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The Construction of Netizens' Reality Toward the Zero Odol Policy: A Netnographic Study of Comments on Metro TV's TikTok Videos

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ABSTRACT: This study analyzes netizens' construction of reality regarding the Zero ODOL (Over Dimension Over Loading) policy through comments on Metro TV's TikTok videos during the period of March–June 2025. The Zero ODOL policy has emerged as a contested public issue due to its significant impact on road safety, infrastructure preservation, and economic implications within the logistics distribution sector. This research employs a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm, utilizing netnography as the primary research method. Data were systematically collected from netizens' comments and interaction replies on three Metro TV TikTok videos specifically discussing Zero ODOL. The analysis was conducted through data reduction, coding, thematic categorization, and interpretation using Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality. The findings reveal five dominant themes in the digital public discourse: (1) the perception of ODOL as a dangerous threat to road users; (2) public support for enforcement based on load limits; (3) the view of ODOL as a primary cause of infrastructure damage and unfairness toward other road users; (4) sharp criticism of supervision practices, which are believed to facilitate illegal levies and inconsistent law enforcement ; and (5) economic narratives proposing solutions related to logistics costs and the stability of staple goods prices. These findings confirm that ODOL is constructed as a complex social issue involving deep conflicts of interest, highlighting the pivotal role of social media as an arena for shaping digital reality and legitimizing public policy.

Keywords: Metro TV, Netizens, Netnography, Social Construction of Reality, TikTok, Zero ODOL

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the transportation and logistics sector in Indonesia has established itself as the strategic backbone of the national economy. Driven by a significant surge in inter-island trade activities, rapid industrial expansion, and high regional distribution mobility, freight vehicles have become an indispensable artery for ensuring the smooth flow of goods and market stability across the archipelago. However, this vital role is accompanied by a complex dynamic where the demands of economic efficiency often clash directly with public safety standards and the durability of national infrastructure.

In practice, the logic of cost-efficiency within the business world frequently pushes industrial actors to maximize cargo loads in a single trip to suppress operational overheads. This tendency has given rise to the phenomenon of Over Dimension Over Loading (ODOL) as a pervasive and systemic problem. ODOL can no longer be viewed merely as a technical or administrative violation; it has evolved into a multi-dimensional social-economic issue with profound consequences for the state and the general public. The most tangible impact is the accelerated degradation of public road infrastructure. According to data from the Directorate General of Bina Marga, ODOL vehicles cause approximately Rp43.47 trillion in state financial losses annually due to the rapid deterioration of roads that should have a much longer service life.

Beyond the financial burden on the state, the ODOL issue is inextricably linked to road safety risks. Vehicles exceeding their weight capacity and physical dimensions experience technical instability, longer braking distances, and a higher risk of component failure, which can trigger fatal and chain-reaction accidents. Consequently, the public increasingly constructs ODOL as a tangible threat that disrupts the sense of security in shared public spaces.

In response to these challenges, the Indonesian government has intensified the "Zero ODOL" policy as a normalization measure to protect infrastructure and ensure the safety of road users. However, the implementation of this policy does not occur in a social vacuum. There is significant resistance and concern from various groups, particularly small-scale logistics entrepreneurs and truck drivers on the front lines of distribution. They perceive rigid enforcement as a potential trigger for a surge in operational costs, which would ultimately be passed on to the public through the rising prices of staple goods often referred to as the "dapur rakyat" (public kitchen) dilemma.

In the digital era, the way these policy issues are communicated and interpreted has shifted significantly. Mainstream media, such as Metro TV, play a pivotal role as a bridge between government policy and public understanding. Metro TV no longer relies solely on conventional television broadcasts but has expanded its distribution to social media platforms, specifically TikTok, to reach a wider and more interactive audience.

TikTok's unique characteristics driven by the For You Page (FYP) algorithm have transformed the platform into a dynamic digital public sphere where policy news can spark intense participation. Within the comment sections of Metro TV's TikTok videos, netizens do not just passively consume information; they actively engage in the production of social meaning. These interactions involve a wide array of narratives, ranging from support for enforcement to sharp criticism regarding illegal levies (pungli), economic concerns, and skepticism about the consistency of law enforcement.

From an academic perspective, this research identifies a critical gap. Most existing studies on ODOL focus heavily on technical transportation aspects, logistics management, or legal frameworks. There is limited research exploring ODOL as a social reality constructed through digital public discourse. By employing the Social Construction of Reality theory by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, this study analyzes how the dialectical processes of externalization, objectivation, and internalization occur within the digital realm. Furthermore, the use of the Netnography method allows for a deep, naturalistic observation of the digital artifacts and cultural interactions that shape collective perceptions of public policy in Indonesia.

