NETIZENS' RESPONSE TO THE IKN ISSUE: A NETNOGRAPHY STUDY ON TEMPODOTCO 'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL *BOCOR ALUS*

RESPON WARGANET ATAS ISU IKN: STUDI NETNOGRAFI PADA KANAL YOUTUBE BOCOR ALUS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the response of netizens to the issue of moving the National Capital City (IKN) in the episode *"The Fate of the IKN in the Hands of Prabowo and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, from Land Issues to Investment"* on TempoDotCo 's YouTube channel *Bocor Alus Politik*. Through a nethnography approach, this study examines the comments of netizens in response to the issue, revealing various expressions of digital politics, social identity, and criticism of public policy. Using the Public Sphere theory, and media equation theory, this study highlights the dynamics of interaction between satirical media, public opinion, and digital political participation. he results of the study indicate that netizens' comments serve not only as a means of political expression but also as a reflection of collective negotiation and public discourse surrounding IKN policies. The findings indicate three predominant patterns in netizens' opinions. *The first* is a rejection of the IKN project, encompassing controversies over its development, concerns regarding its potential impacts, and widespread public skepticism. *Second, the perspective of* governance and leadership, including the management of the capital city and the political situation of Indonesia. and *the third* development project of the capital city is considered good which includes community support. This research contributes to a new understanding of digital political literacy and the importance of social media platforms in shaping contemporary political discourse. The novelty of this research lies in the use of nethnography to examine public responses in the context of satirical media, which is rarely the focus of political communication studies.

Keywords : National Capital City (IKN), YouTube, nethnography, netizens' response, digital political communication, digital public space

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis respons warganet terhadap isu pemindahan Ibu Kota Negara (IKN) dalam episode *"Nasib IKN di Tangan Prabowo dan Evaluasi Jokowi Soal Kepala IKN, dari Masalah Lahan Sampai Investasi "* pada kanal YouTube *Bocor Alus Politik* milik TempoDotCo. Melalui pendekatan netnografi, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi komentar-komentar warganet yang muncul sebagai respons terhadap isu tersebut dan mengungkapkan berbagai ekspresi politik digital, identitas sosial, serta kritik terhadap kebijakan publik. Dengan menggunakan teori Public Sphere, Persamaan media(media equation theory), penelitian ini menyoroti dinamika interaksi antara media satiris, opini publik, dan partisipasi politik digital. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komentar-komentar warganet tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai bentuk ekspresi politik, tetapi juga mencerminkan negosiasi kolektif terhadap kebijakan IKN. Hasil menunjukkan tiga pola utama dalam opini warganet, yaitu *pertama* penolakan terhadap proyek IKN mencakup polemik proyek pembangunan IKN, dampak proyek pembangunan IKN dan keraguan masyarakat. *Kedua* perspektif tata kelola dan kepemimpinan, mencakup pengelolaan IKN dan keadaan politik Indonesia. dan *ketiga* proyek pembangunan IKN dinilai bagus yang mencakup dukungan masyarakat. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi terhadap pemahaman baru tentang literasi politik digital dan pentingnya platform media sosial dalam membentuk wacana politik kontemporer. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penggunaan netnografi untuk mengkaji respons publik dalam konteks media satiris yang jarang menjadi fokus dalam kajian bidang omunikasi politik.

Kata Kunci : Ibu Kota Negara (IKN), YouTube, netnografi, respons warganet, komunikasi politik digital, ruang publik digital

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has revolutionized the way people access information and engage in public discourse, including on political issues. One of the mediums that is now prominent in conveying and commenting on political issues is the YouTube platform, which is not only an entertainment channel, but also a space for deliberation and political participation of digital citizens digital media provides a space for citizens to organize, disseminate information, and voice dissatisfaction with the government, for example(Lim, 2018). YouTube, as one of the social media platforms with millions of active users in Indonesia, is an important space for informal, dynamic, and participatory political discourse. In this digital space, public opinions, criticism, and political expression flow freely, making the commentary space a new arena in digital democracy (McNair, 2017).

One of the channels that actively discusses political issues with a satirical approach is TempoDotCo's *YouTube channel Boleak Alus Politik*. The Bocor Alus Politik program is a political talk program that discusses information that may not have been exposed by the media. Tell stories about politicians, and experiences during the coverage process, and analyze the latest political dynamics. Tempo journalists from the political desk, Pramono, Rikang, Hussein, Francisca, and Egi, presented the podcast Bocor Alus Politik. They "leak" information that may not have been exposed by the media. Tell stories about politicians, and experiences during the coverage process, and analyze the latest political dynamics.

