A Map of Nationalism Message on Twitter/X Users in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research was motivated by the global rise in social media usage, which has introduced and disseminated universal values. In Indonesia, nationalism is increasingly challenged by the influx of global information through platforms like social media. The study aims to map the production of nationalism-related messages posted by Twitter/X users in Indonesia. A mixed-methods approach—combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques—was employed to analyze how nationalism messages were produced. The analysis focused on public participation, particularly in relation to gender, the geographic location of tweets, sentiment and emotion analysis, as well as the most commonly used hashtags and keywords on August 17, 2024. The findings reveal that nationalism messages from Indonesian Twitter/X users are organically generated by the public, with the predominant theme being expressions of Independence Day congratulations. The most influential actor in the message network was the account @aingriwehuy. In conclusion, public participation in celebrating Indonesia's Independence Day was evident across all regions of the country and involved both female and male users. The messages were largely characterized by positive emotions and sentiments.

Keywords: Digital; Indonesia; Message; Nationalism; Twitter (X)

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh perkembangan penggunaan media sosial secara global yang membawa nilai-nilai universal. Nasionalisme di Indonesia mendapatkan tantangan dari aliran informasi global yang dibawa masuk melalui media sosial. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memperoleh peta produksi pesan nasionalisme yang dihasilkan oleh pengguna Twitter/X di Indonesia. Pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif dan kualitatif, atau yang dikenal dengan pendekatan campuran, digunakan untuk menemukan peta produksi pesan nasionalisme tersebut. Teori yang digunakan adalah partisipasi publik yang secara khusus dikaitkan dengan gender, lokasi mengunggah tweet, analisis sentimen, analisis emosi, top hashtag, serta kata kunci yang digunakan pada tanggal 17 Agustus 2024. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pesan nasionalisme pengguna Twitter/X di Indonesia adalah organik dari masyarakat Indonesia, dengan pesan utama tentang ucapan selamat Hari Kemerdekaan. Aktor yang berpengaruh dalam jaringan pesan nasionalisme yakni @aingriwehuy. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah partisipasi publik di hari Kemerdekaan Indonesia menyebar di seluruh wilayah Indonesia, dilakukan oleh pengguna perempuan dan laki-laki dengan emosi dan sentimen yang positif.

Kata Kunci: Digital; Indonesia; Pesan; Nasionalisme; Twitter (X)

INTRODUCTION

Discussions on nationalism in the 21st century remain active across various academic and public spheres. These dialogues often center on nationalism as both an idea and a movement, particularly in relation to the challenges posed by globalization, or even at the intersection of the two. Nationalism, as an ideology, holds that the state and the nation must coexist in harmony. As a movement, nationalism

64

frequently prioritizes the interests of a specific nation, particularly in its initial stages, aiming to establish and preserve that nation's sovereignty over its own territory. Nationalism asserts that the state is the sole legitimate source of political power and that each nation must govern itself or determine its own path. In addition to fostering national unity, nationalism seeks to establish and maintain a singular national identity based on shared social characteristics such as culture, ethnicity, geography, language, politics (or governance), religion, customs, and collective historical memory.

However, as societies continue to develop socially and culturally, nationalism is increasingly challenged by the forces of globalization and its consequences. The rapid expansion of the internet has accelerated the spread of global ideologies. For example, in India, the government banned TikTok due to concerns over its Chinese origins, which were perceived to be associated with a specific ideological influence. Fears of foreign ideological intrusion prompted this policy decision (Kumar & Thussu, 2023). Similar patterns have emerged in Poland and Hungary, where growing nationalism is linked to distrust in the media and state-imposed media restrictions that encourage citizens to self-regulate their media consumption.

This concern over the erosion of nationalist sentiment is also present in Indonesia. Lim (2017), for instance, argues that nationalism in Indonesia is transforming tribal-based nationalism, based on a case study of the 2017 DKI Jakarta gubernatorial election. The use of volunteers, digital buzzers, and micro-celebrities during the campaign marked a shift toward post-truth political practices, where branding and emotion often override factual discourse. Social media, while promoting freedom of expression, also fosters an environment where hate speech flourishes, allowing individuals to silence others while invoking their own right to speak freely.

On the other hand, there is evidence that the spirit of nationalism continues to thrive among the millennial generation. Despite persistent challenges from religious nationalist groups, civic nationalism still manifests through community-driven initiatives such as NusantaRun and Sabang Merauke (Anoraga & Sakai, 2023). These expressions of civic nationalism have found fertile ground on platforms like Twitter.

In Indonesia, Twitter has become a stage for both ideological influencers, such as buzzers and micro-celebrities, and grassroots nationalist movements. While some use the platform to promote their own ideological narratives, others leverage it to spread messages of unity and national pride. Given that Indonesia ranks as the fourth-largest user base of Twitter globally, studying this platform's role in the production of nationalism-related messages is both timely and important.

This study, therefore, investigates the production and dissemination of nationalist messages on Twitter. It utilizes media theory, public participation, political communication, and the concept of digital nationalism, employing social network analysis—a methodology that has been underutilized in previous research on this topic. Most prior studies of Twitter content rely on discourse or critical discourse analysis, whereas this research offers a novel perspective by integrating social network analysis to map and interpret patterns of interaction and influence.

