate with the representative and provide them with information, preferences, and opinions; nonetheless, the representative is the one who directly engages in decision-making with other representatives. Direct forms of participation are likely to lead to greater levels of participation in one of the few studies to evaluate this dimension experimentally. 4) Decision Issues, or Decision Problems. These problems include - concerns with work and task design; problems with working circumstances; problems with strategies; and problems with capital allocation and investment. According to several studies, the information that those involved in the decision-making process bring to a given topic influences both participant satisfaction and decision quality. 5) Degree Involvement. As a crucial aspect of PDM, 'degree of involvement' has received the majority of academic attention. The degree of employee involvement has typically been conceptualised as a continuum: a. no advance information is provided regarding a decision, b. advance information is provided, c. employees are permitted to provide their opinion about the decision, d. employees' opinions are taken into consideration when making the decision, e. employees have the right to veto a decision, and f. the decision is entirely in the hands of the employees. 6) Decision Process. Finally, a crucial axis along which PDM can differ is the decision-making process. It entails five crucial and separate processes: problem or issue identification; creating

potential solutions to the problem; selecting a particular solution; organising the execution of the selected solution; and assessing the implementation's outcomes. Unfortunately, neither empirical research nor in-depth theoretical justifications have been offered by academics about the connection between these processes and results. (Black & Gregersen, 1997). These six dimensions of PDM are the appropriate and comprehensive sufficient to understand the government's political decision regarding the relocation policy of IKN from Jakarta to East Kalimantan.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses the netnography method within the constructive/interpretive paradigm domain. Netnography is employed through five steps namely- defining research questions, selecting and identifying communities, data collection, analysis and reporting research (Priyowidodo, 2020). Kozinets (1998) defines netnography as a written record from studying the cultures and communities arising from internet-based communication. In a YouTube account, an online community has formed even though the ties of collectivity are still loose. Data collection was carried out through 8 YouTube accounts which were divided into four counter shows and 4 pro shows against IKN.

Table 1. List of Pro-Cons YouTube Accounts

No	YouTube Channel	Link Address	Title of Content
1	Pro Detikcom Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_et1hAvW-H8	<i>Pro-Kontra Pemindahan Ibu Kota Negara</i>
2	Narasi Cahannel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yztD26Z7FzY	<i>Yang Tidak Dikatakan Jokowi soal Ibu Kota Baru</i>
3	Metro TV	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2NljWOWHRQ	<i>Rizal Ramli: IKN Proyek Ngelindur Jokowi</i>
4	CNBC Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u3zju4ewaQg	<i>IKN Sepi Peminat, Jokowi Usai Proyek Tamat?</i>
5	Contra RG Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xW6DDOHIIU	<i>MPR Beri Signal IKN Bakal Mangkrak? Ambisi Presiden Vs Frustrasi Rakyat</i>
6	RH Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=juxjnBC__XI	<i>RG Kritik Jkw Ajak Warga Singapura Tinggal Di IKN! Bukan Jual Murah, Ini Jual Dungu!!</i>
7	ILC	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fJPP0qzsWQM	<i>Debat Panas!!! Ramai-Ramai Petisi Tolak Ikn</i>
8	TV One Channel	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SfDSizODYo	<i>Nama Ibu Kota "Nusantara" Tuai Pro Kontra</i>

Source: Data Processed by Author (2023)

The eight channels were selected by purposive sampling. The basis of consideration is that these eight channels tend to broadcast and produce news that is both pro and contra. The pro channels are identified as Detikcom Channel, Narasi Channel, Metro dan CNBC Channel. While the contra channels are RG Channel, RH Channel, ILC dan TV One Channel. Another reason is that these eight YouTube accounts specifically cover the pro-con theme intensively and

in-depth and have 125 to more than 1000 netizen comments. Further, the data was processed using the NVIVO 14 application.