In the episode titled *"Episode (The Fate of the IKN in Prabowo's Hands and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, from Land Issues to Investment),"* this channel conveys political analysis in a light, satirical, but informative format. The main topic in this episode discusses the resignation of IKN leaders, namely Bambang Susantono and Dhony from their

positions as Head and Deputy Head of the IKN Authority. Then, the problem of development performance that is not advanced. As well as delays and challenges of the IKN project. then, financial feasibility and investor confidence, and major events in the upcoming IKN.

This episode invited great attention from netizens, as evidenced by the many comments that appeared as a form of public participation in responding to the policy and the leaders who would handle it. Interestingly, these comments not only show preferences or opinions, but also contain ideological expressions, forms of resistance, irony, and even humor as a strategy of criticism of the state and political elites.

This phenomenon of netizens' comments is a reflection of the formation of a digital public space, where people produce and interpret political reality together in online communities. As revealed by Habermas, the public sphere is a space that is easily accessible without limits, free from the pressure of state and economic power, where citizens conduct political talks to realize a common understanding related to the broader public interest (Simarmata, 2014). The basic concept of public space is revealed from Habermas's thinking that it is a "place" to communicate as a life-shaping element that relies on the communicative rationality of community members. In the digital context, this theory is expanding: public spaces are no longer only physical and formal, but also present in a digital form that is more fluid, non-hierarchical, and dialogical in nature (Sebastião, 2013). Habermas is prepared to analyze the functioning of mass communication with authors such as Paul Lazarsfeld, Elihu Katz, Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, Edward Bernays, and Walter Lippmann.(Elizalde & Fitz Herbert, 2023)

Many previous studies have highlighted the role of social media in shaping public opinion on political issues, including IKN. Research Masitah & Dewi show that public opinion on Twitter social media is an agenda- setting in creating or creating information that leads to various public opinions related to the planning process for the relocation of the capital city (Masitah & Dewi, 2022). Meanwhile, Utami through a big data approach and sentiment analysis, found the dominance of negative sentiment towards the IKN project, especially related to social justice issues and environmental concerns(Lestari et al., 2022). These studies show the importance of understanding how public perception is formed and expressed, especially in informal and dynamic spaces like YouTube.

However, there have not been many studies that specifically examine how netizens' comments on political satire YouTube channels such as *Political Leaks* can represent the political attitudes and ideologies of the community or netizens. These comments, in certain contexts, are a form of *netizen engagement* than can represent a form of digital political literacy, expression, and the way people negotiate with political narratives in Indonesia. Through the nethnography approach, these responses can be studied as digital cultural artifacts that are rich in meaning(Kozinets, 2015). The urgency of this research lies in three main things. First, the importance of understanding the digital response of the community to major issues such as the IKN which has structural consequences on the social, cultural, and economic life of the nation. Second, there is a lack of research that uses a qualitative approach of netnography to explore public opinion in the digital space such as political YouTube channels that are critically presented and have a lot of satire. Third, this research contributes to strengthening people's digital political literacy through digital platforms in Indonesia. Keepat: this research uses Habermas' public sphere theory and media equation theory ("People treat computers, television, and new media as if they were real people or real places.")(Littlejohn et al., 2021). So that this research offers new research, including specific study objects, namely netizens'

comments on the YouTube channel *Political Leaks* Then with a research method that uses nethnography to understand people's digital responses, which allows the exploration of symbolic meaning to collective expression in digital space and theoretical novelty

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was compiled using a qualitative approach, because it aims to understand the meaning, which arises from the interaction of netizens in responding to the issue of moving the State Capital City (IKN) entitled *"Episode (The Fate of IKN in the Hands of Prabowo and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of IKN, from Land Issues to Investment),"* which was presented on the YouTube channel *Bocor Alus Politik*. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the main goal of the study, which is to examine in depth the public expressions, assessments, and perceptions manifested through digital commentary. As the main method, nethnography is used, which is an ethnographic method that is modified for the context of a virtual or online community. Netnography was first introduced by Robert Kozinets (2010) and has been widely used in the study of digital communication due to its ability to interpretively read social phenomena through the observation of interactions in cyberspace. In this context, nethnography allows researchers to explore and understand how netizens, as part of a digital society, articulate their attitudes towards a country's strategic policies through comments on social media, in this case YouTube.

