



The Representation of “Sustainable City” on the New State Capital’s Social Media Post-Leadership Resignation

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Abstract. Sustainable city has been among the visions of the new state capital of Indonesia, i.e. Nusantara. The state capital establishment project makes use of its communication platform such as Instagram to inform the public and relevant stakeholders of what sustainable city is like. The study aims to investigate how its social media posts were able to maintain the representation of “sustainable city” following the resignation of its first head of authority. By using thematic analysis incorporated with multimodal analysis, we garnered 78 posts of Nusantara’s Instagram posts from 3 June 2024 to end July. Among these posts we found that themes related to sustainable city is minimum. The authority of the new state capital posted activities conducted by its officials instead, leaving the concept of sustainable city underexposed. However, by taking a look at its multimodal texts, we found that sustainable city is represented as “a city in the making for the white collars” on the basis of collaboration and a lot of planning. However, the concept of sustainable city remains vague. Furthermore, the collaboration with the surrounding communities seems to be overlooked as the page favors strategic partnerships with corporations and foreign bodies. The study suggests a more robust representation of sustainable city in further communication of the new state capital through social media.

Keywords: Sustainable City, Representation, Nusantara, Social Media

1 Introduction

Sustainable city has been among the visions of the new state capital of Indonesia, i.e. Nusantara. It is further detailed in Law No. 3/2022 on National Capital as to what the sustainable city constitutes. As stated in the vision section of the law, sustainable city is “a city that manages resources efficiently and provides services effectively with efficient use of water and energy resources, waste management, integrated transportation modes, livable and healthy environment, a synergy of the natural environment and the built environment” (p.33). The definition seems to slightly differ from the goal postulated by the UN of sustainable city (Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.). As it appears that the definition of “sustainable city” for Nusantara tends to focus on the management of natural resources and infrastructures, while overlooking its role to empower its citizens economically and socially. Broadly defined, sustainability means to meet “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (UN, n.d.).

The state capital establishment project makes use of its communication platform such as Instagram to inform the public and relevant stakeholders of what sustainable city is

like. The use of Instagram is a strategic choice as the platform is the second most frequently used social media [GWI, 2023]. Thus, Instagram is expected to bridge the interests of the authority of the state capital and the public as the taxpayers. The posts bring the self-representation of sustainable city as postulated in the law. Indeed, some studies have shown the important role of social media in disseminating the representation of some sites [e.g. Garrod, 2008; Zao, Zu, & Hao, 2018]. According to Hall [1997], representation is a complex way in which the media symbolizes and presents reality and imaginary through language, images, and icons. As Instagram posts these days can accommodate multimodality, the management of the new state capital has more freedom to represent its vision of sustainable city.

However, the development of the state capital is filled with some issues, not to mention the small number of foreign investors and the resignation of the head of authority after 2 years of his appointment [Setwapres, 2024].

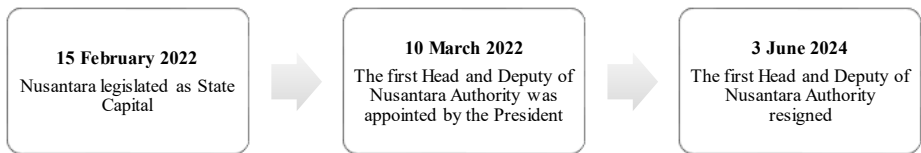


Figure 1. Chronological order of Nusantara’s first leadership

The change of leadership may lead to further doubt on the development of the capital [Nugroho, 2024; Rahayu, 2024]. It is of interest to the researchers to investigate how its social media posts were able to maintain the representation of “sustainable city” following the resignation of its first head of authority.

2 Methodology

The study uses thematic analysis. According to Alhojailan [2012], thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis used to analyze classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. We collected data from the official Instagram page of Nusantara (@ikn_id), garnering 78 posts, from the resignation of the first head of authority on 3 June 2024 to end of July of the same year. The data we collected included pictures or videos and captions. We categorized each post based on the theme of content it delivers. Furthermore, the main interest variables in this research are the representation of sustainable city as demonstrated on its social media page. Thus, among the 78 posts, we selected only posts that showed Nusantara’s photos as sustainable city or contain keywords depicting it as “sustainable city” by the definition of Law No. 3/2022 on National Capital, including “efficient use of water and energy resource,” “waste management,” “integrated transportation modes”, “healthy environment,” and relevant keywords to this definition. We attempted to investigate how images, videos, and words were arranged in such a way to construct the representation of Nusantara as a sustainable city.