Data was collected archivally as a part of netnographic data collection. The analysis was done thematically based on the dominant themes in the discussions/comments. Data validity testing, or triangulation, was carried out in two stages. First, confirm the data during the analysis process. Second, cross checking the data when the research report was written. The type of data crosscheck is through resource persons and theories. The netnography steps were carried out as follows figure 2.

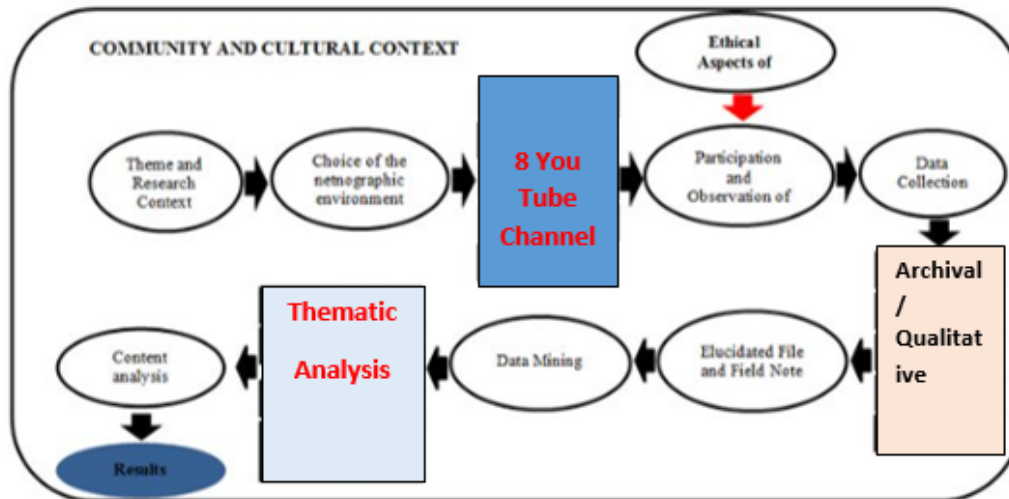


Figure 2. Netnography Steps
Source: (Priyowidodo, 2020)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are two aspects of the findings that are emphasised in this research. The 'con' aspect includes pessimism that tends to see the shortcomings and unpreparedness of the IKN being moved. Meanwhile, the 'pro' aspect or agreeing to move the IKN contains optimism and better governance. More complete data is examined through the visualisation at Figure 3.

It is clear that there are two prominent attitudes in the project of relocating the national capital from Jakarta to IKN in East Kalimantan. The optimism aspect emphasises that the relocation will prosper because this project has long been planned. Even if one looks at the initial idea, it was started during President Soekarno's administration, but failed to be executed. Similarly, President Soeharto, who was in power for more than three decades, was only able to bring up the idea of moving the national capital to the Jonggol area, Bogor but it was not implemented either. The project is considered a flagship initiative- a 'lighthouse project' that must be executed by a president with a strong vision and leadership character. Furthermore, it can be noted through the following commenter:

"Lighthouse project! The first priority should be the welfare of the people. The capital city's location is not a problem, as long as the main policy is for the welfare of the people. Eliminating the poverty of the Indonesian people should be the first priority. What is happening is like buying Hermes branded clothes while hundreds of millions of people are not dressed". (@guchydivancouv6857, CNBC Indonesia).