The research was conducted on the YouTube channel *Bocor Alus Politik*, which is a program owned by *Tempo Media Group*, which discusses political issues critically. The episode that was used as the focus of the research was an episode entitled *"The Fate of the Capital City in Prabowo's Hands and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, from Land Issues to Investment, when the issue of moving the capital city resurfaced in public discourse. Data collection was carried out through passive participatory observation techniques, where researchers observed, recorded, and documented netizens' comments without being directly involved in the discussion. Observations on the comments on the YouTube account upload @Tempodotco the episode (The Fate of the IKN in the Hands of Prabowo and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, From Land Issues to Investment), which amounted to 3,162. However, the researcher only took 2,558 comments with the period of June 8 – November 14, 2024, because some comments could not be taken such as private comments or some have been deleted. Then the data analysis technique used in analyzing the results of data collection is using Coding Analysis. In this analysis, there are several stages carried out, namely: (1). Coding(Eriyanto, 2021).In this coding, it is carried out in a line, in each line of code, the researcher gives a label or name. The researcher carefully reads each post (line of code) and then labels each code. Coding mapping is carried out by providing a table, which is to give a concept of the data that has been collected, namely from the comments of an upload on YouTube which can reach thousands. (2). *Noting*, i.e. Recording categories of comments that can be used to meet research indicators. The term 'memoing' refers to changes to data and other records. In addition, researchers can make notes on this data. (3). Making *Abstracting* : At this stage, the researcher associates each label (concept), makes equations and differences from each label, which later from this stage the researcher summarizes the labels so that fewer concepts will be obtained. This abstraction process is carried out by looking for more general or more abstract categories that can contain each label or concept. (4). Checking and *CheckingBefore* this abstract category is associated with theory, the researcher needs to check first. Some things that need to be checked include: First, whether the category has a higher

level of traction compared to the label or concept in the previous stage. Second, whether category one can be clearly distinguished from other categories. In order for each category to be distinguished from each other, researchers need to make a definition of each category. Researchers can also use that category to review concepts. From this check, it is possible that the researcher changed the name of the concept or changed the category so that all concepts can be accommodated in the category. (5). Generalization, namely making an explanation of the phenomenon or case being researched using the categories (abstracts) that have been obtained. Keena Theoretical: Relating the theoretical explanations obtained in the data to existing theories. The research tries to build a theory by sourcing from data.
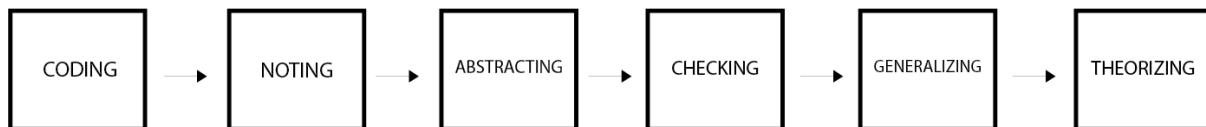

Figure 1: Data Analysis Process

3.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bocor Alus Politik is a podcast program part of Tempo Media Group that starts in 2023. Leaked Alus Politik is released once a week, on Saturdays to be precise. Tempo first aired its first podcast video on May 20, 2023 on Spotify and YouTube platforms with the Episode Theme "Jokowi, Kingmaker, or Troublemaker?" Titled "Jokowi Kingmaker for the 2024 Election, Who Is the Presidential Candidate He Is Championing?". Leak Alus Politik also has an Instagram named @bocoraluspolitik with a total of 146 thousand followers. Tempo journalists from the political desk, Pramono, Rikang, Hussein, Francisca, and Egi, presented the podcast Bocor Alus Politik. They "leak" information that may not have been exposed by the media. Tell stories about politicians, and experiences during the coverage process, and analyze the latest political dynamics. From the results of the study, 15 concept themes were found in the analysis of Code data, namely:

Table 1 Final Theme

Yes		Coding	TOTAL	Subtheme	Theme
	1	Resignation of the Head of IKN	158	Polemic of the IKN Development Project	Rejection of the IKN Project
	2	Controversy Over Independence Day Celebrations in IKN	105		
	3	Doubts about the attractiveness of the IKN project for investors	78		
	4	Dissatisfaction with the unequal distribution of natural resources (SDA)	19	The Impact of the IKN Development Project	
	5	Concerns about Environmental and Social Impacts	118		
	6	The development of the IKN is considered a waste of the State Budget	82		

7	Pessimism Towards the IKN Project	338		
8	Compare with Other Projects	106	Public Doubt	
9	Innuendo of Indonesia's Political Dynamics	288	Political situation in Indonesia	
10	Innuendo Against IKN Management	335		Governance and Leadership Perspectives
11	Leadership Quality Comparison	72	Management of IKN	
12	Pessimism Towards Leadership	279		
13	The Potential of IKN for the Indonesian Nation	23		IKN Development Project Considered Good
14	Optimism for the IKN Project	65	Community Support	
15	Optimism Towards Leadership	71		

Each theme contains a story related to data. The themes that have been found must also be related to each other. To make it easier to identify themes and understand the relationships between themes, visual mapping patterns can be created as a representation of these relationships. This pattern will help illustrate how the themes interact and affect each other. An overview of the overall pattern can be seen below:
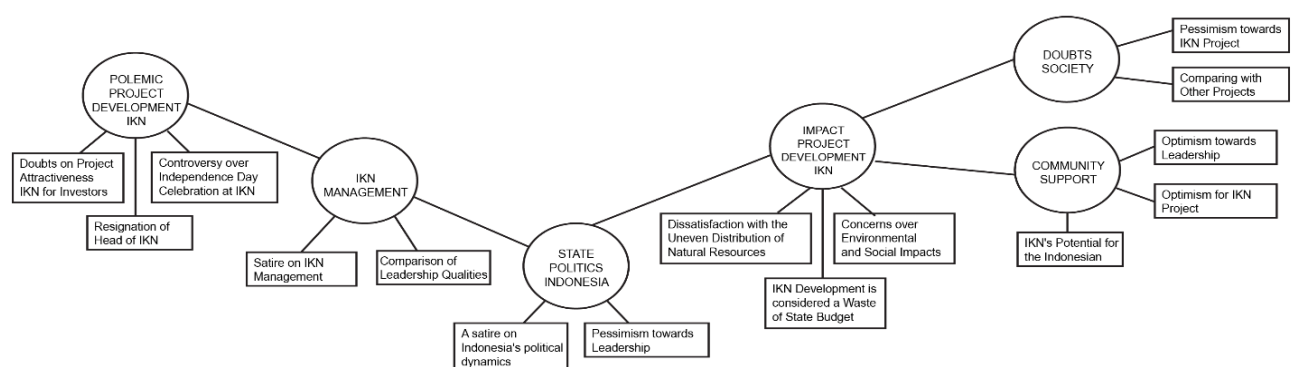

Figure 2: Pattern chart results on research themes

From the 15 codes that have been found by the researchers, it is then simplified into 6 subthemes. Furthermore, the subthemes are further summarized to produce 3 main themes.

First, the Rejection of the IKN Project, which means the community's distrust or distrust of the National Capital Development (IKN) project in East Kalimantan. *Second, the* Perspective of Governance and Leadership, which means Public Opinion on leaders who participate in the management of the National Capital City (IKN) and the Government. *Third,* the IKN Development Project is considered good, which means that the National Capital Development Project (IKN) in East Kalimantan is considered good and brings benefits for the future of the Indonesian nation. The following is the definition of the final theme in the form of a table:

Table 2: Final Theme Conclusion

DEFINITION OF THE FINAL THEME

Theme: Rejection of the IKN Project	Theme: Governance and Leadership Perspectives	Theme: IKN Development Project Considered Good
Definition: The community's distrust or distrust of the National Capital City (IKN) development project in East Kalimantan.	Definition: Public opinion of leaders who participate in the management of the National Capital City (IKN) and the Government.	Definition: The National Capital City (IKN) Development Project in East Kalimantan is considered good and brings benefits for the future of the Indonesian nation.
Subtheme: Polemic of IKN Development Projects • Resignation of the Head of IKN • Controversy Over Independence Day Celebrations In IKN • Doubts about the attractiveness of the IKN project for investors Subtheme: Impact of IKN Development Projects • Dissatisfaction with the unequal distribution of natural resources (SDA) • Concerns about Environmental and Social Impacts	Subtheme: IKN Management • Innuendo Against IKN Management • Leadership Quality Comparison Subtheme: The State of Indonesian Politics • Innuendo of Indonesia's Political Dynamics • Pessimism Towards Leadership	Subtheme: Community Support • The Potential of IKN for the Indonesian Nation • Optimism for the IKN Project • Optimism Towards Leadership

