

Dominant Actors and Political Communication related to The New National Capital City in Indonesia (Ibu Kota Negara - IKN)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to see who the dominant actor or communicator in the IKN.

Methodology/approach: This research using the quantitative content analysis research method, and researchers will analyze the four types of engagements

Results/findings: The results showed that Muhammad Said Didu through the account @msaid_didu, is at the top for like and retweet interactions. Meanwhile, Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil), was ranked 1st and 2nd for reply. Ridwan Kamil also got the highest quote interaction. The topic of moving the IKN involved well-known figures accounts such as Hidayat Nur Wahid and Sudjiwo Tedjo. In addition, accounts that are also involved and get high user engagement are accounts belonging to the media, such as Tempo (@tempodotco), Kompas (@kompascom and @kompasTV), Kumparan (@kumparan), and CNN Indonesia (CNN Indonesia).

Conclusions: The study reveals that personal accounts, particularly those of Muhammad Said Didu and Ridwan Kamil, dominate political communication about the National Capital City (IKN) issue on Twitter. Despite having fewer followers than media outlets, these individuals achieved higher engagement through more personal and interactive communication styles. In contrast, media accounts tended to act as one-way information sources, generating less audience interaction. The findings highlight that authenticity and direct engagement are key to influencing public discourse on political issues in the digital era.

Limitations: The limitation of this research is that it does not look at the audience to be able to describe the impact of the communication carried out.

Contribution: This research is useful for the development of communication science, especially in the area of media and political communication.

Keywords: *Dominant Actors, Political Communication, The New National Capital City, Twitter*

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1. Introduction

Talking about the policy of moving the National Capital City from DKI Jakarta to East Kalimantan continues to be an interesting issue to be discussed. *Tempo.co* mentioned that there are five polemics that still arise related to this matter, namely (1) protests by local residents who suddenly pegged their land for the construction of IKN; (2) the construction of IKN which has the potential to displace twenty thousand indigenous peoples; (3) the transfer of IKN is considered to leave problems in DKI Jakarta; (4) the existence of potential human rights violations; and (5) the IKN Law is considered publicly defective. In addition, there are also still polemics regarding the use of Foreign Nationals to supervise

IKN projects which are considered to trigger social jealousy. Not to mention the various challenges of technocratic in the Development of IKN Nusantara.

The construction of IKN Nusantara has been officially rolled out by referring to Law Number 3 of 2022 which was previously promulgated. IKN Nusantara is conceptualized to be a forest city, with 75 percent of its area being forest. The New National Capital City (IKN) will help Indonesia achieve its target of becoming a developed country by 2045, as outlined in the Indonesia 2045 Vision. Built with the notion of national identity, the IKN will change the orientation of development to become more Indonesia-centric and accelerate the country's economic transformation. In addition, IKN Nusantara is planned to become a sustainable city with zero carbon emissions. In addition to building a sustainable city, President Joko Widodo's vision also wants IKN Nusantara to reflect the national identity and greatness of the Indonesian nation.

Although the IKN Nusantara development project has been underway, there is a critical public response regarding this big plan. One of the solutions offered to reduce this polemic is to continue to strive to accommodate critical public responses as consideration for decision-making that must be able to be resolved by political decisions that do not ignore let alone exclude them (Hasanah, Mulyady, Azahra, Nuraeni, & Ridwan, 2024). This is in line with one of the main dimensions of policy communication, that concerns to how people develop new policies. Ways in which issues rise to the level of awareness and concern to create policies about them constitute one dimension of policy communication theory and research. Policy communication is an element and the communication process is created for, implementing, interpreting, and evaluating policy in any form (Wumu, Dengo, & Londa, 2022). Jenkins stated that public policy as a set 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, on principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve (Howlett & Cashore, 2014). Thus, to be able to create strategic policies, it is necessary to begin with the identification of communications that arise in the community, as a response to developing issues (Scott et al., 2023).

In the context of IKN, it is also necessary to take a geo-strategic and geo-political approach, considering that there are many potential threats, which if not handled seriously, will reduce the credibility of the government. Geo-strategies are actually adopted to be implemented to preserve and protect the sense of security of an area (Prayoga, Trisiana, & Meisiana, 2024). Meanwhile, geo-politics aims to regulate political spatial planning to avoid disturbances that cause anxiety (Adawiyah, 2024). These two aspects can be handled through collaboration between the state and the community. Collaboration needs to be formed by expanding the involvement of citizens to participate for common goals related to IKN (Mulyadi et al., 2024). Citizen participation is further facilitated by the existence of digital media, where communication can be formed and established freely for all kind of communities (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Study demonstrates the positive impact of digital technologies on enhancing access to information, improving connectivity, and creating new economic avenues for rural communities (Sari & Diana, 2024; Zhang & Li, 2024). Additionally, digital transformation initiatives have been shown to empower community members by equipping them with the skills and resources necessary to participate in the digital economy (Kosasih & Sulaiman, 2024). Communication related to IKN is in line with the stages of development of IKN. January 18, 2020, became a historic moment, where the IKN Law was approved by the DPR. That is, there is already a legal basis for the transfer of the national capital. It contains starting from the formation, form and structure of government, special authority, transfer of the position of state institutions, to funding and budget management. In the end, the preparation, construction, and transfer of the new IKN are determined as national priority programs no later than ten years after the IKN Law comes into effect (Pradana & Putra, 2024).