Consequently, this study aims to fill this void by placing TikTok as a vital digital public square where the legitimacy of the Zero ODOL policy is negotiated and constructed by netizens. By focusing on comments on Metro TV's TikTok account from March to June 2025, this research intends to provide a comprehensive understanding of how social media acts as an arena for shaping reality and public opinion in the face of structural national issues.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Previous Research

This study refers to ten previous research references that analyze digital activism, meaning construction, and the use of netnography in social media. Previous studies indicate that digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have transformed into public spheres for advocacy, social criticism, and the formation of collective identity through hashtags and community interaction. Furthermore, TikTok is identified as a rapid information medium for viral issues, serving as an active discussion space for netizens to share opinions and critiques. These studies provide a methodological foundation for exploring how public policies like Zero ODOL are digitally constructed.

B. Social Construction of Reality Theory

The social construction of reality theory posits that social reality is not an objective or natural phenomenon but a product of continuous human interaction, creation, and interpretation. Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann explain that this construction occurs through a dialectical process consisting of three stages: externalization, objectivation, and internalization. Externalization is the process where individuals express themselves and create social reality through actions and language. Objectivation occurs when the results of these expressions become institutionalized and are perceived as an objective reality external to the individual. Finally, internalization is the process where individuals re-absorb this objective reality into their consciousness through socialization.

C. Over Dimension Over Loading (ODOL)

Over Dimension Over Loading (ODOL) ODOL is a term referring to freight vehicles that violate technical regulations regarding physical dimensions and load capacity limits. Over dimension refers to vehicles modified to exceed standardized physical sizes, such as length or height. Over loading occurs when the vehicle's weight exceeds the maximum capacity determined by its chassis and road-bearing strength. This phenomenon is not only a technical violation but also a social issue that significantly increases traffic accident risks and accelerates the deterioration of public infrastructure, leading to substantial state financial losses.

D. TikTok and Social Interaction

TikTok and Social Interaction TikTok is a short-video social media platform that has become an essential part of modern digital communication dynamics. It facilitates social interaction and public opinion formation through features such as comments, likes, and algorithmic recommendations. Within the context of public policy, TikTok serves as a digital public sphere where the community expresses opinions and influences discourse through visual content and intense interactions in the comment section. Features like the "For You Page" (FYP) allow information to reach a broad audience, making the platform a dynamic arena for netizens to construct social meanings regarding policies like Zero ODOL.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative approach rooted in the constructivism paradigm to understand how reality is shaped through social interaction and meaning-making. The study employs netnography as the research method, focusing on netizens' interactions within the digital public sphere of TikTok, specifically on the Metro TV account. The unit of analysis is the construction of reality regarding the Zero ODOL policy, while the unit of observation includes comments and replies from three purposively selected videos posted between March and June 2025. Data collection was conducted through online observation and digital documentation, treating digital traces as cultural artifacts. The analysis followed a systematic process of data reduction, coding (including open, axial, and selective coding), data display, and interpretive analysis to identify dominant thematic discourses. To ensure data validity, source triangulation was applied by comparing netizen responses across different video contents and cross-referencing primary digital data with secondary sources, such as policy documents and news reports.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Overview of the Zero ODOL Policy on Metro TV

Overview of the Zero ODOL Policy on Metro TV The Zero ODOL (Over Dimension Over Loading) policy has emerged as a prominent public issue in recent years because it directly addresses aspects of daily life, ranging from traffic safety and infrastructure preservation to the stability of logistics distribution. ODOL refers to freight vehicles that violate technical regulations either through physical dimensions exceeding standards (*over dimension*) or loads surpassing the carrying capacity

(*over loading*). In practice, ODOL is viewed as a complex structural problem involving various stakeholders, including the government, logistics operators, truck drivers, and the general public. From the government's perspective, this policy is a strategic measure to curb state financial losses, which are estimated at approximately Rp43.47 trillion annually due to infrastructure damage caused by overloaded vehicles. However, the policy has sparked significant debate; while some support it for the sake of order and safety, others criticize it for its potential to increase operational costs and suppress drivers' income.

Drivers' Resistance and Protest

The implementation of the Zero ODOL policy triggered open protests in various regions, as showcased in Metro TV's coverage. For instance, on June 21, 2025, Metro TV reported on truck drivers blocking roads as a form of collective dissatisfaction toward regulations they deemed burdensome. Such actions indicate that ODOL is no longer a mere technical transportation issue but has evolved into a social conflict concerning economic survival and labor rights. A similar mass protest occurred in Sidoarjo on June 19, 2025, involving hundreds of drivers, particularly from the light steel transport sector, who voiced their refusal of the regulations. These events demonstrate that public policies touching on field workers' livelihoods are prone to social resistance and the formation of diverse digital realities.

Government Instructions

On the other hand, the government maintains a firm stance, as evidenced by President Prabowo's directive on April 18, 2025, ordering immediate action against ODOL vehicles. This high-level instruction serves as a form of legitimacy and provides clear policy direction, emphasizing law enforcement and order. Such firm statements from state authorities influence public perception, fostering both trust in government decisiveness and criticism regarding the fairness of implementation in the field.

