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Introduction to the Special Issue on Social Implications of the ICTs in the Indonesian Context

Merlyna Lim and Yanuar Nugroho

In the exponential growth of the internet, especially the internet, have become a ubiquitous part of people’s lives all over the world, including in Indonesia. Three decades since the internet was introduced to Indonesia via the first international connection made by the University of Indonesia in Jakarta (Lim, 2003:117), the number of Indonesian internet users has reached 39.6 million or approximately 16.1% of total population (Internet World Stats, 2011). That makes Indonesia one of 20 countries with the highest number of internet users. The more stunning fact comes from the usage of social media in the country. In 2011, there are around five million bloggers populated the Indonesian blogosphere. By December 2011, there are 41.7 million Facebook users in Indonesia, making it the second largest nation on Facebook after the United States (Socialbakers, 2011). In addition, the April 2011 data from Comscore (2011) reported that at 22% Indonesia ranks fourth of its Twitter population, behind the Netherlands, Japan and Brazil.

The growing use of the internet, including social media, has not only implicated the ways Indonnesians communicate, but also influenced the ways they connect to each other. With the developments of social media such as blogs, wikis, collaborative websites and other social networking tools to fulfill the personal, organizational, societal and political goals, and to influence the ways individuals work and live, it is important to understand the implications it brings. What is central here is the needs for a critical examination of the assumptions behind the internet adoption in Indonesia and the ways in which these impact, and are impacted by, the societal development. While innovations in internet technologies and social media have perhaps given new impetus for the reinvention of many activism in many fronts (i.e. government, business, and civil society organizations), more than often, not all of these technological adoption processes are deliberate and strategically designed by the users.

Similarly, equal access to telecommunication infrastructure cannot be assumed as granted: digital divide (Norris, 2001) is real, particularly in developing worlds like Indonesia. Moreover, mobile and cable broadband penetration has been claimed to have bridged the divide (e.g. Roux, 2011) but most of its development simply follows the ‘market logic’ rather than its ‘universal service obligation’ (e.g. Rauen et al., 2011), leaving many deprived areas unconnected, as is the case in Indonesia. In contexts like these, Morozov’s warnings (2011) on the over-exaggerated role of digital technology, particularly social media in social change, despite sounds too dystopian, are worth noting. We should always be critical to the notion of the internet being perceived as a causal agent having a pivotal role in social change. Echoing Lim and Kann (2008), we perceive the internet, as a technological artefact, as “both constituted by society and constituting society” (83). The impact and outcomes of the internet as well as its inherent limits and possibilities are, thus, constructed by “social arrangements and contexts around the technology” (Lim & Kann, 2008:83). We also note, not only is the adoption and use of the Internet and social media never straightforward, its integration into many organisational strategies often becomes problematic (for an example of internet adoption in civil society organizations (CSOs), see Nugroho, 2011).

However, despite the exponential growth of the internet usage and the abovementioned challenges, scholarly work focusing on the relationship between the internet and society in Indonesia is still a rarity. As a research domain, the Indonesian internet study only started about one and half decade ago. The first known scholarly work in the field is Hill and Sen’s (1997) preliminary survey of the internet’s democratizing potential in Indonesian politics. With their study on the politics and culture of Indonesian cybercafe or warnet in Yogyakarta, Hill & Sen (1997) opened up a new terrain for exploration. Since then, a handful of scholars have emerged as the first generation of researchers who have conducted in-depth research in various social, political, and cultural aspects of the internet. Such research is exemplified by scholarly work on: the relationship between the internet and democracy (Hill & Sen, 2000; 2005; Lim, 2003; 2004a; 2006), roles of the internet in conflicts and in shaping collective identity (Hill, 2002; Brauchler, 2003; 2004; Lim, 2004b; 2005; 2011), online election (Hill, 2003), CSOs’ use of the technology (Nugroho, 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2011; Nugroho and Tampubolon, 2008), urban spatiality of the internet development (Lim, 2002), internet adoption in educational institution (Kuntoro & Al-Hawamdeh, 2003; Thompson, 2004), e-government (Furuhol & Wahid, 2008), politics and culture of the blogosphere (Lim, 2009), and socio-economic aspect of the internet access (cybercafe or warnet) (Kristiansen et al, 2003; Wahid et al, 2006), among others. While these works can be considered as pioneering, certainly there are many other unexplored terrains in this novel field of study.