Considering the relevance of social media—especially Twitter—as a space for digital expression, this study highlights how national identity is constructed, contested, and communicated online. This is especially evident during moments of national celebration, such as Indonesia's Independence Day, when social media features like replies, mentions, and retweets become tools for shaping collective sentiment (Meeks, 2016).

METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative approach was utilized to extract data related to user-generated content on Twitter (currently known as X). Data mining was conducted using Drone Emprit Academic (DEA), a tool designed to capture influential Twitter accounts, user posts (tweets), and interactions within the network during a specified timeframe.

Data for this study were collected from August 1 to August 31, 2024. This timeframe was selected because August is the month in which Indonesia commemorates its Independence Day. This article contends that Independence Day is not merely a celebratory event but also a moment for reflecting on the historical foundations of the nation-state, its present challenges, and future aspirations. National Day celebrations serve as key opportunities for reaffirming national identity and a sense of belonging. These commemorations typically include various symbolic events, such as parades, award ceremonies

65

for distinguished individuals, cultural performances, rituals at national monuments, and public concerts. As Gabriel and Lentz (2020) observe, such events function as "sites and arenas for the enactment of nationhood" and contribute to the construction of "national imaginaries." They also visibly affirm the state's role as the "authoritative representative of the nation." Thus, by analyzing user behavior before, during, and after the Independence Day celebrations, this study aims to provide a detailed account of nationalism-related content on social media. A total of 10,000 posts were collected using the hashtag #HUT_RI_76 and the keyword "Dirgahayu."

To gain deeper insights into the quantitative findings, a qualitative approach was employed, drawing from the perspectives of public participation, political communication, and digital nationalism. To examine sentiment and emotional content, the study utilized an Ekman-like emotion classification model. Paul Ekman identified six basic emotions—happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise, and disgust—that remain widely used in natural language processing, despite the development of more complex emotional taxonomies by later scholars (Bruna et al., 2016).

Additionally, contextual analysis was conducted to situate tweets within broader social discourses, adopting methodologies previously used in public opinion studies on legal and health-related issues (Noakes et al., 2025). To differentiate meaningful content from irrelevant noise—an essential step for accurately interpreting user interaction—the study employed a deep interpretive approach capable of capturing the subtleties of language and sentiment (Shaheer et al., 2022). By integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods, this research provides a comprehensive map of the production of nationalism-related messages on Twitter/X.

However, the study acknowledges certain limitations. Sentiment analysis of Indonesian-language tweets poses significant challenges due to the language's rich nuances and regional variations. Furthermore, the presence of automated accounts (bots) can inflate tweet volumes and distort sentiment analysis results. To address this, bot detection scores were calculated, resulting in an overall author bot score of 1.77 and a post bot score of 1.86. These scores—measured on a scale from 1 to 2—indicate that the majority of users and posts were classified as human or near-human rather than automated.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research discovered the demographic data of Indonesian Twitter (X) users. The data contained user age and user gender data.

Table 1. Demography Twitter (X) Users by Age

Age Group	Authors	Authors (%)	Posts	Posts (%)	Retweeted	Mentions	Replies
18	333	29.21%	424	29.18%	326	52	46
19-29	463	40.61%	547	37.65%	419	111	17
30-39	120	10.53%	172	11.84%	122	43	7
40	224	19.65%	310	21.34%	133	159	18

(Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024)

Table 1 indicates that the majority of Twitter/X users participating in discussions about Indonesia's Independence Day fall within the 19–29 age range, accounting for 463 accounts or 40.61% of the dataset. The second-largest group consists of users aged 18, comprising 29.21%, followed by users aged 40, who make up 19.65%. In contrast, the fewest participants were from the 30–39 age range, representing only 10.53% of the total users. These findings align with demographic data from Datareportal.com, which reports that Indonesia's population is also dominated by individuals aged 18–34. Specifically, 11% of the population falls within the 18–24 age group, while 15% are aged 25–34 (Kemp, 2024).

These age categories can be classified into generational cohorts. A "generation" refers to a group of individuals born around the same time and shaped by similar social, cultural, and technological contexts. Members of a generation, often referred to as a birth cohort, typically exhibit shared values, preferences, and behavioral patterns throughout their lives (The Center for Generational Kinetics, 2024). There are currently seven recognized generational cohorts: the Greatest Generation (1901–1924), the Silent Generation (1925–1945), the Baby Boomers (1946–1964), Generation X (1965–1979), the Millennials (1980–1994), Generation Z (1995–2012), and Generation Alpha (2013–2025).

66

In this study, the data reveal that Generation Z is the most prominent demographic participating in Twitter/X conversations surrounding Indonesia's Independence Day. Not only do they represent the largest user group, but they also lead in the number of posts and retweets. This observation is supported by findings from Pew Research, which reports that Generation Z is the dominant age group in online search activity. Moreover, Generation Z is distinguished by its deep integration with technology. Often referred to as the "always-on" generation, they have been immersed in a digital environment since birth. Mobile devices, Wi-Fi, and high-speed cellular networks provide them with continuous internet access, while social media, instant connectivity, and on-demand digital content are central to their everyday lives (Dimock, 2019).

We further identified groups of authors based on personal accounts and organizational accounts.