B. ODOL as a Threat to Road Safety and Public Disturbance

ODOL as a Threat to Road Safety and Public Disturbance In the digital public discourse, ODOL is widely perceived as a serious threat to the safety and comfort of road users. Beyond technical violations, overloaded vehicles are positioned as a primary cause of traffic accidents due to instability and suboptimal braking systems. Netizens often express deep-seated anxiety and a lack of trust when sharing the road with large, overloaded trucks, viewing them as symbols of an unsafe road environment. Consequently, safety becomes a moral benchmark used by the public to judge the policy; many argue that enforcement is a necessary preventive step that should not be compromised for the sake of the logistics sector's efficiency. This sentiment reflects a collective demand for the state to prioritize public safety over narrow group interests.

C. Support for Regulation Based on Load Limits

Support for Regulation Based on Load Limits There is a significant portion of the public that supports Zero ODOL enforcement on the grounds that every vehicle must adhere to established technical standards. Load limits are viewed as the minimum criteria for maintaining a measured and safe transportation system. From this perspective, regulation is not an economic barrier but a form of public protection. Netizens who support the policy often characterize resistance from drivers as a lack of social discipline or "low human resource quality," emphasizing that safety should be a universal priority. This support, however, often comes with the expectation that the government must act consistently and fairly, targeting the entire distribution chain rather than just the drivers.

D. Infrastructure Damage and Unfairness Among Users

Infrastructure Damage and Unfairness Among Users ODOL is also constructed as a primary factor in the deterioration of public infrastructure. Excessive loads are seen as "asphalt destroyers," causing potholes and cracks that degrade the quality of roads funded by taxpayers. This creates a sense of systemic unfairness, as the economic benefits of overloading are enjoyed by specific businesses, while the social and financial costs such as increased maintenance budgets and travel delays are borne by the state and the general public. Interestingly, this discourse often expands into a critique of the government's own infrastructure management; some netizens question whether road damage is solely due to ODOL or also caused by poor construction quality and budget leakages. Such skepticism highlights a lack of public trust in the transparency of infrastructure projects.

E. Criticism of the Supervision System and Illegal Levies

Criticism of the Supervision System and Illegal Levies A major theme in netizen feedback is the criticism of the supervision system, particularly the prevalence of illegal levies (pungli). The public perceives that ODOL persists because enforcement is inconsistent and prone to negotiation between authorities and violators. Within this discourse, drivers are often viewed as vulnerable targets in a power-imbalanced relationship, forced to pay "informal fees" to both "rogue officers" and local thugs for smooth passage. The existence of pungli erodes the legitimacy of the policy, as regulations are seen not as safety tools but as opportunities for exploitation. Therefore, many argue that solving ODOL requires not just roadside raids but a total reform of the logistics supervision system and an improvement in drivers' welfare.

F. Economic and Distributional Narratives

Economic and Distributional Narratives The construction of the ODOL reality is also heavily tied to economic and logistics stability. From an economic perspective, ODOL is a pragmatic response to high distribution demands and limited operational budgets. Netizens express concerns that strict enforcement without providing alternative solutions will lead to a "domino effect," including a surge in logistics costs and a subsequent hike in the price of staple goods. This creates a public dilemma: while safety is desired, the "dapur rakyat" (public kitchen) must remain stable. Suggestions for solutions often include the government setting

fair logistics tariffs and providing adequate transportation infrastructure that accommodates economic growth without compromising safety.

G. Integration of Netnography and Social Construction Theory

Integration of Netnography and Social Construction Theory By utilizing netnography, this study identifies that social media platforms like TikTok serve as "cultural arenas" where public policy is interpreted through daily experiences. The interactions observed follow the dialectical process of Berger and Luckmann's theory: externalization occurs when netizens voice their frustrations or support in comments; objectivation happens as these repeated narratives form a collective "digital truth" regarding ODOL; and internalization is reached when the public adopts these constructions as their primary framework for judging state legitimacy. Ultimately, ODOL is not just a transportation issue; it is a live social reality where the values of safety, justice, and economic survival are constantly negotiated in the digital sphere.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study entitled *"The Construction of Netizens' Reality toward the Zero ODOL Policy: A Netnographic Study of Comments on Metro TV's TikTok Videos (March–June)"*, it can be concluded that netizens do not merely act as passive recipients of information but play an active role in constructing meaning and shaping social reality through interactions in TikTok's comment sections. The analysis of comments on three Metro TV TikTok videos reveals that netizens' constructions of reality regarding the Zero ODOL policy are diverse and non-uniform. While some perceive the policy as a necessary effort to enhance order and road safety, others interpret it as a policy that potentially imposes economic burdens, particularly on actors directly affected at the operational level. Furthermore, the study highlights the emergence of reality constructions that emphasize issues of justice, consistency, and effectiveness in policy implementation. Netizens not only evaluate the substance of the policy but also critically question its enforcement, supervision, and practical application. The interactive nature of comments and reply threads demonstrates that TikTok functions as a digital public sphere where multiple perspectives intersect, fostering debate and negotiation of meaning. Accordingly, the reality surrounding the Zero ODOL policy is produced through dynamic digital communication processes, aligning with the constructivist perspective that social reality is collectively constructed through ongoing interaction.

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