Since its approval, this law has triggered various responses from the public. Therefore, it is important to know and analyze the response of the cyber community, especially the dominant actors in communicating it through Twitter social media (Ramadhani, Rakhman, Kuncoroyakti, Utami, & Pertiwi, 2023). Social media include Internet platforms, services, and tools that are used to support collaboration, community building, participation, and content sharing (Bu'ulolo & Hulu, 2025).

Social media as an online space where users can create, share, and consume content primarily generated by other users (Siagian & Yuliana, 2023). This digital platform allows individuals to communicate with each other via Internet applications, regardless of location, using computers, tablets, and smartphones. According to Fiadzawoo, Mahama, and Attati (2022), while social media has gained widespread popularity, it is recognized as a double-edged phenomenon due to its associated impacts (Mebarki, Kendouci, & Bendida, 2024). The identification of this response is expected to be an input for the creation of policies related to IKN.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Political Communication in the Digital Era

Political communication refers to the process of transmitting messages, values, and political information between governments, political actors, the media, and citizens (Howlett & Cashore, 2014). In the digital era, this communication has evolved from traditional mass media to social media platforms that promote real-time and two-way interactions. Twitter, in particular, allows users to express opinions and engage directly with political discourse, transforming how political narratives are constructed and contested (Wumu et al., 2022). Estrella-Ramón, Gálvez-Rodríguez, and Herrada-Lores (2024) highlight that the effectiveness of online political communication depends on the communicator's credibility, timing, and framing strategies, such as the use of hashtags to attract public attention. Effective communication, therefore, not only delivers information but also shapes how citizens interpret political agendas and policies. As Scott et al. (2023) note, policy communication must translate complex policy objectives into accessible public messages to foster understanding and support.

Political communication refers to how messages, values, and political ideas are transmitted among governments, politicians, media institutions, and citizens (Howlett & Cashore, 2014). The digital age has transformed this process from hierarchical and centralized systems to interactive and participatory communication through social media. Twitter, in particular, has become an open arena for debate, framing, and persuasion, enabling both elites and citizens to shape the flow of political narratives in real time. According to Wumu et al. (2022), policy communication functions as a cycle that includes the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policy messages to shape public awareness and acceptance.

This aligns with Scott et al. (2023), who emphasize that political communication is not only about message delivery but also about translating complex public policies into accessible and persuasive narratives. Estrella-Ramón et al. (2024) found that credibility, timing, and framing are key variables determining the effectiveness of online political messages. Hashtags, tone, and visual cues often determine how an issue trends and how citizens emotionally connect to it (B, Suripatty, & Lewerissa, 2025). This framework is especially relevant for public policy debates such as Indonesia's capital relocation, where political communication becomes a tool to shape legitimacy, counter criticism, and mobilize digital participation.

In addition to earlier arguments, research by Hadma and Anggoro (2022) shows that political actors who successfully navigate social media must not only broadcast messages, but also manage risks such as image damage, misinformation, and rapid public backlash. Furthermore, Boynton et al. (2013) analysed how the use of hashtags, retweets and URLs in the political domain on Twitter significantly exceeds their use in the general Twitter stream, indicating that political communication on Twitter is qualitatively different from other content. These findings suggest that digital political communication demands not just message creation, but also strategic format-use (e.g., hashtags or URLs) and rapid responsiveness (Yeimo, Lewerissa, & Suripatty, 2025). For your study on the IKN relocation, this means communicators who use those mediums and formats effectively (for example, framing their tweets, using hashtags, or embedding links) are likely to generate higher engagement and exert greater influence.

2.2 Social Media and Citizen Participation

Social media platforms are essential tools for fostering civic participation and public engagement in policymaking. Bu'ulolo and Hulu (2025) define social media as online spaces that encourage collaboration, information exchange, and participation across diverse communities. (Siagian & Yuliana, 2023) further emphasize that social media blurs the boundaries between information producers and consumers, creating participatory communication patterns, particularly among Generation Z. The role of hashtags has become central in connecting fragmented conversations into cohesive discussions. According to Laucuka (2018), hashtags serve as communicative devices that categorize information and link users around shared topics. Mondal et al. (2024) demonstrate that *hashtag activism* effectively increases visibility and engagement, helping shape public discourse on political and social issues. In the context of Indonesia's capital relocation (IKN), hashtags related to “#IKNNusantara” have served as digital arenas for debate and dialogue, reflecting both support and criticism toward government policies.