This special issue aims to enrich the intellectual discussions much needed in the field. Five articles showcased here look at a wide variety of the uses of online media technologies and

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platforms and what implications these uses have on people, organizations and society in the Indonesian context as the technology becomes more widely available. This issue also includes works that look at the other side of the coin, those who focus on the cultural, social and political shaping of the technologies by Indonesian society. We briefly introduce them in turn.

In the first article, Tiastuti and Rakhmani investigate the relationship between Indonesia blogging culture and primordialism. Providing a rich analysis of the Indonesian blogosphere, these authors argue that in this new sphere nationality is shaped by old languages but mediated through new models. Further, they argue that the blogosphere emerges as a network that facilitates ethno-symbolism where the trace of ideological hegemony of nationalist ideology merges with the ethnic sentiment. Following this, in a comprehensive study of the broadband access in the country, the second article by Rohman and Bohlin attempts to identify the demand and supply factors that determine mobile broadband access. Findings from this study show that geographical characteristics play more important role than income in developing the broadband access.

In the third article, Wayansari provides an interesting exploration of the role of Web 2.0 based websites in influencing politics in Indonesia’s new democracy. Through the case of Politikana.com, Wayansari demonstrates that user-generated content platforms can potentially contribute to the widening of online public sphere by providing an “associational space” for rational and critical discourse. Widodo’s study of use of the Internet for public participatory democracy by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in the fourth article, argues along the same line. The author demonstrates that citizen journalism or community-based journalism is an effective medium to develop participatory democracy. His findings, however, show that while there is a mutual relationship between internal and external use of the internet by NGOs, the advancement in workplace participatory democracy does not directly correlate with public participatory. Finally, Dewi shares her research on the application of local e-government in rural areas. Using the case of Terong village, the author demonstrates that the successful development of community-based e-government in bureaucratic reform is determined not only by the application of the e-government system itself, but also influenced by the media convergence and structural factors such as strong leadership and good governance from the related local government.

These articles sit nicely together and are complementary to each other. Through their cases, studies, analysis, and theorization, contributors of this issue together have contributed to a broader understanding of how the internet and society have mutually shaped each other and theoretical considerations of the links between social implications and the internet. It is our honor to edit such a collection. As editors, we are also proud to pronounce that the contributors are, predominantly, young Indonesian scholars who never published in peer-reviewed outlet before. We sincerely hope that the launch of this special issue marks a significant milestone, not only for these young scholars, but also for the advancement of the Indonesian internet study.

We thank the contributors for their hard work and extend our gratitude to Dr. Thomas Hardjono for his valuable support and assistance in finalizing this special issue.

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In particular, Yanuar focuses on the role of innovation in development, mostly in sustainable development and/or developing countries. He also investigates factors other than innovation (e.g. democracy, civic engagement, among others) that play important roles in the success of development and pays attention to intermediaries and intermediation process in the systems of innovation. He pays attention at the link between new media and information technologies and social change and their interaction in the fabric of societal life. Lastly, he looks at the mobility of researchers, impacts of research funding schemes, the influence of journal rankings in academic careers, and knowledge management in third sector organizations and services sectors.
Abstract—Although the shift of paradigm in Post Authoritarian Indonesia has rearticulated the discourse of nationhood, the general notion that it is based on an imagined community remains an important consideration. Decades of ideological hegemony has been performed by the state through various socio-cultural constructions, embedding in the minds of its citizens the notion of a nation as a territorial space that undermines ethnicity in favor of the wholeness of ‘Indonesia’. This paper studies the community within the cyberspace, namely Blogger Communities, to explore collective identities that are shared in the minds of its members to re-conceptualize Indonesian nationhood. As a result of decades of hegemonic state oppression, Blogger Communities practice an extended construction of this hegemonic national consciousness in the blogosphere. These communities perform both the role of social agency that goes beyond the virtual through conforming to the shaped territorial space in general and ethnicity in particular – forming a cyber Taman Mini Indonesia Indah.