Table 2. Total Posts by Users Type

User Type	Authors	Authors (%)	Posts	Posts (%)	Retweeted	Mentions	Replies
non-org	909	79.74%	1.106	76.12%	906	141	59
is-org	231	20.26%	347	23.88%	94	224	29

(Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024)

Table 3. Total Posts by Gender

Gender	Authors	Authors (%)	Posts	Posts (%)	Retweeted	Mentions	Replies
Male	817	71.67%	1.056	72.68%	667	319	70
Female	323	28.33%	397	27.32%	333	46	18

(Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024)

Table 2 shows Twitter/X accounts based on individual and organizational users. The data indicates that the network is dominated by individual accounts, with a total of 909 authors or 79.74%. Individual accounts also contributed significantly to the number of posts, with 1,106 posts or 76.12%. These personal accounts made a substantial contribution to the discussion of Indonesia's Independence Day, especially in the #HUT_RI_76 and 'Dirgahayu' networks.

Furthermore, Table 3 shows the total posts by gender in the #HUT_RI_76 and 'Dirgahayu' Twitter/X networks. In this network, male users outnumber female users. Male users contributed 906 retweets, 141 mentions, and 59 replies, which are more frequent forms of engagement compared to female users, who retweeted 94 times, mentioned 224 times, and replied 29 times. Based on these data, we may identify gendered communication styles in political participation.

In the American context, both gender disparities in political communication, interest, and behavior, as well as gender differences in online content creation, have been extensively investigated. These disparities are significant because they create digital divides that lead to unequal opportunities and experiences (Bode, 2017). When focusing on social media, findings are varied. Research suggests that men are more likely to express themselves politically on social media (Lutz et al., 2014; Vochocová et al., 2016), while other studies find no gender difference (Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010; Vesnic-Alujevic, 2012).

The terms political participation and political engagement are often used interchangeably. Norris argued that any dimensions of social activity that are either designed directly to influence government agencies and the policy process, indirectly to affect civil society, or attempt to alter systematic patterns of social behavior can be considered forms of engagement (Norris, 2002). While some have questioned the extent to which online engagement truly constitutes participation (Morozov, 2013), scholars now generally agree that digital, networked participation should be included in definitions of political engagement (Gibson & Cantijoch, 2013; Theocharis, 2015). As shown in the following discussion, applying this notion of political involvement to social media produces a wide range of interaction opportunities.

Gender inequalities in political engagement appear in three key areas: differences in political interest, political knowledge, and political participation. These inequalities may emerge as early as late adolescence, as children begin to learn adult social norms. While the primary focus here is on political participation, political interest and knowledge are also explored due to their strong connection to broader political engagement (Bode, 2017). Political interests differ by gender: men are significantly more likely than women to report an interest in politics, current affairs, and government. A variety of

factors contribute to this gap, including situational, structural, and socialization-based influences. Despite progress in gender equality, a significant discrepancy in political interest remains, largely due to socialization processes. Notably, this difference exists not only in the U.S. but also in other countries (Bode, 2017).

A substantial gap in political knowledge between men and women has also been identified in numerous studies. Women tend to know less about politics and the political process. Men and women are mobilized by different types of messages; men are more often encouraged or expected to be politically aware or involved, while women are not (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014). These disparities are frequently attributed to differences in socialization. Both structural (economic advantage, occupation, income, etc.) and attitudinal (e.g., ideology) factors moderate the impact of gender on political knowledge (Bode, 2017). This gap narrows when women are represented by female officeholders (Fridkin & Kenney, 2014), and it is also influenced by how 'political knowledge' is defined and measured (Bode, 2017). Political knowledge has a powerful impact on the formation of political opinions, the processing of new information, and the stimulation of political participation. It also influences how voters make decisions and can affect attitudes toward specific issues and support for democratic norms (Carpini & Keeter, 2005; Galston, 2001).

The gap in political engagement between men and women is shaped not only by differences in interest and knowledge but also by disparities in participation. Women continue to lag behind men in nearly all forms of political participation, such as deliberative discussion (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014; Nir & McClurg, 2015), persuading others how to vote, wearing campaign buttons, displaying campaign signs, joining political rallies or meetings, volunteering for a candidate or party, and donating to political campaigns. Among these, persuading others to vote in a certain way shows one of the most pronounced gender gaps (Bode, 2017). Factors such as a confidence gap, aversion to conflict, and a stronger emphasis on maintaining social harmony are often cited to explain women's lower participation levels (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014).

Beyond political participation, studies have also identified a global, gender-based digital divide in access to and use of online platforms (Drabowicz, 2014). Socioeconomic variables initially caused early access gaps, which have narrowed among younger generations (Helsper, 2012). However, usage gaps persist (Bimber, 2000) and are evident across age cohorts (Calenda & Meijer, 2009). Women continue to use the internet "less frequently and less intensely" (Ono & Zavodny, 2003).

Some of the remaining gap can be explained by gendered attitudes toward online spaces, particularly differences in self-efficacy and privacy concerns (Hoffmann et al., 2015). Even with nearly equal technical capabilities, women often perceive themselves as less competent online compared to men (Li & Kirkup, 2007; Schumacher & Morahan-Martin, 2001). This perception mirrors broader STEM trends (Hargittai & Shafer, 2006). While men are more likely to share content online, this is partially due to differences in both perceived and actual ability (Hargittai & Shaw, 2015; Hargittai & Walejko, 2008).