Social media has redefined political participation by allowing direct interaction between policymakers and citizens. Bu'ulolo and Hulu (2025) describe social media as a participatory medium that encourages collaboration and information exchange beyond institutional boundaries. Similarly, Siagian and Yuliana (2023) note that platforms like Twitter foster an inclusive digital public sphere where users can critique policies, propose solutions, or even mobilize social movements. Hashtags play an essential communicative role in transforming scattered posts into cohesive discussions. Laucuka (2018) conceptualizes hashtags as semantic markers that categorize and amplify political discourse, allowing users to trace conversations across social and ideological lines. Mondal et al. (2024) demonstrated that *hashtag activism*—such as #BlackLivesMatter or Indonesia's #TolakUUCiptaKerja—can influence mainstream narratives by connecting personal opinions with collective movements. In Indonesia's IKN context, hashtags like #IKNNusantara and #IbuKotaBaru served as arenas for contesting political legitimacy. Through these online mechanisms, citizen participation transcends geography, allowing users from diverse backgrounds to engage in national discourse. Such digital democratization, however, also introduces challenges of misinformation and polarization, highlighting the dual-edged nature of social media as both a participatory and conflictual space (Sapariati, Widnyani, & Dewi, 2025).

Building on prior discussion, on homophily and polarization in Twitter political networks finds that users with similar political profiles tend to cluster together, limiting exposure to diverse viewpoints and potentially reinforcing echo-chambers (Salsabila & Isyanto, 2025). This matters because while social media offers wide participation opportunities, not all participation equals deliberation—if networks are segregated, voices may simply reinforce existing beliefs. In your IKN case, this suggests the possibility that dominant communicators may address segmented audiences and not necessarily cross-cutting ones. Moreover, research by “Social Media as a Platform for Incessant Political Communication” (2023) shows that in the Indian context social media truly enabled ongoing citizen-government dialogue, not just broadcast, enabling networked public spheres (Rodrigues & Niemann, 2017). These studies imply that citizen participation via social media is complex: high interaction counts do not automatically guarantee broader deliberative engagement.

2.3 Dominant Actors and Public Opinion Formation

The concept of dominant actors in digital communication aligns with *agenda-setting* and *framing* theories, which argue that individuals or organizations with greater visibility and perceived authority can influence public opinion and direct political conversations. Abdurrahman (2014) found that Ridwan Kamil's consistent engagement through Twitter transformed his account into an alternative public sphere, fostering transparency and active participation among citizens. Similarly, Wulansari (2014) noted that authentic and consistent communication strengthens audience trust and enhances message effectiveness in digital spaces. Ramadhani et al. (2023) argue that digital movements such as #TolakUUCiptaKerja demonstrate how individual actors and media institutions collaborate in shaping online narratives. However, media outlets often function as one-way information disseminators, while personal accounts tend to generate stronger audience interaction by presenting relatable, emotional, and

conversational content. As a result, personal communicators like politicians and activists frequently dominate digital discussions compared to institutional actors.

The rise of dominant communicators on digital platforms aligns with *agenda-setting* and *framing* theories, which argue that actors with greater visibility and perceived authority can influence how issues are prioritized in public debate. Abdurrahman (2014) identified that Ridwan Kamil's use of Twitter as Mayor of Bandung created a new public sphere where citizens could interact with government programs transparently and actively. Wulansari (2014) added that consistent and authentic online communication fosters trust and strengthens leadership legitimacy. Ramadhani et al. (2023) showed that during Indonesia's #*TolakUUCiptaKerja* digital movement, individual actors and citizen networks were more effective in driving engagement than institutional media accounts. This finding illustrates how online influence is shifting from traditional media gatekeepers to interactive communicators capable of emotional resonance and dialogic exchange. In this study's context, personal accounts like those of Muhammad Said Didu and Ridwan Kamil illustrate how public credibility, personal branding, and responsiveness enable individuals to dominate the online agenda regarding IKN. Their active engagement transforms Twitter into an informal policymaking forum—reflecting the decentralization of influence in the digital communication ecosystem.

Additional evidence from a study by Hua, Naaman, and Ristenpart (2020) on Twitter interactions with U.S. political candidates shows that users who engage adversarially (e.g., negative replies, trolling) were more peripheral in the network yet received heightened visibility in each candidate's interaction set. This reveals a subtle dimension: dominance is not only about positive engagement (likes, shares), but also being pulled into contentious dynamics. Additionally, the dataset of German political Facebook pages in one study (2019) found that a small number of hyper-active users accounted for much of the interaction in political communication online (Papakyriakopoulos, Serrano, & Hegelich, 2020). For your research, this suggests that the dominant actors on Twitter around IKN may not only gain visibility by promulgating messages, but also by generating or being drawn into polarizing interaction—this may contribute to their prominence in like, retweet, reply, and quote metrics.