3 Results and Discussion

The official social media page of the new state capital does not focus on showing how sustainable city is like. Instead, we found that it consisted of mixed types of contents. The thematic analysis indicates that it comprises information about what was happening in the new state capital such as event organization in the state capital, cooperation with corporations, monitoring, work progress, and grand launching of some infrastructures. Interestingly, there were some posts not directly related to the vision or work progress in the state capital. As suggested by Kusumasondjaja [2018], this type of posts is directed to interact with audience. This type of posts include greeting on public officials, national or festive day celebration, or congratulatory remarks.

Regarding posts related to the definition of sustainable city, we could only find “water” in 3 posts, “energy” in 1 post, “transportation” in 3 posts, “environment” in 3 posts, and “sustainable” in 13 posts. It should be noted that most of the keywords were found in Indonesian. Other relevant keywords including “green”, “waste management”, and “energy” constitute less than 10% of the post number. Despite the presence of “sustainable” in posts, most of the posts does not contain information or description of what sustainable is. Instead, it is simply just a mention of how the development is supposed to be done in the new state capital.

Provided that the posts consisted of captions and photos/videos, the multimodal analysis was conducted to understand how the sustainable city is construed on the social media page. Multimodality refers to the use of multiple symbols combined to convey meanings [Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2010]. The analysis of relationship between images and textual representation provides an in-depth view of the text, allowing us to explore further on absence of elements that may be significant [Michelson & Álvarez Valencia, 2016; Serafini & Reid, 2019]. Furthermore, the importance of multimodal analysis lies on the fact that photos or videos posted on the social media are deliberately staged to support self-representation [Rettberg, 2017]. The images or videos uploaded in the same post, we can find that Nusantara’s Instagram page tends to show people with formal or official attires, many of which are in a conference room. The posts published on the Instagram page seem to glorify the participation of Nusantara’s officials in some events. The purposes of the participation may be to learn from other parties, reporting to other government bodies, and ask for recommendation. This leaves the concept of sustainable city underexposed. At the same time, it shows that the city and the authority are still in progress to achieve the city’s supposed vision or “a city in the making for the white collars” with a lot of planning and collaboration with other parties. It is obvious that a lot of parties, particularly the native tribes of the surrounding area were excluded in the social media posts.

As of the sustainable concept, we should also acknowledge some posts that show preservation of wildlife around the city area, interconnected infrastructure with surrounding areas, concept of forest/green city and commitment to green transportation. Unfortunately, these constitute only about 10% of the total posts. The work progress monitoring is among the highest number of posts on Nusantara’s social media page. Unfortunately, many of the work progress report is dedicated to a short-term goal, i.e. preparation for holding Independence Day in the city. Another aspect which is also addressed on the social media page is collaboration with surrounding community,

particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This is in line with UN's notion of sustainable city which should be able to empower its citizens and provide them with equal distribution of welfare. However, this type of information seems to be undervalued on the social media page as indicated by the proportion of such posts on the page.

Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between the main images published and the caption texts. For instance, a post on 10 July about public consultation of education roadmap in city state. Instead of showing the activities such as engaging discussion, the main image shows people looking at the camera while making a hand heart. It is also similar to the posts on 17 July, 27 July and 31 July, showing people with hand hearts while the action verbs on the captions read *sosialisasikan* (socialize), *sepakati* (agree), and *optimalisasi* (optimize), respectively. These images do not effectively represent the activities. Instead, they seem to show togetherness and optimism on the development of Nusantara. It seems to maintain the representation of collaboration in developing the city. At the same time, the pictures seem to highlight the aesthetics of human poses, rather than mirror what is described by the caption.

Although the scope of this research is limited to the posts of Nusantara's Instagram page after the resignation of its first Head of Authority, it would be beneficial to touch on the representation of "sustainable city" on its Instagram posts prior to the leadership resignation. Similarly, the posts also tended to show agreement for collaboration between the officials with other parties, including foreign bodies, corporations, and academic institutions. It is indicated by the domination of pictures of officials indoor. There was almost no change between the presentation of Nusantara prior to and after the resignation. The lack of exposure of nature and the highlight of the main architecture, i.e. Presidential Palace tended to show that the sustainable city is a city with grand buildings and tend to be dedicated for the white collars.

4 Conclusion

Following the resignation of the former head of authority, the vision of sustainable city on the official social media page of Nusantara seems to be underrepresented. Although the images of the state capital's officials dominate the posts, it can be seen that the vision is represented vaguely as "a city in the making for the white collars" on the basis of collaboration and a lot of planning. However, the collaboration is mostly shown with partners from corporations or foreign bodies. Collaboration with surrounding communities or the natives of the land tend to be overlooked. If there is any, they are represented by the local governments or MSMEs. It should be noted that representation of sustainable city is still ongoing on Nusantara's social media page. Due to the limited data, the result of the study should only be applicable within the period of data collection. The finding suggests a more robust representation of sustainable city in further communication of the new state capital.

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