

STAKEHOLDERS' RESPONSES TO BANTEN'S 25 YEARS OF BECOMING A PROVINCE IN NEW MEDIA REPORTING

Nurdin Sibaweh¹, Zulfahmi Yasir Yunan^{2*}

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA

²Univerasitas Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA

Corresponden email: *Zulfahmiyasir@uhamka.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines stakeholders' responses as conveyed through new media regarding the 25-year development of Banten as a province. It analyzes the perspectives of prominent Banten figures, members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), community groups, and the Banten Provincial Government concerning the current state of the province. The reality constructed in new media predominantly reflects critical viewpoints, suggesting that Banten has not undergone substantial transformation and continues to face significant challenges, particularly in relation to poverty and unemployment. In contrast, the reality constructed by the Banten Provincial Government emphasizes the considerable progress and development achieved over the past twenty-five years. Drawing upon Social Constructionism Theory, these differing interpretations contribute to the formation of social realities among audiences, who actively engage with, interpret, and negotiate the information disseminated through new media platforms.

Keywords: Reality Construction, Banten, New Media

INTRODUCTION

Based on Law Number 23 of 2000 concerning the Formation of Banten Province, promulgated on October 17, 2000, Banten was officially ratified and established as one of the provinces in Indonesia. The formation of Banten Province was the culmination of a long journey by the people of Banten in striving for their region to become an independent province. According to Khatib Mansur (2001:88), the struggle for the formation of Banten Province began in the 1960s. In 1963, prominent figures from Banten began to gather and identify themselves as the committee for the formation of Banten Province. During this phase, the struggle faced ideological and political challenges, considering that the political system at the time adhered to the *Nasakom* framework (Nationalism, Religion, and Communism). Furthermore, the figures who gathered came from various political parties of that era, including the Indonesian Islamic Syarikat Party (PSII), Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), and the Indonesian National Party (PNI).

According to Gilang (2013:2), before Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government was enacted, the people of Banten had proposed provincial status twice. However, both attempts failed due to various points of rejection. The first proposal occurred in 1952–1953 when the Merak-Bakauheni Ferry Terminal was opened. This initial attempt was rejected on the grounds that the formation of the province was driven by political motives that could disrupt the sovereignty of the Central Government. Additionally, the central government raised concerns regarding inadequate Human Resources (HR). Consequently, the Central Government of Indonesia rejected the idea of forming Banten Province in 1953, as reported in *Pikiran Rakjat* on August 5, 1952. The second attempt took place between 1959 and 1966. This second effort was more organized and involved political forces from the PNI, PKI, and groups of Islamic scholars (*Ulama*). However, this attempt also failed because, in 1965, the PKI was deemed to have initiated a coup, and the movement to establish Banten Province was rejected once again after being associated with a communist movement.

Subsequently, in 1999, the effort to establish Banten Province was revitalized, capitalizing on the momentum of the *Reformasi* (reformation) era and the newfound openness in freedom of expression. This movement was largely spearheaded by the power of religious scholars (*Ulama* or *Kiai*). The process of striving for the formation of Banten Province continued through various dynamics and finally succeeded in the year 2000. Throughout this struggle, all elements of Banten society contributed and mobilized—ranging from students, youth, government figures, Regents/Mayors across Banten, Chairs of Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) at the Regency/City level throughout Banten, to religious figures such as *Ulama* or *Kiai*.

Various reasons and motivations were articulated by these figures in their efforts to establish Banten as a province. Among the prominent arguments regarding the urgency of forming Banten

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Province was that expressed by KH. Aminuddin Ibrahim—one of the pioneers of the post-reform movement for Banten's provincial status—during a *halal bi halal* (social gathering) of Banten *Ulama* on February 5, 1999. He highlighted the high poverty rate in Banten and emphasized the need for accelerating growth, development, and efficiency in governance (Mansur, 2001:127).

Since Law Number 23 of 2000 concerning the Formation of Banten Province was promulgated on October 17, 2000, Banten has reached its 25th anniversary, with its official anniversary falling on October 4. At this 25-year milestone, many continue to scrutinize the conditions of Banten and its developmental progress, resulting in several contrasting perspectives. The author positions these views, opinions, and criticisms as an evaluative-critical response to the trajectory and progress of Banten's development throughout its history as a province.

Based on the description above, this paper will examine how Banten's stakeholders respond within new media regarding the condition of Banten after 25 years of provincial status. The core issues to be explained in this study are formulated into the following two questions: How do stakeholders view the current condition of Banten as expressed in new media? How do these stakeholders convey their views to deliver meaning or messages to the public, thereby shaping a social construction regarding the condition of Banten after 25 years as a province?

This study will be conducted by analyzing the responses and views of stakeholders through new media. According to Poster (in McQuail, 2011:151), new media can be distinguished from old media because new media bypasses the limitations of print and broadcasting models by: Enabling many-to-many conversations and simultaneous reception, as well as the alteration and redistribution of cultural objects; Disrupting communication acts from their traditional emphasis on territorial relationships and modernity; Providing instant global contact; and Integrating modern/late-modern subjects into a networked machine apparatus.

The new media referred to in this context are online media outlets that report on the 25-year achievements of Banten as a province. This medium was selected considering that the public can access it more easily than traditional media. The focus of the study will center on media coverage during Banten's 25th anniversary on October 4, 2025. The analysis will be guided by the theory of social constructionism, also known as the social construction of reality theory.