- The Development of IKN Is Considered a Waste of the State Budget

Subtheme: Community Doubt
- Comparing with Other Projects
- Pessimism Towards the IKN Project

Based on the results of research that has been conducted on the Netnographic Study of Netizens' Comments on the Tempodotco YouTube Account in the episode "The Fate of the IKN in Prabowo's Hands and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, from Land Issues to Investment", it was found that public opinion on the National Capital City (IKN) development project in East Kalimantan can be categorized into three major themes:
1. Rejection of the IKN Development Project
2. Governance and Leadership Perspectives
3. IKN Development Considered Good

The results of the analysis showed that negative or skeptical comments about the IKN project were more dominant than positive comments. From the total number of comments that have been filtered from 2,558 to as many as 2,009 comments. This is reflected in the two main themes that have more codes, namely Rejection of IKN Development Projects which has a total of 8 codes with a total of 1,004 comments and Perspectives on Governance and Leadership which has 4 codes with a total of 974 comments. Many netizens have shown distrust in the sustainability of this project, both in terms of planning, funding, and the social and environmental impacts it causes. In addition, many netizens made negative comments about President Jokowi. Netizens consider President Jokowi not good at managing the country. However, on the other hand, the theme of IKN Development is Considered Good, which has 3 codes, with only 159 comments, considers that they are optimistic from and believe in the IKN project in East Kalimantan as well as in the leadership of the country such as President Jokowi. The overall results are as follows:
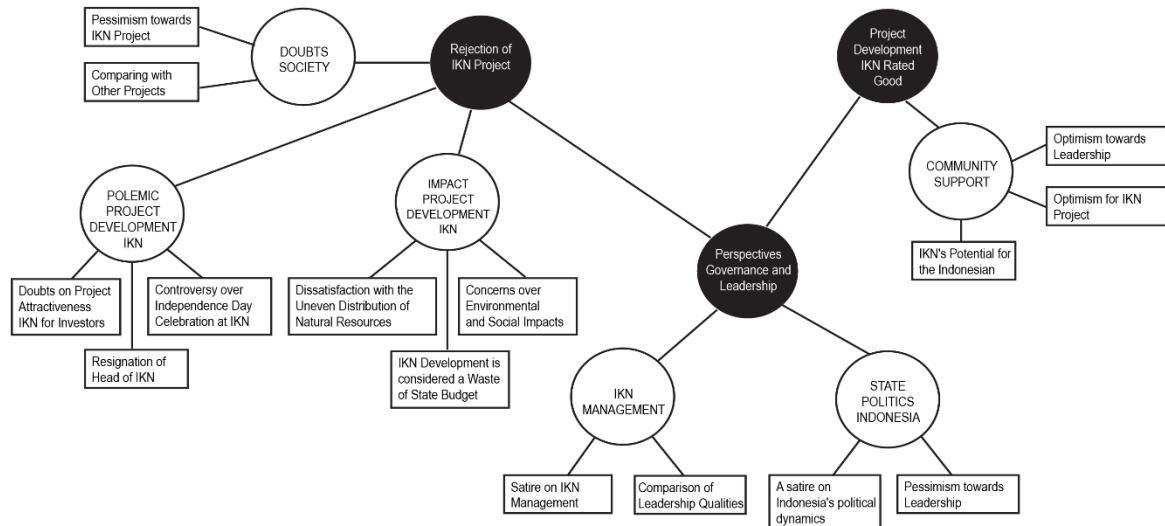
Figure 3. Interthematic Relationships (final) processed by the Researcher

Outcome Analysis using Media Equation Theory

In the context of the episode *"The Fate of the IKN in the Hands of Prabowo and Jokowi's Evaluation of the Head of the IKN, from Land Issues to Investment"* on the YouTube channel *Boleak Alus Politik*, netizens' interactions show that the media (in this case satirical videos and YouTube comment columns) are not only treated as information channels, but have been personified and treated like dialogue partners.