Index Terms—cyberspace, nationhood, identity, ethnicity, blogging culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the sky, there is no distinction of east and west; people create distinction out of their own minds and then believe them to be true. (Buddha)

Studies on the role of media in the exercise of social power in general and nationhood in particular, have increasingly focused on how institutional media construct national identity [1], [2], [3]. In a country like Indonesia, where for years, the ‘nationalists’ struggled to unify more than 200 ethnic groups into this ‘imagined community’ of a nation, the role of a unifying media is important in constructing a ‘national consciousness’. The idea is that media use allows a synchronized activity, rendering the receivers anonymous, as they are part of the ‘mass’. The cultures conveyed are as important as the isolated activities of the receivers in terms of constructing a fraternity of otherwise strangers, or in other words, an ‘imagined community’.

The internet, on the other hand, emerged more as an alternative medium that found its way out from under the control of the state [3], [4]. There are contesting ideas surrounding whether or not the internet, particularly social media, is indeed a revolutionary tool, an extension for institutional media, or if it provides a connection with existing power holders [5], [6], [7]. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that social media notably functions in different ways for its users. Such difference redefines the idea of a ‘mass audience’ and gives way to the re-conceptualization of the ‘media’s role’, or the ‘media’-tion of social relations, in constructing a national consciousness. With fewer identifiable power structures compared to institutional media, the internet provides a space that is shaped by its users. The notion of ‘space’ becomes an important consideration in order to understand this process; as nation building is a multifaceted dynamic through which – as the focus of this paper – nationhood is constructed through mediation and physical landscape.

Studies on state ideology [8], [9], [10] argue that the powerful manipulate the subordinates to unwittingly adopt the ideology of the ruling class through various means of economic, political, and socio-cultural productions and reproductions. The subordinates unconsciously consent to the set of ideologies determined by the powerful, including undermining social and cultural fragmentation. Landscape and architecture can be seen as the ‘media within culture’ or a media archive that, in relation to the idea of a nation, is a representation of an erased ‘particular’ (i.e. ethnicity, geographical markers, territory, etc). (See Fig. 1)

Fig. 1. Map of Indonesia.
A physical artifact of grandeur, monumental to the national culture project in Indonesia is the Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (or the “Beautiful Indonesia Miniature Park”, hereafter referred to as the TMII). Built under Suharto’s regime, the TMII embodies this ideological archive. In the TMII, the uniqueness of each ethnicity in Indonesia is highly accentuated and framed within the museum complex. It symbolizes the desire of the authoritarian regime (through the hegemony of nationhood) to control Indonesian local communities by providing a space that represents mental and physical boundaries. The Indonesian government maintained the locality of each ethnic group, allowing ethnic sentiments and nationalism to coexist. This visible ‘territorial marking’ is reinforced by institutional media, particularly through television, as part of a larger nation building scheme. The introduction of the internet, on the other hand, has blurred these markings. Data shows that in the rapid growth of local blogger communities – permitted by the increasing availability of the internet – they have name themselves by territorial ‘ Indonesian’ markers. These reemployed markers, which were created by the authoritarian government, merge together the notion of ‘physical’ and ‘mediated’ space. These blogger communities, not unlike the TMII, are shaped and bordered by physical territorial names in cyberspace. Reading the list of names of local blogger communities is like reading the list of traditional houses built inside the TMII.

This paper questions how local blogger communities practice and extended construction of national consciousness in Post Authoritarian Indonesia. Despite the end of the authoritarian regime, the boundaries that have been strategically created by the government are continually rehearsed. Even in the cyber practices of blogger communities, Indonesian netters maintain the imagined boundaries as an implication of decades of hegemonic oppression.

II. SPACE, POLITICS AND NATION BUILDING IN TMII

During the three decades of the Suharto regime, Indonesians were taught to value the geographical condition of the country – the string of 17,504 islands and its surrounding waters belong to Indonesia. On one hand, ethnicities that mark these territories are included as part of the national culture, namely the young Indonesian nationalists who had united into local/national ethnic union of the first Youth Pledge. On the other, ethnically distinct groups that live in various areas all over Indonesia are seen as a threat towards national pride. The denial of minor ethnicities shaped a banal national awareness, for it annihilated the awareness of Indonesia as a community comprising of particular groups in favor of shaping the idea of a community as a ‘whole’. Propagandist methods were used, through both physical landscape and through institutional media, to stress the issue of unity in diversity – including and instilling the hegemonic ideology of a limited and selected ethnicity and culture.