The theory of social constructionism, according to Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. Davis (2010:385), was originally conceptualized by sociologist Alfred Schutz. It was further developed by Peter L. Berger, a sociologist from the New School for Social Research, New York, and Thomas Luckmann, a sociologist from the University of Frankfurt, in their seminal book *The Social Construction of Reality*, published in 1966. Baran and Davis acknowledge that while this book does not explicitly discuss mass communication, social constructionism found its urgency and established itself as a mass communication theory when media became closely linked to social and cultural change. In this context, the author posits that social and cultural changes are inextricably linked to the media. In fact, the media is widely understood as one of the pillars of democracy; a nation's journey toward organizing or strengthening its democracy cannot dismiss the existence and power of the media.

Contained within social constructionism is the understanding that reality is socially constructed, where "reality" and "knowledge" serve as two key terms for comprehension. Reality is a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition, whereas knowledge is the certainty that these phenomena are real and possess specific characteristics (Berger & Luckmann, 1990:1).

Regarding social constructionism theory, Denis McQuail (2011:110-111) explains that the idea of society as an objective reality that constrains the individual is countered by an alternative view: that the structures, forces, and ideas of society are formed by humans, continuously shaped and reproduced, and remain open to change. McQuail further posits that the image of reality provided by media is a selective construction made from real pieces of information and observations, which are put together and presented through a specific frame, angle, or perspective. Consequently, news genres and news-processing routines are also constructed. Thus, social construction refers to the process by which events, people, values, and ideas are first formed or interpreted in a particular way and order of priority, leading to the construction of a larger picture of reality.

Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. Davis (2010:383-384) elaborate that social constructionism is a culturally based theory. All culturally based theories share the same foundational assumption: our experience of reality is an ongoing social construction for which we share responsibility; it is not something simply transmitted or broadcast to the public by ruling elites. Social constructionism offers a view of the media's role that contrasts sharply with mass society theory and the limited-effects perspective. Mass society theory imagines a large population living in a nightmare reality dominated by manipulators, while the limited-effects perspective emphasizes a passive audience. Specifically, social constructionism shares theoretical assumptions with symbolic interactionism, assuming that audiences actively process information, reshape it, and retain only what they culturally need. This audience activity

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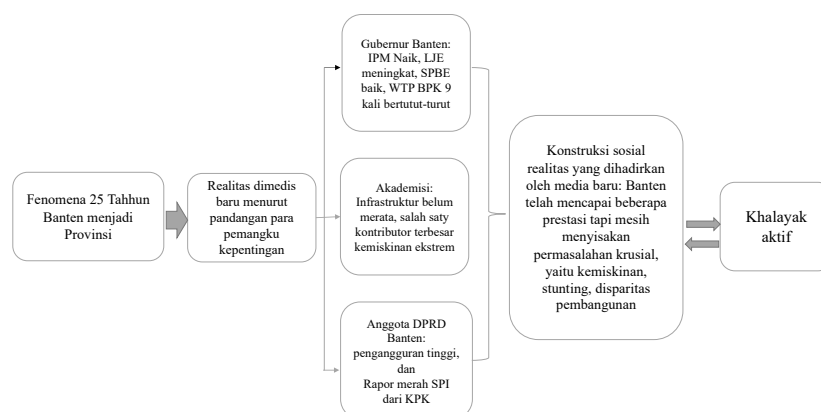
is even carried out to reinforce existing knowledge, fostering greater belief and prompting action based on the view of the social world communicated to them by the media.

RESEARCH METHOD

To describe and understand the phenomena that are the focus of the study, this research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with the method used being content analysis. Content analysis in this context refers to any technique or technique used to draw conclusions through efforts to identify message characteristics, and is conducted objectively and systematically (Moleong, 2002:163). The message characteristics in question are the results of the text or communication language used by Banten figures, community groups, and Banten Provincial Government officials in explaining the condition of Banten after 25 years as a province. Considering that this research is qualitative and the characteristics of the data in this study are text or language data, it is also realized that the problems contained in the text or language are not only limited to the use of sentences or parts of sentences, but also include more complex message structures. Also important to note from the text are the ideology behind the text, and the context in which a text is born. This is where the relevance of content analysis is used in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In reporting on the evaluation of Banten's development after 25 years as a province, a wide array of views, opinions, and criticisms have been voiced by various stakeholders highlighting Banten's current condition. However, for the purpose of this study, the author selects only a few specific news reports containing these perspectives. The chosen views, opinions, or criticisms originate from academics or prominent Banten figures, members of the Banten Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), and the provincial government itself. While these sources may not yet be deemed fully representative of the general public's view, the author argues that news coverage involving academics/figures, DPRD members, and the provincial government is sufficient to serve as a baseline for a social constructionist analysis of the narrative built by new media regarding Banten's current state. They are considered representative because they stem from distinct societal groups/elements, and the news references are drawn from highly trusted new media portals. From these online news portals, the author will identify and outline the main points of the arguments presented by Banten academics/figures, Banten DPRD members, and the Banten Provincial Government.



Source: Processed by the author

CONCLUSIONS

The social construction of reality presented by new media regarding Banten's condition after 25 years as a province, based on the views of Banten figures, community groups, and the Banten Provincial Government, reveals diverse realities. The social construction of reality after 25 years of Banten Province includes achievements and progress, such as an increase in the Human Development Index (HDI), but still presents problems of poverty, unemployment, stunting, and development disparities. The social construction of reality presented by new media is not immediately accepted by the public, as they actively seek and process information to reinforce or reject these realities. Therefore, ultimately, the

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public constructs their own reality about Banten's condition at 25 years old. This reality construction may agree or disagree with the construction constructed by new media.

Future research suggests conducting a study of Banten's public acceptance of the views of stakeholders in new media regarding the evaluation of Banten's 25th anniversary as a province.

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