2.4 Political Communication and the IKN Context

The relocation of Indonesia's National Capital City (IKN) from Jakarta to East Kalimantan represents a major political and developmental initiative that has sparked diverse public reactions. Hasanah et al. (2024) emphasize that successful implementation of this project depends on effective government communication that integrates public participation and transparency. Yusuf et al. (2024) found that social sentiment toward IKN varies, ranging from optimism about decentralization to skepticism regarding environmental sustainability and social displacement. Mulyadi et al. (2024) argue that inclusive communication strategies are vital to building trust and fostering collaboration between the government and citizens in large-scale projects like IKN. In this context, public figures such as Muhammad Said Didu and Ridwan Kamil have emerged as key communicators, influencing public perception through their online engagement. Their dominance reflects the shifting power of political communication, where personal authenticity and digital interactivity often outweigh institutional authority.

The relocation of Indonesia's National Capital City (IKN) to East Kalimantan represents a landmark policy that intertwines political, environmental, and socio-economic dimensions. Hasanah et al. (2024) argue that inclusive communication and community participation are vital for the policy's legitimacy. Meanwhile, Yusuf et al. (2024) identified divided public sentiment—ranging from optimism about decentralization and national identity to skepticism over ecological sustainability and social equity. Mulyadi et al. (2024) emphasize that sustainable urban development requires transparent, dialogic communication between the government and citizens. The IKN case exemplifies how digital platforms function as modern deliberative spaces where public figures, activists, and media institutions negotiate meanings of “progress” and “justice.” The prominence of individual actors such as Muhammad Said Didu and Ridwan Kamil highlights how charisma and narrative personalization can amplify engagement far beyond institutional messaging. Their communicative style—direct, conversational,

and emotive—contrasts with the formal, top-down tone of media outlets. Consequently, the IKN discourse reflects a transformation in political communication, where authenticity, rather than authority, determines influence.

Although specific to Indonesia's IKN relocation, we can draw parallels from other large-scale policy debates. For example, research on digital space for public democracy via hashtags in Indonesia shows that Twitter hashtags can serve as mobilizing platforms for protest and policy legitimization simultaneously. Also, research into “political communication in times of spectacularisation” Gómez-García, Zamora, and Berrocal (2023) argues that political issues are increasingly framed as spectacle in digital media, with emotional narratives, visual dramatization, and influencer-style communication dominating. In the IKN case, this suggests that the communicators who emerged dominant may have been those who framed the issue not only in terms of facts or policy but in emotionally and visually compelling ways, turning a policy relocation into a public narrative of transformation or controversy.

3. Methodology

This research uses netnography as a written records resulting from studying cultures and communities that emerged from Internet-based communication. But, this study will only analyze content, by identifying tweets based on four types of engagements in Twitter, namely:

- a. *like* (promoting a tweet),
- b. *retweet* (sharing a tweet with the followers),
- c. *reply* (answering to a tweet), and
- d. *quote* (commenting to a tweet while sharing with the followers).

By using the quantitative content analysis research method, this study aims to see who the dominant actor or communicator in the IKN issue from the four recorded engagements is. The general framework of any content analysis begins with conceptualizing the idea for investigation. Researchers begin by identifying a corpus of texts that will explore a research question or hypothesis. A research question should acknowledge how the texts elicit social action and consider who the texts were written for, why they were written, and how they have been used. This research began with data collection, namely by taking and mining (crawling) conversation data on social media using ASIGTA. The data collection was conducted Since the enactment of the Law on National Capitals, from 18 January 2022 to 31 January 2022. Noted, there have been 14,872 interactions on Twitter. Researchers will analyze the four types of engagements, to identify the accounts with the highest number of interactions, as the dominant actors in IKN-related communications. Meanwhile, data validity tests are carried out by confirming data when the analysis process is carried out. This validity ensure by cross-referencing the data, also verifying if the accounts are active and influential in the IKN-related conversations or discourses.

4. Result and discussions

This research results section contains an explanation of the results of the analysis related to the identification of dominant actors and what kind of Political Communication in the New National Capital City (Ibu Kota Negara - IKN)'s issues. First discussion will talk about what are ten most interactive twitter accounts based on the four types of engagement. Twitter account that has the most *like* interactions listed in table 1. Muhammad Said Didu through the account @msaid_didu, is at the top for like interactions (6,009 times). It follow with @tempodotco and @ridwankamil.

Table 1. *Like* Interactions

No.	Account	Number of <i>Like</i> Interactions	Date
1	@msaid_didu	6.009	January 24 th , 2022
2	@tempodotco	3.342	January 19 th , 2022
3	@ridwankamil	3.163	January 22 nd , 2022
4	@TrendAsia_org	3.056	January 19 th , 2022
5	@sudjiwotedjo	2.274	January 26 th , 2022
6	@ferrykoto	2.230	January 27 th , 2022

7	@keuangannews_id	2.126	January 20 th , 2022
8	@CNNIndonesia	2.002	January 19 th , 2022
9	@KompasTV	1.957	January 30 th , 2022
10	@tempodotco	1.897	January 26 th , 2022

Source: Research results (2023)

In tweet uploaded on January 24th, 2022, Said Didu expressed his opinion regarding IKN. He mentioned five things related to IKN, namely: (1) born from personal desire - without in-depth study; (2) intended for the enjoyment of oligarchy - not for the benefit of the masses; (3) built from debt funds or third-party funds, (4) supported by sycophants of power; and (5) not in the interest of the people.

