



fesmedia **Asia** *series*

**Beyond Click-Activism?
New Media and Political Processes
in Contemporary Indonesia**

By Yanuar Nugroho and Sofie Shinta Syarief
2012

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Published by *fesmedia Asia*
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
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ISBN: 978-602-8866-05-7

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*We should not allow ourselves
to be over-impressed by the popularity and rapid spread of
Internet technology, because the same features attended the
invention of television about whose significance plausible doubts
have been raised. Rather, the marks of a truly transforming
technology lie elsewhere and are, I have argued, twofold: the
ability to serve recurrent needs better (qualitatively as well as
quantitatively) and having a major impact upon the
form of social and political life.*

(Gordon Graham, "The Internet: //a philosophical inquiry", 1999:37)

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Abstract

Internet and new media have given new impetus for the reinvention of civic activism and hence reshaped many political processes in various contexts and settings. In Indonesia, one of the world's biggest social media users, the challenge is not about how the technology is used or adopted, but about the ways in which it could be accessed and used to influence political dynamics. We investigate the extent to which new media impacts upon political processes in Indonesia and the factors that affect it. Reflecting on the Indonesian political systems and structure, and detailing some empirical case studies on new media use, we argue that most uses of social media, including those aimed at influencing political processes, are *ad hoc*. There is an imminent need for strategising the use of new media in civil society in order to enable them address societal changes at large in a more sustained, engaged civic activism.

Acknowledgements

This paper is an original study facilitated by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and builds on the research collaboration between the University of Manchester UK and HIVOS Regional Southeast Asia (2010-2011) titled 'Citizens in @ction', also led by Yanuar Nugroho. We thank the respondents taking part in the study in 2010-2011, and in particular Donny B. Utoyo, Enda Nasution, and Ade Tanesia, for the updated data through interview in 2012. We are grateful for the help of Kathryn Morrison to read and correct the language of this report.

1. Internet, Politics, and Change in Indonesia: An Introduction

As this study is being written¹, the number of *Twitter* users in Indonesia has surpassed 19.5 million², there are more than 5.3 million blogs³, and the number of *Facebook* users is well above 42.5 million⁴. This has made Indonesia high on the global list of social media users, being labelled by the media as ‘*Twitter* Nation’ and ‘*Facebook* Country’⁵. Very recently, in early May 2012, a video of a soldier in civilian outfit driving a military-owned car arrogantly bullying a motorcyclist with a pistol and stick went viral through *YouTube* and spread through *Twitter* and *Facebook* and subsequently forced the high officer in the Armed Forces to admit the incident and give sanction to the soldier⁶. Literally days earlier, the government was bombarded by fierce criticism for not being able to protect the citizens when three Indonesian migrant workers died in Malaysia and their bodies returned allegedly with eyes missing, triggering suspicion of organ trafficking and lead to a full examination. Although the autopsy later disproved the allegation, the criticism which started in *Twitter* blew up, quickly spread in both online and conventional media, and set a tension between the two countries and even compelled the Foreign Ministry to make an official statement⁷.

These two events, which show how the officials or government responded to the people’s pressures, many would argue, would have never happened had the Internet and social media not been used on the scale at which they are used today. In other words, this argues for the use of social media that has changed the face of the Indonesian politics, enabling citizens and common people to voice their concern and in turn influence political affairs. Such an

1 The drafting of this manuscript started on 1 May 2012.

2 See SemioCast, “Brazil becomes 2nd country on *Twitter*, Japan 3rd Netherlands most active country” http://semioCast.com/publications/2012_01_31_Brazil_becomes_2nd_country_on_Twitter_supersedes_Japan. Accessed 2 May 2012.

3 See Saling Silang, “Direktori Blog” <http://blogdir.salingsilang.com/>. Accessed 2 May 2012.

4 See <http://www.socialbakers.com/Facebook-statistics/indonesia>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

5 See CNN Tech, “Indonesia: *Twitter* nation” http://articles.cnn.com/2010-11-23/tech/indonesia.Twitter_1_Twitter-nation-social-media-social-networking?. Accessed 30 May 2012.

6 See The Jakarta Post, “Army confirms soldier’s involvement in Palmerah-trigger happy video” <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/05/01/army-confirms-soldier-s-involvement-palmerah-trigger-happy-video.html>. Accessed 2 May 2012.

7 See The Jakarta Post, “Dead migrant workers’ organs were not stolen: Foreign minister” <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/04/28/dead-migrant-workers-organs-were-not-stolen-foreign-minister.html>. Accessed 30 May 2012.

argument looks even more convincing and prominent when recalling the case of how *Facebook* was used to organise support and rallies in the case of *Prita Mulyasari* and *Cicak vs Buaya* (or *Bibit-Chandra*) consecutively back in 2009, or how the independent candidacy of *Faisal-Biem* running for the current Jakarta's Governor election evolved around the #SaveJkt movement, which originated in *Twitter*⁸. However, how far can we hold on to this argument? Did the advent of the Internet and social media signify the change? Or, did the whole change actually originate outside the domain of technology use? If so, then to what extent does the use of the Internet and social media impact upon Indonesian politics specifically?

Indeed, one of the most discussed topics in the media world today is probably how the Internet and social media have transformed politics in many different settings and contexts. Yet the views on this matter vary to a great extent. The optimistic ones, for example the most-cited 'Arab spring' case, have been challenged by more critical –or probably even 'pessimistic'—ones like Morozov's (2011). However, no matter what the views are, the process of Internet and social media use and its implications for societal change is never as simple and straightforward as it looks. The adoption processes and the use of new technological innovations like the Internet, especially in fluid but dynamic groups such as citizen groups, or civil society/non-governmental organisations, are often seen as a 'black box': unknown to many (Nugroho, 2011b). The consequence is twofold. One, conceptually, it becomes very difficult to properly offer explanation and analysis of the impacts of such use at wider societal levels. The bearings of the Internet and social media in politics, for instance, remain vaguely conceptualised (e.g. a very recent paper by Shirky, 2011). Two, in practical terms, it is then equally complicated to empower the society at large in order to be able to adopt and use the Internet and social media strategically and politically in the (local) contexts in which they are embedded.

This paper, therefore, neither aims to offer a groundbreaking conceptualisation of the link between Internet and social media use and political processes, nor defends a certain theory about it. Instead, by showcasing the Indonesian case, it aspires to tell the stories from the field, i.e. to present the empirical evidence on how this link evolves and develops over time across different contexts in the country. By doing so, it seeks to understand the conditions under which the potentials of such development could be realised. Here, it is important to take into account the ambivalent character of technology and its inherent

8 These cases will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

consequence: the use and adoption of technology is always like a double edged sword –for better or for worse.

The political reform (or '*reformasi*') in 1998 was praised as being one historical event in Indonesian politics in which, for the first time, communication technologies played a significant role in the social movement around the time that the authoritarian regime was brought down (e.g. Hill and Sen, 2000; Lim, 2003; Marcus, 1998; Nugroho, 2007; Tedjabayu, 1999). Despite the limited availability of the technology at that time, a number of pro-democracy activists started using mobile phones and pagers in combination with *handy-transceiver* and early emails hosted at *nusa.net.id* to organise massive rallies in the country's major cities. Whilst some information remained among urban activists in Java, many scandalous stories about corrupt government officials and elites were discussed more widely in the mailing list *apakabar*, which were then printed, copied and distributed offline to many grassroots groups to maintain their morale in the elongated protests and rallies. The list of similar examples is endless. However, in the conflicts in Poso, Moluccas by the end of 1999, both violent Muslim and Christian groups also used the Internet to fuel hatred in society by posting provocative news on their websites which also contained hate-speeches and calls for vicious attacks against each other (Hill and Sen, 2002; Lim, 2004). Even until today, fundamentalist groups *Front Pembela Islam* also benefit from the use of web technology where they can spread hatred quickly and widely. What we see here is evidence that, in the hands of uncivil society, technology can be used for uncivil purpose, destroying the *res publica*. Social change, therefore, is always uncertain; the future of the social is always contested. The challenge here is for the civil society to effectively and strategically use the technology for civil purposes, i.e. the betterment of the society, the preservation of the common good, and the survival of the shared life in the republic.

In this study we explore how various citizen groups in Indonesia use and adopt the Internet and social media and the ways in which such use and adoption influences the dynamics of the political processes in the country. The increasing use of the Internet and social media somehow, as we have found, opens up space that is necessary for them to engage in politics – a space which had once been absent and that the conventional media could not provide. There seems to be a strong correlation between the dynamics in the landscape of the media industry and policy in Indonesia and how media propagate politics. Indeed, in the political economy context of Indonesia, media are closely intertwined with politics: media have become political

vehicles and in turn media get political power. This is the central context when analysing the use of the Internet and social media in Indonesia.

We found that while, on the one hand, social media provides a relatively new potential platform for the citizens to engage with politics, on the other, there are pressing challenges that may hinder them from fully benefitting from the opportunity. Among them is unequal distribution of ICT infrastructure which creates a multi-layer of disparities in technology access and use. Another latent problem is the low literacy in media for the largest part of society, in addition to poor policy in media –not just Internet and social media—which is unable to respond to the quick change in the landscape of media industry and policy in Indonesia. The other important challenge is perhaps how the use of the Internet and social media for political purpose, mostly by civil society organisations, is still very much *ad hoc*, rather than strategised within organisations.

We base this paper on our own recent studies on social media and media industry and policy in Indonesia (in particular we refer to Nugroho, 2011a; Nugroho, 2011b; Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a; Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b), enriched by more updated data we gathered recently –including first hand data and some new grey literatures. We also extend the argument and deepen the analyses. To present this study, we adopt a simple structure. After introducing what this study is all about, the next section sets out the context of this paper by presenting the socio-political context and development in Indonesia. Then, Section Three continues by focusing on the dynamics of media in Indonesia, as media have been seen as one of the most important pillars for democratic political processes. Section Four outlines the development of the Internet and social media in Indonesia, looking at the infrastructure, growth, and policy. This section provides a firm ground for Section Five which is the core of this paper: new media and politics in Indonesia. It also discusses the use and adoption of the Internet and social media in civil society in a great detail by presenting three case studies. This section ends with an attempt to draw the lessons learned and offer a synthesis, before the final Section Six concludes.

2. Socio-political Context and Development in Indonesia: Legacies and Plausible Futures

Understanding the socio-political context and development in Indonesia is a prerequisite for explaining the link between social media use and political dynamics – let alone for explaining how such use impacts upon political processes. Otherwise, social media would be easily believed to be so *sui generis* –that it is its unique features alone that matter, excluding it from the wider context. We realise, nevertheless, that it is impossible to be entirely comprehensive in presenting the Indonesian context. Instead, we can only highlight some aspects of it. The qualifier ‘some’ is crucial as Indonesia is a vast and plural subject, while the scope of this section is necessarily limited, i.e. to provide a relevant context to the research.

Indonesia has traversed across a spectrum of political systems and representation over the past few decades, from an authoritarian regime to a more democratic administration, despite the current growing concern over the defunct state in many of today’s societal conflicts. Similarly, the socio-economic and cultural development of the country has also transformed over time. Having survived the financial crisis at the end of the 1990s, Indonesia has now focused on regaining its economic strength both internally and in the region, with some successes and failures. In nearly all aspects of development –be it social, political, economic or cultural— it is evident that civil society has been an important actor whose role gets more central and needs to be taken into account because maturity in political culture is often reflected in civil society activism. Only after these aspects are considered, can the plausible future trajectories of the socio-political development be projected.

2.1. Archipelago in transition: Political systems and representation

Indonesia has a long and rich history of political systems. With no intention to discard the importance of this history, the focus of this study is the development in Indonesian politics in the past fifteen years, i.e. since the late period of Soeharto’s militaristic New Order regime (the early 1990s) up to recently (the early 2000s). There are four significant, distinct periods of transition to democracy which can be related to civil society activism in Indonesia (Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2008).

Pre 1995: Authoritarian period – From 1965 until May 1998, General Soeharto led Indonesia in a highly authoritarian way and called his leadership period the ‘New Order’, to distinguish from the ‘Old Order’ led by the former President Soekarno. The New Order regime was dominated by the military and was able to resist pressure for democratisation. There were conflicts in the political élites and the military, but these were factional and easily controlled and manipulated by Soeharto. The regime was extremely powerful and became relatively autonomous in relation to society (Uhlin, 2000). Due to its position in the global capitalist system and anti-Communist ideology, the regime received substantial economic, military and political support from the West. Until the mid 1990s, the world saw Indonesia as a politically stable state with an impressive record of economic growth, which qualified it as one of the ‘tiger economies’ in Asia. In this period civil society was weak, depoliticised and fragmented (Hill and Sen, 2000). Many civil society groups within in Indonesia, despite their differences in ideologies, agreed to regard the government as the ‘common enemy’ (Setiawan, 2004).

1995–1998: Bloody transformation – From the mid 1990s, civil society started expressing its discontent more openly. A new generation of advocacy groups, mainly pro-democracy and human rights groups, were formed and became increasingly active in anti-government protests. These groups were characterised by their attempts to unite all forms of pro-democracy movements and increase pressure against the government, including establishing alliances with peasants and workers (Uhlin, 1997:110-114). A wide spectrum of civilian academics, civil servants and street vendors joined hand-in-hand with the civil society movement and citizens’ groups, expressing concern and protesting to the government (Kalibonso, 1999; Prasetyantoko, 2000). But the beginning of the end of Soeharto’s 36 years of authoritarian government in Indonesia was actually initiated by the Asian economic crisis that began in Thailand in 1997. When the crisis hit Indonesia and the regime could hardly retain its power, students pioneered and led mass demonstrations and demanded the President’s resignation⁹. In 1997 scores of civil society organisations also joined in with the students giving support to the movement. After a short and bloody period which cost the lives of students who protested in the streets, accounts of missing activists who were protesting against the government’s policies, thousands of people dead in mass riots, many reports of Indonesian Chinese women raped and vast material destruction¹⁰, on 21 May 1998

9 Student activism has indeed always played an important role in the Indonesian politics (Aspinall, 1995).

10 As reported by many authors (like Bird, 1999; Uhlin, 2000).

General Soeharto, who was eventually abandoned by the military, was forced to step down. His 36 years of administration had come to an end and 1998 saw a historical moment when Indonesia entered a period of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. This was the point in time which was then widely referred to as '*reformasi*' (political reform); the point which separates the 'old' Indonesia and 'new' Indonesia as many would claim (for instance Bresnan, 2005a; Cameron, 1999; Clear, 2005; Hill, 2000; McCarthy, 2002; Mietzner, 1999; O'Rourke, 2002).

1999–2002: Fraught euphoria – Soeharto's successor B.J. Habbibie, under both international and national pressure, introduced some political reforms and revived political activities that had been stifled for more than three decades: some political prisoners were released, free elections were promised and a referendum took place in East Timor, which led to East Timor's independence. Almost at a stroke, political space in Indonesia was considerably widened. Yet, because it was sudden and massive, its effect was euphoric for most of the people in the country. Farmer organisations and trade unions became radicalised and underground organisations came to the surface and joined hands with the newly formed civil society groups and organisations (Hadiz, 1998; Silvey, 2003). Hundreds of new political organisations and political parties were formed and the media became much more independent and critical of the government. But the transition was not entirely painless. There was massive social unrest and political turmoil accompanying dramatic political change with three more presidents elected (and one impeached) within four years: Abdurrahman Wahid (2000), Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001) and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (2004). This third period (1999-2002) was obviously marked with relatively chaotic political change due to the euphoric reaction after the displacement of the authoritarian leader.

2003–present: Towards stability – The political situation seems to have 'settled down' from 2003 onwards. During 2003, preparations for the 2004 election were made, which took the reform process further through extending the range of publicly elected positions. For the first time voters directly elected the President and Vice-president. They also elected representatives to the newly established House of Regional Representatives under the reformed election system. These elections were the first in the history of Indonesia in which there was no government appointed Member of Parliament. Despite worries from pro-democracy civil groups about President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (often nicknamed as "SBY") whose background was in the military, as a nation, Indonesia has begun to evolve in terms of political maturity. This

period, which significantly differs from the previous period of euphoria, seems to have marked a new era in the democratisation process in Indonesia, with all their ups and downs. Civil society groups, who had been important actors throughout the previous periods, have started to gain a more pivotal position and a wider sphere to act as a 'check-and-balance' for both government and business. They actively address various concerns and issues in order to advocate people's rights, to protect their environment and to develop their livelihoods and thus bring about social change in many aspects. Some groups try to do so by influencing governmental policies, promoting ethics and accountability, building public opinion and providing alternative media. In terms of concerns and issues, civil society is characterised as being more diverse compared to its identity during the authoritarian regime.

What seems to be constant across the four periods of the transition to democracy above, particularly after the *reformasi*, is the perpetual search for legitimacy of the regime. Many argue that, being relatively more democratic, the *post-reformasi* regimes somehow hold a more legitimate power compared to the New Order regime, also because of the direct vote in the presidential election¹¹. Indeed, the reform did bring about many political changes, including the amendment of the constitution which also included how the president and the vice president were elected in a general election (Constitution, Third Amendment, Article 6A).

President Yudhoyono is serving his second period of presidency at the moment. In the last election, in 2009, he was elected by more than 60 per cent of the voters¹². His legitimacy is also strengthened by the outcome of the legislative election held a few months earlier, whereas the party he founded, the *Partai Demokrat* (Democrat Party), dominated with 20.85 per cent of votes¹³. Moreover, Yudhoyono also formed coalitions of political parties after the election to strengthen his government and his policies¹⁴. In a country where the presidential and parliamentary systems are being used at the same

11 In the New Order era, the president was appointed by the MPR (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat/People's Consultative Assembly), the highest institution of the state, by a majority vote among its members (Constitution, article 6). See <http://www.mpr.go.id/pages/produk-mpr/uud-1945>.

12 See Vivanews, "SBY Resmi Menang Pemilihan Presiden 2009 (SBY Officially Won the Presidential Election 2009)"; http://politik.vivanews.com/news/read/77378-sby_boediono_resmi_menang_pilpres_2009. Accessed 3 May 2012.

13 See Vivanews, "Partai Demokrat Menang (Democratic Party Won)" http://politik.vivanews.com/news/read/56333-partai_demokrat_menang. Accessed 3 May 2012.

14 See Tempo, "Begini Isi Perjanjian SBY-Parpol Koalisi (This is the Agreement between SBY-Political Parties)" <http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2012/04/05/078395020/Begini-Isi-Perjanjian-SBY-Parpol-Koalisi>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

time, the result of both elections reflects the trust given by Indonesian citizens towards Yudhoyono and his party.

But *das Sollen* is very rarely pronouncement of the *das Sein*. The realm of Indonesian politics, especially today, shows a high level of complication. The problem seems to lay in how far the legitimacy enables the administration to have public support, despite their representatives in the House, in order to achieve an effective government. One example of the government's failure to act firmly, which resulted in violation of civic rights, was the issue on one of extremist group: FPI (*Front Pembela Islam/Islam Defenders Front*). For many years, FPI have claimed to be fighting against *kemunkaran* (straying)¹⁵. Yet, many testify and believe that the actions they take are notorious and against religious tolerance, such as vandalising clubs, offices, and even other Islamic groups' mosques in many places. This has happened since after the reform in 2000, but has become much more intensive over the past five years or so.¹⁶ When the government failed to take appropriate measures in handling the violence carried out by FPI, several activists and ordinary citizens decided to take action. The activism started online through *Twitter* and *Facebook*, with several initial activists posting tweets or messages to gather support with the subject "Indonesia Tanpa FPI" and tweets with hashtag #*IndonesiaTanpaFPI* (literally translated as 'Indonesia without FPI')¹⁷. Other than disseminating their thoughts regarding the violent actions of FPI, they were inviting people for a rally in Central Jakarta to demand that the government disband the hard-line group¹⁸. The protest itself was a response to the government's reluctance to take action against the FPI, whereas Yudhoyono as the president seemed indecisive on the matter. Partly, this was because he apparently wanted to keep his popularity among Indonesian Muslims, but also because of the close link between FPI and the police force¹⁹. We will discuss this more in a later part of this study.

15 See "Perjuangan FPI (FPI's struggle)" <http://fpi.or.id/?p=perjuanganfpi>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

16 See also: The Jakarta Post, "FPI and the Limits of Freedom of Association", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/10/06/fpi-and-limits-freedom-association.html>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

17 See BBC Indonesia, "Aksi Unjuk Rasa Indonesia Tanpa FPI di Jakarta (Rallies "Indonesia without FPI" in Jakarta)", http://www.bbc.co.uk/indonesia/berita_indonesia/2012/02/120214_antifpi.shtml. Accessed 3 May 2012.

18 See The Jakarta Post, "No Love Shown to the FPI", <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/02/15/no-love-shown-fpi.html>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

19 Historically, FPI first emerged in Jakarta after President Suharto's resignation as part of the state-established Pam Swakarsa, a quasi civil society security group, initially aimed to intimidate crowds protesting in the parliament during the 1998 *reformasi*. See Wilson (2008).

This shows that although the people directly chose their leaders and representatives, there is a growing feeling that there is no guarantee that they can have their aspirations acknowledged and realised. There seems to be a growing void in the political systems and representation, leaving the concerned citizens on their own, without the state working for them. This situation has created the need of the citizens for alternative platform(s) and channel(s) to voice their demands and to facilitate their acts as pressure groups. This is the space that would, as proven later, be quickly filled by the Internet and social media.

2.2. Socio-economic and cultural development

In Asia, the economy is growing rapidly, making people believe that the future of the world economy is Asia, replacing Europe and other developed countries. Dominated by China, India, and Japan, Asian economic development has been very promising and become more and more lucrative for business interests (e.g. Lindquist *et al.*, 2012). The new champions in the region are predicted to be Korea and Singapore, followed by Malaysia and Thailand –and probably also Vietnam which catches up very quickly. Indonesia would however, if no significant progress is made, be likely to only lead the bottom league, along with the Philippines, Cambodia, and Myanmar, as suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour in the region (Global Competitiveness Report, 2010).

Indonesia itself has been through difficult times since before the economic crisis in 1998 but it managed to survive. The unemployment rate is still high (8.4 per cent of the total workforce of 108.2 million²⁰), and with the current poverty level (29.4 per cent population living below USD 1 per day) and the impact of deaths caused by natural disasters (4.9 million people affected per year), this all creates a serious socio-economic problem in the country and in turn also impacts upon the national performance in development (e.g. GDP per capita remains low at USD 4.394)²¹. In regard to this, child labour is another concern. ILO reports that in 2009 there were 3.7 million (or 10 per cent) of the total 35.7 million children aged 10-17 years who have to work to earn money, most of them as industrial labourers²². In addition, most of the workforce in Indonesia is concentrated in the informal economy, which accounts for 70 per cent of the country's total labour market.