Even as the overall digital gap narrows, gendered differences in online behavior persist. Consistent with broader communication trends, women are more likely to use the internet for social interaction and relationship maintenance, while men are more inclined to use it for informational purposes (Abraham et al., 2010; Fallows, 2005; Maltby et al., 2008). Men tend to seek information related to news, jobs, gaming, politics, sports, and finance (Li & Kirkup, 2007). Gender also influences perceptions of technology, particularly communication tools. Men and women use technology for different reasons and derive different types of satisfaction, reflecting the broader behavioral trends discussed above (Ilie et al., 2005).

In the context of social media, these gendered patterns continue. According to Muscanell and Guadagno (2012), men are more likely to use Facebook to meet new people or find job opportunities, whereas women primarily use it to maintain existing relationships. Women are also more likely than men to use Facebook both initially and regularly (Kimbrough et al., 2013). These patterns, evident even by age 12, appear to be shaped significantly by socialization. Furthermore, gender trends differ by platform: women are more likely than men to use Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, but are less likely to use Twitter and LinkedIn (M. D. and A. Smith, 2013).

In the context of this research, which is situated in Indonesia, the use of social media is significantly shaped by the country's prevailing patriarchal culture. This cultural framework manifests in various aspects of daily life, where gender roles are often defined in ways that position women as subordinate to men. Daulay and Saladin (2017) affirm the persistence of patriarchal norms in Indonesian society, noting that women are frequently regarded as second-class citizens. Despite this, their study

68

highlights the presence of female leaders in Karang Baru Village, Talawi Sub-district, Batubara Regency, illustrating that female agency continues to emerge even within traditionally patriarchal settings. Numerous studies have further underscored the enduring nature of patriarchy in Indonesia. This cultural paradigm is not only embedded in social practices but also reflected in mass media, which often mirrors and reinforces gendered representations of everyday events (Januarika, 2021; Febiola et al., 2022). These findings suggest that social media, as an extension of societal norms, may also perpetuate or challenge existing gender hierarchies depending on how it is used and by whom.

Figure 1. **Distribution of Mentions by User Locations**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

Figure 1 illustrates the geographic distribution of user locations associated with the hashtags #HUT_RI_76 and Dirgahayu. The majority of users were located in Sumatra and Java, Indonesia's two most populous islands (Antaranews.com, 2022). This population concentration contributes to increased levels of social media activity, in part due to the heightened social interactions often facilitated by physical proximity.

Traditionally, proximity has been seen as fundamental to the formation of social ties, with social connectedness closely linked to face-to-face interactions, and physical distance considered a barrier to connection. While this assumption underpinned much early social research, social network theorists were among the first to contest it. They demonstrated that social structures could be mapped beyond physical proximity, with social connections extending across broad geographic boundaries (Takhteyev et al., 2012).

The rise of the internet—particularly platforms like Twitter (now X)—has further transformed these dynamics. Early digital optimism led some scholars to claim that distance had become irrelevant (Castells, 2002; DiMaggio et al., 2001). Contemporary digital platforms allow users to maintain and even form new social ties across long distances, often with weak or semi-anonymous connections. Twitter, in particular, enables global reach at minimal cost, fostering interactions that may span continents and bypass the limitations of traditional, geographically bound relationships.

However, this does not mean that geography has been rendered obsolete. Despite Twitter's potential for global interaction, users still tend to form digital connections with those who are geographically proximate or locally relevant. They often follow friends-of-friends, regional influencers, or accounts offering contextually pertinent content. Twitter's geo-location features further reinforce its function as a locative platform, indicating that physical geography continues to shape user interactions (Wilken, 2014).

Figure 1 also reveals the distribution of mentions by user location across Indonesia, highlighting how interactions related to Independence Day extend across the national territory. While internal mobility within Indonesia is relatively unrestricted, national borders still significantly shape digital interactions. These borders influence not only physical movement but also user attention and priorities, often concentrating focus on domestic issues due to media narratives and national policy impacts.

Nevertheless, scholars have cautioned against methodological nationalism—the uncritical assumption that the nation-state is the natural unit of social analysis (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). The influence of national borders on social media behavior must be examined empirically rather than

assumed. This study hypothesizes that national boundaries reduce the likelihood of forming Twitter connections, even when controlling for physical distance.

Moreover, the impact of national borders on digital interaction is not uniform. Drawing on the core-periphery model (D. A. Smith & Timberlake, 1995), users in large, influential countries may exhibit more domestically oriented online behaviors and less engagement with international content. In contrast, individuals from smaller or less globally dominant countries may actively seek international connections due to limited domestic opportunities for niche interests or greater exposure to global events. Consequently, users in peripheral countries are more likely to follow international Twitter accounts and participate in transnational discourses.

Figure 2. **Top Hashtag**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

Figure 2 shows the top hashtags on August 17, 2024. Hashtag Bank Mandiri (#BankMandiri) and a hashtag 79 Tahun Merdeka (#79TahunMerdeka) came in first and second on the Indonesian Independence Day conversation. Historically, discussing hashtags on Twitter/X, in 2007, Chris Messina tweeted the suggestion to utilize the hash symbol (#) for content organization. He could not have anticipated the subsequent proliferation of this practice, using the symbol before words, character sequences, or emojis, as a commonplace social activity both online and offline. The utilization of the # sign transcends mere content tagging; it is now perceived as a "multiple, open-ended, and contingent phenomenon" in society (Rambukkana, 2015) that functions as a narrative tool in digital research (Omena et al., 2020).