The TMII embodied the notion of the annihilation of specific cultures and therefore constructed a banal national unity. The park was built in 1971 by former first lady Tin Suharto (“Ibu Tin”), who personally financed this giant project and who subsequently opened it to the public in 1977. The TMII is the brainchild of Ibu Tin who, after having visited Disneyland, aimed to raise a sense of nationalism in diversity by building an amusement centre in the form of a miniature Indonesia. The TMII includes a set of 26 traditional houses from each province in Indonesia. The park is surrounded by an artificial lake with extensive man-made islands in the centre – a physical map of the archipelago. The TMII is essentially a museum compound. Each traditional house is an individual museum, along with the other 16 museums located inside the TMII. (See Fig. 2) The miniatures function as a synopsis of virtual aspects of Indonesian life; representing cultures, natural and traditional ethnicities.

The notion of the ‘museum’ considers the imagined forms of the Indonesian authority’s dominion. Drawing from Anderson’s idea, we argue that the TMII is an imagination of how its creator forms the mental image of an empire. Although the TMII claims to portray the diversity of Indonesia, the majority of street names, gardens, theatres, and museums have been greatly influenced by Suharto’s own ethnic background, namely Javanese culture. The 3D theatre is named Keong Mas (Golden Snail) from Javanese folklore, the swimming pool is named Taman Renang Ambar Tirta coming from Javanese language (Tirta means water and Ambar means extensive), the playground is named Among Putra which comes from the Javanese language (Among means care and Putra means children), and in the main entrance of the TMII stands the Purna Bhakti Pertiwi museum in the form of a cone.

![Fig. 2. Map of TMII, which includes a miniature Indonesia at the centre.](image)

1 The statement recognized the ‘major ethnic and religious groups’ of the highest cultural achievement who also show evidence of ‘civilization’ as part of nation building. Ethnic and religious minorities who are not perceived as sharing this value are clustered together as if sharing a common ‘primitive’ nature. See Colchester, M. (1986) “Unity and Diversity: Indonesian Policy Towards Tribal Peoples”, The Ecologist, 16.

2 The famous Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge) was declared by local ethnic (and religious) groups (Jong Java, Jong Islamieten Bond, Jong Batak, Jong Celebes, Jong Ambon, Minahasa Bond, Madura Bond, Pemuda Betawi, etc) pledging themselves to the unity of a nation. The second Youth Pledge (Jakarta, 27-28 October 1928) was the first official event that constructs national awareness comprising of ethnic diversity. The second official event is the promulgation of Pancasila as a political philosophy in Indonesia (1 June 1945), where then President Sukarno set forth the Sanskrit words ‘Bhinneka Tunghal Ikta’ (Unity in Diversity) as the essential slogan – stressing on national pluralism.

3 There is a slight difference in practice between “building an awareness of national ideology” and “brainwashing to impose national ideology”, where Anderson (1992) uses the term “instilling of national ideology” (p. 163).

4 Although there were rumors of corruption during the establishment of the TMII.
shape similar to *tumpeng* (the Javanese ceremonial yellow rice dice). (See Fig. 3 & 4)

![Fig. 3 & 4. Left: *Nasi tumpeng* present in a celebration. Right: The Purna Bhakti Pertiwi museum in the shape of *tumpeng.*](image)

By using Javanese names, Suharto positions his own ethnicity at the centre of his vision of Indonesia. This imagined dominion places Javanese culture at the centre of the universe (Indonesia), enforced by it being surrounded by markers of other cultural identities. Through the TMII, Suharto virtually marked the territory, ensuing his control of Indonesia. The TMII becomes more than a museum representing the variety of Indonesian cultures. It is a landscape of hegemony in the form of an amusement centre to naturalize an idea of ‘an empire’, emphasizing on the Indonesian government as the “ruling bloc” [13] tasked to maintain the reality of national unity through the inclusion of ethnic groups under one nation. The TMII is a hegemonic space as it constructs a reality of unconscious everydayness that resulted from the art of domination, whose objects spontaneously accept the rules from the authority [13].