20 BPS-Statistics Indonesia, 2010.

21 Human Development Index 2010, UNDP.

22 International Labour Organisation, 2009.

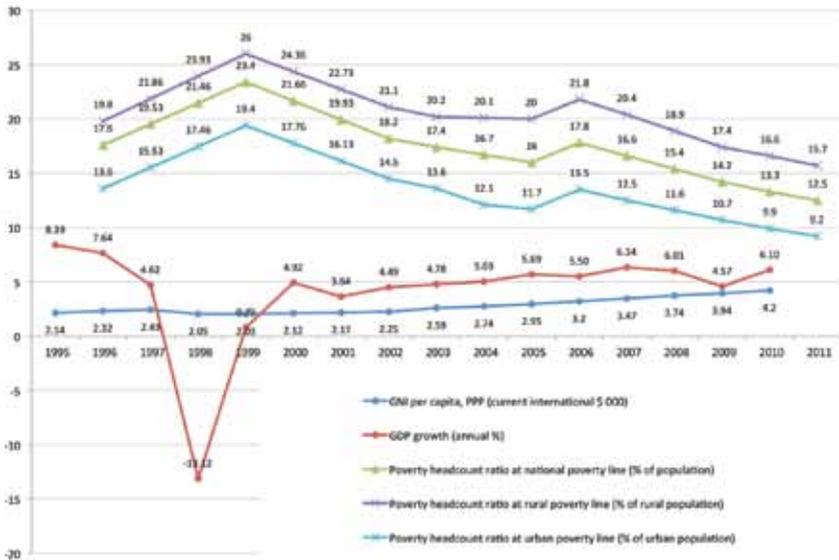


Figure 1. GNI per capita, GDP growth, and poverty headcount ratio – Indonesia: 1995-2011
 Source: Author; data processed from the World Development Indicators and Global Development Finance²³.

The GNI per capita shows a constant increase after the economic crisis in 1997-1998 (currently USD 4,200 per capita PPP), although the GDP growth fluctuates. Over the past half dozen years, the poverty headcount ratio at the national poverty line (\$2 per day) has been decreasing, supposedly showing that the number of poor people has been decreasing (see Figure 1 above). However, the data has been disputed a lot and raised questions about whether the actual poverty is *really* decreasing²⁴. One Indonesian research-based NGO, *Prakarsa*, at the end of 2011 released its own research and, in contrary to the National BPS-Statistics Indonesia whose data is used by the World Bank, showed that the total poverty in Indonesia had actually increased by 2.7 million, i.e. from 40.4 million in 2008 to 43.1 million in 2010. This has made Indonesia the only Southeast Asian country whose poverty rate has increased (Prakarsa, 2011).

23 See World Bank database <http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do>.

24 For example, see <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/08/indonesias-poverty-line>.

Although the Indonesian economy seems to improve, the inequality gap also widens. According to the World Bank, in 2005 the richest 10 per cent hold 28.51 per cent of the total income share whilst the poorest 20 per cent only 8.34 per cent²⁵. This situation is not getting any better today. The CIA *World FactBook* reports that in 2010, of the 144 countries ranked, Indonesia occupies the 81st place on the 2010 *Gini Index* (a measure of income inequality), shown in the regional income dispersion which grew by 15 per cent between 2002 to 2010²⁶. In many economies, such extreme inequality has been proven to be a fertile ground for social conflicts, which can easily manifest into violent actions – as now evident in Indonesia. To many extents, violence has characterised Indonesia’s current societal problems, particularly (although not only) in urban poor and slum areas.

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Rural population (% of total population)	64.40	63.12	61.84	60.56	59.28	58.00	56.78	55.56	54.34	53.12	51.90	50.78	49.66	48.54	47.42	46.30
Urban population (% of total)	35.60	36.88	38.16	39.44	40.72	42.00	43.22	44.44	45.66	46.88	48.10	49.22	50.34	51.46	52.58	53.70
Rural population growth (annual%)	(0.07)	(0.59)	(0.67)	(0.75)	(0.81)	(0.87)	(0.82)	(0.87)	(0.94)	(1.03)	(1.13)	(1.04)	(1.13)	(1.22)	(1.29)	(1.36)
Urban population growth (annual%)	4.32	4.95	4.79	4.64	4.52	4.41	4.17	4.08	3.98	3.88	3.76	3.45	3.35	3.27	3.20	3.14

Table 1. Urbanisation in Indonesia: 1995-2010

Source: Author; data processed from the World Development Indicators and Global Development Finance of the World Bank.

Indeed, there is a trend of positive urbanisation. People are moving away from rural areas with the hope that working in the cities will make them better-off economically. Rural population growth has never been positive since before 1995 whilst urban population growth has increased dramatically over the same period and has become more worrying in the past few years (see

25 Author’s excerpt from the World Development Indicators and Global Development Finance of the World Bank – see <http://databank.worldbank.org/ddp/home.do>.

26 Measured by the standard deviation of GDP per capita by province, with the standard deviation of inter-provincial GDP per capita increasing from IDR 7.13 million to IDR 8.2 million over 8 years See <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/id.html>.

Table 1). Many have argued that chains of problems have occurred due to such urbanisation, such as the decreasing of workforce in rural areas, leaving productive lands neglected and in turn ultimately being converted into settlements or industrial complexes.

In terms of education, the country does quite well. Since the revitalisation of the education policy (by means of the enactment of the UU No. 20/2003 on the National Education System), the completion rate for primary education has been 100 per cent since 2007, and the secondary school enrolment has increased steadily from 60 per cent (2005), to 64 per cent (2006), 71 per cent (2007), 75 per cent (2009) and 77 per cent (2010). This has contributed to very high literacy rate at 92.5 per cent for adult total, and 99.5 per cent for youth total.

Such socio-economic development has in turn played an important role in the creation of the middle class in Indonesia, for better or worse. Using the Asian Development Bank's definition (2010), there are 134 million (around 56.5 per cent) of Indonesian middle classes, i.e. those who spend USD 2-20 daily²⁷. Typically, after providing for basic needs of food and shelter, the people in this category have one third of their income for discretionary spending (Diane Farrell, member of America's National Economic Council, cited in *The Economist*, 2009). Although some would categorise middle class by income as well as education, it can also be scrutinised by consumer culture: the middle class uses the culture of consumerism as a self-created socio-cultural entity and a means to build identity (Ansori, 2009). The economic privileges enjoyed by the middle class (in Indonesia this includes various subsidies given by the state for fuel and essential services) will eventually lead them to become consumerists in order to maintain their class membership and to be continually differentiated from others from the lower classes.

With the growing number of affluent Indonesians, including the middle classes, spending is a certainty. Indonesia has been regarded as one of the biggest markets for many products and services, including communication technologies, especially mobile- and smart-phones. For instance, the increase of gadget users in Indonesia has been extraordinary, so much so that the producers of BlackBerry and Research In Motion (RIM) named the country as one of their largest markets, with approximately 10 million users in early

27 See "Bank Dunia: Kelas Menengah Indonesia 134 Juta Orang (134 million Indonesian Middle Class: The World Bank)", <http://www.bisnis.com/articles/bank-dunia-kelas-menengah-indonesia-134-juta-orang>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

2012²⁸. This simply shows how enticing the country is for gadget producers because, for middle class Indonesians, owning such devices has always been associated with status. The popularity of smart-phones goes hand in hand with the Internet and social media usage (which will be discussed in the Section Four in more detail), especially when people can afford both for a relatively low price²⁹. It is therefore natural for the Indonesian middle classes to make their way into the online sphere, since connecting to the Internet is getting cheaper and easier from day to day.

The increasing use of smart-phones and other products that can be seen as a proof of consumerism culture among Indonesian middle classes perhaps reflects the Weberian socio-economic perspective. However, there is also a socio-political perspective of the middle classes that should also be regarded as an indicator: their engagement in politics. As the middle classes can enjoy material and cultural advantages because of their educational and technical qualifications, to some extent they become more involved in the political sphere since they possess all the necessary means to access information as well as engage in politics. Furthermore, the categorisation of class and its sociological impacts brings a certain characteristic to the middle classes, especially in an emerging democracy like Indonesia. As Tilkidjiev suggests, *“The principles and mechanisms of social differentiation and mobility have been manifesting a growing degree of structural similarity”* (2005:211). Thus, the middle classes have the potential to be a unified power for a further development and change, and therefore will maintain their ability to be the driving force of modern society (Tilkidjiev, 2005). It is the will to use that power and to fully engage with the political sphere that still needs to be questioned. It is in this vein that the links between middle and upper classes and the Internet and social media, such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, are made. They have been transformed into a political platform where dissenting opinions from millions of Indonesians, mostly middle class, can be posted, which might otherwise not be aired in public (Deutsch, 2010). This could be a positive outcome of the affluent middle classes of Indonesia: with enough money left to spend on whatever they want, they have the opportunity to channel their thoughts and concern, as well as to engage in politics, for the betterment of their lives and the society, since they have already fulfilled their basic needs. However, whether or not this opportunity is materialised, and to what extent, is another matter.

28 See Detikinet, “RIM: Blackberry Paling Laku di Indonesia (Blackberry is the Best Seller in Indonesia: RIM)” <http://inet.detik.com/read/2012/04/24/162357/1900435/317/rim-blackberry-paling-laku-di-indonesia>. Accessed 3 May 2012.

29 For an illustration: After buying a mobile or smart-phone for about USD 200 any Indonesians who do not have any computer can go online for less than USD 10 a month (Deutsch, 2010).

2.3. Civil society: Civilising political culture?

As previously elaborated, the discussion of socio-political and socio-economic development in Indonesia cannot but touch upon the issue of civil society. Indonesian civil society has indeed received very substantial attention and concern since the fall of the authoritarian New Order and the rise of *reformasi* period. The emergence of Indonesian civil society in politics since then has become both fascinating and difficult to understand for many people, for the country's politics were dominated by the state during the New Order era (1966-1998). Some Indonesian scholars have attempted to study civil society in the country (for example, among others, Billah, 1995; Fakhri, 1996; Ganie-Rochman, 2002; Hadiwinata, 2003; Hadiz, 1998; Hikam, 1999; Kalibonso, 1999; Prasetyantoko, 2000; Sinaga, 1994) to complement their Western counterparts (e.g. Aspinnall, 1995; Bird, 1999; Bresnan, 2005b; Eldridge, 1995; Hill, 2003; Uhlin, 1997). However most of them have mainly focussed on one particular form of civil society, i.e. NGOs (non-governmental organisations) as the most visible subset of it, which is in general more organised compared to other fluid, amorphous, less organised groups of civil society³⁰.

As a general take, the Indonesian civil society sphere spans a wide spectrum with two ends: the *developmentalist*, and the *advocacy* group. Two most-cited studies by Hadiwinata (2003) and Ganie-Rochman (2002) reflect and affirm these different orientations –Hadiwinata looks at developmentalist groups while Ganie-Rochman examines advocacy organisations³¹. But regardless of

30 It is worth noting, however, that in Indonesia the terms civil society and NGO have a rather complicated interpretation and understanding compared to what we may have seen in the literature. Traced back to the 1970s, the term *Organisasi non-pemerintah* (ORNOP) was used as a direct translation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) but then replaced by *Lembaga Swadaya Masyarakat* (LSM) which literally means 'self-reliant organisation' (SRO), most of which was because of fear among activists that the term ORNOP might provoke government repression. Some also proposed another term, LPSM (*Lembaga Pengembangan Swadaya Masyarakat* or *self-help community support institution*) which was deemed to have more resemblance with what was known as NGO, while others started using *Organisasi nir-laba* (non-profit organisation). It seems that Indonesian NGO activists never reached consensus (Hadiwinata, 2003:6-7). Only after the 1998 *reformasi*, many social activists started using and popularising the term *Organisasi Masyarakat Sipil* (civil society organisation/CSO) to distinguish civil- and community-initiated organisations from those run or initiated by military, government and business.

31 Note that another perspective is offered by Fakhri (1996) who proposes three categorisations of civil society, i.e. as conformists, reformists and transformists. *Conformists* are groups of civil society working without clear vision and mission (and possibly theory), but adapting themselves to the dominant structure. *Reformists* support a participatory approach and mainly strengthen the role of civil society in development without questioning the ideology of development but just concentrate on methods and techniques. *Transformative* civil society organisations question the mainstream ideology and try to find an alternative vision and mission through critical education and participatory studies (Fakhri, 1996).

this categorisation, without doubt, Indonesian civil society has been playing a crucial role in the social, economic and political landscape across the country, despite them being heavily marginalised during Suharto's era in 1969-1998. Since the 1998 reform, there has been an obvious bloom in civil society activities in Indonesia focussing on widening civic engagement in its broadest sense. Although most studies of civil society cannot be separated from discourse of democracy and democratisation (e.g. Abbott, 2001; Coleman, 1999; Glasius *et al.*, 2005; Wainwright, 2005), to understand the nature of civil society in Indonesia, the perspective may need to be widened, for their activities are certainly not limited to democratisation.

The roles of civil society in Indonesia span from providing humanitarian aid, to development of urban and rural communities, to carrying out training and capacity building and to acting as watchdog organisations (Billah, 1995; Fakhri, 1996; Hadiwinata, 2003). Often some civil society organisations and NGOs in Indonesia are misunderstood as anti-business for they consistently advocate consumers' rights, support labour and trade union activities and protect the environment from business' wrongdoings through research, lobbying and advocacy endeavours. They also face the risk of being labelled anti-establishment because of their critical stance towards status quo policies, their endeavour in promoting civil supremacy and their efforts in fostering wider democracy. On occasions, some of them are accused of trading the country's interest for their watchdog activities, carrying out campaigns abroad and organising testimonial sessions before international bodies like Amnesty International or Human Rights Commission at the UN (Ganie-Rochman, 2002; Hadiz, 1998; Harney and Olivia, 2003; Lounela, 1999).

However, it is also as a result of the work of organisations of this sort that in Indonesia small-medium businesses benefit from various skills training and have better access to marketplaces; that farmers learn more about organic and sustainable farming processes; that women in rural areas now have access to micro-credit schemes and become empowered domestically; and that consumers' interest in getting more healthy products and produce through fairer trade have been promoted more widely. It is also through the efforts of various civil society groups that the importance and urgency of the fulfilment of workers' rights are brought to the wider public; that the rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are protected and aid is provided as a higher priority; and that in addition to raising continuous awareness of civil and political rights and human rights, the discourse of economic, social and cultural (ecosoc) rights has also become more public (Demos, 2005).

Nevertheless, the face of civil society in Indonesia is not always bright –at least from the empirical perspective. Looking at Indonesia’s socio-political situation nowadays, one can possibly mistake ‘uncivil’ society for civil society. Civic groups whose work is based on extremism and violence, for example, may not easily be distinguished from civil society groups working on ‘civility issues’ like democratisation or social empowerment if they are only observed at the surface. They even claim that they *are* civil society. *Forum Betawi Rempug* (Betawi Brotherhood Forum, or FBR), for instance, claims to represent working-class members of the indigenous Betawi ethnic group of Jakarta, despite their strategy to combine appeals to ethnicity and class with extortion and coercion. Another example already mentioned earlier in this paper is FPI, which is an instance of vigilante-style groups that employ the symbols of militant Islam for their quest of guarding the society from immorality (Wilson, 2006:267). But, are they really part of Indonesian civil society? Despite the claim, what they do is against the very basic idea of civil society: using violence to meet their goals. So the answer is clear –such groups are not part of civil society in Indonesia (Herry-Priyono, 2006). But there is a central issue that needs addressing: the civility of civil society. And as can be predicted in the historical and local context of Indonesia, the issue of civility relates tightly to the issue of violence/non-violence.

There has been long-standing historical ambiguity between ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ uses of violence in Indonesian civil society that can even be traced back to colonial period in the country (Cribb, 1991; Wilson, 2006). As the authoritarian regime employed violence as a central strategy for maintaining political control, violence and criminality were once normalised as state practice including mobilisation of quasi-civil society organisations like *Pemuda Pancasila* and *Pemuda Pancamarga* who use violence as a basic approach (Ryter, 1998). However, after the fall of the regime, non-state groups employing violence and intimidation as a political, social, and economic strategy have also apparently emerged (O’Rourke, 2002). It can be seen that while operating in a *modus operandi* similar to organised crime gangs, these groups articulate ideologies that legitimises the use of force, violence and coercion through appeals to ethnicity (like FBR), class (like *Pemuda Pancasila*), and religious affiliation (like FPI). Violence is also justified as an act of rectification (maybe rather than direct opposition) in a situation where the state is absent or considered to have failed in providing fundamentals such as security, justice, and employment (Wilson, 2006).

What does this all imply for the political culture in Indonesia?

Over the past 14 years, Indonesia has undergone a transition from a centralised authoritarian political system to decentralised democracy. Along with this transformation, the citizens' orientation towards politics has also shifted, which in the end affects their perception of political legitimacy. One of the most famous Indonesianists, William Liddle, characterises it as the transformation of the traditional political culture to a modern one (Liddle, 1988; 1996). To him, the notion of traditional political culture can be seen by the tendency of a patron-client relationship of the ruling elite and the citizens, where "*the leader should be benevolent and the people should be obedient*" (Liddle, 1988:1) which was evident during Soeharto's military-supported New Order administration (Mietzner, 2006). But then the fact is that, against all odds, Indonesia succeeded in transforming the authoritarian system into a more democratic one for a short time and relatively smoothly, almost without bloodshed (Anwar, 2010; Mietzner, 2006). The 1998 *reformasi* shifted the polity, where a more modern and democratic political culture emerged. From then on, democracy has been the political system used by the country, applied in every level of governance, from the top presidential level down to the election of local administrators.

So far, the shift in political culture in Indonesia seems to be on the right track. But in order to achieve the highest form of democracy, the political culture needs to be characterised more by a democratic and rational political system. As the third-largest democracy in the world, this might seem very promising for Indonesia. The diminishing hierarchical aspect in modern political culture will enable the citizens to interact with their government or representatives freely and mean that ideas can be mutually exchanged. Therefore, the possibility for the people to perform as a pressure group in order to get their aspirations to the government, in accordance to the core of democracy, is highly possible.

Democracy in Indonesia expands from its political system to the implementation of universal values of human rights. Even though it is still much contested in its practice, freedom of speech, expression, and association are protected by the law, being incorporated in the country's constitution. After *reformasi*, the influx of civil society organisations, including NGOs and other pressure groups, indicates an early stage of the democratisation process, since many of them are involved in political discourses (Lim, 2006). These groups are politically pressuring the government to implement good governance in many fields. KontraS (*Komisi untuk Orang Hilang dan Korban Tindak Kekerasan*/Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence) in the field of human rights

and Transparency International Indonesia in the anti-corruption movement are among many examples of such groups. Moreover, the government also established several institutions to maintain its accountability and transparency. KPK (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi/Corruption Eradication Commission*) and MK (*Mahkamah Konstitusi/Constitutional Court*) are a few examples of how the government wishes to maintain their transparency and accountability, and invites the citizens to become actively involved by reporting or filing particular cases. To some extent, these have all influenced the public's consciousness regarding political matters.

Another important remark on the political culture of the country is the establishment of free press. In the New Order era, press was regarded as the extension of the state, for the media at that time served the objectives of the ruling elites. But after the *Reformasi*, press freedom was gradually owned by Indonesians (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b:36). The enactment of the Press Law 1999 guarantees press freedom which means that there are no more licenses, censorship, or bans on press and media, which were common during the Soeharto regime (Basorie, 2011). Since then, the media environment in Indonesia continued "*to be one of the most vibrant in the region*" (Freedom House, 2011). The press and the media in Indonesia were, to some extent, able to perform as the fourth pillar of democracy by providing a public sphere for the citizens to channel and disseminate their aspirations. Alongside NGOs and other civil organisations, the media was also seen as one of the most prominent entity among the pressure groups. But in overall, Freedom House itself regards the Indonesian press as 'partly free', based on the fact that the violent acts against journalists increased and a series of policies that could be seen as encouraging the attacks towards those with different perspectives emerged (Freedom House, 2011).

The account above shows some aspects of the dynamics of the political culture in Indonesia in terms of citizens' engagement towards politics, active civil society, and the role of the press and its freedom. Although such development seems to be going forward into a modern, democratic political culture, one thing is clear: the society is a dynamic entity, and therefore its culture (politics included) is also constantly changing. Indeed, culture is a pattern of values, beliefs, and customs that can shift within the context of environmental changes and dynamics, which may result in different political values in different generations (Liddle, 1988; 1996). It implies that the political culture we are adopting at the moment will possibly change in accordance with the values of future generations.

2.4. Trends and plausible future trajectories

Looking into the future is always tricky, let alone when it comes to mapping its trajectory. The future of Indonesia's socio-political and socio-economic development is by no means easy to predict. Throughout this section we have tried our best to indicate how such a future might unfold, by understanding various past and current undertakings. Politically, Indonesia will continue to uphold a democratic system, despite its critics that suggest that its democracy is more at the level of procedure rather than substance. The Indonesian economy will keep growing, albeit slowly, through the production and trade of goods and services. However, Indonesia may need a long time before it regains its status as 'a tiger' in the Asian economy which it was once labelled in the mid 1990s and as such, Indonesia is currently losing its leadership in the ASEAN economy despite the optimism. Socially, Indonesia's civil society has been very dynamic and such dynamism will continue to blossom in the future. Civil society groups and organisations – be they organised or not—will become more pivotal and influence the working of the state and the private sector alike. Culturally, the country is embracing a more modern way of life, despite some fear about its social implications that mean that some parts of society even want to withhold it.

The discussion into what the plausible future trajectories might be would perhaps be best linked to the political culture, rather than anything else. At least from what has been discussed here, the country's progress since the 1998 reform has been (co)related to the dynamics of the politics and political culture. Since different generations embrace different political cultures, nothing is constant in politics. As culture is a pattern of values, customs, and beliefs, political culture is always contested. In Indonesia there are at least two groups: one who is eager to maintain their sets of beliefs and customs which were embedded in the previous adopted political culture; and a second one composed of those that value democracy as the highest form of a political system and therefore search for ways to invoke a more democratic system. In the Indonesian context, Liddle calls the first group 'defenders' and the latter 'innovators' (Liddle, 1988; 1996) – a general categorisation that still applies today and will be used here for that very reason.

'Defenders' need to maintain the status-quo and therefore refuse to be challenged by social movements. They have been characterised as having resources such as

a supporting cast of tens of millions of believers, many of whom are mobilisable against change; the cultural and social inertia that typically accompanies long-held beliefs, a high degree of 'recoverability' or capacity to adapt to new situations; and powerful networks of social forces and institutions with an interest in their preservation (Liddle, 1996:153).

In contrast, the 'innovators' attempt to shape the political culture to obtain a more democratic political system (Liddle, 1988; 1996). These groups usually, but not always, consist of intellectuals, political activists, as well as parts of the state apparatus. NGOs, civil society organisations, and other civic pressure groups which demand a more democratic system can be categorised as 'innovators'. Being considered illegal under New Order, since *reformasi*, they began to work openly with the support of national or international forces, especially those concerned with democratisation of a state (Marijan, 2010).