Hashtags, being inherently digital entities (Liu, 2009; Rogers, 2013), may function as indicators of their roles, significances, and usages. In other words, individuals can search for, navigate, or interact with hashtags, while others can monitor, track, and obtain tiny or massive datasets associated with them. Utilizing hashtags can articulate local or worldwide dialogues, succinct or extensive occurrences, and contentious or non-contentious topics (Bruns & Burgess, 2011; Burgess et al., 2015; Highfield, 2018; Pearce et al., 2020). It is crucial to remember that hashtagging is not solely a human endeavor; it frequently serves as the impetus for efficient bot activity (Bessi & Ferrara, 2016; Chu et al., 2010; Wilson, 2017), which is also employed on social media for political and marketing objectives. Consequently, in addition to their ability to reflect communities, publics, discourses, or sociopolitical formations, hashtags can be regarded as sociotechnical networks, functioning as both "the medium and the message" (Rambukkana, 2015). Engaging with hashtags is not a new theme within social media studies, particularly for Twitter/X. This platform is the predominant subject of hashtag-centric research, supported by extensive theoretical and empirical literature examining the correlation between hashtags and social structures.

In nationalism studies, the use of hashtags is known as "hashtag nationalism". Hashtag nationalism generalizes three capabilities of hashtags to approach the role of social media in digital activism from a relational perspective, which includes interconnectivity, intertextuality, and interdiscursivity (He, 2023). Obviously, discussing hashtag nationalism inevitably leads to discussing digital nationalism. A recently emerged field of nationalism studies called "digital nationalism" focuses on how national identities and expressions are impacted by digital technologies. The importance of internet platforms in influencing modern nationalistic emotions is shown by recent literature that examines important topics and research questions (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021). For instance, the Catalan independence

movement has responded to the conflict with the Spanish government by creating distinctive digital strategies. Negotiations, mobilizations, and repression are the hallmarks of the current scenario, which culminated in the independence referendum in 2017. Major political parties and grassroots organizations both innovated their use of digital platforms for organization and action due to this approach's failure (Pitroso, 2024). Meanwhile, digital nationalism in the U.S. highlights similar to that of autocratic nations like China and Russia; the U.S. has embraced digital authoritarian strategies. This includes propaganda and media censorship, which are carried out to influence public opinion and behavior and foster a form of nationalism that inhibits critical civic participation (Green, 2021).

Figure 3. **A Map of Word Cloud**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic a, 2024

Social interaction relies on the capacity of both parties to communicate, which typically necessitates proficiency in a common language or the assistance of a bilingual intermediary. Thus, linguistic disparities can shape social interactions. Linguistic differences, like geopolitical boundaries, are correlated with distance. Individuals residing in the same locale generally possess a common language (or several languages). Furthermore, due to the patterns of historical habitation and subsequent colonization, individuals in proximate regions are more inclined to speak the same or analogous languages compared to those who are farther away. It is anticipated that common language proficiency will exert an influence distinct from distance (Takhteyev et al., 2012).

Language exhibits a more intricate relationship with distance than national borders. Individuals typically communicate in the predominant language of their city or country, but they may also converse in additional languages. Many individuals globally are currently acquiring English alongside their native and national languages. We may explore two distinct concepts: ties are more likely to form between users in regions with a robust linguistic connection and between pairs of users who tweet in the same language (Takhteyev et al., 2012).

Sentiment, Emotions, and Public Discourse

The term "discourse" serves in several contexts, either as a mechanism for enabling communication or as an instrument for defining and constructing "the objects of knowledge" (Wodak et al., 2001). The significant impact of online public opinion indicates that discourses not only influence personal opinions but also contribute to the redefinition of national identity (Wu et al., 2024). Within the extensive landscape of social media, Twitter accommodates a diverse spectrum of persons and organizations, fostering opinion fragmentation and swiftly enabling circumstances for public discourse. This presents a conceptual basis for understanding the variation in social views. Consequently, the study's participants increasingly use "online discourses" to express their thoughts. The introduction of the internet provided a forum for democratic discussion on a variety of online topics. Its fundamental openness is the foundation for democratic discourse, encouraging individuals to engage in more extended and profound discussions about public matters (Witschge, 2008). These online discourses involve the interchange of information, thoughts, and ideas in the virtual sphere, showing aspects that are intricately linked to power dynamics and cultural influences throughout all types of discourse.