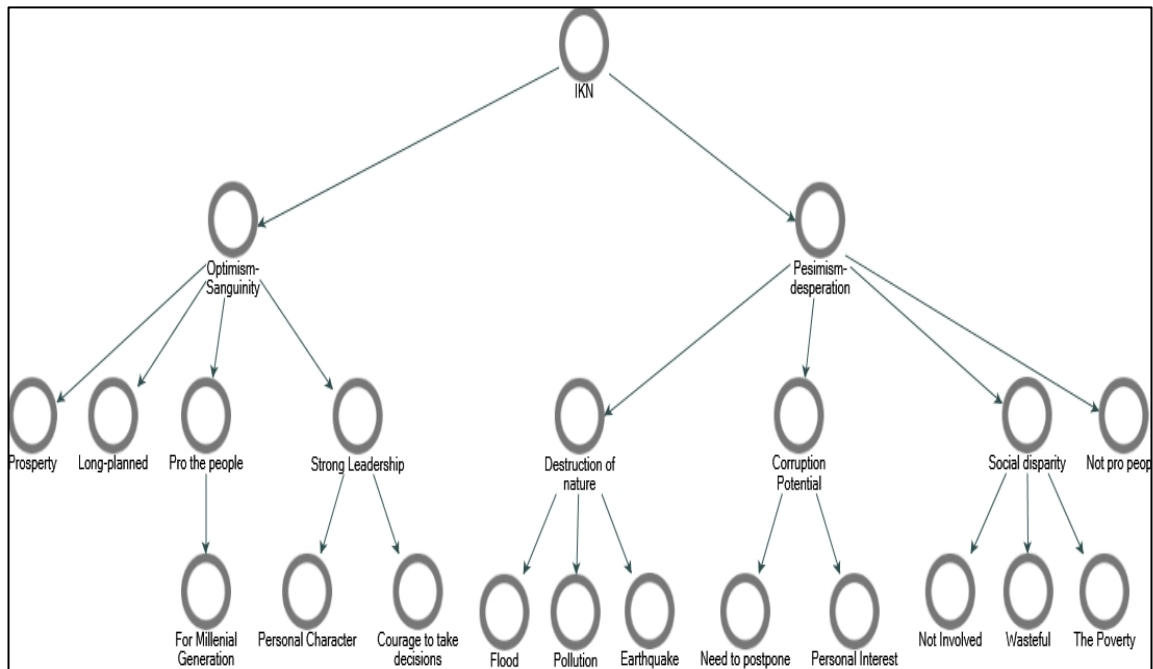


Figure 3. Pro-Contra Relocation of Country's Capital
 Source: NVIVO 14 processing results (Author, 2023)

Even through this relocation project, people are hopeful that the growth of tourism, which has been enjoyed in Java and Bali, will also shift to Kalimantan. As reflected in the comments below:

"Hopefully the central government will change the direction of urban tourism development in IKN Nusantara equipped with tourism facilities in the form of environmentally friendly tourist attractions, building lodging, children's rides, tourism fleets consisting of electric-energy public transport, airports, cross-country railways and provincial tracks in Kalimantan after there is a mapping of land leased to tourism activities and land for the construction of central government buildings so as to generate IKN opinions and attract domestic and foreign investors accompanied by stages of implementing the construction of government buildings". (@jatipelem6895, CNBC)

However, there are also those who consider that the IKN relocation project will add a considerable financial burden to the state in a difficult economic situation. The comment was written with a strong statement, thus:

"The country's economic situation was difficult during the pandemic. It is better not to implement and not to force the construction of the IKN project which costs 450 T. There are still many more important development targets for the benefit of many people. For example: increasing per capita income, eradicating covid, increasing employment opportunities. Don't focus on the construction of the IKN project. Make the people of Indonesia happy." (@muhammadchaldun6631, RG Channel)

"I think IKN should not be prioritised by the current government. It is better to focus on economic development. Because the economic conditions of the Indonesian people, especially in the regions, are very concerning. The purchasing power of the people is currently very declining. Likewise, the farming community is currently suffering due to the high cost of fertilisers and difficult to obtain in the market, both subsidised and non-subsidised fertilisers." (@johnsonmarbun7557 ILC Channel)

In the initial design of IKN, there will be at least 10 development centres: government, health, economic, education, research, innovation, entertainment, agricultural, logistics, agro-industry, and renewable energy industry centres. It can be observed through the Figure 4. The spirit of optimism holds the conviction that whatever endeavour pursued with seriousness will

undoubtedly succeed. On the other hand, it's simple to give up with even little disruptions, which certainly doesn't help as seen in the Figure 5.