In any given time, these two groups are contenders against each other. In the current political culture in Indonesia the example of such contestation might be found in the case of Internet censorship imposed by the Government. Given the democratic atmosphere and claims that freedom of speech is of paramount value, the enactment of the Information and Electronic Transaction Law in 2008 (which somewhat reflects the defenders' view) was continuously questioned by members of the public, particularly those promoting civic freedom (which somewhat reflects the innovators' view). The government was adamant that the implementation of the law was to protect the nation, especially from content that is regarded as pornographic (Reuters, 2010a). But many believe that the act of censoring the net will eventually affect greater aspects of society than merely porn. Enda Nasution, a prominent Indonesian blogger, states that such censorship could be used by the ruling elites to silence political opposition in the online sphere³². In a world of rapid technological development in a democratic atmosphere, censoring the content of the net, instead of providing a thorough policy on its usage, might indicate the reluctance of the government to be challenged by its sophisticated citizens.

On reflection, what the 'innovators' aim for is a 'civic culture', which, according to Almond and Verba (1989), is determined by democratic political culture. The development of Indonesian citizens, where the public have a deeper

32 See Jakarta Globe, "Glitches in Blocking 'Offensive' Indonesian Web Sites Provokes Anger" <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/glitches-in-blocking-offensive-sites-provokes-indonesian-ire/390768>. Accessed 4 May 2012.

understanding of how important it is to have a democratic atmosphere in order to be heard by the government, encourages these 'innovators' to grow. They are constantly challenging the state, in any way possible, to make sure that democratic values are implemented. It is very likely that the future of a democratic, open, and just Indonesia depends on how much the 'innovators' can occupy the public sphere in the country to spread their discourse. In a modern society, such a purpose can be achieved by using one of the geniuses in human civilisation: media.

3. Media in Indonesia: A Dynamic Landscape

Media (Latin, singular: *medium*) are central to modern society. Playing a central role in the development of the society, media are highly contested. Controlling the media has become more and more synonymous with controlling the public in terms of discourse, interest, and even taste (Curran, 1991). The basic tenets of the media, both physical and non-physical, have shifted from being a medium and mediator of the public sphere that enables the critical engagement of citizens (Habermas, 1984; 1987; 1989), to being tools for power to ‘manufacture consent’ (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). This notion is important in understanding the dynamics of the media today –particularly mass media in any form– in any context, including in Indonesia.

From Soekarno’s ‘Old Order’, to Soeharto’s ‘New Order’, and now to Yudhoyono’s administration, media have been an inseparable part of the regime’s mechanism of exercising power. Media have always been used as a political tool: first as a means of propaganda (in Soekarno’s era), then as a form of control (mainly in Soeharto’s time), and now as a tool for the government’s image building (in Yudhoyono’s period). The 1998 *reformasi* brought enormous changes in the media landscape in Indonesia, in which media businesses started to flourish noticeably. Such developments are determined not only by technological progress but also more importantly by the market dynamics and political interest. Such is clear in the Indonesian case. As media represents –and is an embodiment of– power, media ownership and media policy are vitally important in understanding the dynamic landscape of the media in Indonesia.

3.1. Media industry³³

The Indonesian media industry has evolved since the late 1980s, from being heavily controlled by state as means for power, to being highly profit-driven and liberalised. The reform in 1998 became a turning point after which media businesses started to flourish and form a media oligopoly and the concentration of ownership. At the moment, there are twelve large private media groups that control nearly all media channels in the archipelago, including broadcasting, print media and online media. They are *MNC Group*, *Kompas Gramedia Group*,

33 For fuller account on the landscape of media industry in Indonesia, see the recent report by the author, on which this section is based (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a).

Elang Mahkota Teknologi, Visi Media Asia, Jawa Pos Group, Mahaka Media, CT Group, Beritasatu Media Holdings, Media Group, MRA Media, Femina Group, and Tempo Inti Media (Nugroho et al., 2012a). See Table 2 below.

No	Group	TV	Radio	Print Media	Online Media	Other businesses'	Owner
1	Global Mediacomm – Media Nusantara Citra (MNC)	20	22	7	1	Content Production, Content Distribution, Talent Management	Hary Tanoesoedibjo
2	Jawa Pos Group – Jawa Pos News Network	20	n/a	171	1	Paper Mills, Printing Plants, Power Plant	Dahlan Iskan, Azrul Ananda
3	Kelompok Kompas Gramedia	10	12	88	2	Property, Bookstore chain, Manufacturing, Event Organiser, University	Jacob Oetama
4	Mahaka Media Group	2	19	5	n/a	Event Organiser, PR Consultant	Abdul Gani, Erick Thohir
5	Elang Mahkota Teknologi	3	n/a	n/a	1	Telecommunication and IT solutions	Sariatmaadja Family
6	CT Corp	2	n/a	n/a	1	Financial Services, Lifestyle and Entertainment, Natural resources, Property	Chairul Tanjung
7	Visi Media Asia	2	n/a	n/a	1	Natural resources, network provider, Property	Bakrie & Brothers
8	Media Group	1	n/a	3	n/a	Property (Hotel)	Surya Paloh
9	MRA Media	n/a	11	16	n/a	Retail, Property, Food & Beverage, Automotive	Adiguna Soetowo & Soetikno Soedarjo
10	Femina Group	n/a	2	14	n/a	Talent Agency, Publishing	Pia Alisjahbana
11	Tempo Inti Media	1	n/a	3	1	Documentary making	Yayasan Tempo
12	Beritasatu Media Holding	2	n/a	10	1	Property, health services, cable TV, Internet service provider, University	Lippo Group

Table 2. Private major media groups in Indonesia: 2012
 These are businesses run by the same owner/group owner.
 Source: Nugroho, et al (2012a:39)

MNC Group has three free-to-air television channels –the highest number owned by any media group– with 20 local television networks and 22 radio networks under its subsidiary *Sindo Radio*. *Jawa Pos Group* has 171 print media companies including its *Radar Group*. *KOMPAS*, Indonesia's most influential newspaper, has expanded its network to include a content provider by establishing *KompasTV*, besides the existing 12 radio broadcasters under its subsidiary *Sonora Radio Network*, and 89 other print media companies. *Visi Media Asia* has grown into a powerful media group with two terrestrial television channels (*ANTV and tvOne*) and its quickly-growing online media channel *vivanews.com*. A new media company under *Lippo Group*, i.e. *Berita Satu Media Holding*, has already established an Internet-Protocol Television (IPTV) *BeritasatuTV*, online media channel *beritasatu.com*, and additionally owns a number of newspapers and magazines (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a:45-48).

Such concentration of ownership happens by means of mergers and acquisitions (M&As). Some of the most important ones have taken place quite recently in Indonesia (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a:46-47): (i) *Indosiar* was acquired by *Elang Mahkota Teknologi (Emtek)*, a holding company of *SCTV*, making *Emtek* in possession of two terrestrial television stations and one local television station in their group; (ii) The largest online independent news portal *detik.com* was bought out by *CT Group*, the owner of *Trans TV* and *Trans 7*, making the group now in control of one of the most trusted online sources; (iii) A number of local television channels were taken over by large groups such as *MNC Group* with its *Sindo TV* network and *Jawa Pos*, which has its own TV network; and (iv) *Beritasatu.com* and *Lippo Group* joined forces and formed *Beritasatu Media Holding* in 2011. While characterising the recent development of the media sector in Indonesia, these M&As are clearly intended to strengthen the media businesses, and this strategy apparently works: media corporations have become more powerful in Indonesia –individually and collectively as an industry—despite the strong competition between them.

The growing concentration of the media industry can be seen as a result of the capital interest logic in the business. Such development has clearly turned media into a simple commodity, with the audience being treated as mere consumers rather than rightful citizens; the implications of which may be much more complicated than they seem at first. There are at least two interconnected consequences. First, the current media oligopoly has endangered citizens' rights to trustworthy information and diversity of content due to the increasing intervention of the business owners. Second, as profitable business, the provision of media infrastructure and content are

very likely to be shaped by the owner's interests and are thus highly beneficial for those seeking power. These two consequences are best observed in two empirical aspects: diversity and independence.

In terms of *diversity*, the rise of media post-1998 *reformasi* seems to have failed to prevent the media becoming controlled by a small number of people/groups. Although the government passed the Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002 aiming to halt unhealthy media ownership practices, it clearly has failed to ensure the diversity of media ownership (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b). Having the media landscape concentrated in just twelve groups of private owners, it is arguably very likely that the content they offer will have a very low level of diversity. Other than the fact that a small numbers of owners creates a limited range of content, the competition among the media is considerably strong. Also, the tendency of the media in the country, in terms of its business and content, is focused on the capital, Jakarta, resulting in limited coverage of issues. In other words: one or two particular issues being brought to the public eye, with approximately 12 major viewpoints representing each group, are then broadcast by the groups through their tens or hundreds of media companies, on hundreds of channels. What happens is “*thousands of media outlets [that] carry highly duplicative content despite being packaged in different programs*” (as observed in Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a:47). Such circumstance also restricts innovation in the industry in terms of content and programme packaging. While new-players with new ideas are constantly emerging, with the market being flooded by a limited content, like it or not, these newcomers will have to follow what already exist in order to keep up with the ratings. This is because it is ratings that matter above all: it determines the advertising that keeps the industry alive. Therefore, in order to keep up with the industry, most of the time, new-players that may be innovative have to go along with the usual content and programme packaging, or even attach themselves to the existing giants, which eventually will make them less innovative (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a).

In terms of *independence* –McLuhan (1964) suggests that “*the medium is the message*,” pointing out how media themselves become influential in the society. While people may think that the media does not and should not form opinions, the agenda setting theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1968) still rings true today. It explains how the media does not tell us what to think, but what to think about (CJ222 News Reporting & Writing, 2012). Ownership is one of the most crucial factors in deciding the agenda setting, which eventually leads to its independence. Among the few groups

that control the landscape of the media industry in Indonesia, at least five of them show strong political ties (Lim, 2011:10). Two of the most obvious are *Media Group*, which run the first news channel in the country *Metro TV*; and *Visi Media Asia* (VMA), with two TV stations, one of them is another news channel *TVOne*. *Media Group*, which is owned by Surya Paloh, former Chairman of the Advisory Board of the former ruling party *Golkar* and the founder of a new political party, *Nasdem*. Meanwhile, VMA belongs to Aburizal Bakrie, the Chairman of *Golkar*. They have been known to use their media as a political campaign tool to influence public opinion and hence fail to maintain their independence when it comes to spreading the news. One anecdotal account provides evidence of how politics has influenced their agenda setting³⁴. These two TV stations used to be ‘friends-in-competition’ when both their owners, Paloh and Bakrie, were friends and prominent leaders of *Golkar*. Since 2008, in the 2 year commemoration of Sidoarjo mudflow³⁵ *Metro TV*’s policy was to use the term ‘lumpur Sidoarjo’ (literally ‘Sidoarjo mud’) in every news piece being aired, unlike many other media which uses the term ‘lumpur Lapindo’ (literally ‘Lapindo mud’) in order to put pressure on the company owned by Bakrie. But the policy changed in 2009, when Paloh and Bakrie went head to head, racing for *Golkar* Chairmanship. The term ‘*lumpur Sidoarjo*’ was no longer used in *Metro TV* as the newsroom decided to change it to ‘lumpur Lapindo’ instead³⁶. Similarly, in response to the strong competition between the two candidates, Bakrie, with his authority, prohibited media outside his company to cover the plenary session of *Golkar*’s national congress³⁷.

This shows how the media are easily framed and used to meet their owners’ needs in order to influence the public, especially in the political sphere and for political agenda. Therefore, it is rather difficult to say that Indonesian media has practiced an ideal level of balance in their content and reportage. On the contrary, it becomes evident that the media have become a mechanism by which businessmen and politicians convey their interests while gaining

34 This example is drawn from our own experience (cf. S. Syarif) who has worked for *Metro TV* as a journalist, having first hand experience on the matter.

35 This mudflow started as an eruption of hot mud in the area where PT. Lapindo Brantas, owned by Bakrie’s group, drilled in a natural gas field (The Jakarta Post, 2011).

36 A blogger, Yayat Cipasang, managed to observe the change of term from “lumpur Sidoarjo” to “lumpur Lapindo” used by *Metro TV* and post it on his blog, <http://yayat-cipasang.blogspot.com/2006/10/lumpur-lapindo-versus-lumpur-sidoarjo.html>. Accessed 4 May 2012. The term “lumpur Lapindo” is still used until today by *Metro TV*. See example: <http://www.metrotvnews.com/read/news/2012/04/28/89548/Korban-Lapindo-tetap-Duduki-Titik-25>.

37 See Detik, “Hanya Media Milik Bakrie yang Diperbolehkan Liput Munas *Golkar* (Only Media Belonging to Bakrie to be Allowed to Cover *Golkar*’s National Summit)” <http://news.detik.com/read/2009/10/06/215616/1216609/10/hanya-media-massa-terkait-kandidat-bisa-meliput/991101605>. Accessed 4 May 2012.

profit from the business. This resonates with Bagdikian's (2004) and Joseph's (2005) arguments that investment in media industry is more likely to aim for economic and political gain of the investors, rather than to fulfil the *raison d'être* of the media to provide the public with trustworthy information and pluralistic points of view as well as a sphere in which citizens can engage. Media industry in Indonesia (and perhaps just like in other countries) has become more a profit-oriented business which colludes with politics, resulting in a controlled and narrowly-constructed sphere rather than a free, organically-evolved public medium.

3.2. Media policy and regulatory framework

The issue of controlling media has been rather prominent in the history of Indonesian media. In his time, the First President Soekarno deliberately used the media as a 'tool for revolution', but also as a means of controlling his political and development agenda. Then, the Soeharto's New Order inherited Soekarno's way of governing mass media, although chose a more pragmatic approach (Hill and Sen, 2000:53). During the era, censorship was common and permits to establish new press companies were rarely given, placing national media under the restriction of the state policies (Armando, 2011; Hill and Sen, 2000). Although enjoying a slight improvement in terms of cultural expressions (Hill and Sen, 2000:239), media was closely monitored by the Ministry of Information. Both periods were perhaps instances where media became the extension of state, exceeding its function as 'the extension of man' (McLuhan, 1964). After Soeharto stepped down, in the early *reformasi* era, the press was also reformed through the enactment of Press Law No 40/1999. What drove the reform, according to Armando (2011:154), was a shared interest and vision: a self-controlling, self-regulating press, that is immune to censorship and cannot be banned by any means.

Today, the Indonesian public increasingly realised the importance of having a free press to function as the fourth pillar of democracy. At the moment, there are several policies that govern, or significantly affect, the workings of the media in Indonesia:

No	Media Policies	Content/Issue
1	Human Rights Law No. 39/1999	Right to access information
2	Telecommunication Law No. 36/1999	Abolish Telkom monopoly
3	Press Law No. 40/1999	Press freedom, establishment of Press Council
4	Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002	Network-based broadcasting system, establishment of Indonesian Broadcasting Commission
5	Government Regulations No. 49/2005	Foreign broadcasting activities
6	Government Regulations No. 50/2005	Private broadcasting
7	Government Regulations No. 51/2005	Community broadcasting
8	Government Regulations No. 52/2005	Subscription broadcasting
9	Electronic Information & Transaction (ITE) Law No. 11/2008	Electronic transaction, defamation act
10	Freedom of Information Law No. 14/2008	Public access to information
11	Film Law No. 33/2009	Film production and distribution
12	Convergence Bill (by April 2012 as revision of the Telecommunication Law)	Media convergence

Table 3. Media policies in Indonesia
Source: Nugroho, *et al.*, (2012b:59), with minor update.

In terms of governing the media, there are two policies that are intended to be the basis of media practices. First, the Press Law No. 40/1999, which contains the basic principles of press freedom, including the abolishment of the Ministry of Information that served as the press and media control during the New Order era, as well as the establishment of the Press Council as the press regulator. Second, the Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002, which concerns the democratisation of media landscape and ownership by means of decentralisation and establishment of accountable licensing procedures. It also enshrined the formation of KPI (*Komisi Penyiaran Indonesia*/Indonesian Broadcasting Commission) as an independent body to maintain the principles of an autonomous broadcasting system.

While this regulatory framework had in fact been on the right track to democratisation, the hope to have an accountable and independent media landscape was tampered by the government itself by releasing policies that contradict the two. Only three years after being passed, the enforcement of the Broadcasting Law was being countered by the Government Regulation No. 50/2005. In the latter regulation, the function of KPI to issue and revoke the broadcasting license was pint-sized as the role to do so was restored to

the government, displaying how the state has, once again, the authority to interfere in the media. As result, the function of the media as the watchdog was no longer powerful, as the freedom of speech and expression was heavily dependent upon the government.

The contradictions toward free press have also been ongoing as the state passed three other regulations. First, the Electronic Information and Transaction Law No. 11/2008 (ITE Law), the purpose of which was supposedly to aim for protection of electronic business transactions. Yet, it includes regulations regarding the defamation act with vague definitions that eventually can be used to prosecute individuals or groups expressing their opinions on the Internet. During 2009, six persons had already been prosecuted on the basis of the ITE Law, including a housewife, Prita Mulyasari, under the charge of circulating defamatory statements towards a hospital because she sent complaint e-mails to her family and friends regarding the service she had while she was undergoing treatment. Concerned about the fatal consequences of the regulation, the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI), Indonesia's largest journalists' union, filed a petition to the Constitutional Court to revoke Article 27, paragraph 3 of the ITE Law (Freedom House, 2010). However, the Constitutional Court rejected the petition.

Second, the Freedom of Information Act No. 14/2008 which promotes new legal guarantees for the public to access information, but unfortunately also stipulates one-year jail term for any 'misuse' of the information (Freedom House, 2009). Again, the term 'misuse' also has a vague definition that opens possibilities for other misuse and abuse of the regulation. Third, the Pornography Law No. 42/2008, which once created heavy controversy. The law itself criminalises any sex-related material assumed to violate public morality and tends to limit freedom of expressions. Moreover, it contradicts many forms of cultural expressions as well as being discriminative towards female individuals (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b:41). Many creative groups, as well as journalists and media practitioners were concerned about their freedom of expression because their works would easily be banned under a vague definition of pornography.

There are several other bills that are planned to be passed in the near future, e.g. the Information and Technology Crime bill, Convergence bill, and Intelligence bill. These future regulations are already being heavily debated because those bills might hinder the freedom of expression, freedom of information, and restore the authority of media control to the government. The public's

active involvement and scrutiny regarding these bills are essential to maintain the democratic atmosphere of Indonesian media. Indeed, facing a rapid growth of the media industry, media policy has to ensure the diversity and plurality of media content that has become the most threatened aspect in the industry. Here is where the regulatory framework could play a significant role in ensuring content diversity through controlling media ownership. Because both the state and the media business are likely to be biased towards certain orientations of content in their favour or vested interest, ownership most likely determines the content (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b:60). To put it short, regulating media ownership has proven to be trivial, due to the lack of coordination between regulating bodies in Indonesia and the fact that the existing policies are not equipped with practical rules in addressing ownership matters³⁸.

It is the task of the policy to ensure the public character of the media: that media are supposed to serve the *bonum commune* or common good. This is the challenge of the media regulatory framework in Indonesia, i.e. whether it can provide a policy platform on which the development of the media is beneficial to the direction of the development of the country and reflect its socio-cultural dynamics.

3.3. Media and contemporary society in Indonesia

Despite the rapid growth of online media, conventional media remain pivotal for Indonesian society as access to Internet infrastructure is still very much unequally distributed. At the moment, there are 351 transmitters from ten national free-to-air television stations; 1,248 radio stations, and 1,076 print media publications which are published throughout the 33 provinces of Indonesia (Media Scene, 2011). However, the gap in the distribution of the media infrastructure between Java-Bali (which are highly developed) and other parts of the country (which are much less) is stunning (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a). We briefly turn to each of the conventional media.

First, the television. With ten private free-to-air (FTA) national television stations³⁹ and one public television station (TVRI), television remains the most popular media in the country. The latest data from the Ministry of Communication and

38 See the detailed examination on the media policy in Indonesia in a very recent report (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b).

39 They are RCTI (MNC Group), MNCTV and Global TV (MNC Group), SCTV and Indosiar Visual Mandiri (EMTEK), Trans TV and Trans 7 (CT Group), ANTV and tvOne (Visi Media Asia), and Metro TV (Media Group). Some groups have their own local television station, e.g. MNC Group owns *Sindo TV Network*, and EMTEK has *O-Channel*. Most of them are concentrated in Java.

Informatics (Kominfo, 2011a) shows that even in Papua and Maluku –included as the least developed areas—nearly 100 per cent of the households have a television set. However, the coverage is still poor. According to the BPPT report, in 2007 the national broadcasting television signal was received in 50,767 villages (73 per cent), while the rest (19,888 villages) were left without any signal at all (BPPT, 2008). Papua and Maluku provinces had the least access, with only 12 per cent and 5 per cent respectively of their villages able to access the national television network – despite nearly every household has a TV set.⁴⁰ As the most influential media, television programmes do have enormous impacts on society. However, the ratings show that the most watched types of programmes are drama (soap opera or *sinetron*) and sensational news. Indeed, most private TV stations sell drama as their main content in order to win the audience share⁴¹.

Second, in addition to television, radio remains one of the most widely spread media formats in Indonesia. Having been controlled by the state through President Soeharto's family during the New Order era, after the 1998 *reformasi* the radio network expanded quite rapidly. In 2005, there were only 831 radio stations (Laksmi and Haryanto, 2007), but by 2010 the number leapt to 1,248 (Media Scene, 2011). This number is dominated by large private media companies with some of them controlling more than ten radio stations throughout the archipelago⁴². In some areas community radio stations emerge as people's own initiative to create stations that serve their needs develops. The data on community radio comes from different sources. In 2003, KPID (Local KPI) West Java listed 500 community radio stations operating throughout Indo⁴³nesia. This number increased to 680 in 2005, and according to JRKI *Jaringan Radio Komunitas Indonesia* (Indonesian Community Radio Network) the number rose to 700 in 2006. However, the latest data, also sourced from JRKI, shows a decrease in 2009 to only 372 radio stations.

40 The census was carried out by BPPT in 2007, covering 69,955 villages, not included Tsunami-victim villages in Nangroe Aceh Darussalam and Nias (BPPT, 2008). There has been no further census since then.

41 RCTI has the biggest audience share with soap opera as their main content, followed by SCTV and Trans TV. TV One and Metro TV have the smallest shares as they focus on news broadcasting.

42 This includes like *MNC Group* with its *Sindo Radio Network* and *Kompas* with its *Trijaya Radio Network*. See Nugroho et al (2012a:63-64).

43 Community radio is a radio station in a particular community, run by the community, for the community's interest, with content that is about the community. The permitted coverage is only a 2.5 km radius. Community radio plays a significant role for citizens, particularly those with difficulties in accessing other sources of information. It can be seen as a healthy form of society-driven media which is not profit-oriented and can act as a mediator between the public and information (Nugroho et al., 2012a:70-73).