Paper [14] studied the use of architectural landscape as hegemonic tools to colonize its public’s consciousness as a false community and transfers a belief system with which they employ to ‘view the world’. The TMII’s display embodies the ideology of Indonesian nationhood. The architectural landscape has been used by the ruling bloc as an important medium in preserving the Indonesian people in oblivion of a hegemonic ideology. For more than 30 years, it has been compulsory for Indonesian students to have field trips to TMII as part of a school’s education programme, and for government employees to visit TMII as part of the family-friendly benefits of the state department they work for. The wives of the Armed Forces members and government officials visit the TMII to exemplify their nationalism and to support their husbands’ career.

The practice of visiting the TMII is a form of mental colonization through imparting the banal influence over Indonesian citizens of various cultural backgrounds, in order to ensure their loyalty to the NKRI (Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia or the United Nation of the Republic of Indonesia). The TMII is utilized to recreate and reinforce the invisible border in the minds of Indonesians to replace the pre-existing visible border belonging to every ethnic group in Indonesia. The work of [12] also argued that this “nation-building” effort is one of the forms of political movement to guarantee against disloyalty to NKRI:

“State elites undertake “nation-building” efforts to create common bonds, foster common values, or craft a common culture that defines a new nation coincident with existing state boundaries. This form of state nationalism attempts to eliminate bonds to a prior national or ethnic group and to form new loyalties to the state based on membership of a new nation” [12].

The TMII is one of the cases in which the hegemonic ideology of Indonesian nationhood is crystalized as ‘reality’. The notion of “Bhineka Tunggal Ika” becomes so commonsense that even in Post Authoritarian Indonesia, and through a space with virtually no government control, the blogger communities continue to name themselves by employing markers of Indonesian territories. This practice extends from and reinforces ‘common bonds, values and culture’ of the nation. The manner in which each blogger community identifies itself and the requirements they impose on new members to meet in person prior to joining emphasizes [15] the idea that “‘common sense’ becomes an exciting object of study as part of a constant struggle for the dominant, or hegemonic, ideology. It marks the moment at which an ideology triumphantly becomes ‘banal’.” (2003, p. 194)

### III. Indonesian Blogger Community as a Cultural Artifact

Cyberspace is eroding [national] borders, at least in terms of jurisdiction. In fact, nation and state are often irrelevant in the formation and conduct of online communities. Intellectual properties flow freely across the Net, knowing no borders. (Vince Guiliano)

Data reveals that the phenomenon of blogging in Indonesia is one worth studying. The Asia Blogging Net (ABN) reported that there are 30,000 active blogs in Indonesia around mid 2007. By 2008, this number had multiplied. Mass media predicted the active blogs in Indonesia reaching 1 million.

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5 Studies show that the dominance of Javanese in Indonesian history has occurred long before its independence. In this paper however, we focus on how Suharto’s regime mainstreamed Javanese culture as part of the hegemonic national consciousness after the forming of the modern, nation-state.

6 A debate surrounds the concern of violent rebellions and separatist movements are rooted in the exclusion of ethnic groups in state.

7 Egor used the idiom ‘blind society’ to which we do not completely agree in the context of Indonesia. In this paper, we use the term false community instead to refer to Anderson’s (1983) imagined sense of fraternity and Marx’s false consciousness (in relation to the relationship between ‘class’, between the ruling and the ruled). The term deliberately excludes the agency of members as it focuses instead on disproportionate power distribution that undermines individual autonomy.

8 Three most notable (but not limited to) provinces in Indonesia, D.I. Aceh, East Timor (now Timor Leste), and Irian Jaya (now West Papua) have been immune from hegemonic tools like the TMII (for more on national disintegration, see King 2004 and Bresnan 2005).