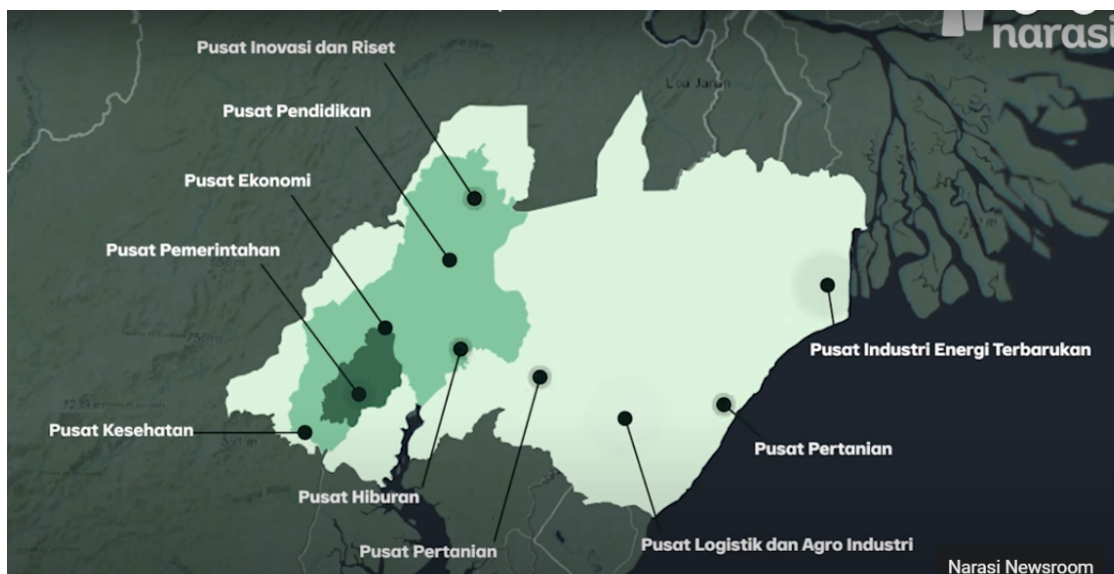


Figure 4. Ten Development Centres
 Source: Growth Centre Mapping (Narasi Channel)