Lastly, the print media including newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals. Since the 1998 *reformasi*, with no SIUPP [*Surat Izin Usaha Penerbitan Pers/Press Publication Business Permit*] required, the newspaper industry expanded dramatically. Hundreds of newspapers appeared right after 1998. In 1999 there were 1,381: more than four times the amount in 1997. It continued to grow to 1,881 in 2001 but decreased rapidly to only 889 in 2006 due to the fact that many of them could not survive. Since then, the industry has gradually begun to grow again (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a). The distribution of print media, particularly newspapers, has been quite even across Indonesia. The ownership, too, is not only limited to political elites and government, but has become a business where everyone can engage. There are four private large groups controlling numerous magazines and newspapers across Indonesia: *Jawa Pos News Network (JPNN)*, *Kelompok Kompas Gramedia*, *MRA Media Group*, and *Femina Group*⁴⁴.

With the development of the media industry in Indonesia, the quality of journalists is still questioned as well. With approximately 50,000 journalists all across Indonesia⁴⁵, the press is still lacking in terms of content, language, and depth of information, resulting in complaints from senior members of the Press Council regarding the decline of quality and performance of current media. Incompetence and lack of experience in news reporting are considered to be the cause of the matter (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b). Moreover, according to AJI (*Aliansi Jurnalis Independen/Independent Journalist Alliance*), poor quality of reporting is the main stimuli of violence against journalists. Almost half of the reported physical violence and threats towards journalists from December 2010 to December 2011 were caused by the journalists' lack of professionalism, ranging from unbalanced reporting, inaccuracy, and false identification of news sources⁴⁶.

44 *MRA Media Group* was the first to bring the franchise magazine *Cosmopolitan* to Indonesia in 1997, and it has continued with a number of niche and franchise magazines up until today. *Femina Group* is famous for its women's magazines, and has expanded its network to include tabloids and a talent agency. *Kompas* has expanded its newspaper range by acquiring local newspapers and has united them under the name *Tribun Group*. *Jawa Pos* has pursued the same strategy under *Radar Group*.

45 See *Republika* "80 Persen Pengaduan melanggar Kode Etik Jurnalistik (80 per cent Complaints to Violate Journalistic Code of Ethics)", <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/11/11/29/lveaej-80-persen-pengaduan-melanggar-kode-etik-jurnalistik>. Accessed 7 May 2012. See *Berita Satu*, "AJI: Berita tidak Akurat Memicu Kekerasan Pers (Inaccurate News to Incite Press Violence: AJI)" <http://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/23494-aji-berita-tidak-akurat-memicu-kekerasan-pers.html>. Accessed 6 May 2012.

46 Roadshow recruitment is held by at least five television stations; *Metro TV*, *SCTV*, *TV One*, *Trans TV*, and *Trans 7*. Each station recruits in at least three big cities in Indonesia.

Observing the practices of media in Indonesia, there are at least two causes of the poor quality of the press. First, the high demand of journalists due to the increase of media coverage in the country. Looking to recruit high numbers of journalists, several media, especially television, held roadshows in many cities all across the country to gather as many candidates as possible, instead of using the conventional recruitment method⁴⁷. The large quantity of candidates and the high demand for journalists means that the recruitment time, as well as training time, naturally shortens, therefore reducing quality.

Second, the high level of competition among media triggers the need to prioritize velocity. This tendency is evident especially in television and cyber media. One fatal example was shown by TV One. In the midst of a terrorist raid by the police special force on 7-8 August 2009 in Temanggung, Central Java, one of its reporters announced on a live broadcast that the most wanted terrorist in Indonesia, Noordin M Top, had been shot dead. The report was proven false hours later. TV One stated that they heard the rumour from other journalists and, in order to air the news as quickly as possible, did not confirm it with any authoritative body, including the police. No particular sanction was given to the journalist, except a simple warning from the management⁴⁸.

Other than the poor reporting quality, Indonesian press faces another issue; violation of ethical codes. Even though the Press Council has formalised the codes for journalists in Indonesia, it does not necessarily increase the quality of the press as well as the journalists. Initially, the ethical codes are formulated in order to ensure the responsibility of journalists towards the public, in terms of the diversity and norms applied in the society⁴⁹. As much as their functions, duties, and rights are protected by the law, journalists need to respect individual human rights in order to be regarded as professional and accountable. The ethical codes also protect the public's right to access reliable information.

Yet, there are still many ethical code violations committed by journalists. According to the chairman of the Press Council, Bagir Manan, there were approximately 5, 000 complaints from the public regarding journalistic

47 See Kompas, "TV One: Tayangan Temanggung Naikkan 'Rating' (Temanggung programme to increase rating: TV One)" <http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2009/08/27/19533758/tv.one.tayangan.temanggung.hanya.untuk.naikkan.rating>. Accessed 8 May 2012.

48 Ethical codes for Indonesian journalists by the Press Council, see <http://www.dewanpers.org/dpers.php?x=kej&y=det&z=7cc41713ba1b1dc60f2f5f6421866712>.

49 See Republika, "80 Persen Pengaduan melanggar Kode Etik Jurnalistik (80 per cent Complaints to Violate Journalistic Code of Ethics)" <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/11/11/29/lveaej-80-persen-pengaduan-melanggar-kode-etik-jurnalistik>. Accessed 7 May 2012.

practices during 2011, and 80 per cent of all the reports were regarded as violation of ethical codes⁵⁰. Ethical codes in Indonesia are increasingly violated because of a variety of reasons, such as market considerations,⁵¹ preference for sensational reports instead of quality (in order to gain audience on the basis of quantitative parameters: Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b:46), lack of understanding of the journalists towards their own ethical codes⁵² and bribery due to the low average wage for journalists in Indonesia.⁵³ Even if there is a strong will to avoid bribery, without enough income, journalists will still not be able to produce high quality news materials.

Realising how awful the situation was, the Press Council decided to enact a journalist's standard of competence in February 2012. Even though the Press Council cannot force every journalist to undergo the competency test, the council states that it is a basic requirement for any news-seeking individual to be named as a professional journalist with all its required competencies⁵⁴. This issue is closely related to the quality of the news itself, particularly whether or not the media's coverage is characterised by variety and balance.

At the moment, other than newspapers, the public have the ability to obtain news from other forms of media such as various news television channels, news radio stations and news online portals. With their numbers rising day to day, one might assume that the variety of news coverage will also increase, therefore bringing more choice of information to the public. Is this the case? Unfortunately not.

The increase of news producers, in all available forms, does not necessarily bring variety in news options. Most daily newspapers, news programs, and online portals present the same subject and repeat it with different headlines

50 See Republika, "80 Persen Pengaduan melanggar Kode Etik Jurnalistik (80 per cent Complaints to Violate Journalistic Code of Ethics)" <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/11/11/29/lvaej-80-persen-pengaduan-melanggar-kode-etik-jurnalistik>. Accessed 7 May 2012.

51 According to a prominent member of the Press Council, Agus Sudibyo.

52 According to AJI.

53 Recently, AJI calculated that the ideal wage for a reporter in the capital, Jakarta, with 1-3 years experience should at least be USD 560 per month. Yet, in reality, many media entities pay their journalists less than USD 320 monthly. See Sindo News, "Upah Wartawan Rendah, Kebebasan Pers Terancam (Journalist's Wage Low, Press Freedom is in Danger)" <http://www.sindonews.com/read/2012/05/01/437/621958/upah-wartawan-rendah-kebebasan-pers-terancam>. Accessed 7 May 2012.

54 See Pikiran Rakyat, "Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Wartawan, SKW Efektif Diberlakukan Terhitung 9 Februari (To Increase the Quality of Journalists, SKW is to be applied from 9 February)" <http://www.pikiran-rakyat.com/node/176286>. Accessed 7 May 2012.

(Nugroho *et al.*, 2012b:46). We can see this tendency especially in online portals which quantify their audience by the number of hits they receive daily. In order to attract more readers, or to urge a reader to read as many news articles as possible, online portals sometimes create many news-pieces with different angles, but mostly without any new data or information to differentiate between them⁵⁵. In addition, the practice of mergers and acquisitions enables many media entities in the same group to share their stories or information, resulting in similar news stories. As a result, headlines in dailies, online portals, news channels and stations are typically the same from day to day. It is normal to see similar rundowns of news materials in news bulletins from different TV stations, for example. Particular agenda setting or investigative reports rarely make it the main headlines.

Yet, a promising development occurs in the form of citizen journalism. In the past few years, several media has been relying on this kind of journalism in order to gather the latest information on various subjects. For online portals, citizen journalism is translated by providing blogs, or links to blogs, for regular members of the public to channel their thoughts to the wider audience (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a:88). Besides promoting citizen journalism itself, this method allows the public to be the watchdog for news contents and mainstream media. Critiquing the media in terms of their content and operations is getting easier, which enables citizens to reclaim their public sphere as well as to ensure that the media retains its public character.

In television and radio, citizen journalism occurs in the form of giving information from the public to the media. Many stations or channels deliberately ask their audience to notify them whenever there is any occurrence that has news value through various means of communication. Other than covering the occurrence after receiving the information, the media also provides ways for the public to do their own reporting by recording the event and sending the video to TV channels, or being interviewed directly by the media via phone/videophone. Even though this method may help both parties to gain new information and engage with the news dissemination practice, the media still have to be very careful in checking all the facts regarding the news to avoid any misinformation or false reporting.

55 An example of this tendency can be seen in these two news-pieces from Detik, one of the leading online portals in the country, about the very recent cancellation of Lady Gaga's concert due to disapproval from certain religious group(s): <http://news.detik.com/read/2012/05/15/074345/1917104/10/ini-alasan-polda-metro-tolak-konser-lady-gaga-di-jakarta> and <http://news.detik.com/read/2012/05/15/123258/1917418/10/bila-konser-lady-gaga-batal-polisi-akan-kawal-proses-refund-tiket>. Both articles have the same basic information, but few wordings were added to emphasize the differentiation: the first piece talks about the reason of the ban, the latter outlines the refund mechanism. Accessed 15 May 2012.

Other than the variety of news coverage, the media also have to consider the balance of their reportage in addition to the subjective journalism problems. Many complaints are being addressed nowadays concerning the practice of news gathering in the current atmosphere, where news is valued as a commodity. Coverage of both sides of a story, which is one of the basic requirements of an ideal report, is neglected on many occasions. Research conducted by *Yayasan Pantau* in 2009 shows that the Ahmaddiyya case reports produced by Indonesian journalists were biased in terms of the perspective they were using. Journalists were incapable of withholding their personal views when reporting on the subject (Pantau, 2009). Such subjective journalism can also be found in the ways journalists choose their news sources. Since journalists are not allowed to put their personal opinion in their reports, choosing unbiased news sources has become a vital aspect in ensuring the objectivity of the news.

With the advancement of communication technology, also exemplified in an earlier example regarding the false report of a reporter from *TV One*, speed is considered more important than accuracy. According to the Press Council, imbalanced news reporting is the main violation of ethical code by online news portals. Out of 43 complaints filed against online portals throughout 2011, 30 cases were regarding unbalanced news coverage. It was mainly caused by the urge to disseminate information as quickly as possible, ahead of the competitors, particularly in online channels⁵⁶. New media have probably offered the speed of information to their audience, but have clearly not always been able to provide balanced stories and coverage. To overcome these problems, as well as to eliminate the lack of news verification in the real-time online news, the Press Council have recently issued cyber media news guidance (Nugroho *et al.*, 2012a:92).

Such challenges in conventional media, to some extent, have made more and more of the Indonesian public turn to the Internet as an alternative source of news and information. And the Internet has provided space for citizens to engage through communication and information exchange – a space that conventional media has probably failed to create as a result of it being captured by political and business/profit interest. Indeed, media, in the Indonesian context, cannot be separated from the country's political processes, since it is still regarded as the main medium to communicate politics.

56 See Berita Satu, "Berita Tak Berimbang Masalah Utama (Imbalance News Are the Main Problems)" <http://www.beritasatu.com/nasional/33369-berita-tak-berimbang-masalah-utama.html>. Accessed 10 May 2012.

Whether Indonesians trust citizen journalism more than conventional media is a difficult question to answer. Not only that there have been no systematic studies concerning this matter, but that citizen journalism relies heavily on the access to telecommunication infrastructure, which at the moment is still unequally distributed. However, it is perhaps safe to say that citizen journalism can be considered as one aspect —among many— to indicate the will of the citizens to gather more diverse information, with wider point of views. Citizen journalism has started to make Indonesians believe that ordinary people can have their own power to spread the information, and to share their stories and views. Although it will take some time, once the new media enables the wider public to produce and exchange political information, its influence on political processes will be much more significant than it is at the moment.

4. The Internet in Indonesia: Promises and Perils

The Internet and social media innovations clearly bring about changes in the world in which we live today. Used by more than two billion people, leaping from just tens of thousands in the early 1990s, the Internet certainly diffuses faster than any other technological innovation in modern times. In Indonesia, the development of the Internet began in the early 1990s (Purbo, 2000). It is estimated that there are more than 55 million Internet users today. Over the past fifteen years or so, Indonesia has become one of the much discussed nations with regards to the use of Internet and social media: from fun, to economic development, to humanitarian causes (e.g. Doherty, 2010; Reuters, 2010b; The Economist, 2011). In terms of economy, at the moment the Internet contributes 1.6 per cent of the Indonesian GDP (or around USD13.3billion), higher than LNG does (1.4 per cent) and dwarfs what the electricity sector contributes (0.5 per cent) – and this figure is estimated to increase to 2.5 per cent in 2016 (Deloitte Indonesia, 2011).

However, beyond common measures like the number of users, domains, or hosts, it is not easy to characterise the nature of Internet diffusion, let alone to understand the processes and impacts of Internet use and adoption. The extent to which the changes in society are facilitated by the Internet and social media, and the processes it requires, often escapes our attention. It has been a serious challenge to assess the transformative features that the Internet and social media offer. In this section we aim to provide a firm ground on which to analyse the transformation that the Internet and social media bring by firstly examining the diffusion, use, and impacts in the Indonesian context.

4.1. Internet and development: Bridging or dividing?

Indonesia ranks fourth in Asia (after China, India and Japan), and eighth in the world in terms of the number of Internet users, with an estimated 55 million people using the technology at the moment. See Figure 2 and Table 4.

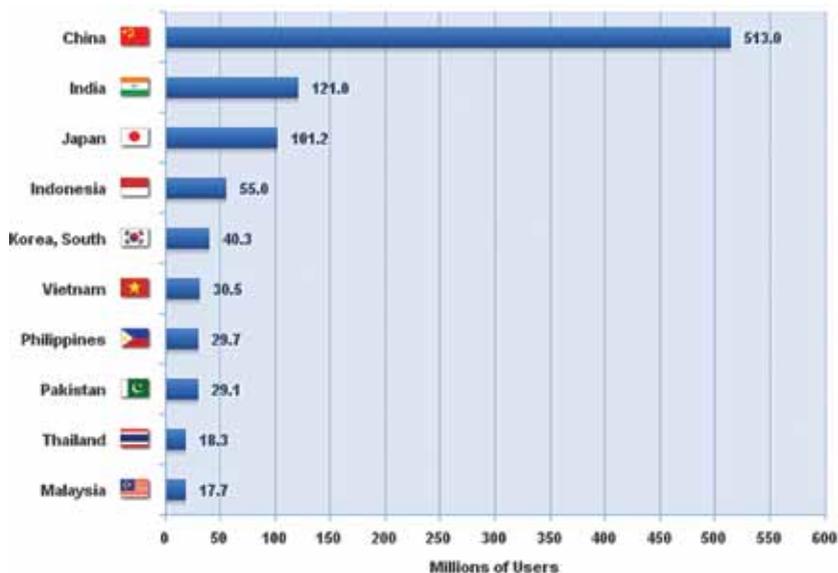


Figure 2. Asia Top Internet countries

2,267,233,742 Internet users in the World estimated for 2011Q4

Source: InternetWorld Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm

However, in terms of penetration, Indonesia is lagging behind other countries with only 22.4 per cent of the population connected to the Internet – although, it is actually a jump from 14.1 per cent in March 2011⁵⁷. In ASEAN, the highest penetration is in Brunei Darussalam (79.4 per cent), then Singapore (77.2 per cent), followed by Malaysia (61.7 per cent), the Philippines (29.2 per cent) and Thailand (27.4 per cent)⁵⁸. Nevertheless, over the past few years, the number of Internet users in the country increased significantly. According to APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers), the number of users leapt by 770 per cent during 1998-2002, from half a million in 1998 to 4.5 million in 2002; then almost doubled from 16 million in 2005 to 31 million in 2010 (APJII, 2010). This figure was just before another jump to 55 million by March 2012 as reported by the InternetWorld Stats very recently.

57 See Nielsen – Indonesia, “Indonesia The Most Reliant On Mobile Internet Access Across Southeast Asia: Nielsen” 11 July 2011, <http://id.nielsen.com/news/Release110711.shtml> accessed December 2011.

58 See InternetWorld Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm.

#	Country or Region	Population, 2011 Est	Internet Users Year 2000	Internet Users Latest Data ^a	Penetration (% Population)	World % Users
1	China	1,336,718,015	22,500,000	513,100,000	38.4%	22.5%
2	United States	313,232,044	95,354,000	245,203,319	78.3%	10.8%
3	India	1,189,172,906	5,000,000	121,000,000	10.2%	5.3%
4	Japan	126,475,664	47,080,000	101,228,736	80.0%	4.4%
5	Brazil	194,037,075	5,000,000	81,798,000	42.2%	3.6%
6	Germany	81,471,834	24,000,000	67,364,898	82.7%	3.0%
7	Russia	138,739,892	3,100,000	61,472,011	44.3%	2.7%
8	Indonesia	245,613,043	2,000,000	55,000,000	22.4%	2.4%
9	United Kingdom	62,698,362	15,400,000	52,731,209	84.1%	2.3%
10	France	65,102,719	8,500,000	50,290,226	77.2%	2.2%

Table 4. Top 10 countries with highest number of Internet users
a World Internet User Statistics were updated for 31 March 2012.
Source: InternetWorld Stats – www.Internetworldstats.com/stats3.htm

However, the latest data publicly available (Kominfo, 2010), shows that 67 per cent of the distribution of PCs and 70.05 per cent of Internet access are concentrated in Java and Bali (in terms of ownership and access per household respectively) while other regions are largely left behind. Such disparities are also reflected in the spread of warnet or Internet kiosks –a most economical access point for people—which are still concentrated in big cities in Java, Bali, Sumatera, and province capital cities in other parts of the country (Nugroho, 2011a). Warnet has definitely played an important role in providing Internet access to the Indonesian people despite the fact that the data has been recorded differently: the official data from the Government shows that 43 per cent of Internet access is from *warnet* (Kominfo, 2011b), while a research group at Singapore Management University believes it is 65 per cent⁵⁹ for the same period⁶⁰.

59 See https://wiki.smu.edu.sg/digitalmediaasia/Digital_Media_in_Indonesia - the data was latest updated 1 November 2011, the page was accessed on 25 May 2012.

60 It may be worth noting here that there will be always discrepancies in the ICT-related data released by different sources in Indonesia. In Table 5 we can see the number of Internet users provided by the government is a stunning 25 million less than the figure InternetWorld Stats reports. This is also the case with the penetration rate of the Internet. This simply shows that providing accurate data on this has somewhat become impossible.

The recent official data from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics reports that ICT infrastructure in Indonesia is dominated by cellular with a penetration rate of 72.8 per cent or around 171.4 million of the total 250 million Indonesian population (Kominfo, 2011b)⁶¹. Yet, this does not necessarily mean that the majority of the Indonesians have access to mobile phones as it is quite likely one person owns more than one device: the 2010 data from ID-SIRTII shows that of the total mobile subscribers above, there are only 135 million unique numbers (Manggalanny, 2010). The official data further shows that the growth of fix telephone (wireline) is stagnant due to the society moving towards fixed wireless access (FWA) or mobile cellular. In addition, the number of broadband users, which actually increases, still looks small in total (Kominfo, 2011b). Table 5 shows the most recent official data on the ICT infrastructure in Indonesia along with the providers, in which the private sector plays a significant role.

	Fixed Wireline	Fixed Wireless	Cellular	Internet	Broadband
Absolute number of users	8.4 million	27.5 million	171.4 million	30 million	12 million
Provider of infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TELKOM 99% • Indosat • i-phone & BBT <1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TELKOM 58% • Indosat 2% • Bakrie 39% • Mobile-8 1% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telkomsel 48% • Indosat 23% • XL Axiata 20% • Others 9% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet kiosk 43% • Campuses 3% • Schools 1% • Offices 41% • Households 12% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed BB 1% • Wireless BB 4%
Penetration (% population)	3.6	11.7	72.8	12.3	5

Table 5. Penetration of ICT infrastructure in Indonesia: 2011
Source: Indonesia ICT Whitepaper 2011 (Kominfo, 2011b)

Another particular focus in terms of infrastructure is regarding broadband. Citing a study of Brooking’s Institute (McKenzie survey) the Government believes that every 1 per cent growth of broadband penetration in Indonesia will increase the GDP growth by 0.6- 0.7 per cent, employment by 0.2-0.3 per cent, and efficiency in public services such as electricity, transport, health, and education by 0.5- 1.5 per cent. Nation-wide broadband based connectivity

61 Another data claims that the penetration of mobile phone in Indonesia is 90%. See <http://slideshare.net/donnybu> (November 2010, accessed 20 May 2012).

would be central in the creation of creative society and knowledge-based economy. It is estimated that within the next ten years there will be around 120-140 million broadband users, generating business value worth IDR 300 - 400 trillion. At the moment in Indonesia, approximately 5 billion devices (e.g. mobile phones, computers, tablets, vehicles, TVs, fridges, cameras, etc.) have been connected to the Internet and by 2020 the figure is predicted to be 50 billion, thanks to broadband. With an average spending on each device of about USD 29 – 42 per month, the economic value generated from broadband alone will be huge. In addition, entering into the broadband economy will attract an additional investment of IDR 96 to 169 trillion to Indonesia's national economy (Kominfo, 2011b).

Obviously, with such trends and projection, the Government pays attention to the expansion of the broadband infrastructure through fibre-optic backbone, which is still low at the moment.

	2008	2009	2010	2014
Population (million)	238	240	242	252
Household (million)	61	62	63	66
Broadband subscriber (million)	0.41	0.85	1.25	19.7
Broadband penetration (% household)	0.2 %	0.4 %	0.5 %	8 %
Broadband penetration (% population)	0.7 %	1.4 %	2 %	30 %

Table 6. Penetration of broadband in Indonesia in 2014: Projection
Shaded column is projection
Source: Indonesia ICT Whitepaper 2011 (Kominfo, 2011b)

The Government targets the penetration of broadband to reach 30 per cent by 2014; that is when the Internet penetration is projected to reach 50 per cent and the Internet village 100 per cent. However achieving this target is a huge challenge. The fibre optic infrastructure has not been equally available across the archipelago – concentrated in Java (62.5 per cent), Sumatera (20.31 per cent) and Kalimantan (6.13 per cent) only. Furthermore, more than 50 per cent capacity was deployed only in Jakarta and its satellite cities (or *Jabodetabek*: Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi) area (Manggalanny, 2010).