Twitter/X, in particular, is a valuable resource to investigate how people engage in various events and themes (Ahmed et al., 2020). During the last few years, it has functioned as a platform for 'speaking out' and, at times, as a tool for causing societal division. It is important to note that online forums are also influenced by numerous power dynamics, which can shape the course and outcome of talks (Ben Labidi & Al Zo'by, 2025; Gorodnichenko et al., 2021; Hassan & Wang, 2024; Nonnecke et al., 2022;

Weng & Lin, 2022). Whereas some studies suggest that bots play a crucial role in influencing public opinion, others suggest that celebrities and public figures play a more significant role in shaping public opinion. Other entities might use Twitter users' actions, particularly media outlets or political personalities, for publicity or propaganda purposes. Sentiment analysis serves to provide rapid insight into public debates by investigating people's opinions, attitudes, and behavioral responses to certain events or incidents using written language accessible (Jana & Maity, 2023)
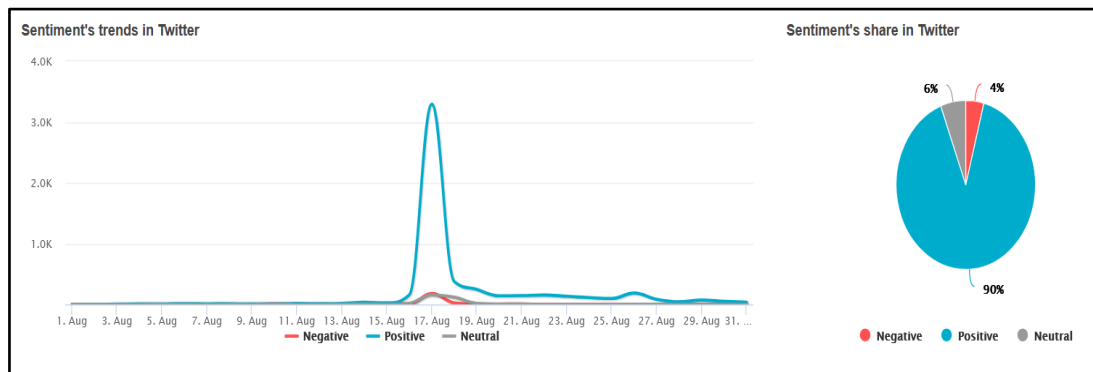
Figure 4. **Sentiment's Trends in Twitter/X**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

Figure 4 exhibits sentiment trends in #HUT_RI_76 and 'Dirgahayu' network. The highest sentiment is positive sentiment, with a value of 90%. Meanwhile, neutral sentiment came second with 6%, and negative sentiment came last with 4%. Sentiment analysis is a field that employs Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques to extract people's thoughts, feelings, opinions, and behaviors from user text data. Furthermore, sentiment analysis, which focuses on the text classification problem, is often referred to as opinion mining. People's thoughts on certain subjects that are posted on social media can have a big impact because of the platform's strong impact and growing worldwide coverage (Öztürk & Ayvaz, 2018).
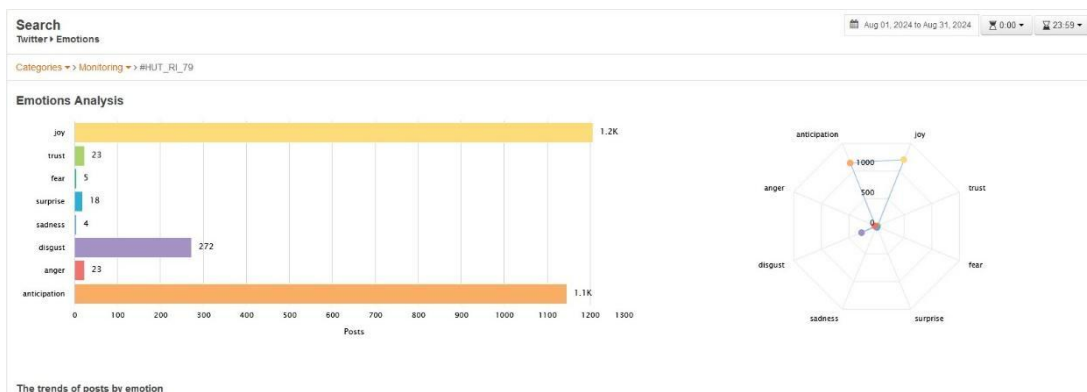

Figure 5. **Emotions Analysis**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

Figure 5 illustrates the emotion analysis of Twitter/X users engaging with the hashtags #HUT_RI_76 and Dirgahayu. The predominant emotions expressed by users are joy and anticipation. According to the Oxford Dictionary, an emotion is "a strong feeling arising from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others." Emotions represent complex patterns involving physiological arousal, subjective feelings, cognitive processes, and behavioral responses to situations that are personally significant (Sailunaz & Alhajj, 2019). Essentially, emotions capture how individuals feel or react to certain events or contexts. Commonly expressed emotions on social media include happiness, sadness, anger, and fear.

The terms emotion and sentiment are often used interchangeably, but they differ conceptually. While emotions refer to specific affective states (e.g., happy, sad), sentiment typically denotes the broader polarity of an emotion—positive, neutral, or negative. For example, a tweet stating "I am happy" conveys the emotion "happy" with an underlying positive sentiment (Sailunaz & Alhajj, 2019). Given Twitter's 140-character limit (now expanded but historically important) and its diverse user base spanning various ages, ethnicities, cultures, and genders, Twitter data has become a valuable resource for text and emotion analysis.

The emotion classification used in this study draws on well-established categorical emotion models such as those developed by Ekman, Shaver, and Oatley, which group human emotions into major categories like anger, disgust, fear, joy, and love (Sailunaz & Alhajj, 2019). This framework facilitates systematic interpretation of the emotional content expressed in social media posts related to Indonesia's Independence Day celebrations.