9 ABN or PT Asia Blogging Net is a company specialised in blogging and web 2.0 from Indonesia for the Asia region.


Figure 5 below shows Jakarta as one of the top 30 cities for blogs in the world. The data also reveals Jakarta as one of four representative cities in Asia for blogging practices; together with Beijing, Mumbai and Singapore. WordPress.com statistics emphasizes Indonesia’s blog booming by showing that Bahasa Indonesia is one of the top languages used by WordPress.com users after English, along with Spanish, Turkish, Brazilian Portuguese and Italian.

The rising phenomenon led to the first Blogger Fest in October 2007 in Jakarta. The first author of the current paper was present in both Indonesia blogger events. She was sitting alone in upper row of chairs and claimed that it was fascinating and enjoyable to observe how people, who have otherwise interacted in a mediated space, meet each other physically. The Blogger Fest accommodated the ‘crossing-over’ from the ‘online world’ into the ‘offline world’. In her first Blogger Fest, it took Endah minutes to realize that several people commune together on the same spot. When new guests arrived, they would look around first before finding a seat – as if trying to find something. Not long after, friends waved and the newly arriving guest approached the group and cheerfully joined them by greeting each other using their ethnic vernaculars.

At the Blogger Fest, the master of the ceremony introduced these commuting groups of people as Blogger Bali, Blogger Bunderan HI, Blogger Angin Mamiri, Blogger Bandung, and so forth. Each group demonstrated a unique collective movement, several of them performing chants using their local vernaculars every time the master of ceremony introduced a group to the attendants. It was extremely surprising to see how intimate and familiar they having been with each other, in spite of their relationship, or community, was wielded almost exclusively online.

‘Community’ is a concept that is still undergoing scholarly debates. For the purpose of this paper, we refer to Cohen, who states that “community” is contextually developed and is dependent on how its member embeds the meaning of “community” into their life practices. However, the work of Putnam’s (1993 and 2000) notion of civic virtue in social capital society (i.e. trusting and profitable relations among individuals) requires less physical interaction and more in the affection that binds its members. Modern community does not stress the importance of rigid environment boundaries and it doesn’t emphasize cultural roots (i.e. ethnic, ideology, politics, region, government) [21]. The nonphysical on-line world fulfills the need of being a member of “community”, where member can immerse in the togetherness without space, time, or physical borders [15, 20, 22, 23, 24]. Virtual community, attributed to the late Harold Rheingold’s expression is not any different with what he had experienced in the “real world: everything in the online world is as ‘real’ as in the offline world.

According to him [22], cyber community members pursue security by shifting their need from the sense of community belonging and space attachment to the sense of information sharing and possession. The distinctive factor differentiating modern communities and cyber communities is for the notion that the latter dwell in cyberspace: “a state of possibilities, a place where space and time lose meaning of barriers” [25]. In modern communities, information re-enacts the ‘traditional’ requirement of social identity and it becomes the yeast of “community in the mind”. Mediated social relationships extend from traditional customs that are apparent in traditional communities, whereas in cyber communities, it is the space itself – the place without barriers – that, in combination with the ‘traditional’ of modern communities, shape relationships vis-à-vis the community itself. Rheingold’s imagined communities are voluntarily formed by its members, who expect benefit from others through information sharing, furthermore they expect that other members may benefit through their own information sharing. It gives more expression to reciprocal connections among the members that bears down on the information sharing.

Although he refers to Anderson’s Imagined Community – Rheingold narrowed his attention to “community in the mind”. The term refers to the notion that most members are anonymous to other members yet they share the same framework of community in their mind. What Rheingold refers to imagined communities has nothing to do with cultural roots in terms of nationhood. Rheingold’s imagined community is not a culturally ingrained group, formed by culture, history, and kinship as Anderson’s is. Anderson argues formed nationalism in the mind (imagined) of communities’ members, whereas Rheingold stresses on the shared framework in the minds of the members.