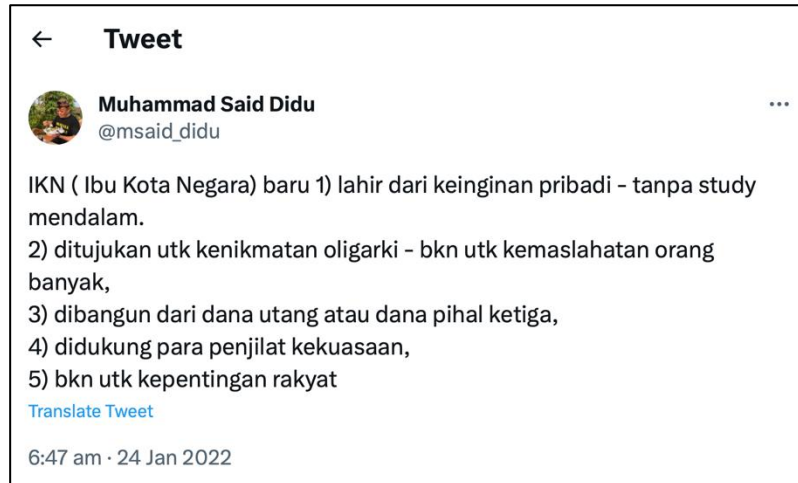


Figure 1. Tweet from Mohammad Said Didu's twitter account (@msaid_didu) on January 24th, 2022.

Source: Research results (2023)

Said Didu, Secretary of *Kementerian Badan Usaha Milik Negara/BUMN* (The Ministry of State Owned Enterprises) in 2005-2010, is indeed known as a figure who often expresses his opinion regarding the transfer of IKN. His opinion on twitter received great attention from netizens. Evidently, this tweet got 6,009 likes. On *retweet* interactions, Muhammad Said Didu through the account @msaid_didu, is also at the top for retweet interactions (Table 2). The same tweet, then got 1.861 number of retweets. This interaction allows an account to share a tweet with the followers. Thus, Said Didu's tweet has been shared by at least 1,861 times to more followers.

Table 2. *Retweet Interactions*

No.	Account	Number of Retweet Interactions	Date
1	@msaid_didu	1.861	January 24 th , 2022
2	@tempodotco	1.215	January 19 th , 2022
3	@TrendAsia_org	1.163	January 19 th , 2022
4	@sudjiwotedjo	841	January 26 th , 2022
5	@ridwankamil	774	January 22 nd , 2022
6	@tempodotco	728	January 26 th , 2022
7	@kumparan	685	January 21 st , 2022
8	@CNNIndonesia	608	January 19 th , 2022
9	@QaillaAsyiqah	530	January 24 th , 2022
10	@keuangannews_id	502	January 20 th , 2022

Source: Research results (2023)



Figure 2. Tweet from tempo.co's twitter account (@tempodotco) on January 19th, 2022.
Source: Research results (2023)

In the second position, twitter account which gets the number of *retweets* is the tempo.co account (@tempodotco). In a tweet uploaded on January 19th, 2022, this media account shared an article on online media nasional.tempo.co entitled “*Koalisi Kaltim Tolak UU Ibu Kota Negara, Berpotensi Gusur Lahan Adat*” (Kaltim Coalition Rejects the National Capital Law, Potentially Evicting Customary Land). Tempo.co wrote a tweet by paraphrasing the online news headline to “*Koalisi Masyarakat Kaltim menolak Undang-Undang tentang Ibu Kota Negara (IKN) yang baru disahkan DPR pada Selasa, 19 Januari 2022*” (The East Kalimantan Community Coalition rejects the Law on the National Capital (IKN) which was just passed by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, January 19, 2022).

This tweet was then added with a hashtag: #TempoNasional indicating that this news was national in scale. Tempo provides hashtags according to the division of rubrics in online media. *Tempo Nasional* is used for the latest and latest national news about government, law, politics, crime, education, and events that occur in Indonesia. While *Tempo Dunia* contains the latest international news regarding politics, law, government, crime cases, wars that occur around the world. Another example, on *Tempo Metro*, we will find the latest metropolitan news in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi regarding government, law, education and social issues.

By definition Laucuka (2018) a hashtag is ‘a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media websites and applications, especially Twitter, to identify messages on a specific topic’ (ODE). The hashtag serves the function of linking content into a larger conversation about a specific topic on Twitter (Estrella-Ramón et al., 2024; Mondal et al., 2024). Meanwhile, for *reply* engagement, the results showed that Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil), was ranked 1st and 2nd for this interactions (2,228 and 1,571 times). This result was obtained from two tweets uploaded on two consecutive days, January 21 and 22, 2022.