Avatar	User	Status	#Followers	#Retweeted	All Time	Sentiment
1	heulaaluhe @aingriwehuy	Doa upacara di IKN sangat bagus. "Beratus tahun dijajah bangsa asing, kini kami mulai dijajah oleh nafsu dan kedengkian kami sendiri" "Bukakanlah hati kami utk mementingkan kepentingan bersama melebihi kepentingan pribadi" Semoga bukan cuman sekedar kata kata 🇮🇩 😢 #HUT_RI_79 https://t.co/Ac75in0uz4 ⏱ 17/Aug/2024 10:37 WIB 📊Graph	7,896	751	🔁 195 ♥ 832	Positive 100 % Edit ⌄
2	bank mandiri @bankmandiri	"Jika kita memiliki keinginan yang kuat dari dalam hati, maka seluruh kekuatan Alam Semesta akan bahu membahu mewujudkannya." —Ir. Soekarno untuk Nusantara, 17 Agustus 2024 79th Dirgahayu Indonesia. #BankMandiri https://t.co/zS68w6hVfh ⏱ 30/Jul/2024 19:43 WIB 📊Graph	235,015	645	🔁 3 ♥ 6	Positive 100 % Edit ⌄
3	Hilmi Firdausi @Hilmi28	Mereka larang jilbab Paskibraka, kita gaungkan jilbab adalah lambang kemerdekaan muslimah. Ada yg mau bagi2 alat kontrasepsi gratis kpd pelajar, kita lawan dgn gerakan anti freesex & pornografi. Ada yg menguras kekayaan negeri dgn korupsi. Ada yg mau merawat politik dinasti. Ada yg ingin merusak demokrasi… Dan masih banyak hal2 yg membuat kita miris di Republik yg hampir berusia 80 thn ini. Kata orang, usia segini memang sedang lucu2nya. Apapun itu, jgn pernah lelah mencintai Indonesia, dgn terus bergerak & bersuara utk memperbaiki negeri tercinta. Dirgahayu ke 79 Indonesiaku. Semoga Allah jaga dan selalu berkahi bangsa ini menuju Baldatun Thoyyibatun Wa Rabbun Ghafur. Aamiin ❤️🇮🇩 ⏱ 17/Aug/2024 07:39 WIB 📊Graph	593,764	598	🔁 207 ♥ 614	Positive 100 % Edit ⌄

Figure 6. **Top 3 Most Retweet**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

To explain why certain posts achieve greater levels of dispersion and popularity—defined by the number of likes or retweets—this study employs the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM). According to this model, when users retweet a message, they are attributing credibility to it. This action suggests a level of cognitive engagement in which users have considered the content and consciously decided to share it. The HSM posits that individuals process information through two complementary forms: heuristic and systematic. Rather than being mutually exclusive, these forms may operate simultaneously and reinforce each other.

The systematic mode involves deliberate and analytical evaluation of the message content, which is central to the formation of opinions. In this mode, retweeting becomes a meaningful act that reflects a user's critical judgment. This framework highlights that popularity on social media platforms such as Twitter may not solely result from viral randomness but also from users' intentional endorsements (Lahuerta-Otero et al., 2018).

Figure 6 displays the three most retweeted posts within the #HUT_RI_76 and 'Dirgahayu' networks. The most retweeted post contained a prayer for the Indonesian nation. The second most shared post featured a quote from Indonesia's first president, Ir. Soekarno. The third post addressed national challenges, such as the hijab, corruption, and democracy, while concluding with optimism and encouragement to continue loving Indonesia. The prominence of a prayer-themed post highlights the role of religion in Indonesian social and political life. Prayer, as a core religious practice, resonates deeply with the public and often symbolizes collective hope and solidarity during national moments. Scholarly literature indicates that religion intersects with political behavior in Indonesia in complex ways. Religious expressions, including prayer, have been shown to influence political engagement, underscoring the politicization of belief systems and the centrality of religious networks in shaping civic participation (Putra et al., 2024; Busro, 2024). These factors contribute significantly to the evolving dynamics of the political landscape across the country.

In addition to religious and political content, retweet behavior is shaped by the concept of homophily, which refers to the tendency of individuals to associate with others who share similar characteristics or viewpoints. Homophily plays a substantial role in retweeting dynamics on Twitter,

particularly through demographic and political dimensions. Demographic homophily involves users' tendencies to retweet individuals who share the same gender, race, or cultural background, thereby reinforcing existing social bonds (Mousavi & Gu, 2015). Political homophily refers to the influence of political alignment, wherein users are more likely to engage with content shared by those affiliated with their political orientation. This dynamic contributes to the formation of ideological echo chambers and the intensification of polarization within digital spaces (Esteve-Del-Valle, 2022). The findings of this study suggest that retweeting patterns on August 17, 2024, reflected not only demographic and political homophily but also geographic homophily. Users tended to engage more with content shared by others from similar regions within Indonesia, indicating the enduring significance of physical and cultural proximity in shaping digital interactions.