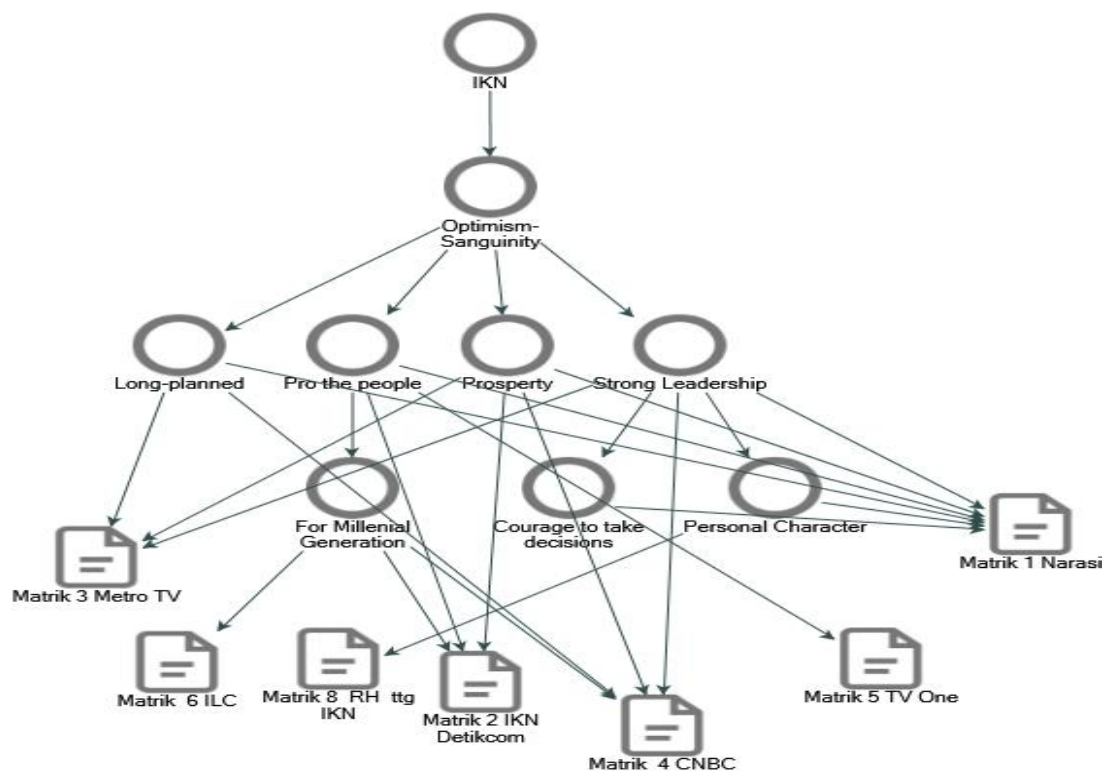


Figure 5. Optimistic Perspective on IKN
 Source: NVIVO 14 processing results (Author, 2023)

"No matter how sophisticated the development is, as long as it is managed and controlled by greedy humans, don't expect it to have a positive impact on this country and its people. O Lord, the almighty, the almighty, protect and save my beloved country from the traitors who want to destroy and destroy this country and may our brothers and sisters in Kalimantan there always be under your protection and love, O Allah." @ahmadsyauqi1812

"Let development take its course. The community's responsibility is to constantly monitor development to ensure that it considers environmental and ecological factors. The country will fall behind without development, and it will be impacted by natural development."
 (Narasi Channel, @muadzahmed7430)

"Local citizens now have the chance to move forward, but they must be prepared to keep learning and battling. We must be able to take advantage of chances when they arise and maintain our enthusiasm for catching up. It won't make our life better to point the finger at others. Let's live as warriors rather than as bystanders. Continue forward motion."
 (@murdjokogembul9405, Narasi Channel)

"I support the IKN's program, however it needs to be balanced with contacts or discussions with locals to produce regulations that are not biased. Even if it isn't perfect, the optimal approach must exist if it can reduce the likelihood of anxieties like the one depicted in the film among locals."
 (@nelyratih5198 Narasi Channel)

An alternative positive spirit was also conveyed by one of the comments on detik.com which compared the cost of the IKN to finance the growth of cities in Papua. In more detail, these netizens commented thusly:

"500 trillion in costs for IKN, not to mention the time, etc., for years.. if you improve the growth of cities in Indonesia, it's even better.. it can be more equitable and fair according to Pancasila, especially Papua.. so these cities will develop and become many capitals in the end.. so that the president in an emergency can go to some cities that could be the capital as well so that the islands become fair .. not believe in sarana animism dynamism etc. .. we back to the ancient times again".
 (@fanwardaya7387, detik.com channel)

People with pessimistic perspectives, unfortunately, always have a negative reaction to everything. We are being looked out for our errors even if they are invited to discuss it. The Figure 6 provides further details.