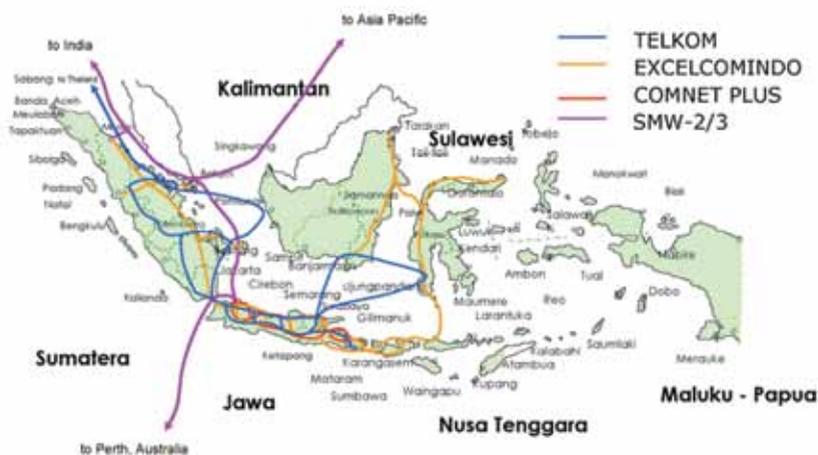


Figure 3. Fibre-optic broadband infrastructure and its providers in Indonesia: 2010
 Source: Mangalanny (2010)

Similarly, Java and Sumatra and the western part of Indonesia enjoy better cable and wireless telephony connections. The latest available Government data reports that in 2005, there were 24, 257 villages (34.68 per cent of total villages) in Indonesia with a cable telephone connection. This increased to 24, 701 in 2008, but decreased in terms of percentage to only 32.76 per cent, as the number of villages also increased. Of these figures, most of them are in Java-Bali and Sumatra. Similar figures apply for cable connection: villages in Java-Bali and Sumatra have the most wireless connections (Kominfo, 2010:34). All the data presented above shows a disparity of ICT infrastructure availability and access between Java vs. outside Java. The same disparity can also be found in the urban vs. rural areas, and going deeper into demographic variables, male vs. female. Such data may reflect the centralised development policy of the Government probably inherited from Soeharto's era⁶².

To address this problem of unequal availability of ICT infrastructure, particularly fibre-optic broadband, the Government has promised to focus the programme of 'Palapa Ring' on the ICT infrastructure development in the eastern part of Indonesia, particularly Nusa Tenggara, Maluku and Papua which at the moment are not connected to the backbone (See Figure 3 above). However, of the total IDR1,900 trillion investment needed for this purpose, the

62 See earlier Section Two and Three.

Government could only allocate the state budget of IDR500 trillion, leaving the rest (IDR1,400 trillion) open for others to invest, or for the private sector to contribute under the USO (Universal Service Obligation) scheme.



Figure 4. Palapa Ring programme
 Source: Indonesia ICT Whitepaper 2011 (Kominfo, 2011b) and Authors' personal correspondence with Kominfo.

In 2008 the Government claimed to have started the installation of 10,000 kms of fibre-optic in the eastern part of Indonesia which cost IDR4 trillion. This development is part of the 'Palapa Ring' programme, a development of a both ground and under-sea fibre-optic backbone that connects the major islands in the archipelago, linking the 33 provinces and 440 cities/municipals using 35,280km long under-sea cable and 21,807 km long ground cable. If successfully laid out, this fibre-optic network would provide a solution to the current problem of communication access and speed. Reflecting on the tendencies of conventional media development as discussed earlier, the availability of high speed connection will also help distribute media content in the future as media is moving towards digitalisation and convergence. The latest update from the Government indicates that 42,470kms of fibre optic have been laid and are already connecting Sumatera, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Bali, and Nusa Tenggara (see Figure 4 above).

What is crucial in the development of infrastructure here is that it has to be aimed at making the availability of communication access more equally distributed. This is one precondition for widening public participation in politics at the broadest sense. Of course, the other side of the coin is how the public use the communication and information media available to them.

4.2. Internet and new media: 'I share therefore I am'

If there are words to characterise Indonesian society in using the Internet and new media currently, it is that they may be an 'always on-line' generation (Nugroho, 2011a:30). In major cities in Java-Bali and Sumatera, an Internet-ready desktop costs less than IDR4million (USD400); a netbook and cellular data service modem is available at IDR2.5million (USD250); Internet-enabled cellphones can be purchased at less than IDR1million (USD100). While these prices keep decreasing thanks to fierce competition among telecommunication service providers, such a situation may have changed the culture of communication and the even life-styles of many Indonesians who can afford and access the technology. Not only is it now common for people to literally always be connected- 24/7- to the Net, but that an online presence has become as important as an offline one for many. Mobile technology, which penetrates much higher than fixed line (see Figure 5 below), certainly plays an important role here: more than 60 per cent access of to the Internet in Indonesia is done through mobile phones which get cheaper and cheaper. The Indonesian mobile market has been very dynamic: by July 2011, Blackberry OS dominated the market with a share of 38 per cent, taking over Symbian devices which previously led with 52 per cent. In addition, Android and iOS are also gaining a larger market share despite lagging behind the first two⁶³.

63 See <http://dailysocial.net/en/2011/07/26/statcounter-blackberry-defeats-symbian-in-indonesia-for-Internet-access/>.

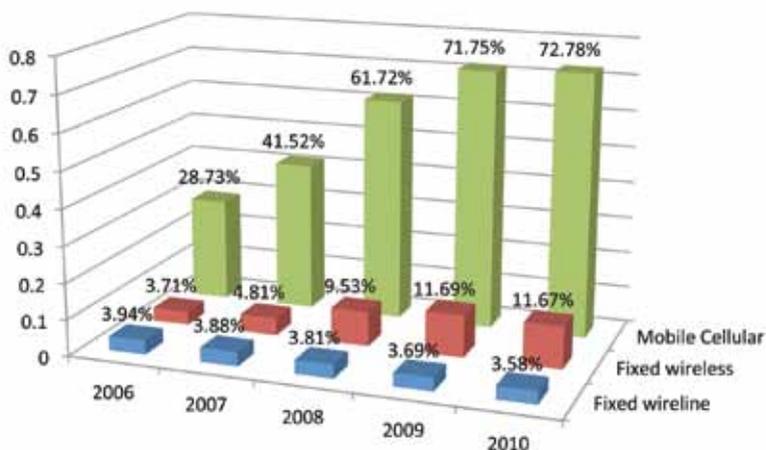


Figure 5. Penetration of fixed wireline, wireless, and mobile cellular in Indonesia: 2011
 Source: Indonesia ICT Whitepaper 2011 (Kominfo, 2011b)

What do Indonesians do while online? Both the data from the Government’s survey (Kominfo, 2010) and from an independent market research IPSOS⁶⁴ confirm that Indonesian netters are heavy-weight social media users: they visit social media the most when online. Indonesia even ranks the first in the world with an average of 83 per cent of people that use the Internet also using social media, followed by Argentina (76 per cent), Russia (75 per cent), Sweden (72 per cent) and South Africa (73 per cent) – leaving the UK (65 per cent), US (61 per cent) and France (50 per cent) behind⁶⁵. See Figure 6.

What does this mean for civic and social engagement and attempts to analyse it? First, in understanding today’s societal dynamics in Indonesia, social media is very likely to be one of the possible *explanans*. Although proportionally, the Internet population is smaller, these are also likely to be the citizens with some degree of activism. However, attention needs to be paid here in order to avoid too simplistic a view of the role of social media (e.g. either too pessimistic or too optimistic) in social activism.

64 See <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id=5564>.

65 See “Most Global Internet Users Turn to the Web for Emails (85 per cent) and Social Networking Sites (62 per cent);” IPSOS press release, available <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id=5564>.

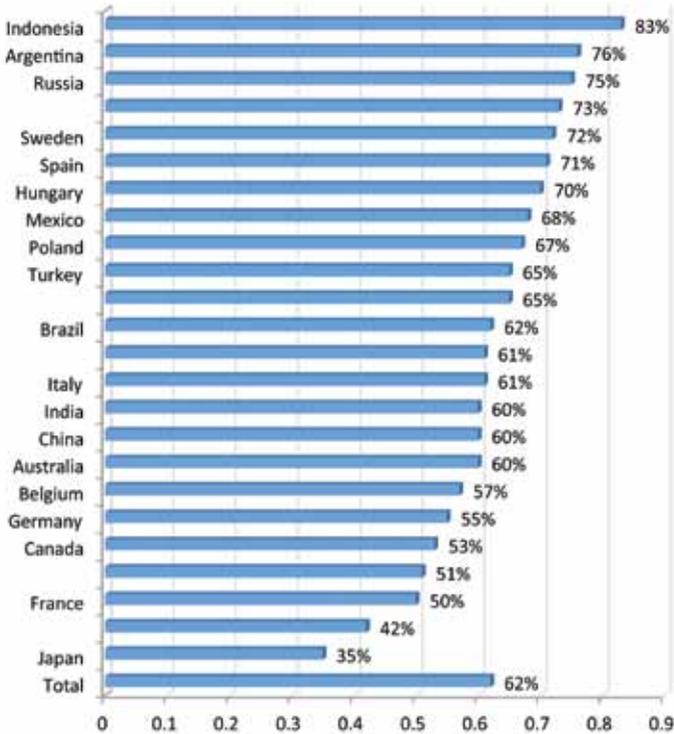


Figure 6. Visit social networking sites/forums or blogs
 Source: IPSOS research, 2012 ⁶⁶

Secondly, it is important not only to see if those who are active offline are also active online, but also to examine exactly what role social media plays when social activists emerge from, or are facilitated by, social media. And, finally, related to that, social activists are also likely to represent their group, organisation, or community online and to expand their network.

At the moment (2012) Indonesia is the 4th largest *Facebook* nation in the world, after the US, Brazil, and India in terms of absolute users. This is a drop from 2nd place at one point. Indonesian Netters started using *Facebook* from 2006, but the site became popular in 2008. With less than 1 million users in January 2009,

⁶⁶ See “Most Global Internet Users Turn to the Web for Emails (85 per cent) and Social Networking Sites (62 per cent)”, IPSOS press release, available <http://www.ipsos-na.com/news-polls/pressrelease.aspx?id=5564>.

there are now 42,586,260 Indonesian users (17.53 per cent of population, and 141.95 per cent of the online population) on *Facebook* as at the end of May 2012, which is actually a jump of more than 6.7 million users compared to last year (Socialbakers, 2012). Further, Socialbakers reports that 91 per cent of the Indonesian *Facebook* users are below the age of 35, with the majority of them aged 18 to 24 (41 per cent). The highest growth of users in February to May 2012 came from the 13-15 year old age group, while previously from the 18-24 year old age group⁶⁷.

Following *Facebook*, *Twitter* has become highly popular. Currently there are 19.5 million *Twitter* accounts in Indonesia making it the fifth largest user population in the world in 2012⁶⁸, two places lower than it was before last year⁶⁹. A closer look, using data from Jakarta-based Saling Silang (2011), reveals that the most common *Twitter* platform is via mobile: *UberTwitter* (43 per cent), *API* (16 per cent), *Blackberry* (11 per cent), and *Tuitwit* (5 per cent). There is a great tendency for Indonesian *Twitter* users to share everything via *Twitter*. First, 53 per cent of all tweets generated by Indonesian *tweeps* are retweets, i.e. communicating what others have said by means of broadcasting to his/her own followers. Second, based on the *trending topics* from January 2011 most discussed topics are football (20.17 per cent), events (10.81 per cent), *memes*⁷⁰ (8.11 per cent), and news (5.20 per cent). Third, they also share links to conventional media sources like news portals (22 per cent), *Twitter* apps (24 per cent), and games (18 per cent). This is in addition to the 3 per cent of tweets which share photos, 1 per cent *YouTube* videos, and 4 per cent foreign news (SalingSilang, 2011). Finally, this is probably unique in the world in Indonesia *Twitter* is also used to deliver 'lectures' (known as '*kultwit*' which literally means 'tweet lecture'), in which a series of tweets are used to present a particular topic, or argue certain views⁷¹.

67 We compared Socialbakers' data on the Indonesian *Facebook* user statistics, from <http://www.socialbakers.com/Facebook-statistics/indonesia#chart-intervals>, between 20 October 2011 and 30 May 2012.

68 See http://semiocast.com/publications/2012_01_31_Brazil_becomes_2nd_country_on_Twitter_supersedes_Japan accessed 2 May 2012.

69 See https://wiki.smu.edu.sg/digitalmediaasia/Digital_Media_in_Indonesia. Accessed 25 May 2012.

70 An (Internet) meme is an idea propagated through the Net, which may take the form of a hyperlink, video, picture, website, *Twitter* hashtag, or just a word or phrase. It can evolve and spread rapidly, sometimes reaching global popularity very quickly.

71 Some public figures are also known as prominent '*Twitter* lecturer's such as @hotradero, @iindraJpiliang, @gmontadaro, @ulil, @budimandjatmiko, among many others.



Figure 7. From eating out to kultwit

Source: Left: Twitsy website: an illustration. *Twitter* account and link are blurred for anonymity purpose; Right: twitpocket.wordpress.com which archives a great number of tweet lectures – note the last eight entries are all tweets from @hottradero, who is also known as Twikipedia Indonesia⁷².

Indonesians are also the world's biggest users of location-based social media *Foursquare*, even more than USA and Japan⁷³. *Koprol*, the local contender of *Foursquare* was acquired by Yahoo! in May 2010, and since then its users have jumped to more than 1 million, ranking it 3rd in pageviews to *Facebook* and *Twitter*⁷⁴. With regards to blogs, although microblogging using *Twitter* has become undoubtedly famous, conventional blogging also remains popular. At the moment there are more than 5.3 million blogs tracked by *Saling Silang*, growing significantly from less than 1 million in 2009.⁷⁵ It is estimated that currently there are 2.7 million bloggers, more than 25 blogger communities and at least five national blogger conferences. However, of all blogs tracked, only 32.67 per cent were updated in the past three months (*SalingSilang*, 2011). There is an apparent trend for long time bloggers to now write less posts. From our observation and fieldwork discussion, many of the new bloggers are high school and college students. However, they are more intensive in using *Twitter* and *Facebook* for conversation than using blogs. Some bloggers also use *Facebook Page* and *Twitter* to enhance their personal branding.

72 See Salingsilang, "Poltak Hottradero, Rajanya Kultwit (Poltak Hottradero, the King of Tweet Lecture(r))" <http://salingsilang.com/baca/poltak-hottradero-rajanya-kultwit>.

73 Based on Google Trends, <http://trends.google.com/websites?q=foursquare.com&date=ytd&geo=all&ctab=0&sort=0&sa=N> accessed on 11 March 2011.

74 See Koprol Blog, "Koprol is #3 Social Network by Pageviews" <http://www.koprolblog.com/2010/11/3rd/> 13 November 2010 accessed 28 May 2012.

75 <http://blogdir.salingsilang.com/> accessed 2 May 2012.

The Indonesian blogosphere is dominated by the big five: Blogspot (15 million visit per month), *Wordpress* (9 million), *Blogdetik* (1.3 million), *Kompasiana* (1.1 million) and *Dagdigdug* (120 thousands) with the top six topics regularly posted and discussed being Jakarta, law and government, economics, parenting, social sciences, and web design and development⁷⁶. Being active in an online community is also an inseparable part of online activism. *Kaskus* is at the moment the largest Indonesian online community. It ranks as the 6th most popular website in Indonesia (Koinfo, 2010) and is one of two local sites in the top 10 (detik.com at 9th), positioning it at 241st worldwide⁷⁷. *Kaskus* has more than 1.6 million registered accounts, provides a platform not only for discussion but also for an online marketplace which evolved naturally as members gained more trust in the site and their fellows. Every month, approximately IDR2billion (USD200k) worth of transactions are recorded in *Kaskus*, which unlike other e-commerce sites, does not impose transaction fees⁷⁸. Other famous e-commerce sites include *Bejubel.com*, *Tokopedia.com*, *Multiply.com*, *Lapar.com*, and *Dealkeren.com* – which have contributed to the development of the Internet economy in Indonesia.

In retrospect, it seems, for millions of Indonesian *onliners*, not only being online, but sharing daily activities in social media has become so central that had Descartes been still around he might have characterised this situation with '*Communico ergo sum* - I share therefore I am'. More and more use online social networks as a way to stay connected to colleagues, friends and families, independent of time and space. As a result, not only are the lines between private and social life quickly becoming blurred, but the nature of actual (*offline*) engagement and the 'virtual' (*online*) one becomes difficult for many to distinguish. While social media are offering to many people something exciting, there is a huge challenge to work out how the fading boundaries these tools have left in their wake can be dealt with. This means redefining and reformulating social rules as the technology is being used by many. In the context of Indonesia (and perhaps also other countries) Internet governance and policy becomes pivotal, precisely because the Net is no longer just a tool for communication, but it is also an embodiment of societal power that needs regulating to ensure it is accountable – for the betterment of society.

76 See <http://www.slideshare.net/donnybu/indonesian-blogosphere-2011/> accessed 30 May 2012.

77 See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaskus> accessed 30 May 2012.

78 As revealed by Andrew Darwis, the founder of *Kaskus*, in a personal encounter by one of the authors, end of 2010.

4.3. Internet governance and policy

As the Net has become a public sphere where individuals interact for social, economic and cultural purposes, the need for governance emerges. In Indonesia, such need is manifested in a lasting tension: between keeping the Internet free for everyone and ensuring its safety and security for the citizens to interact through governance. As Internet use has become more and more embedded in the daily activities of many people, the frequency of attacks and crime in the Net has also increased. Cybercrime can be found in many forms such as identity theft, account hijacking (which has become very frequent for emails, Internet Messaging, and social network sites), transmission of malware and malicious codes, fraud, industrial espionage, hostage of critical information resources, cyberwarfare, piracy, and many others. There are two institutions in the country that deal with the information systems security, i.e. the government-established ID-SIRTII (Indonesia Security Incident Response Team on Internet Infrastructure) and the community initiated IDCERT (Indonesia CERT – Computer Emergency Response Team) which has been registered as an International CERT member.

The Government itself has also been quite active in using the Net for its own very purpose: to provide public services and to disseminate information to the citizens through the e-government programme. The intention is formalised by setting up its regulatory framework, i.e. the Presidential Instruction No. 3/2003 on the National Strategy and Policy for e-Government Development. The aims are twofold: (i) to assist with data and information processing, and to provide electronic management system for the governmental works; in order (ii) to provide affordable and accessible public services for the citizens (Kominfo, 2011b). Several initiatives have been taken by ministries and local governments to expedite the development of e-government. There are currently 69 central government institutions and 403 local governments that have launched their websites since 2002 – with some of them already implemented online system for public services, portals and information sites of potential resources (Sujarwoto and Nugroho, 2011). However, just like the unequal distribution of ICT infrastructure, the implementation of e-government, too, has still been very much concentrated in Java-Bali, and only in some developed regions in Sumatera and Kalimantan – leaving the eastern part of Indonesia underserved. The government has promised to put more effort in to remedy this problem as it is gradually understood that citizens' participation in development, through Internet enabled interaction such as in e-government, is important.

Indeed, as a tool and service, the Internet social media has enabled their users to gather for social interaction in a much more simple and immediate fashion. As a result, people not only have the ability to share ideas and opinions, but also to gain notoriety and expand their influence – intentionally or not. The advancement in Internet and social media innovation has altered the way and the speed with which ideas spread: from days or even weeks to seconds – and it is still getting faster and faster. In a country like Indonesia where the democracy is still in its infancy, the Government struggles in creating a balance between control and freedom. And when it comes to the Internet, it becomes even more difficult to regulate it as it is highly contested by different societal actors.

To start with, in Indonesia there are two Laws on which Internet regulation is based: the Telecommunication Law No.36/1999 and the Electronic Information & Transaction (ITE) Law No. 11/2008. In addition, there are three regulations issued by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, which at the moment is the executor and the most significant state body that governs media both online and offline. They are (1) The Ministerial Regulation No. 26/PER/M.KOMINFO/5/2007 on *the Security of the Use of IP-based Telecommunication Network*, which has been updated by the Ministerial Regulation No. 29/PER/M.KOMINFO/10; (2) The Ministerial Decree No. 133/KEP/M/KOMINFO/04/2010 on *the Establishment of the Coordinating Team of National Information Policy*; and (3) The Ministerial Circular No. 01/SE/M.KOMINFO/02/2011 on *the Implementation of the Electronic Systems for Public Services Provision in State's bodies*.

No.	Regulation
1.	Ministerial Decree (Telcom) No. 59/1996 on the Service Tariffs for Provision of Internet Network
2	Law No. 36/1999 on the Telecommunications Law
3	Government Regulation No. 52/2000 on the Telecommunications Operation
4	Dir.Gen Decree (Telcom) No. 241/2000 on the Sharing of 2400-2483.5MHz band for Outdoor Wireless Internet and Microwave Link
5	Ministerial Decree (Telcom) No. 20/2001 and 21/2001 on the Telecommunications Network and Service Operation
6	Dir.Gen Decree (Telcom) No. 159/2001 on the Provision of Internet telephony for public
7	Law No. 19/2002 on the Intellectual Property Right
8	Ministerial Decree (Telcom) No. 23/2002 on the Provision of Internet telephony for public

No.	Regulation
9	Ministerial Decree (Telcom) No. 31/2003 on the Establishment of Indonesian Telecommunications Regulatory Body
10	Presidential Instruction No. 3/2003 on the National strategy and policy on e-Government
11	Law No.11/2008 on the Electronic Information & Transaction (ITE)
12	Ministerial Regulation No. 26/PER/M.KOMINFO/5/2007 on the Security of the Use of IP-based Telecommunication Network, updated by the Minister Regulation No. 29/PER/M.KOMINFO/10
13	Ministerial Decree No. 133/KEP/M/KOMINFO/04/2010 on the Establishment of the Coordinating Team of National Information Policy
14	Ministerial Circular No. 01/SE/M.KOMINFO/02/2011 on the Implementation of the Electronic Systems for Public Services Provision in State's bodies
15	Law No.42/2008 on the Pornography

Table 7. Regulatory Framework affecting the Internet development in Indonesia
Source: Authors

However, some of those regulations are challenged by society. For example, the ITE Law, which vaguely defines defamation acts (in Article 27 paragraph 3), so that it can be easily used as justification to repress the exercise of the rights to freedom of expressions in cyberspace. The then-famous Prita Mulyasari⁷⁹ is one of the six who were prosecuted on the basis of this law. Subsequently, some civil society groups attempted to revoke the article through judicial review at the Constitutional Court level, but failed. Another regulation, Pornography Law No. 42/2008 has also been seen as problematic. The Law has often been used by the Government to censor content of not just conventional media, but also of online ones and hence jeopardises freedom of expression – that has become a concern of journalists, artists, and activists alike⁸⁰. In the latest report (Kominfo, 2011b) the Government claims that around 30-40 per cent of the international Internet traffic is used for accessing negative content particularly pornography-related materials, *warez* activity, and illegal multimedia content.