As this research focuses on Twitter, the study also considers the different types of user engagement found within the #HUT_RI_76 and 'Dirgahayu' networks. Twitter users engage with content in several ways, including liking a tweet to signal agreement or support, retweeting it to share with their followers, replying to initiate or continue a conversation, and quoting the tweet with added commentary. These engagement types reflect varying levels of cognitive and emotional involvement, providing critical insights into how users interact with sociopolitical narratives during nationally significant moments such as Indonesia's Independence Day (Toraman et al., 2022)..
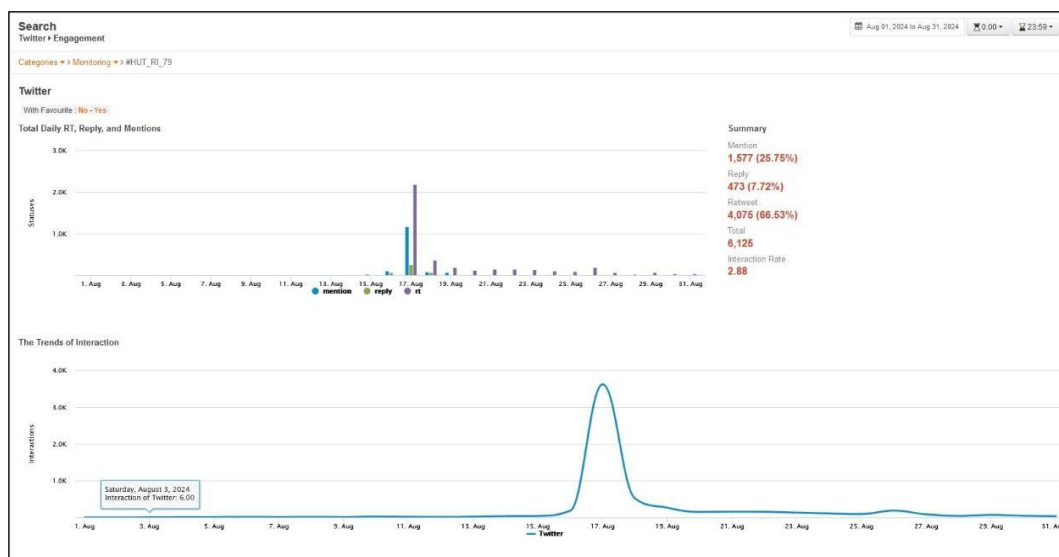

Figure 7. **Engagements Types**
Source: Drone Emprit Academic, 2024

Figure 7 presents the types of engagement on Twitter during August 2024, with a notable peak on the 17th—Indonesia's Independence Day. On this day, there were 1,577 mentions (25.75%), 4,075 retweets (66.53%), 473 replies (7.72%), and an interaction rate of 2.88. These figures indicate that Indonesians are particularly active in retweeting on Independence Day. Retweeting involves sharing another user's tweet, thereby amplifying its reach and visibility across the platform. It serves as a crucial metric for measuring engagement and the dissemination of information within Twitter's social network (Meštrović et al., 2022). Importantly, retweeting functions as a form of citation rather than an outright endorsement, signaling that the content originated from another user (Marsili, 2021; Metaxas et al., 2015). It reflects interest in the message, trust in its source, and alignment with its content (Metaxas et al., 2014).

As discussed earlier, Twitter has become a powerful medium for shaping Indonesian nationalism, providing a digital space for political discourse, identity formation, and social mobilization. Analysis of official accounts tied to nationalist parties shows how these actors strategically use Twitter to engage the public and disseminate ideological messages. Notably, nationalist parties such as @Gerindra, @NasDem, and @PDI_Perjuangan actively reinforce party identity and promote key political figures. For example, the @PDI_Perjuangan account generates substantial engagement by frequently posting

74

content highlighting the party's historical legacy alongside its current political candidates (Hadmar et al., 2024).

Another important element is the promotion of nationalist discourse through hashtags like #HUTRI76, which shape public sentiment and reinforce national identity during commemorative events. Influential Twitter users, or influencers, play a key role in amplifying these narratives, often echoing official state rhetoric (Sari et al., 2022). Moreover, Twitter functions as a platform for social movements and activism. This is exemplified by the widespread reaction to the Nationalism Knowledge Test controversy, which sparked intense online debate and organized resistance against perceived injustices, illustrating Twitter's role in facilitating activism (Sumartias et al., 2023).

Simultaneously, the rise of cyber-nationalism, such as the growing online rivalry between Indonesian and Malaysian users, demonstrates Twitter's dual role in fostering national pride and exacerbating regional polarization. This paradox highlights the complexity of digital nationalism, where social media platforms serve as both unifying and divisive forces in contemporary political culture (Sari et al., 2021)

CONCLUSION

Throughout August 2024, discourses surrounding Indonesia's Independence Day steadily developed, beginning on August 1 and continuing through the end of the month. The peak occurred on August 17, coinciding with the national holiday, indicating a sustained public interest and collective anticipation. Among the most frequently used hashtags were #BankMandiri and #79TahunMerdeka, suggesting both corporate involvement and patriotic expression. The account @aingriwehuy emerged as the most influential on Independence Day, particularly through a post highlighting a prayer conducted during the ceremony in Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN). This demonstrates how online discussions intertwine religious practices with national and political identity. On that day, user sentiment was predominantly positive, characterized by emotions of joy, pride, and celebration. Retweets represented the highest form of engagement, followed by mentions and replies, reinforcing Twitter/X's role as a platform for amplifying messages during significant national events. These results offer important insights for understanding public behavior during commemorative moments. To enrich the analysis, interdisciplinary approaches—particularly from Political Science and Sociology—are essential. Furthermore, continued monitoring of Independence Day discourse may help inform public policy by providing a clearer picture of societal attitudes and digital civic participation.

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79