1. Rejection of the IKN Project: Media as an Opponent of Discussion

Many netizens expressed sharp criticism and rejection of the IKN project. They responded to the video as if they were in direct dialogue with the narrative conveyed by the host. In accordance with the theory of Media Equality, this behavior reflects that they perceive the media as a social actor who can be 'talked to' and criticized. Even in comments with satire or sarcasm nuances, netizens display emotional expressions that are usually aimed at real people.

2. Governance and Leadership Perspectives: Media as a Representation of Power

In comments related to the governance of the IKN project and national leadership, the media is interpreted not only as a distributor of information; but as a symbol of power or a tool of hegemony. Many comments criticized President Jokowi's leadership or assessed Prabowo's feasibility in continuing the project. Here, the Media Equation theory shows that the media is perceived as a "representative" of the political elite.

3. Support for the IKN Project: Media as a Collaborative Partner

On the other hand, some comments voiced support for the IKN development project and believed that it could be a symbol of the nation's progress. In this context, the Media Equation theory explains that netizens respond to the media as an entity that can be collaborated emotionally. They show a sense of nationalism and optimism like encouraging a leader or a work team.

Based on the Media Equation theory, the results of the study show that the behavior of netizens in responding to the episode is not only to convey technical opinions, but also to treat the media as a social entity that has personality, authority, and even affective relationships. Their comments are full of interpersonal dimensions: criticism, support, anger, cynicism, and hope, all of which reflect the tendency of humans to treat the media like other human beings. Thus, *the Bocor Alus Politik channel* is not only a distribution channel for political messages, but also a space for social and symbolic interaction where the public negotiates their identity, ideology, and political emotions on national issues such as IKN.

Furthermore, the findings of this study show how political emotions, humor, criticism, and support circulate within digital platforms, creating new forms of political engagement that are not always formal, but nonetheless significant. In this case, social media plays a dual role: as a source of information and as a medium for the formation of public opinion that is interactive and horizontal. Thus, this study emphasizes that digital political literacy is not only about the ability to understand media content, but also includes critical awareness of the representation of power, development narratives, and leadership dynamics produced and consumed through digital platforms.

4. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed 2,558 netizen comments, from which 2,009 were selected as relevant for thematic analysis. The findings show that the majority of netizens expressed a strong sense of distrust toward the IKN (Nusantara Capital City) project. This distrust centers around various aspects, including the project's planning and management, the credibility of leadership at both the city and national levels, issues of funding transparency, and concerns about social and environmental impacts.

Public opinion was categorized into three dominant themes: (1) Rejection of the IKN Project, (2) Governance and Leadership Perspectives, and (3) Positive Perceptions of IKN Development. The theme of "Rejection of the IKN Project" received the highest response, with 1,004 comments across eight sub-themes. This was followed by "Governance and Leadership Perspectives" with 974 comments and four sub-themes. These findings reflect the prevailing skepticism among netizens toward the IKN initiative and President Joko Widodo's leadership in managing large-scale national projects. Moreover, the study reveals that netizens' online commentary functions not only as a form of political expression but also as a space for collective negotiation and critical public discourse regarding state policy.

On the other hand, although the number is smaller, there are also groups of netizens who have a positive view of the IKN project. The theme of IKN Development is Considered Good, which has 3 codes, only collected 159 comments. This group showed optimism about the long-term benefits of the IKN project and put their trust in the country's leadership.

The results of nethnography on audience comments on YouTube accounts show that the digital space is not only a medium for information consumption, but also a space for social interaction and public discussion. Through the Public Sphere theoretical approach, it was found that part of the comment column functions as a digital public space, where the audience participates in discussions concerning social, educational, and policy issues, although the quality of the discussion still varies. Some of the comments reflect rational, open, and equal communication practices, but others are still dominated by emotional and superficial expressions.

From the perspective of Media Equation Theory, audience responses in comments show a tendency to treat media and digital content like humans, for example, as a place to express empathy or personal criticism of content and creators. This confirms that users do not only passively accept the media, but develop social relationships as if the media were a social entity. Overall, it is concluded that digital media such as YouTube is not only an information channel; but also a space for social interaction and public discourse. However, the quality of the space is greatly influenced by the audience's media literacy ability and the extent to which the media is able to create a healthy and inclusive discussion space.

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