In the future, the Government and the House of Parliament plan to pass a number of bills which could impact upon the development of the Internet and media in Indonesia, i.e. the Information and Technology Crime Bill, Convergence Bill, and Intelligence bill. Civil society has already debated these

79 The case will be discussed in subsequent chapter.

80 See, for example, Direct Action "Indonesian press, freedom of expression under attack" http://directaction.org.au/issue25/indonesian_press_freedom_of_expression_under_attack accessed 30/5/12.

bills as they potentially destroy the freedom of expression and the freedom of information that had long been fought for. These bills are also feared to be a means for the Government to restore their control over media and the public sphere.

In retrospective, the Government seems to be rather dubious in supporting the development of the Internet. On the one hand, the expansion of the Internet infrastructure is clearly within the government's interest for the technology undoubtedly supports the country's economy. On the other, in terms of content, the Government still holds back its support as they do not want to lose control of what the citizens can access. According to one prominent civil society and net activist Donny B. Utoyo, on some occasions a number of NGOs and CSOs were invited to meet and formulate some policies concerning ICT and the Internet, but

... their attendance is just for formality and justification. The Government [the Ministry of Communication and Informatics] already had their policies ready to issue so that whatever we said to them they would only said 'yes' without any further thought (DB. Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012)

It seems it will take years for the wider society to be aware of the importance of issues surrounding the governance of ICT infrastructure and content. If the society is to fully exercise their rights to communication, freedom of expression and information, they themselves need to act deliberately to make it happen. This certainly is a huge challenge that civil society needs to respond to. One way is to use the Internet and social media themselves as tools and means. However this demands the ability of the civil society to strategise their use and adoption of the technology to help them play a more significant role in societal change – particularly through influencing political processes.

5. Civil Society Online: New Media and Politics in Indonesia

In early 1994, INFID introduced *NusaNet* as a response to the government's repressive conduct and surveillance towards civil society and in order to provide safer communication and a more effective networking platform among NGOs and pro-democracy activists. The service that Nusanet provided was very simple: dial-up access at 9.6Kbps and encrypted email exchange through generic addresses "@nusa.or.id"—but it helped many organisations, groups and activists to learn about the technology. By the end of 1996 and in early 1997, a considerable number of Indonesian advocacy NGOs and many pro-democracy activists had been connected to the Internet via Nusanet, which was also considered safer at that moment than existing commercial ISPs, which could be easily interfered by the government's military intelligence. Since then, the use of ICTs became an inseparable part of civil society activism in the country. We recall⁸¹ that despite still in its early stage in Indonesia, the Internet had already been used to mobilise support –moral and material— to the students and activists in major cities protesting against the regime in various events surrounding the 1998 *reformasi*. By the activists having access to the Net, emails were sent to tell the world about what happened in the country. The list '*apakabar*' (literally means 'how do you do') moderated by John McDougall, was the main channel to broadcast the latest news about Indonesia. A lot of information important to the movement at that time was distributed on the Net, printed out and physically redistributed to activists. Messages were spread across demonstrators via SMS and pager, pinpointing the locations of military blockades so that they could avoid them in their rallies and demonstrations. There were many more. Scholars like Hill and Sen (2005) conclude how new communication technologies like the Internet "played a central role in the downfall of the Soeharto dictatorship" (p.53). And evidently, also in its aftermath.

Throughout this paper we have presented the development of the Indonesian social, political and economic dimension along with the blossoming political engagement of civil society particularly over the past fifteen years or so (Section Two), and how media have played their role in the society, for better or worse (Section Three). We then reported how new media –the Internet and

81 This is a personal account of the author (cf. Y Nugroho), who actively took part in the civil society movement around the 1998 reform.

social media—have been adopted and used and what the soaring number of their users may mean and implicate (Section Four). At this point one might inevitably think that civil society activism relates very closely to the adoption of these new media. While this could well be the case, the actual relationship between them is not easy to argue for, neither is it easy to find the causal relationship that might have been assumed to exist. Rather, in the absence of a very much needed large scale empirical study on this topic (that could have served as a basis), what could possibly and realistically be done is to try to understand the condition under which the use of new media characterise civil society activism through contextual observations. In other words, the task is not to conceptualise or make a universal abstraction of the link between the Internet and social media and civil society political activism. Rather, it aspires to help uncover, through several examples –some positive, some negative– how civil society as a potential source of power for democracy and betterment of societal life interacts with the technology.

This is what this section aims for – presenting some examples about different ways in which new media has been adopted, used, and appropriated by Indonesian civil society for their purposes. We draw accounts from recent studies, news, grey literatures, and our own observation and first-hand data gathered through interviews to present our cases. This section starts by discussing the challenges in using new media to widen political participation, followed by mapping the spectrum of use before identifying factors that promote and inhibit such use. Three case studies are then briefly presented to gain some insights and reflection.

5.1. From ‘knowing’ to ‘engaging’? The challenge in widening civic political participation

The advancement in ICT innovation, particularly the Internet and social media technology, has fundamentally reshaped media from one-way communication (which deliver news and information), into a two-way interaction (whereby users can interact with the information provider, or among users). This perhaps is what qualifies the word ‘new’ in new media. What is more revolutionary in this technological development is that it has transferred media into a new potential platform for various socio-political engagements. The use of new media has contributed to the expansion and widening of civic public sphere in Indonesia – at least in the cyberspace (Lim, 2002). With social media, this becomes more evident. Social media has become an online public sphere where people engage for various purposes: from befriending to trading, from

sharing news to networking. However, as substantiated in the adoption of Internet technology in the Indonesian civil society (Nugroho, 2011a), such a process is never immediate especially if the engagements that currently reside in the cyberspace are to be enacted in the offline, physical space.

One feature of new media is speed. Social media can make any information viral – that is, become a hot topic and be discussed widely in a matter of minutes. *Twitter* is a good example of this. Tweeting has become one way to spread information. And when it concerns public interest, the information can be quickly taken up and discussed – and to some extent can spark reactions in the offline world. One example is when a car belonging to the Minister of Social Affairs entered the dedicated busway lane in Jakarta on 4 May 2010. One commoner, Rubinni, took the picture and tweeted it; which then quickly became viral. The Minister himself was forced to admit to the incident and tried to avoid the charge by arguing that he already asked for permission to use the lane from the Jakarta Police Authority. But the authority publicly denied that they gave such permission⁸², creating public disbelief and tainting the credibility of the Minister.

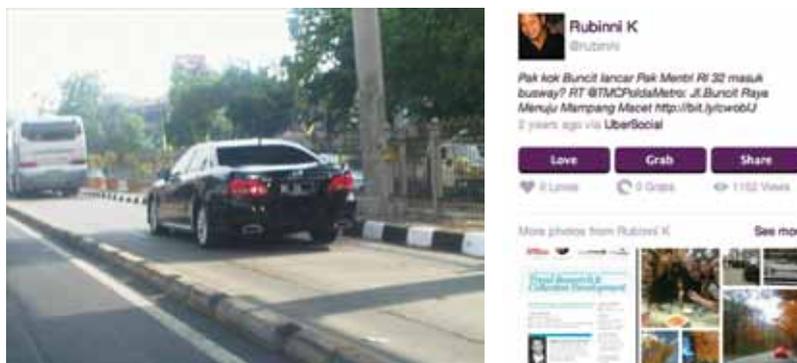


Figure 8. Minister's car using the busway lane: A viral tweeted photo
Source: *Twitter.com/rubinni* as documented in <http://lockerz.com/s/21000097>

82 See Detiknews, "Mobil RI 32 Masuk Busway, Mensos Mengaku Sudah Izin Polisi (The official car RI32 entering the busway, the Minister of Social Affairs claimed to have asked permission from the Police)" <http://news.detik.com/read/2010/05/04/120714/1350745/10/mobil-ri-32-masuk-busway-mensos-mengaku-sudah-izin-polisi> accessed 30 May 2012 – and compare it with another news from the same source, "TMC Polda Metro Bantah Beri Izin Mobil Mensos Masuk Busway (The Jakarta Police denied giving permission for the Minister of Social Affairs' car to enter the busway lane)" <http://news.detik.com/read/2010/05/04/132144/1350818/10/tmc-polda-metro-bantah-beri-izin-mobil-mensos-masuk-busway> accessed 30 May 2012.

Such is an example of how social media can be used to leverage the influence of common people –not yet in public decision making perhaps, but in controlling the acts of public officials in the public sphere. What can be learned here is that social media like *Twitter* provides a platform in which the user is no longer merely a passive agency that is fed with information. Rather, it enables the user to actively engage, create, and spread information and views and hence it potentially becomes a means for wider social interaction and public participation in shaping politics. Citizen journalism is perhaps one way to do so. Through blogging (including microblogging), social media have transformed audiences from being mere spectators to participants, since the technology offers the ability to help them create and share political information, content, and views – and have them exchanged or debated.

New media have probably changed the landscape of public debate. People are no longer holding back in discussing issues that used to be ‘taboo’ or banned by the Government (particularly during Soeharto’s era). Citizen journalism sites like *Politikana.com*, *Blogdetik*, or *Kompasiana.com* have become places where heated debates among citizens take place: on nationalism, religious fundamentalism, national security, pornography, legitimacy of the government, and many more. The same also happens in the *Twitland*. The current debate on the topic of *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* (Indonesia without FPI) is one example. Various perspectives and views have been exchanged –both positive and negative. But many of these online debates have also often been so intense that the sense of unity as citizens sometime fades and instead what emerges is a sense of ethnicity, religion, or political affinity. Of course, online debate does not always manifest itself in an offline realm, but to some extent this is how contemporary discourses of Indonesian Netters are shaped – and arguably this affects how they understand and live their life in the offline world.

What can be seen here is that not only can new media help people to get a wider view of information and opinions, but as the public also have the ability to produce information, the widening of political participation begins. The challenge is whether or not, and the extent to which, the political engagement in the online sphere could be taken forward to the offline world. Posting and debating political views online, just like updating statuses or ‘liking’ in *Facebook*, forwarding emails, retweeting tweets, or blogging, are probably now an inseparable part of –or even constitute– online activism. These are arguably important in (re)shaping views and opinions of the online public, but in order to enact political change or to influence political processes, such activism needs to be done strategically so that the impacts are felt in the offline world.

The movement of *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* may be an example of such strategic undertaking. Starting from a debate in Twitland initiated by @IndTanpaFPI and promoted by many prominent pro democracy activists and common citizens alike, the movement has evolved towards offline engagement by first organising a rally in the centre of the capital city Jakarta then gathering support to officially sue the Indonesian Police Force for being unable to prevent violence in the name of religion. The rally on 14 February 2012 was participated in by some 1,400 people and the movement has now managed to gather support from 2,502 individuals and 16 organisations who were willing to be openly mentioned as part of those demanding the police admit responsibility⁸³. The official case was filed on the 10 May 2012 and the movement now is preparing for a class action. Despite the criticism addressed to this movement, this is arguably an example of how the *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* activists strategically used various media (*Twitter*, blog) and transformed the online movement into offline engagements like rallies, official summons and class action.

This is perhaps the point where we need to reflect deeper on the features of new media that pose challenges for civil society activism. The ease with which one can receive and spread news and information enables people to choose which information to read, simply by scanning the online news headline, *Facebook* status update, a 140 characters tweet, or the subject of an email or blog post. Although this development can be seen as a personalisation of information, arguably, it is also the cause of a banalisation process, where due to the combination of speed and the amount of information being received, people tend to lack a deep understanding of the stories, and therefore do not take informed actions. This is central in addressing the very basic assumption of successful new media-enabled civil society engagement: that there should be a shift from (merely) knowing what is going on in the online world to (consciously) engaging in offline activism.

5.2. New media: Spectrum of use

As hinted elsewhere in the paper, the Indonesian new media landscape is both dynamic and contested. All societal actors –government and public agencies, market and firms, and citizens and civil society—seem to have started using the technology. Some are more advanced than others and some benefit more than others. In terms of political engagement, unlike in conventional media

83 See <http://IndonesiaTanpaFPI.wordpress.com/2012/05/09/IndonesiaTanpaFPI-somasi-kapolri/>.

where some media owners are closely related to politics and hence shape public views on political issues (see Section Three), there seems to be no such dominant actors in social media. Instead, social media becomes an arena where everyone and every political institution, ministers and political parties, engage and try to win over the masses.

Tifatul Sembiring (Minister of Communication and Informatics, @tifsembiring) and Dahlan Iskan (Minister of State Owned Enterprise, @iskan_dahlan) are examples of public officials who are known to be active in social media – with the latter joining quite recently. Using *Twitter*, inadvertently or not, they become ‘celebtwit’ (*Twitter* celebrities) and build their support base –in the same way that artists do.



Figure 9. *Twitter* pages of two Ministers
 Source: *Twitter.com/iskan_dahlan* and *Twitter.com/tifsembiring*

Openly discussing issues, from daily routines to ministerial policies, and sometimes providing words of wisdom, these two ministers quickly gathered a significant number of followers. However, unlike Minister Sembiring whose tweets often sparked controversy amongst social activists,⁸⁴ Minister Iskan’s tweets are relatively ‘entertaining’. He is well known to be very good at responding to his followers, from answering young people asking simple questions or just greeting him, to receiving complaints and acting upon them.

84 The most recent one was when on 27 May 2012 Minister Sembiring tweeted ‘Alhamdulillah (Thanks be to God)’ after learning the cancellation of Lady Gaga’s concert in Jakarta. Another famous example was when he shook hand with the US First Lady Michele Obama. He defended what he did despite that it was actually forbidden in his belief to shake hands of opposite sex not related to him. See <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/11/11/tifatul-defends-shaking-hands-with-michele-obama.html>.

This has certainly made him famous, popular, and likeable by many youngsters – a move that might benefit him for his future political purpose.

In Indonesia, *Twitter* has the potential to be a fertile ground for socio-political movements to be nurtured and to emerge from the online realm to the offline sphere. On 16 July 2009 the Ritz Carlton-Marriot hotel in Jakarta was bombed. Daniel Tumiwa was the first to tweet the news of the bombing, which was quickly followed by others sending first photos. In a matter of hours, Indonesian tweets dominated the conversation in *Twitter* worldwide by pushing the hashtag #IndonesiaUnite to the top ‘trending topic’ for three days in a row. This movement was credited with having an impact upon many people’s awareness of the terrorism issues – even on those who are not online. IndonesiaUnite also has a dedicated website and *Facebook* fans page with more than 400 thousands fans, although at the moment the movement is rather quiet.

Another political movement which emerged from Twitland is the #SaveJkt or ‘Save Jakarta’ movement. Initiated by a Singapore-based Indonesian academic Sulfikar Amir, using the *Twitter* account @savejkt the #SaveJkt movement slowly built its support base, involving young professionals and inviting the middle classes in Jakarta who want to live in a better Jakarta. The movement aimed at letting Jakartans point out everyday problems that need to be fixed in the city by tweeting with the hashtag #savejkt. In its journey, @savejkt apparently also aimed to influence future elections in the city taking place this year. An independent pair of candidates, Faisal Basri and Biem Benyamin –well known as Faisal-Biem—who run for the election are believed to have been supported by the #savejkt movement who spread political awareness to the public on the needs and importance of having an independent candidate.





Figure 10. Source: [Twitter.com/savejkt](https://twitter.com/savejkt) – the tagline says, “Social movement for a better Jakarta”; <http://savejkt.org>; <http://www.Flickr.com/photos/broadryd/6302047548/in/photostream/> copyright @BroArdy; used with permission

#SaveJkt movement takes advantage of both online and offline engagement. *Twitter, Facebook fan page, and the website* are used to spread the idea of the movement; but offline engagements in the forms of discussions and public gatherings are also organised as a means of networking. Addressing the election taking place shortly, when asked about the #SaveJkt-backed candidate Faisal-Biem, its founder said firmly,

We fully realise that our ideas [about the better Jakarta] will never turn into policies unless we have political clout. Therefore, we will also use the 2012 gubernatorial election as momentum when we will support the nomination of an independent candidate [Faisal-Biem] ... We have a campaign team, a concept team and a strategy team. The concept team is the most important one because its main job is to pool all the ideas on how best to manage Jakarta and turn them into workable programs. The campaign team will then introduce the programs from the concept team in its Twitter feeds while also conducting off-line campaigns, such as holding public discussions. The strategic team's main job is to find the ideal governor candidate that this movement will endorse. (Sulfikar Amir, founder #SaveJkt, as interviewed by The Jakarta Post, 16/11/10⁸⁵)

85 See The Jakarta Post, “Saving Jakarta, one tweet at a time” <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2010/11/15/saving-jakarta-one-tweet-a-time.html> - Recently, in a personal account with the authors, Sulfikar maintained his view on #SaveJkt role in the coming election (Toronto, 15/3/2012).

Such an example underlines the role that social media can play in social movements, which is quite wide ranging. In addition to (re)shaping public opinion or discourse, the most common use of social media is perhaps to support the formation of campaigns. One of the most famous instances is perhaps the case of *Coins for Prita* campaign which became a nationwide movement. In early 2009, Prita Mulyasari, a common housewife, was prosecuted by the Government under the charge of defamation for sending complaints through private e-mails to family and friends regarding the service of the Omni International Hospital where she was treated. She was jailed for three weeks and was released after a public outcry which gained weight after becoming viral on the Net thanks to *Facebook*. Some prominent figures including the former President Megawati Sukarnoputri also paid a visit to the jail to show support. Prita was sued in a civil case by the Hospital at the Tangerang District Court with a fine of IDR 312 million (USD37,000). She appealed the decision at the Banten High Court, which cut the fine to IDR 204 million (USD 20,500) before appealing to the Supreme Court. It was during this appeal that many Indonesian net activists, among others organised by *Komunitas Langsung*, started a mailing list and *Facebook* group called *Coins for Prita* to raise money from people throughout the country to help Prita pay the fine. Probably due to seeing such huge support for Prita, the Hospital dropped the civil lawsuit and the Supreme Court immediately quashed it altogether⁸⁶.

In a similar case, social media was also used extensively to support *Bibit-Chandra* in the case famously known as *Cicak v. Buaya*, depicting a fight of civil society against corruption. *Facebook* and *Twitter* were used extensively by netizens to gather support. The movement '*Gerakan 1,000,000 Facebookers Dukung Chandra Hamzah & Bibit Riyanto*' (1 million *Facebookers* to support Chandra Hamzah and Bibit Riyanto) succeeded in gathering over 1.3 million supporters on *Facebook* in just nine days.

86 However, in July 2011 the Supreme Court upheld an appeal of the Tangerang Court's decision when Prita was also tried in a criminal libel case –despite it was actually the same case. At that time, the Tangerang court dismissed prosecutors' preliminary arguments and later acquitted her during the trial proper, to which the prosecutors appealed. It was this appeal that the Supreme Court upheld. See news, for example, *The Jakarta Globe*, "Shock Guilty Verdict in Prita Mulyasari Saga" <http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/home/shock-guilty-verdict-in-prita-mulyasari-saga/451797>.



Figure 11. Indonesian *Facebookers* to save KPK

Source: CICAk rally, 10/9/2009 as documented by The Jakarta Post; <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2009/11/09/thousands-people-rally-%E2%80%98cicak%E2%80%99.html>

In addition to influencing public opinion,⁸⁷ the supporters also used the technology to invite people to rally in Jakarta. The rally was to support the KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) which was at that time in a battle between the Attorney General's Office and the National Police with the latter organisation detaining the Commission's top officials for bribery allegation. The rally, on 10 September 2009, was attended by some five thousand people. This case has now become one of the most cited in which new social media like *Facebook* can play an important role in social movement.

Another prominent example where Indonesian social movements use social media for their causes is *Coin A Chance* (coinachance.com). *Coin A Chance* is a charitable social movement initiated by Nia Sadjarwo and Hanny Kusumawati in Jakarta in 2008 which aims to provide the chance of an education for impoverished children by asking people to collect and donate their coins or change. To reach supporters, the movement intensively use *Facebook* and blogs. The movement was awarded 'The Best Online Activism 2009' by Nokia Indonesia and the movement has now spread to other cities like Bandung, Yogyakarta and Bali and even to other countries such as Germany and Austria⁸⁸. This effort has inspired people to share their wealth with those in need. Another similar movement, in a different form, is *1,000 Books Movement* (1000buku.dagdigdug.com) which use social media to collect second-hand

87 For example, see Kompasiana, "Ayo dukung cicak lawan buaya!" <http://politikana.com/baca/2009/07/06/ayodukungcicaklawanbuaya.html>.

88 See more http://coinachance.com/?page_id=6.

books for children living in poverty or in deprived rural areas. Although relatively successful in its early phase, the movement has however now been inactive for some time.

In addition to *Facebook* and *Twitter*, blogs remain popular new media – even beyond Indonesia. According to Matt Mullenweg, the founder of WordPress, the Indonesian language is the third most used language after English and Spanish in Wordpress.com⁸⁹. Almost every big city in Indonesia has its own blogger communities, such as *CahAndong* (Yogyakarta), *BHI (Blogger Bunderan Hotel Indonesia)* (Jakarta), *BBV (Bandung Blog Village)* and *Batagor (Bandung Kota Blogger)* (Bandung); *Blogfam (Blogger Family, nation wide)*, *Bloggor (Blogger Bogor)*, *Deblogger (Depok)*, *TPC (TuguPahlawan.Com, Surabaya)*, *AngingMammiri (Makassar)*, *Loenpia (Semarang)*, *Bengawan (Solo)*, *Wongkito (Palembang)*, *Kotareyog (Ponorogo)*, *Bloggerngalam (Malang)*, *Plat-M (Madura)*, *PendekarTidar (Magelang)*, *Benteng Pendhem Club (Ngawi)*, and *BBC (Bali Blogger Community, Denpasar)*. These blogger communities commonly organise various gatherings (famously known generically as: *kopdar* or *kopidar*, meaning offline meeting), blogging training, social activities, and in some cases turning blogs into books. Blogger communities usually also interact using other media such as mailing lists, *Plurk*, *Twitter*, and *Facebook*. Some examples from our recent research (Nugroho, 2011a)⁹⁰ are presented below:

Our mission is to write, to blog everything about the potentials in Madura island. We want Madura to be exposed in the virtual world. We want as many people as possible to know [the good thing] about Madura. So far, if you query ... [it is] most likely only bad things, or negative content about Madura that appear. We want to counter this. We want to write as much positive content about Madura as possible, [including] people, customs, culture, etc. (Nurwahyu Alamsyah, Plat-M blogger, interview, 8/9.10)

[Our] main goal is to make people in Surabaya know and get more familiar with blogging. Our main activity is capacity building – we do training on blogging. We also organise dissemination workshops and seminars and radio talk-shows to introduce blogs

89 Matt said this in a press conference of 2009 Worldcamp Indonesia, 17 January 2009. See http://wap.vivanews.com/news/read/22987-indonesia_third_top_wordpress_user/0.