Table 3. *Reply Interactions*

No.	Account	Number of Interactions	Reply Date
1	@ridwankamil	2.228	January 22 nd , 2022
2	@ridwankamil	1.571	January 21 st , 2022
3	@hnurwahid	853	January 18 th , 2022
4	@tempodotco	785	January 26 th , 2022
5	@democrazymedia	530	January 30 th , 2022
6	@msaid_didu	427	January 24 th , 2022
7	@hnurwahid	340	January 22 nd , 2022
8	@MardaniAliSera	302	January 18 th , 2022
9	@kompascom	278	January 21 st , 2022
10	@OposisiCerdas	272	January 25 th , 2022

Source: Research results (2023)



Figure 3. Tweet from Ridwan Kamil’s twitter account (@ridwankamil) on January 22nd, 2022.

Source: Research results (2023)

Ridwan Kamil uploaded a video of IKN, tweeting “*IBU KOTA NEGARA resmi dinamai “Nusantara”. Apa harapan kita kepada ibu kota baru ini?*” (the capital city is officially named "Nusantara". What are our hopes for this new capital?). This question provoked 2,228 replies. Here is some of the replies:

fdzr @fadjarkim “*Gak jadi pindah pak. Gak penting*” (Not move. Not Important)

Txtrobotbera @robotbera “*Epic nih beberapa taun lg*” (Epic in few years away)

&cok @Ccookk_ “*Harapan sih semoga hutan gak rusak , tp pas liat video nya keliatan ngerusak hutan, jadi kepikiran kalo udh jadi nya gmn*” (Hopefully the forest will not be damaged, but when you see the video it looks like will destroying the forest, think about how it will be)

Table 4. *Quote Interactions*

No.	Account	Number of Interactions	Quote Date
1	@ridwankamil	1.349	January 22 nd , 2022
2	@tempodotco	523	January 26 th , 2022
3	@hnurwahid	185	January 18 th , 2022
4	@ridwankamil	170	January 21 st , 2022
5	@TrendAsia_Org	169	January 19 th , 2022
6	@tempodotco	140	January 19 th , 2022
7	@MardaniAliSera	105	January 18 th , 2022
8	@kompascom	103	January 21 st , 2022
9	@sudjiwotedjo	102	January 26 th , 2022
10	@msaid didu	92	January 24 th , 2022

Source: Research results

As mentioned in Table 4, this Ridwan Kamil's tweet also got the highest *quote* interactions of 1,349 times. Twitter account that *quote* this tweet will commenting while sharing with their followers. After Ridwan Kamil, tempo.co took second place in *quote interaction*.



Figure 4. Tweet from tempo.co's twitter account (@tempodotco) at January 26th, 2022.

Source: Research results (2023)

Just like before, tempo.co re-shared the news from his online media *bisnis.tempo.co* entitled “*Kepala Bappenas Tak Tahu Ada Konsesi Tambang di Ibu Kota Negara*” (Head of the Ministry of National Development Planning Doesn't Know There Are Mining Concessions in the National Capital). Ringkasan berita ditulis dalam tweet “*Kepala Bappenas Suharso Monoarfa tak tahu sebagian lahan di Ibu Kota Negara (IKN) merupakan wilayah konsesi tambang*” (Head of the Ministry of National Development Planning Suharso Monoarfa did not know that some of the land in the National Capital City (IKN) was a mining concession area). Tempo.co also continues to add hashtags, namely #TempoBisnis, a tempo.co rubric containing the latest and latest business news about economics, finance, banking, investment, stocks in Indonesia and the world today. From these four twitter interactions, it can be seen that the dominant actors in communication about IKN on Twitter in the

period 18-31 January 2023 are Muhammad Said Didu and Ridwan Kamil. Said Didu was Secretary of The Ministry of State Owned Enterprises in 2005-2010, and having long been known to be very vocal in criticizing the government.

One of Said Didu's most vocal criticisms of the government was related to the acquisition of PT Freeport Indonesia's shares. Said Didu considered that the government's policy in purchasing Freeport Indonesia's shares through PT Inalum could harm the state. Outline his statement regarding the heavy burden of the state budget due to Corona. However, on the other hand, the National Capital City (IKN) development program in East Kalimantan Province has not been postponed. For Said Didu, the IKN project under *Menteri Koordinator Kemaritiman dan Investasi* (the Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment) must be diverted to handling Corona. The dialogue in question stated that the reason there has been no budget transfer from IKN is because of Luhut's strong focus on the investment sector. This conflict then continued in the legal path.