Compare Castell’s (2000, 2001, 2002) network society as a form of modern society (i.e. whose activities involve the exchange of electronically processed information that are fully supported by electronic-based technologies) with Putnam’s (1993 and 2000) notion of civic virtue in social capital society (i.e. trusting and profitable relations among individuals will form a democracy because of its self-governing nature, where connections
Implementing the concept of the modern community into Indonesian Blogger Communities largely ignores the basic needs of humans as social beings, as the concept is built upon the notion that people shape communities mainly around institutions and economical practices [26, 27]. In relation to this, after 2001, Indonesian bloggers realize that several of them share the same territorial and ethnic background – with Bandung Blogger Village as the first regional blogger community founded on 5 July 2005. Contrast to scholars who argue that it is modern communities that dwell in cyberspace, where space and time lose its barriers; Indonesian blogger communities interact actively and simultaneously maintain the projected “territorial border” in their minds.

In 2009, Candra listed blogger communities all around Indonesia17. Drawing from Candra’s findings, Indonesian blogger communities shape ethnic and/or territory-based online groups. These communities relate to the desire to share a collective identity among Indonesian bloggers where low commitment is unacceptable. In this case, applying to become a member is far from easy. Each blogger community requires a blogger to have at least one active blog and to meet other members (usually those who have been members for the longest period) off line to introduce themselves as well as to get to know community better18. This physical meet and greet is mentioned as KOpi DARat19 (or kopdar). Kopdar is the main requirement for approval. Several blogger communities require additional conditions, which strongly reflect the aim to cultivate collective identity: applications must born/live in the same city/province and/or come from a similar ethnic background.20 However, the requirement of kopdar21 reflects the establishment of a surveillance system for blogger communities to control the verifiability or ‘stability’ of their online community, not unlike the notion of national stability during the Suharto era. Then, the ruling block established a well-structured social administration system which included, from the lowest level, Neighborhood Unit (Rukun Tetangga, RT), Community Unit (Rukun Warga, RW), Sub District (Kelurahan) continued up to the highest level such as Regency (Kabupaten) and Province. Similar to the notion of the multi-level structure of ‘community’ during Suharto’s regime where newcomers moving into a neighborhood must report themselves to the head of RT and RW (lapor diri), the requirement of kopdar reflects a similar establishment of a system to ensure that members, as a ‘citizen’, must report themselves to the authority in the blogger community.

While early blogging activities emphasized blogging practice on the content of the weblog22 kopdar portrays the idea of blogging practice as part of networked activity, where members cultivate relationships through ‘bear and gear’ [28]. Not only is the interaction between members in cyberspace is strengthened by physical, face-to-face interaction [29], but the acceptance of new members extends on the social structure established during the Suharto era to abide to ‘affirmed local authority’ (i.e. RT/RW).23 The social bond is wielded by the blogging as a network for being “completely connected”24, which reflects to the engagement between blogger communities going beyond the blog itself.

“Friends urging friends to blog, readers letting bloggers know they were waiting for posts, bloggers crafting posts with their audience in mind, and bloggers continuing discussions with readers in other media outside the blog [30].”

The notion of complete connectivity in blogging activity is groundbreaking because the idea suggests a strong interplay between cyberspace and physical space (‘real’ life). The Indonesian blogosphere goes beyond even this groundbreaking notion of blogging activity: Indonesian bloggers from a shared ethnic and/or territorial background commune into the same blogger community and name themselves after their ethnicity or region. There is interplay, a ‘bouncing back’, or ‘derestriction’ between the online and the offline. One is an extension of the other and vice versa, which functions according to its context and, we argue further in the paper, even beyond that. Blogging practices in Indonesia have literally and figuratively have become an extension to the existing and emerging forms of identity and identification between bloggers and, through kopdar, vice versa. Whether it is Loenpia Semarang, Angin Mamiri, Bunderan HI, or Cah Andong, the daily activities of the members is interconnected in both online and offline world. In Indonesia, blogging activities have, as they have interconnected online and offline ‘world’ empowered the

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22 For more on the idea of Web 1.0 features used in blogging activities, see Blood (2002).
23 A similar interrelation between ‘physical’ social structure and its reproduction through blogosphere is also apparent in the proliferation of warnet (Internet Café) in Indonesia. Warnet does not only facilitate online social relationships but also function as places to extend online and offline settings (see Lim, M. (2009) “Muslim Voices in the Blogosphere: Mosaics of Local-Global Discourse”, in M. McLelland and G. Goggin (eds.), Internet Studies: Beyond Angiophone. London: Routledge). Both cases, in this sense, illustrate that the community formed online both passes and criticizes the notion of economic determinism in ‘modern community’.
24 “Links are the social currency of this interaction, allowing webloggers to be aware of who is reading and commenting on their writings” (Marlow, 2004).