90 These examples are featured using the data collected for our earlier work (Nugroho, 2011a). We have received consent to use this material from the University of Manchester and Hivos who funded the work.

and blogging. We also disseminate the idea of Internet Sehat [healthy Internet] and Internet aman [safe Internet] as widely as possible. So, yes, the main element of our activity is indeed capacity building. (Novianto Raharjo, TuguPahlawan.Comblogger, interview, 22/8/10)

We blog with a mission [that is] to promote cultural heritage in Ponorogo ...i.e. reyog [which] is not well promoted to people outside this region. ... We, bloggers in Ponorogo, gather and we feel united in our willingness to make people out there know and get familiar with our culture. ... I think, to some extent, we succeed. Even the local government ... has now recognised what we are doing and is now supporting us (Khamdani Ali Mashud, Kotareyog blogger, interview, 7/9/10)

[As] a community of bloggers, we want to educate our society... [train them] how to write and how to blog properly. We want to build... citizen journalism and we want to be the bridge between the people and the government. It is to realise what we want that we have some programmatic agenda such as workshops, trainings, and discussions on blogging. ... Another event [that we organise] is ngabubur-IT [Sundanese word ngabuburit means gathering]. We invited people from seven cities and now the event is very well known. This gave birth to the Internet Sehat [healthy Internet] movement, which has a very strong visibility and influence in Indonesian cyberspace – so strong that the Minister of Information and Communication even uses the same label. Those events that we organise have had big impact and influence and made us, Blogger Depok, well known. (Dodi Mulyana, deBlogger, interview, 27/8/10).

Indeed blogging has become quite popular in the country. There are a number of web 2.0 sites based on blogs such as *Politikana.com, Curipandang.com, Ngerumpi.com, Wikimu.com, Kompasiana.com*, amongst many others. So popular it seems, Indonesian bloggers gathered nationally in a Pesta Blogger (Blogger Festival). The first Pesta Blogger was held on 27 October 2007 and was opened by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics who declared the date as National Blogger Day – perhaps the first in the world. Themed “*New Voice of Indonesia*” the gathering was attended by more than 500 bloggers from across the country. The second festival, entitled “*Blogging for Society*” was

held on November 2008 and was attended by more than 1,000 Indonesian bloggers, including five invited foreign bloggers. The third festival involving more than 1,200 online activists was held on 24 October 2009 with the tagline “*One Spirit One Nation*”. On 30 October 2010, the fourth event was held in Jakarta bringing the slogan “*Celebrating Diversity*”. Attended by more than 1,500 online activists, this was the last festival to use the name *Pesta Blogger*. In 2011 the festival returned but only to change its name into *ON|OFF*. Despite the success, this series of festivals raised concerns and resistance amongst bloggers, particularly those outside Jakarta, over the involvement of the private company *Maverick* who patented the name ‘*Pesta Blogger*’ in 2009⁹¹ – an act which is feared by bloggers as an attempt to commercialise and take advantage of the events.

In politics, social media has started to become an important aspect in Indonesian political campaigns. Although new media was not yet used for campaigns in the 2009 general election, it is expected to be one of the most anticipated tools for political marketing nowadays, especially in the 2014 national election. Moreover, social media is seen to be able to offer new ways of campaigning in contrast to the conventional ones (Yunarto Wijaya, interview, 4/5/12⁹²). One most celebrated feature is its ability to provide a platform which enables everybody to participate, thus giving an equal opportunity to young citizens, especially young political activists, to channel their voices. Such feature is important as many Indonesian political parties currently use more feudalistic approach in their political activities, hindering the possibility of younger politicians to “market” themselves, as well as limiting their ability to act upon particular issues. The rise of the Internet and new media in the Indonesian political sphere, therefore, provides them with the much needed space to engage with the public as their constituents.

A study conducted by Cathy Cohen and Joseph Kahne (Cohen and Kahne, 2012) shows that the Internet, especially social media, is an effective tool to invite youngsters (15 to 25 years old) to participate in politics. They find that 45 per cent of the young people involved in the study became interested in particular political news after they saw it being posted on *Facebook* or *Twitter*. This might be perhaps the case in Indonesia, too. Political parties are nowadays emphasising on obtaining political support from young voters

91 See *Maverick*’s explanation “*Menyoal Pesta Blogger (Questioning Blogger Blogger Festive)*” <http://www.maverick.co.id/social-media/2010/08/menyoal-pesta-blogger/> accessed 30 May 2012.

92 This interview was not conducted by the authors; it was available in *Youtube* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bn8-rcb7OWs>) and used with permission and full consent from the informant.

through new media, believing in its power as such. One of the latest political events where the Internet and social media have been highly incorporated is the Jakarta's upcoming gubernatorial election (the direct election held on 11 July 2012). There are six pairs of candidates competing to govern the Capital, and all of them have been intensively using social media, especially *Twitter*, to communicate with potential voters. According to Yunarto, until early May 2012, Joko Widodo and Basuki Tjahaya Purnama are the most popular candidate pair in social media, receiving the biggest attention compared to other contenders. However, social media campaigns have only been used merely as political advertisement. The candidates seem to be unable to grapple what new media can offer. Instead of initiating a thorough political conversation with their potential voters, for example, these candidates mostly post their programmes, campaign schedules, or other related articles in their social media accounts. The potential of the new media as political marketing tools to youngsters are being wasted, as the communication is conducted in the old one way manner (Wijaya, interview, 4/5/2012). This simply shows that Indonesian political actors still need to learn the meaning of 'new' in 'new media' in terms of their political activities.

Such dynamics show that there are also non-technological factors that can potentially drive or inhibit the proliferation of social media in civic movement and in political processes.

5.3. New media adoption: Drivers, barriers, and enabling conditions

Recalling the results of our recent research which surveyed 231 Indonesian civil society organisations (Nugroho, 2011a), it is revealed that

[w]hile the need to be kept up to date with current information is the strongest internal driver for Internet and social media adoption, reasons related to increasing an organisation's public visibility have internally driven the adoption more strongly than the increasing effectiveness and efficiency of works and a 'craving' for new technology. [...] Externally, some of the top reasons for adopting the Internet and social media in civil society are networking, collaboration and extending knowledge and perspective. This also shows that the issue of competition is not an important one for adopting the Internet and social media in civil society. (p.41)

Further, regarding the barriers,

The most observable negative aspect of Internet and social media use in civil society seems to be a technical one (computer virus). Yet, what is striking, although not surprising, is that in a significant number of cases, the technology is distractive to the organisation staff. Internet and social media use is not really seen to cause the organisation's issues and concerns to become biased. [...] In terms of difficulties, the survey shows that lack of money, resource, infrastructure and expertise seem to be high (moderate to very high) on the list. Perhaps due to the nature of the organisation, problems like internal policies, external politics, conservative cultures, and many others, do not contribute significantly (low and very low) to the difficulties in the use of Internet and social media in the majority of Indonesian civil society groups and communities. (pp.44-45)

These results show that drivers for civil society to adopt Internet and social media seem rooted in the need for mutual relationships with other communities, as reflected in the need for networking, collaboration, widening perspectives and seeking knowledge. However, while these drivers are more substantial, the barriers are more technical. On reflection, such may relate to the common problems experienced by civil society in developing countries in which availability of Internet access and the development of telecommunication infrastructure is unequally distributed. The drivers and the barriers do not work in isolation, rather, they affect each other (Nugroho, 2011b). Hence, in order to understand the nature of the use of social media in civil society, the focus should be on the conditions under which the adoption is facilitated. In other words, it is the enabling conditions that drive adoption and use of the technology in civil society. There are at least a few aspects to discuss here.

First, do social media open up new opportunities for contentious politics? Some groups within Indonesian civil society find that the technology can help propagate issues central to their concern, and it is the experience of this that helps them appropriate the technology. In addition to some contemporary examples featured in an earlier *subsection*, we recalled a discussion with a few civil society groups working in the issue of human rights in Aceh a while ago. To retain the richness of the data, we quote the part of the discussion below:

The problem [with the human rights issue] is that it is confronted head-to-head with the Islamic Sharia... You know that Sharia Law is applied in Aceh. But things have gone far too extreme. Now there is a public discourse whether rajam [stoning to death] and potong tangan [hand-cutting] punishments should be legalised. And even when it is still as a discourse, we have noticed that in some elementary schoolbooks there are chapters that detail how the punishment should be conducted... So now we have to change our strategy. Thanks to the boom of free hotspots across Aceh, people are connected to the Internet. Most of them – no, all of them – are using Facebook. Now we use Facebook to campaign for human rights and pluralism. We are not saying say we have been totally successful, but we can see many young people now become aware of the issue; how the issue is being openly discussed in schools, in mailing lists; even how some high-level public officers engage with this discourse. I believe, now, there will be some public discontent if the plan with the punishments goes ahead (Focus Group, Banda Aceh, 4/10/10).

It seems, for civil society in Indonesia, the ability of technology to open up the possibility of contentious politics does matter. Here, the very feature of social media which can quickly and widely penetrate ideas to the public is central. As exemplified in the case of Aceh above, social media like *Facebook* has the potential to help transform the society by means of widening their perspectives and deepening their understanding about certain issues at stake.

Second, do new media support the networking and coordination of civil society groups between one another? As argued and substantiated elsewhere in this paper, in the Indonesian context, networking and coordination of civic movement has to a large extent been facilitated by the use of social media and ICT in general – right since before the reform in 1998. Nowadays, numerous civil society gatherings, including rallies and demonstrations, have been organised with the help of *Twitter* and *BlackBerry Messenger* (famously known as *BBM*). Groups such as *AIMI-ASI* (Association of Breastfeeding Mothers), for example, use new media of all sorts (including *Twitter*, blog, *Facebook* page, and website) and expand its network not only to fellow civil society organisations, but also to governmental departments (Ministry of Public Welfare, Ministry of Health, etc.), United Nations bodies (UNICEF, WHO, etc.), and international NGOs (Helen Keller, CARE, Save the Children, etc.). *AIMI-ASI* has been very successful in its campaign to help reshape the policy of the Indonesian Ministry of Health that

it managed, through benefitting from its network: now the advertisement of formula milk has started to be banned from state hospitals in Indonesia (Mia Sutanto, personal account, 2010-2011). With regard to international activities, Indonesian civil society has evidently networked outside of the country (Uhlen, 2000). However, little research has been carried out with regards to whether this networking is facilitated by the use of new media, particularly in contemporary Indonesia (our earlier research on this topic concerns the Internet in general. See Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2008).

Third, do the new media support the recruitment and mobilisation of followers in social movements? Some examples in an earlier subsection, particularly the cases of Prita Mulyasari and Bibit-Chandra (or Cicak v. Buaya), show the extent to which the technology can effectively be used to mobilise support in social movements. However, very rarely does social media work in isolation from other media when it comes to recruitment and mobilisation. In a context where ICT infrastructure is still unequally accessible, some dependency on conventional media is inevitable. Even the successes of the Prita and Bibit-Chandra cases were, to some extent, also due to the traditional media like television which picked up the message circulated in the online realm, then amplified it through their channels and delivered it widely to society, including those outside the reach of new media like *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

The point above links closely with the final aspect of the enabling conditions for new media use in civil society, i.e. convergence: to what extent do new media converge with and influence traditional media? In many cases the use of social media in civil society should be strengthened by conventional media. The abovementioned cases of *Prita* and *Bibit-Chandra* are just two examples. Other examples are abundant; from using television channels to amplify campaign such as in the *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* movement, to using community radio to penetrate particular issues as Yogyakarta-based *Suara Komunitas* does in promoting alternative economic models to the grassroots communities. One factor to take into account here is the involvement of local stakeholders who can be instrumental in a media convergence strategy. In Indonesia, where social ties among communities are still very strong due to local cultures, values and belief systems, local stakeholders can be crucial in media convergence strategies – because converging media also means converging of the movement. *Komunitas Langsung* (Langsat Community) and *SalingSilang.com* in Jakarta seem to understand this issue. In addition to providing web services for communities (like *Politikana.com* for civic journalism, *Cicak.org* for news on corruption, *BicaraFilm.com* for film reviews, *CuriPandang*.

com for celebrity gossiping, and *Ngerumpi.com* for women's issues, among others), they regularly host Obrolan Langsung (Langsat Conversation) or Obsat (ObrolanLangsat.com) gatherings. Through these initiatives (which once included public solidarity in the case of *Coins for Prita* movement), many civil society groups and communities come together and know each other –albeit perhaps unintentionally. Such is also the case with *CommonRoom* in Bandung, or *Rumah Blogger Indonesia Bengawan in Solo*. They provide spaces for networking for various elements of civil society in addition to their efforts in bringing new media technology closer to the community level users. Having presented the drivers, barriers, and some aspects of the enabling conditions that are instrumental in the adoption of new media in Indonesian civil society, we now turn to a handful of case studies in order to acquire more in-depth views and a more nuanced understanding.

5.4. Tales from the field

This subsection presents the following three cases in an attempt to provide a variety of examples and to explore the extent to which Internet and social media are adopted by civil society to facilitate mobilisation and campaigns.

5.4.1. Case 1: *ID-Blokir*

In recent years, the Internet has increasingly become one of the primary sources of information for Indonesians, even though its infrastructure is still unequally distributed. The ability of the technology to support user-generated content enables the public to produce and disseminate their own content in the quest for alternative news and information. However such development was met with a conservative approach by the Government who introduced regulations that restricted access to some content in the cyber world. Two regulations are central: the ITE Law and the Pornography Law. Both of them were supposedly used to promote *the Healthy and Safe Internet* campaign by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics⁹³. However, the most notable programme introduced had the aim to block websites that were accused of displaying morally inappropriate as well as radical content⁹⁴. Moreover, the blocking also

93 See Republika, "Blokir Konten Porno Merupakan Perintah Undang-Undang (Blocking pornographic content is mandated by the Law)" <http://id.berita.yahoo.com/menkominfo-blokir-konten-porno-merupakan-perintah-undang-undang-095927878.html> accessed 27 May 2012.

94 See Republika, "Kominfo Blokir 300 Situs Kekerasan (Ministry of Communication and Informatics to block 300 violence sites)" <http://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/11/09/26/ls5147-kominfo-blokir-300-situs-kekerasan> accessed 27 May 2012.

had some side effects: several websites with somewhat 'normal' contents were also affected with many pages inaccessible for a certain period of time.

Realising how serious this matter was, and that it might also lead to a repressive censorship, some activists responded by promoting online movements to remove the government's intervention. One of the most notable groups was the *ID-Blokir* (or *Indonesia Blokir*, literally translated as Indonesia Blocking). According to its founder, Enda Nasution, a prominent Indonesian blogger, *ID-Blokir* was a spontaneous campaign established in the online sphere to gather anyone who had the same concern regarding the inefficiency, misappropriation, as well as the danger of Internet censorship. One of its aims is to maintain the Internet as a free public sphere, where its users can access and spread any information without any worries, since they believe that, if properly employed, the Internet can be a revolutionary tool to accelerate changes in Indonesia. Moreover, it has the potential to shift several paradigms in a broader and faster way. This reasoning is the basic argument used by the member of the *ID-Blokir's* forum to spread their disapproval of Internet censorship. Enda highlights the blocking of pornographic contents that may undermine democratic values, since the state will be able to easily ban a certain content or site with the allegation of spreading pornographic material, without its owner being able to defend him/herself and without any objective measures. Eventually, the policy may preclude the freedom of expression for the public in the online sphere (Nasution, interview, 29/05/2012).

There are three main platforms used by *ID-Blokir* to promote the awareness: a mailing list (www.groups.google.com/group/ID-Blokir/topics), a *Facebook* page (*Tolak Internet Sensorship* (sic)), and a *Twitter* account (@idblokir). These forums —mainly administered by Enda himself—were employed with different goals: (1) *Twitter* was used for fast information exchange, since it enables quick and compact news sharing among the general public; (2) *Facebook* was considered to be the easiest tool to gather support in terms of quantity; and (3) a mailing list was mainly used to form strategies, as well as to share information, resources, and to keep the motivation among its members and general public with the same concern, in order to prove that there are a significant number of citizens who strongly disagree with the policy. Moreover, these three platforms were considered familiar and easy enough to use and therefore hopefully channelling the support for the campaign would not be a problem (Nasution, interview, 7/9/2010 and 29/05/2012).

The public was responsive towards the campaign. During the peak period of the issue, i.e. 2010-2011, there were at least 10, 000 supporters in *ID-Blokir's* Facebook page. The number was high enough for the campaign to be considered accepted by the general public and created a certain awareness (Nasution, interview, 29/05/2012). The highest traffic of the mailing list was during its first month, August 2010, when the policy regarding Internet blocking was issued by the government. There were 549 subjects discussed by the members of *ID-Blokir's* mailing list. The mailing list members commonly shared information regarding what sites which were blocked and how to outsmart it, showing how the blocking mechanism was not actually working, thus regarding it as useless (Nasution, interview, 7/9/2010 and 29/05/2012).

In terms of technology adoption, the participation of the general public in the campaign shows the extent to which the Internet enables people sharing similar points of view to be easily connected. Yet, the character of the society was considered to be a hindrance. Enda explains that given the Muslim majority in the country, it was difficult to avoid the public's dichotomised view, that *ID-Blokir's* campaign sometimes was harshly accused as being pro-pornographic, instead of seeing it as movement to promote the protection of freedom of expression. The issuance of the blocking policy, which was done during the fasting month of Ramadhan in August 2010 set the religious groups in the country to support the government's measures on the ground of moral values. Some people even argued that they wanted the government to protect the society by blocking subjects that were not in line with their moral ideals (Nasution, interview, 29/05/2012).

Yet, the scale of the campaign was not as big as other online movements. Before it grew bigger with a wider range of support, online activists realised that the blocking policy executed by the Government did not affect much on the online sphere. Technically, the government mainly used an application called "*Trust Positif*", created by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics, to filter the alleged pornographic websites. According to the Government, the application database was being continuously updated using public reports if a new pornographic website was discovered⁹⁵. Up to 6 February 2012, the Minister of Communication and Informatics stated that more than 983 thousand sites had been blocked, including 90 per cent of all pornographic

95 See Okezone, "Kemenkominfo Tak Serius Blokir Situs Porno? (The Ministry of Communication and Informatics is not serious in blocking pornographic sites?)" <http://techno.okezone.com/read/2011/04/19/55/447848/kemenkominfo-tak-serius-blokir-situs-porno> accessed 29 May 2012.

portals⁹⁶. This number, argued Enda, does not make sense since he believes that the amount of adult content websites exceeds the total sites blocked by the government. Moreover, there have been no follow ups regarding the ITE Law and Pornography Law which can legitimate the blocking policy, such as the issuance of Government or Minister Regulations. The implementation of blocking was done by letters sent to the Internet Service Providers (ISP) asking them to pass all websites accessed by the public to the *Trust Positif* application. Without any prior test run of the software, it did not perform as expected and therefore the attempt to restrict certain sites was ineffective. Thus, *ID-Blokir* is convinced that the policy was merely a momentous decision, proposed to win the heart of the Indonesian Muslim majority (Nasution, interview, 29/05/2012).

Having realised that the blocking policy by the government was a half-hearted attempt, *ID-Blokir* understand they can now lessen their worry over the concern regarding heavy intervention from the state towards the content of the Internet, at least for the time being. Yet, the platforms prepared for the campaign (the mailing list, *Facebook* page, and *Twitter* account) are still maintained, despite being rather inactive over the past year. This is so they may be revived should similar cases occur, given that the legal basis has been legitimated. If such cases do occur, the platforms to fight against undemocratic policies and actions will be ready to be employed once again (Nasution, interview, 29/05/2012).

5.4.2. Case 2: *Internet Sehat/ICTWatch*

Founded in 2002, ICT Watch (Information and Communication Technology Watch) is a Jakarta-based non-profit organisation established by a group of Indonesian young people who had concerns regarding the development and implementation of ICT in the country⁹⁷. Currently, ICT Watch is one of the few most influential organisations that actively shape the Indonesian public views regarding the Internet and how its content is governed. At the time when the group was established, the penetration of the Internet in Indonesia was very high. Many ICT companies were targeting schools as their market because educational institutions were regarded as one of the most prominent and promising users of the Internet. Unfortunately, the balance of information given about the Internet was never the concern of these companies, since they

96 See Republika, "Blokir Konten Porno Merupakan Perintah Undang-Undang (Blocking pornographic content is mandated by the Law)" <http://id.berita.yahoo.com/menkominfo-blokir-konten-porno-merupakan-perintah-undang-undang-095927878.html> accessed 27 May 2012.

97 See the official website of ICT Watch: <http://ictwatch.com/id/>.

kept on selling infrastructures and promoting a view of how the technology could change the world. Yet, according to Donny Budhi Utoyo, the executive director of ICT Watch, adequate training on how to produce Internet content and the necessary cautions about its negative effects, including the much needed information on how to minimise them, were largely neglected (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012).

Owing to this particular concern, ICT Watch initially aimed to balance the information about the positive and negative impacts of the Internet and make this available to the public. In order to do so, they needed to empower the society so that they were not regarded merely as users, but as information and content producers and distributors. They understood that information was something important for the public, and that the importance of accessing information should also be understood by the society. Therefore, ICT Watch envisaged that *“every person, without exception, has the right to access, produce, distribute and/or utilise any useful information for life through a variety of new media safely and wisely, without having a sense of fear and worry”*. There are five major concerns of the organisation: online safety education, freedom of expression, technology update, new media study, and ICT for women. On many occasions and in many campaigns these concerns overlapped, resulting in new schemes using several approaches to aim for a much more targeted goal (ICT Watch website).

To promote its concerns, since the beginning of its establishment, ICT Watch has already run its flagship programme *Internet Sehat* (literally translated as Healthy Internet). The main goal of this programme is to promote the use of the Internet in a safe, wise, and responsible manner. This programme is also considered to be at the core of one of their foci, i.e. online safety education. The premise of the programme was simple: if negative impacts of the Internet could not be avoided, the best way to address it was by empowering the public to produce as much high quality Internet content as possible, so that the focus of the users could shift towards the qualified materials (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012).

In order to achieve such a goal, ICT Watch planned their campaigns meticulously. There are two main aspects of the campaign; online and offline. For the online campaign, the group uses their website and social media accounts to communicate the programme. The website, *Internet Sehat.org*, is a site rich with information. Not only does it contain information on projects or training materials for various communities all across the country, it also hosts lots of

articles, data, information, studies and other materials gathered from various resources. The posts vary from daily Internet usage (such as a feature of a new application of a popular website), to more sophisticated information (e.g., the consequences of CISPA – Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act, a bill proposed by the United States government to monitor the Internet). Such information is usually translated and edited in order to increase readability for their website's viewers. All agendas of ICT Watch regarding the campaign of *Internet Sehat*, as well as online safety education, can be easily found on the website. They also use *Ushahidi* to collect information, visualise, and map it interactively in order for the public to keep track of the projects under the *Internet Sehat* programme in many regions in Indonesia (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012).