Said Didu has also been reported to *Bareskrim Polri* (the National Police Criminal Investigation Office) regarding his tweets allegedly insulting *Menteri Agama* (Minister of Religious Affairs) *Yaqu Cholil Qoumas*. Said Didu's statement was considered too judgmental of Yaqu, who had just been appointed as Minister of Religious Affairs. Through the tweet, it is alleged that there have been violations of alleged criminal acts of hate speech or individual and inter-group hostility (SARA) and crimes against the general authorities. How Said Didu did on social media is what makes it not surprising if then the *likes* and *retweets* he gets on tweets related to IKN get a high number. Besides Said Didu, the dominant actor in communication on social media related to IKN is Ridwan Kamil. Currently, Ridwan Kamil occupies the position as Governor of West Java. The politician, who is familiarly called Kang Emil, emphasized that he fully supports the development of the National Capital of the Archipelago. This support is realized by conveying the challenges that will be faced by IKN, along with their solutions.

One of the major challenges that IKN will face is to bring civil society or non-state civil apparatus populations to live in IKN, precisely in the Penajam Paser Utara, East Kalimantan. For this reason, Kang Emil will invite West Java entrepreneurs to invest in IKN. In addition, he will also invite West Java infrastructure entrepreneurs to enliven the construction sector at IKN. As an architect, Kang Emil is also one of the judges in the IKN design competition. He also conveyed valuable input related to the design of the IKN several times to President Joko Widodo.

One tweet that attracted a lot of reply interaction was as follows:

"Sebentar lagi Kalimantan Timur menjadi ibu kota negara baru. Usulan dari Pak Presiden ibu kota ini akan dinamai Nusantara, dengan harapan bisa menggambarkan kenusantaraan atau keberagaman Republik Indonesia. Dari pada berdebat, coba kasih ide, nama ibu kota versi kalian? -admin-"

(Soon, East Kalimantan will become the capital of the new country. The proposal from Mr. President of this capital city will be named *Nusantara*, in the hope that it can describe the intermediary or diversity of the Republic of *Indonesia*. Instead of arguing, try to give an idea, the name of your version of the capital? -admin-)

Many Twitter citizens provide answers to these questions. Counted, there are 1,571 replies that appear. According to Wulansari (2014), Ridwan Kamil is often referred to as a government that makes communication breakthroughs by using social media twitter to convey messages continuously. Not only used for socialization and transparency of his work programs, Ridwan uses Twitter facilities to campaign on issues of political participation, the environment, health to the preservation of traditional culture, including this IKN issue. One study Abdurrahman (2014) mentions that this form of communication participation carried out by Ridwan Kamil is utilizing the presence of new technology that provides easy access for humans. Cyberspace, in this case, Twitter, is able to create new public sphere. The current modern government, as practiced by Ridwan Kamil, then as Mayor of Bandung, utilizes twitter as a medium of representation to communicate with citizens. Furthermore, if done

consistently it can build strong public participation, because the interaction relationship between citizens and their leaders is getting closer and even not distant.

This is in line with the findings in the study Nughat (2024) which shows that in more democratic and transparent environments, self-censorship is notably lower, even when citizens criticize the government online. This comparison emphasizes the importance of strong legal protection for freedom of expression and a transparent governance model for reducing self-censorship. Democracy in Indonesia has a statistically significant effect on economic growth in Indonesia. In the long run, a good quality democracy tends to encourage an increase in economic growth. Improvements in democracy in Indonesia should also strengthen democratic norms that apply in society, such as the reduction of corrupt behavior, especially political corruption and money politics in obtaining public office because if this behavior cannot be improved, then the resulting democracy will have little impact on the economy (Nairobi, Santi, & Afif, 2021).

The issue of moving IKN from DKI Jakarta to East Kalimantan also gave rise to other twitter accounts, which dominated the circulation of messages or communication. Broadly speaking, account types can be divided into several groups, as shown in Table 5 below. The first type of Twitter account that uploads messages related to IKN is politicians. Besides Ridwan Kami, there are Hidayat Nur Wahid (@hnurwahid) and Mardani Ali Sera (@MardaniAliSera). In his twitter profile, Hidayat Nur Wahid described himself as *Ketua Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/MPR* (Deputy Chairman of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia) 2019-2024, Member of FPKS DPR RI Dapil DKI Jakarta II, and Deputy Chairman of the PKS Shura Council 2015-2025. Meanwhile, Mardani Ali Sera, is also a politician from PKS and a lecturer from Mercu Buana University. Other accounts that dominate are those of activists, such as Said Didu, among them Sudjiwo Tedjo (@SudjiwoTedjo) and Ferry Koto (@ferrykoto). There is also a @QaillaAsyiqah account, a personal account that has become a popular actor in conveying this IKN issue.