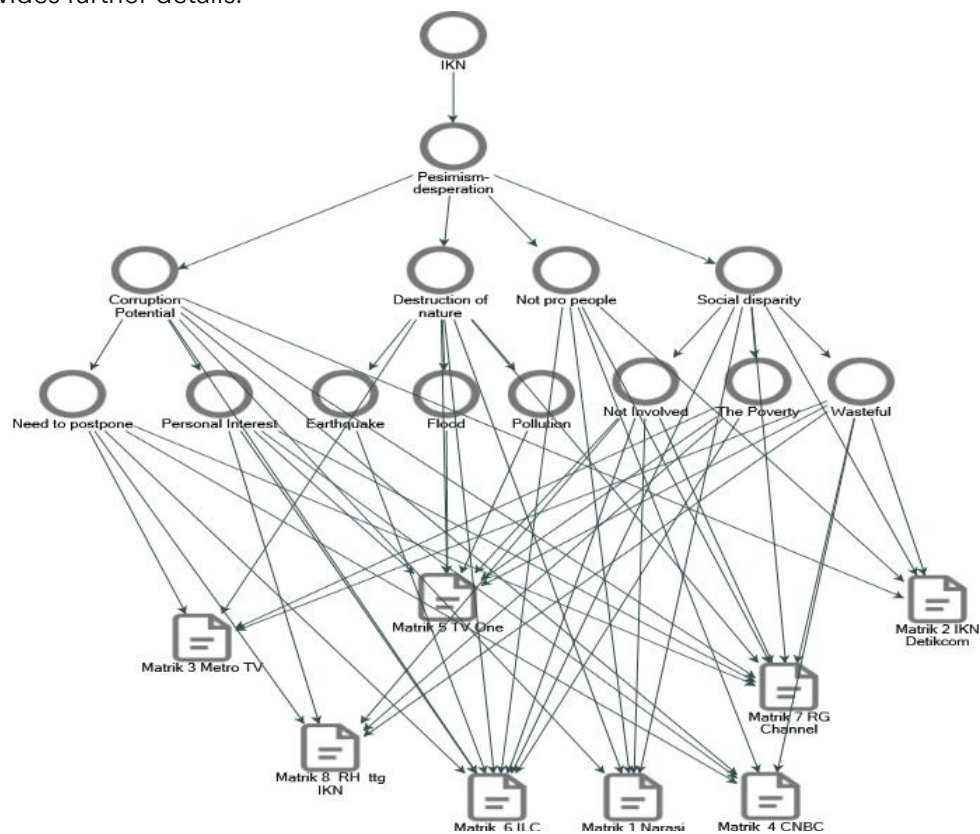


Figure 6. Pessimistic Perspective on IKN
 Source: NVIVO 14 processing results (Author,2023)

Some of the comments containing pessimism are reflections of YouTube accounts that have been in the opposition group so far. Such as TV One Media, ILC, RG (Rocky Gerungan Channel, Narasi and RH (Refly Harun Channel). Some public comments on these accounts are quoted as below:

"People will undoubtedly select a city with business and industry over an administrative city if they wish to settle down. I'm sure that the IKN, whose initial objective was to relocate the capital due to Jakarta's overcrowding, would have to only move people like civil officials. Others might just be passing by.." ([@elmizaosmita6444](#), RH Channel).

"I feel shivers when I hear locals say, "We have lost, our children and grandchildren will be... meaning to be spectators in their own village," since it's awful to witness a policy that just thinks about some parties and ignores the sustainability of the impacted people." [22:0](#) ([@rahmatsaputra_hrp](#), Narasi Channel)

More of the intriguing comments that were posted on the RG Channel claim that the nation's capital was moved by a leader who they claimed lacked brains. As mentioned below:

"When persons without intelligence take charge, not only do bad things occur, but they also lack the ability to identify the horrible things they do themselves. similar to the One who is unaware that he is unaware. So that he doesn't feel stupid and may remain mute in his folly. Even his supporters are unaware that he is standing out for uneducated people." ([@azierizvi](#), RG Channel).

"The reason why the people are frustrated isn't because of the IKN development, but rather because their everyday necessities are increasing and it's harder to make a living now than it was under Suharto! While the MPR only works in air-conditioned meetings, the impoverished struggle mightily to make ends meet for their families each day." ([@ardiansiregar2351](#), RG Channel).

The research data was obtained from eight YouTube accounts, and various comments on those accounts reveal that the political choices made by President Joko Widodo's administration were divisive. All arguments for and against this choice, however, are irrelevant because it was approved by Law (UU) Number 3 of 2022 respecting the State Capital (IKN), which was published on January 18, 2022.