In order to ensure that content is able to be reached by the public, ICT Watch also uses social media. To date, *Internet Sehat* can be found in several social media platforms, i.e. *Twitter*, *YouTube*, *Facebook*, and *Flickr*. These platforms are used due to their popularity and user-friendliness both for the organisation and the public (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012). *Twitter* and *Facebook* are used to continuously inform the public about the activities and other useful messages. This is done mainly by automatically linking the posts on the website so that the links can appear in both *Twitter* and *Facebook*. Until 18 May 2012, *Internet Sehat's Twitter* account (@*Internet Sehat*) had approximately 108 thousand followers, and their *Facebook* page (*Internet Sehat*) had been subscribed to by some 50 thousand people. Furthermore, using both social media, ICT Watch can, to some extent, communicate directly to the public, enabling them to directly exchange ideas and information. This is crucial to get a grasp of what is going on, or what is needed, in terms of online education in many regions in the country. Many times, these exchanges led to real projects conducted by the group. Meanwhile, its *Flickr* account (*Internet Sehat*) is used to upload all pictures taken during their projects or during the course of their activities. Although there is not much information exchange, the photographs can be regarded as a way of letting the public know what kinds of activities ICT Watch conducts. Lastly, the *YouTube* account (*Internet Sehat*) serves as a campaign tool itself, enabling the organisation to reach wider audiences through video postings containing their campaign materials.

As shown above, ICT Watch has been using the Internet and social media to expand their outreach. The *Internet Sehat* movement has been so successful that it was even adopted by the Government, but under a different name. ICT Watch has also been invited, on numerous occasions, by the Government

to provide views and opinions on the Internet governance in Indonesia, making it perhaps one of the most influential civil society groups to advise the Government in Internet-related issues. But, even though the Internet has brought many significant changes and developments to the organisation, ICT Watch does not regard it as their most powerful tool. To them, the Internet and social media are just the tools to enhance the organisation's visibility, the means to channel their campaigns, and the devices to amplify their network (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012). By letting people see who they are, what they are doing, and getting them exposed positively, the organisation will gradually enlarge their network. Although their cyber platforms are easily accessed by anyone they state:

We believe that, actually, our technology is not for the grassroots. Internet is not grassroots [technology]. It would be a lie to say so. So, we know that those who access Twitter, Facebook, online radio and the likes are the middle classes, and we believe that it is [actually] those people who are anxious. If they are anxious about a certain condition around them, and we could deliver certain useful information [to address such condition], they would have the opportunity to make their surroundings better. (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012)

This is why, for ICT Watch, their main targets are actually the lower classes with lower income, which also means lower access to the Internet. They aim to educate grassroots communities to be able to use Internet safely as well as to introduce them to affordable, self-support Internet connection. As Donny reveals,

That is why, for the grassroots, we organise road-shows. We come to visit communities in many regions, but we are not the one doing the improvements. We support some people in the regions to [be able to] do something [useful with regard to the Internet] so that they can be sensitive towards [the needs of] their own local community. (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012)

ICT Watch's campaign to bring as many Indonesians as possible to access the Net safely is mostly done in the offline sphere, through actual face to face meetings, personal touch, and ideas exchange, which lead to an actual action. Emphasising the importance of offline activities, Donny adds that if only ICT Watch had more resources, they would definitely have increased the number of their meetings with local communities because this method is the most

effective way to achieve their goals. Nevertheless, even though social media is not considered as the main tool for campaigns in ICT Watch, Donny admits its importance for civic activism:

We highly encourage research or civil society organisations linking to our group to use social media. It does not mean that we ask them to initiate [social] change by merely using social media. [It is] not absurd, but [it is very] unlikely. By using social media [to communicate], we may know what they have done, so we understand what kinds of help we can offer, and vice versa. This is the aspect [of the technology] which [can] make civil society stronger, because it helps us to connect to each other. Therefore using social media is very important. (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012)

It is also about change that very recently ICT Watch facilitated the launch of *Parlemen 2.0* (literally Parliament 2.0) – a civil society initiative initially led by CRI (Combine Resource Institution) to involve public in policy making process in the parliament. For the first time in Indonesian history, on 13-14 June 2012, meeting sessions of the *Pansus* (*Panitia Khusus*, or Special Committee) of the House of Representative was broadcasted publicly and independently through community media. The meeting was on the Village Bill (RUU Desa) and general public could join through a specific site (<http://fokus.suarakomunitas.net/fokus/23684/mengawal-ruu-desa>), which was also equipped with other social media channels such as *Facebook*, *Twitter*, and *SMS* for the public to participate. The sessions were also live-relayed to hundreds of community radios of the JRKI in 17 provinces and archived in ICT Watch's *YouTube* channel (<http://youtube.com/internetsehat>).

The idea of *Parlemen 2.0* actually stemmed from practices in community radio *Angkringan* in *Yogyakarta* which regularly broadcasts village meetings to the public and let them participate through phone calls or texting to the radio station. The idea was introduced to the House by Ahmad Nasir from CRI and was picked up by the Vice Chair of the Special Committee for RUU Desa Budiman Sudjatmiko (who was an ex pro-democracy activist), who then gave permission for its trial in the Committee meeting. ICT Watch provided technical assistance and promoted the idea of *Parlemen 2.0* widely and publicly believing that policy making processes have to be transparent and that public is entitled to know the processes. The Village Bill (*RUU Desa*), for example, once enacted into Law, will affect the lives of people in more than 70 thousands villages in Indonesia.

This initiative was widely welcomed by public, particularly civil society. As a matter of fact, in the House's official site (www.dpr.go.id), there is actually video streaming facility available, broadcasting *Parliament TV*, airing some of the House meetings. But these meetings are usually about 'hot issues', and already picked up by mainstream media, leaving many other meetings, most often more important and substantial, uncovered.

Combining strong, well planned offline programmes and strategic online campaigns surely offers the best possible result for modern day social activism, which is what has been achieved by ICT Watch in their successful *Internet Sehat* movement and *Parlemen 2.0* initiative. The cyber scheme may enhance the vibe of the concrete approach. No matter how advanced the Internet adoption is, or how much technology is used to build the society, when it comes to activism, it is no less than a series of "clicking, reading, and taking actions until a change occurs" (Utoyo, interview, 18/05/2012).

5.4.3. Jalin Merapi

Jalin Merapi, which stands for *Jaringan Informasi Lintas Merapi* (literally translated as Information Network Across Mt. Merapi), is a community based network, consisting of several community radio stations surrounding the Merapi volcano in the border of Yogyakarta and Central Java, Indonesia. The aim of the network is to manage community-based information regarding the volcano's activities in order to use it as a risk reducing factor if any eruptions were to occur. When it was established in 2006, there were only three community radio stations involved, i.e. *Lintas Merapi FM* (in Kemalang, Klaten, Central Java), *MMC FM* (in Selo, Boyolali, Central Java), and *K FM* (in Dukun, Magelang, Central Java). The network between the three stations was considered crucial because it became one of the most reliable news sources for the nearby communities and residents during and after disasters, since the local government did not have a comprehensive system to manage post-disaster information.

The programme of these three stations attracted several institutions and non-profit organisations to support them with the much needed resources to gather, manage, and spread information about Mt. Merapi's activities. A significant source of support was the thorough information system provided by a Yogyakarta-based NGO *Combine Resource Institution* (or 'Combine' thereafter)⁹⁸, converging both conventional and new media technology. The system ran in a relatively simple manner, although quite a lot of resources

98 See <http://combine.or.id/>.

were needed: each radio station was given a set of handy transmitters to report any updates regarding the volcano and its nearby residents. Combine then translated the messages received, and displayed it in the dedicated *Jalin Merapi* website⁹⁹.

The information system was found to be most useful during the eruption of Merapi in October 2010. In addition to coordinating the mobilisation of volunteers and aid for the victims, the system also enabled news and updates to be sent using handy transmitters or text messages (SMS/Short Message Service). The information was then managed and uploaded onto the website, which functioned as a landing page which integrated all information for the public and converged all media involved in the creation of the content. The technological convergence involving both conventional and new media technology provided an easy access to the information because people could easily relay the updates from various platforms, i.e. *Twitter* (@JalinMerapi and @JalinMerapi_en), *Facebook* (*Jalin Merapi*), the website, and the community radio stations which continuously broadcasted the updated news.

Such technological convergence strategy devised by *Jalin Merapi* was regarded as relatively successful. Other than gathering information from their trusted volunteers, the organisation could also receive various updates from local residents or the general public via all means they used, especially new media. The impact of this was beyond the wildest imagination of those involved in *Jalin Merapi*, as depicted by what was probably of one the most cited stories of the time, below.

It was 5 November 2010, 19.30 [Indonesia time], when a call from a voluntary fieldworker alerted us. We received an emergency request from our Post at Wedi, Klaten, who just received refugees from Balerante and Sidorejo, and now needed 6, 000 portion of nasi bungkus (rice meal). That phone call was so desperate, asking us to tell the public about the need for nasi bungkus. We did not dare to promise anything as it was already night time. Who could have provided that much rice meal in such circumstance? However, we kept trying. Our admin team did everything they could. Some called other Posts or refugee camps who might have some surplus of rice meal. But we did not get what we needed. Not even close. At 19.55, Nasir tweeted: #DONASI nasbung utk 6000 pengungsi di Pusdiklatpor Depo Kompi C, Wedi, Klaten. MALAM INI | Candy 081XXXXXXXXX [literally: #DONATION ricemeal for 6000 refugees

99 See <http://merapi.combine.or.id/>.

at Pusdiklatpor Depo Kompi C, Wedi, Klaten, TONIGHT | Candy 081XXXXXXX]. The time passed so slowly. We knew the tweet was re-tweeted by the followers of @JalinMerapi. In half an hour, the phone rang again. The very volunteer in Klaten told us, gladly, that they have received the rice meal for the 6000 refugees. He wanted us to tell the public about the matter so that there would be no excess of rice meal. We were so glad and felt relieved. One of us, unfortunately I forgot who, tweeted: #DONASI Puslatpur Depo Kompi C, Wedi, Klaten sdh kelebihan stok nasbung. Air minum masih dibutuhkan [literally: #DONATION Puslatpur Depo Kompi C, Wedi, Klaten has received more than enough rice meals. Fresh water is still needed]. (Ambar Sari Dewi, Jalin Merapi volunteer, interview and written testimony, emailed to the author 15/12/10; this was also published in Bahasa Indonesia in the Bulletin KOMBINASI Edition 25, 2010).

The account above shows the magnitude of a result combining reliable information, responsive volunteers, technological convergence, and –to some extent—the hype of social media. As Ade Tanesia, another volunteer of *Jalin Merapi*, confirms, the success story of the organisation lay in its ability to manage its information sources. The network paid particular attention to data verification in order to assure its accuracy. With the high flow of informative and aid-seeking tweets during the disaster time, the volunteers needed to recheck their sources before spreading the news to the public. They asked everyone who sent any updates to include their telephone number in their message. A group of people who were responsible for verifying the data would then call the source to ascertain whether or not the information was to be trusted. In some cases, they asked their volunteers in the nearby area to check for themselves how accurate the information was. Keeping the accuracy of information was one of the most determining factors in drawing and maintaining attention and aid from the general public (Tanesia, written testimony, emailed 21/05/2012).

From the testimonials given, social media, especially *Twitter*, can be considered as something of an effective tool in driving the public to act upon a certain issue. Public participation is the key to effective activism –that organisations or civil society groups have to involve the citizens in order to embody their mission. In this case, *Twitter* apparently provided the much needed platform for *Jalin Merapi*, as reported by our informant:

Among other social media, we found Twitter is the quickest. At that time [when Mt. Merapi erupted on 27/10/10] the followers of @JalinMerapi had already reached 800. By the end of that day the number of Twitter followers of @JalinMerapi kept increasing to 7,000, while the members in our Facebook page reached 200. The number of the Twitter follower continuously increased and by the morning of 28/10/10 there were 10,000 followers. When the biggest eruption took place on the 5 November 2010 the Twitter follower reached 36,000. Until today, the number of our Twitter followers is between 32,000 and 33,000. To me it is fantastic. Our followers, public, help us by providing various information, from the info on volcanic activity of the mountain, to the condition of the refugees who need logistic and help. (ASD, Jalin Merapi volunteer, interview and written testimony, emailed 15/12/10)

Learning from *Jalin Merapi*, there are some preconditions that need to be obtained in order to reap the full potential of new technology during disaster time: (1) a certain focus of issue; (2) the availability of fast and reliable information which can be easily accessed by the general public; and (3) a shared awareness among members of the society, which then promotes the collective awareness to help the victims (as reflected by Tanesia and Habibi, 2010). Therefore, *Twitter*, just like any other new media technologies, can be a medium to prompt a collective action or movement in society to achieve a certain goal, only if these preconditions are met.

Jalin Merapi was relatively successful in using, adopting, and appropriating the Internet and social media to support their activities. Not only did they use the technology to communicate, socialise, and build networks, they pushed its function so that *Twitter* could also be used in the field of social change. The technology and strategy modeled by *Jalin Merapi* eventually inspired several other communities in the country to adopt, e.g. *Jalin Bromo* (Bromo is an active volcano in East Java) and *Jogja Cepat Tanggap* (literally translated as Fast Responsive Jogja), with several adjustments (Tanesia, written testimony, emailed 23/05/2012).

Unfortunately, up to now, the local government has not yet adopted the system used by *Jalin Merapi*. Several presentations given by the organisation to local administrators only resulted in information sharing because most of the staff in the local BPBD (*Badan Penanggulangan Bencana Daerah/Regional Disaster Management Agency*) could not operate new media technologies, including

the Internet and social media, and therefore could only use the conventional ones. Furthermore, the disaster management information system used by the government merely focuses on the transparency of funding, aid collection, and disaster updates from the government bodies, instead of from the locals (Tanesia, written testimony, emailed 23/05/2012). This indicates that there is still much work to do in order to increase internet literacy, especially amongst government officials. Only with such literacy will the Government be able to benefit from all available media to support the disaster information system – which is crucial in a country prone to natural disasters, like Indonesia.

5.5. Beyond technicality, beyond click-activism: A reflection

In March 2009, an independent citizen journalism portal was established by several online activists, including Enda Nasution the founder of ID Blokir: *Politikana* (politikana.com). The website was launched a few months before the general elections. The portal was used to gather political viewpoints from the general public regarding a wide range of political subjects, and acted as a platform for discussions. According to Enda, the portal was set up, to some extent, as a reaction towards the high volume of political talks and debates surrounding the election. The registered members of *Politikana* can post their opinions, information, pictures, or articles. A set of editors were managing these posts to ensure appropriateness of the entries, although there were no fact checking (Nasution, interview 29/06/2012).

In hindsight, back then, the use of the Internet in the Indonesian political sphere was not as vast as it is today. Yet, *Politikana* managed to gather more than 7,000 members within only a few months after it was brought to public. Today, the number has exceeded 10,000. This shows that although the platform was something uncommonly used at the time, the public was longing for an informative and educative sphere, where they could channel their thoughts and share their knowledge on current issues. Reading the posts in *Politikana*, we can see that the members did not only post their stance concerning a particular political issue, but also regarded themselves as a monitoring agent for the elections and for the conducts of political parties and candidates. There were no notable direct outcomes of the portal to the political practices at the time. But, according to Iman Brotoseno, an active member of the site, several political parties and candidates were opening up to *Politikana* members, inviting them to watch and scrutinise their campaigns in several regions in Indonesia (Brotoseno, interview 29/06/2012). Although there were no records of politicians taking part in the online discussions in *Politikana*, to some extent,

these practices has enabled mutual understanding between political actors and the general public, i.e. bloggers and citizen journalists.

In the aftermath of the 2009 election, *Politikana* maintains itself to be an online political discussion platform, providing general, as well as specified subjects which draw the attention of the citizens. At the moment, the portal provides links to the latest issues, e.g. the performance of the President and his Ministers, corruption cases, and the State Secrecy bill. According to Enda, these links can be changed by the editors to keep up with the latest political issues in the country.

What can we learn from here, and also from the earlier case studies?

First, what matters in civil society activism is not the tools such as the Internet or new media per se, but how civil society strategically and politically use the media to advance their activism. Too often, the use of the Internet and social media in civil society is more *ad hoc* rather than strategised. That is, the use of the technology is driven by more impulsive reactions rather than by a deliberate plan and strategy. The three cases presented above, in addition to the *Politikana*, underline the importance of strategising the use of new media. Strategised and carefully planned technology use can constitute an important ground for participating in an engagement. But inappropriate or carelessly planned technology use can exclude people from it.

Second, as change always takes place in the real, offline sphere, the role of physical technology (the Internet and social media) is in fact secondary to the social one (engagements, meetings, direct exchanges). ICT Watch's example of offline public gatherings when propagating a change in attitude towards the Internet asserts this notion. Such activities can provide opportunities to 'prepare' the public for a full-blown engagement, particularly when concerning political processes that affect public life. *ID-Blokir* was once ready for stepping into such processes and is now making itself ready to prepare the wider public for a possible larger scale engagement in the future.

Third, focusing the analysis only on the technical aspect of the Internet and social media as facilitators of civil society movements is naïve. The human factor plays as much of an important role as the technology does. *Jalin Merapi* is an obvious example of a movement where the success is primarily due to the human involvement, much beyond the technology being adopted. Indeed, the convergence of technology was an important step, but the convergence

of engagement involving various agencies mattered the most.

Fourth, if new media can strategically be used in civil society, there is a good possibility for concerned groups to not only emerge, but to contribute to the shaping of relations between technology, politics, and civic engagements. ID Blokir is an example in which emergent concerned civil groups are able to articulate their political identities through direct actions as a collective. The earlier example of *#IndonesiaTanpaFPI* also shows that once civil society can strategise the use of the technology, it could potentially lead to a multiplication of concerned groups in the wider public sphere.

Fifth, overall, these cases should make us –and all civil society groups and communities – more careful and critical towards today's cyber-utopianism or 'Internet centrality'. New media-facilitated civic engagement needs to be reoriented towards real societal changes in which the groups meet, discuss, network, and collaborate regularly in an offline world. Civic activism as such is therefore never fixed in format, but rather constituted and reconstituted through the everyday practices of engagements and ongoing actions.

Finally, all of these cases point to the basic premise, that civic activism is much beyond click-activism. While click activism revolves only around online activities (such as 'liking' or 'attending' in *Facebook*, *tweeting*, forwarding emails, etc.), civic activism forces those online activities into the real world (attending an actual meeting, donating, etc.). This is because there is a massive gap between the two that needs bridging. Only by doing so, can technology be used by civil society to engage with the political processes in Indonesia.

6. Conclusions and Implications

6.1. Conclusions

In the course of Indonesian development, civil society has played a central role. The 1998 *reformasi* brought a new climate in politics, economy, society and culture that altogether have created spaces for bottom-up initiatives to grow and blossom. Many civil society groups were established, working on many issues concerning transformation, and carrying out a variety of activities. At the same time, the Indonesian economy started to recover from the crisis and, as it developed, so did the formation of the middle classes and through them an alternative economy in Indonesia which further strengthened the civil society sphere. In a similar vein, the media sector also enjoyed the freedom, untying itself from state control, only to become one of the most commercialised sectors in Indonesia. However, the development of the media sector has also enabled the citizens to directly participate in the creation of the content and to reclaim the civic public sphere that was once captured by state-controlled media. The advent of technological innovation significantly changed the media sphere. The Internet and social media not only transformed traditional media but also transformed its audience: from a passive user and spectator, to an active user and concerned member of the public. All of these developments have resulted in a very dynamic civil society landscape in Indonesia.

Given the current political development and debates, as social movements, it is imperative that civil society groups and communities strengthen their role in society. Unlike political parties, civil society organisations do not compete for formal political power; but rather to influence political processes. Bottom-up democracy further necessitates a healthy civil society, where social movements and civic engagements are nurtured. Such is central in an infant democracy like Indonesia, because an active civil society is a precondition to a healthy, animate society which can exercise democratic political activities.

This is the context where the diffusion of the Internet and social media in civil society matters. In particular, whether the use and adoption of the technology constitutes an important element for the civil society in influencing political processes. Some structural problems like access and availability of ICT infrastructure in Indonesia can- and do- negatively impact upon the adoption

of the technology. However, the landscape of new media in Indonesia is incredibly rich. Various social media technologies are being used by a large number of civil society groups for many purposes. Yet such use and adoption is never straightforward. There are factors, both technical and substantial, that affect successful adoption of the technology and, similarly, create barriers into it. What is more important is that the process in which civil society organisations use these new media affects, and is affected by, their strategic and political needs and, ultimately, the roles they play in reshaping the socio-political life of the country. The widening civic space, even if only online, seems to be the most visible outcome of this.

In exploring the ways in which citizen groups in Indonesia use and adopt the Internet and social media we found that the technology does become a potential platform for the citizens to engage with the politics. The use of the Internet and social media potentially help civil society not only to disseminate issues to gain wider public attention but also to prepare the conditions for further actions. However we also notice that there are clear and present challenges that may hold back these potentials. First, the unequal access to ICT infrastructure which further creates divides and disparities in technology access and use. Second, media illiteracy, which is prominent across the society including in the Government. Finally, that the use of Internet and social media in civil society is still very much *ad hoc*, rather than strategised within organisations. These challenges need addressing since the use of the Internet and social media has started to become more prominent in the political processes in Indonesia: it has gradually changed the face of civic politics in the country and will continue to do so in the future.

6.2. Implications

We draw a few implications that could be fundamental. Firstly, technology use in civil society is never for the sake of technology itself. Instead it should aim to widen the interaction between civil society groups and communities and the beneficiaries with which- and for which- they work. Technology use should help empower civil society and encourage and support them to maintain a dynamic interaction with the public. With such an aim, strategising the use and adoption of technology in civil society is imperative if a more significant impact of civic activism is to be expected.

Secondly, with the rapid innovation of new media technology and vast development of civic activism taking place at the same time, a causal

relationship between the two might be seen to be inevitable for many people: that the latter is seen to have been caused by the former. While such causality might not always be wrong, there is an apparent danger to mistakenly favour technological superiority over human agency involvement, particularly when it comes to policy analysis. This implies therefore, that in policy orientation, the focus should first be addressed to develop the agency's capabilities both in appropriating the technology and in understanding the dynamics of civic and political realms.

Finally, as networking becomes more central for organisations today, the use of Internet and social media should also be strategically oriented to facilitate networking, both within the civil society sector and between civil society and other sectors, such as public and private organisations. Clearly this will pose new challenges, but likewise, it will also present new opportunities.

6.3. Limitations

We note at least two basic limitations of this research. First, we offer a grounded analysis, but this is not necessarily a generalised explanation of the nature of the use of new media in civil society in Indonesia. With the rich data presented in this paper we naturally expect the readers in relevant fields to judge the transferability of the findings into settings with which they are familiar. Likewise, we also expect them to judge the reasonability of the conclusions. Second, despite the fact that the issue of 'uncivil society' has been discussed at length in Section Two, the discussion about civil society in other parts of the paper is largely based on the assumption that they are 'good' or 'civilised'. Likewise, in the use of new media, we disregard the 'bad and uncivil ways' of using the technology. We do this deliberately as we need a firm ground on which to build our argument. Of course, as discussed in Section Two, 'bad' and 'uncivil' society groups do exist in reality, but they are purposively not taken into account in this study.

6.4. Closing remark

Having confirmed that the use of new media in the Indonesian civil society has significant implications both to the civil society itself and to socio-political dynamics in Indonesia, we now call upon future initiatives to empower civil society in the country. The Indonesian civil society needs to be capacitated in adopting and using new media strategically to facilitate their work. Such capacity building will help them adopt and use the technology, and ultimately, to achieve their mission and goal as civic guardian of the *res publica*.

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