Table 5. Type of Account

No.	Account	Account Type	Joined Year	Followers
1	@ridwankamil	Politician	October 2009	5.5 M
2	@hnurwahid	Politician	October 2009	1.5 M
3	@MardaniAliSera	Politician	March 2010	508.9 K
4	@sudjiwotedjo	Activist, Artist	September 2010	1,7 M
5	@msaid_didu	Activist	April 2019	730.6 K
6	@QaillaAsyiqah	Activist	July 2020	47.6 K
7	@ferrykoto	Activist	March 2009	41.6 K
8	@kompascom	Media & News Company	March 2009	8.5 M
9	@KompasTV	Media & News Company	September 2009	5.1 M
10	@CNNIndonesia	Media & News Company	November 2008	3.9 M
11	@tempodotco	Media & News Company	December 2008	2.2 M
12	@kumparan	Media & News Company	July 2016	1 M
13	@keuangannews_id	Media & News Company	February 2020	90.2 K
14	@democrazymedia	Media & News Company	March 2020	85 K
15	@OposisiCerdas	Media Online	July 2017	238.1 K
16	@TrendAsia_Org	Non-Government & Non-Profit Organization	November 2017	3.8 K

Source: Research results (2023)

In addition, accounts that are also involved and get high user engagement are eight accounts belonging to the media, such as Kompas (@kompascom and @kompasTV), CNN Indonesia (@CNNIndonesia), Tempo (@tempodotco), Kumparan (@kumparan), Keuangan News (@keuangannews_id), Democracy Media (@democrazymedia), and Oposisi Cerdas (@OposisiCerdas). Even though it is included in a dominant account, the interaction owned by media accounts is still lower than personal accounts. In fact, these media accounts have a much higher number of followers. For example, @kompascom with 8.5 M followers (the highest of all accounts), apparently could not occupy first place in the four types

of Twitter interactions. This is certainly a discussion, one of which is because this media twitter account is often only an extension to share news published in its online media.

This finding suggests that a large follower count does not guarantee high engagement, as media accounts like @kompascom, despite having millions of followers, often serve as extensions for sharing news rather than fostering interaction. In contrast, personal accounts tend to generate higher engagement due to their relatable and interactive content. This highlights the importance of tailoring social media strategies to prioritize engagement through platform-specific, audience-focused approaches rather than relying solely on follower reach. This finding relates with another study that shows for the newly created cities in the country, more attention be put to attracting popular citizen involvement in the affairs that otherwise affect the local citizenry if those cities are to realize the necessary development agendas. One way to attain this is by strengthening the role of non-political actors to lead a major role in the development of the respective city (Mwesigwa, Acanga, Chono, & Oboi, 2023).

5. Conclusions

The research focuses on political communication related to the National Capital City (IKN) project in Indonesia, a highly significant development initiative that gained momentum following the approval of the National Capital Law by the Indonesian Parliament (DPR) on January 18, 2020. The law, which authorized the relocation of Indonesia's capital from Jakarta to a new location in East Kalimantan, has sparked considerable debate and public discourse regarding its political, economic, and environmental implications. As the government moves forward with the IKN project, it has become a central topic in Indonesian media and on social media platforms like Twitter, where political figures, activists, and the general public actively discuss and express their opinions on the matter.

This study specifically examines the political communication surrounding the IKN issue on Twitter, with the goal of identifying the dominant actors in the conversation and understanding the nature of their engagement with audiences. The findings reveal that two personal accounts, those of Muhammad Said Didu (@msaid_didu) and Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil), lead in terms of engagement, garnering significantly more interactions compared to media accounts, despite the latter having much larger follower bases. For instance, @msaid_didu leads in likes and retweets, while @ridwankamil ranks high in replies and quote tweets. These findings suggest that personal accounts, often associated with influential individuals or activists, are more successful in generating interaction by engaging in direct and relatable communication with followers. In contrast, while eight media accounts also receive a high volume of user engagement, they still fall short in comparison to personal accounts in all four categories of interaction (likes, retweets, replies, and quotes). This is likely due to the nature of media accounts, which primarily share news articles or updates from their online platforms. This format tends to be more formal and less interactive, and may not encourage the same level of personal connection and discourse that personal accounts foster. Media accounts, despite their larger reach and higher follower counts, are less effective in engaging audiences because they focus on broadcasting information rather than engaging in two-way communication.

The study highlights a key shift in political communication dynamics on social media: personal, authentic engagement is becoming increasingly important in capturing the attention and interaction of the audience, particularly when discussing politically charged issues like IKN. This finding suggests that individuals and activists who engage directly with their followers in a conversational manner are more likely to dominate the discourse on social media compared to traditional media outlets that rely primarily on news-sharing. The research thus contributes to a deeper understanding of how social media, especially Twitter, functions as a platform for political engagement and how different types of accounts—media versus personal—shape the way political issues are communicated and discussed.

Limitation

The limitation of this research is the absence of audience analysis, which hinders a deeper understanding of why personal accounts, such as @msaid_didu and @ridwankamil, achieve higher engagement

compared to media accounts with larger follower bases. This gap makes it challenging to identify how factors like audience preferences, trust, and interaction patterns influence the prominence of personal accounts in political communication about the IKN issue. Consequently, the study falls short of fully explaining the dynamics of engagement and the effectiveness of different communication strategies.

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