In contrast to the opposition forces represented by Democrats, PKS, and PAN (which later joined the Government Coalition), pro-government coalition political parties, such as PDI Perjuangan, Golkar, Gerindra, PAN, NASDEM, PKB, and PPP, held a disproportionate amount of parliamentary power in the DPR. This demonstrates how solid the decision to move the state capital is in terms of both political and legal legitimacy.

This fact also explains how the dominant political communicator group has gained control of the communication flow distribution. In terms of political communication, the feedback that surfaces will get less attention if the communicator dominates the flow of information from the communicant to the communicator. In theory, the media, including the parliament and other formal communication outlets, have been used to express opposition to a policy, but because they are outvoted, their effectiveness is obviously very limited.

The New State Capital is already being built, with a concentration on the growth of the Central Government Core Area, even at this early stage (2022-2024). The expected goal is for IKN to host the Indonesian Independence Day ceremony on August 17 of 2024 by the following year (2024). The signing of construction work contracts for the IKN for the 2022 Fiscal Year, including 19 work packages valued at IDR 5.3 trillion, signified the beginning of the implementation of fundamental infrastructure. In the Central Government Core Area (KIPP), which covers 6,671 hectares of land—less than three percent of the 256,142 hectares total area of the Archipelago Capital City—a few of these work packages have started to be implemented.

The only option to amplify public opinion is through social media platforms, even though it is less authoritative than the representatives of the people's official view. Thus, social media serves as a substitute where opposing or supportive public viewpoints can still be expressed. Of course, it is a different issue that the implications have a different influence over people's goals

than the official media. The main ambition of the populace is social control over all political and policy decisions made by the government and DPR (Parliament).

If it is determined that the government abused its power, the government itself did not want to take the blame. Because a law is processed and generated according to defined norms, this is known as procedural law. Everything has been put into practice, beginning with the draft law and ending with the public review debated in the DPR. While there were many who objected, disagreed, were against, and resisted the establishment of it, all that could be done lawfully could be done through the Constitutional Court (MK) to perform a Judicial Review.

Public input has been considered in decision-making by the government itself. Academics, NGOs, and other representatives of community power are all asked to offer feedback and ideas on the IKN Law in a transparent manner. According to the Participation Decision Making (PDM) theory, it is necessary to involve significant public issues. The aim is to incorporate the objectives of the larger community; the form and organisation may differ. So that public engagement serves as a sort of public democratisation and decision-making is not based solely on the biased judgments of those in positions of power.

CONCLUSION

Based on the thematic analysis above, public opinion collected and successfully categorised is polarised into two major thematic responses. First is an optimistic theme that expresses approval for the relocation of the National Capital. The main reasons are to improve welfare (Java-outside Java) (Detik and CNBC), long-term development planning (Metro TV), being pro-people (ILC), and showing strong leadership to bridge central interests and regional desires (Narasi and CNBC). Second, the pessimistic theme expressed rejection. The reasons are concerns about the destruction of nature (TV One), potential corruption due to limited government finances (RH Channel, RG Channel), widening social gaps (RG Channel, ILC) and not being pro-people due to marginalisation of the local population (TV One, ILC).

This public opinion not only reflects the reality of the media as reflected through their various comments but also approaches social reality. There are groups of people who do not agree with the relocation of IKN. However, there are also public opinions that support the relocation of the national capital to IKN. Indonesia must have a capital city that is friendly to the plurality of society, does not pollute, is neatly arranged, has a smart city design, and is relevant to the progress of digital civilisation.

This research recommends that more comprehensive and in-depth studies need to be carried out related to the understanding of local culture by relying on ethnographic field-based studies. Public opinion through social media only captures public opinion at the surface level. Although relocation decisions and measures have been implemented, socio-cultural studies must still be carried out to complete the material for appropriate and targeted decision-making. This research recommends that the IKN relocation policy be understood optimistically and holistically, especially in central-regional relations and equitable distribution of economic access for a more prosperous Indonesia.

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