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of its users. We use the term agency as the members of blogger communities set regular face-to-face meeting (kopdar) which resulted in education, humanity, political, economy programmes which does not only empower its members but also society in general.

An interesting case that illustrates such agency is demonstrated by Aceh Blogger Community or ABC. ABC is the only Indonesian Blogger Community that owns a secretariat that organizes and plans various programmes. One of the programmes that is executed periodically is the Healthy Internet Campaign and Blogger Training. ABC also organizes an online Acehnese language online dictionary to introduce the language to non-Acehnese people and to preserve the Acehnese language. Another illustration is the Bali Blogger Community or BBC who periodically conducts blogging trainings and organizes blood donations. Loenpia.Net developed the Rotifresh programme which provides various trainings on the advantages of online financing. Angin Mamiri (Makassar) Blogger Community periodically conducts seminar programmes which provide information on education scholarships.

These blogging practices in turn, reflect the local cultural index for particular localities [31]. Although most of the time this localized cultural blogging practices signals the collective identity of each Indonesia blogger community, but more specifically, it also demonstrates situated practices which roots from situated knowledge. Local culture operates to ensure community and/or society participation and furthermore the sustainability of networking. From this point of view, we offer the readers with an idea that blogging practices cannot be treated merely a practice. However, it is a pervasive cultural artifact that forms a blogging culture.

The paradigm in approaching internet users as part of the “blogging culture” in Indonesia then shifts from its early definition of blogging practices that assumes users are ‘active’ to internet users as users and producers: produsers [32]. The enthusiasm reflected by each Blogger Community in Indonesia for fixing societal problems is driven by ‘the vagaries of user-producer interest’ [32]. The social agency of each Blogger Community, exemplified through action-planned social activities, is a result of the interaction within group membership. This membership is shaped through their identification with a collective idea that they share the same ethnic/territory. In this case, the ‘vagaries’ are a result of interaction between the embedding of 30 years of hegemonic ideology in ethnic/territorial identification with networked ‘complete connectedness’. Blogger Community members conduct the function of ‘produser’ in line with their identification to this false ‘sub-nationality’ (for being part of an ethnic and/or territorial group, they would need to be part of the ‘nation’).

The concept of agency we use here refers to Giddens’ (1984), which has been further developed by Olekowsi (1992) and, in the context of technology, Gillespie (2006), Castells (2000), Bruns (2008). See also the book series written by Manuelle Castells (2001 and 2009). On a general note, Castells studies the producers/users of the internet and stated that the internet is a technologically open design. What he means by this is that there is no clear distinction between hackers, virtual communities, and entrepreneurs as everyone can practice on the internet, therefore they can also configure the internet. Please also compare with Giddens’ structuration and agency theory (1996).

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In general, blogging culture in Indonesia may reflect a pro-social image of bloggers as agency through the complete connectedness of each Indonesian Blogger Community. In particular, however, if we approach blogging as a cultural artifact it provides a different overview of the situation. In 2008, the Indonesian Blogger Fest Board announced Cah Andong as the blogger community winner for being the community which has conducted the most social activities. Not long after, a posting made by a member of the Angin Mamiri Blogger Community expressed dissatisfaction over the result. The posting revealed that Cah Andong’s victory was due to the board consisting of mostly Javanese; the majority are the ‘cronies’ of the Head of the Committee at the moment. The issue of ‘Javanization’ arose; ranging from the fact that the majority of committee members are Javanese until the committee uniform being batik (traditional Javanese cloth pattern). Consequently, the blog of this particular Angin Mamiri Blogger Community member became a battlefield to attack ethnic sentiment. The 2008 Blogger Fest became a momentum for a cold war, instilling the issue of Javanese and non-Javanese blogger into the Indonesian blogosphere.

In this case, ethnic sentiment became a form of resistance towards the dominant ideology of Indonesian nationalism that positions Javanese culture at the centre of cyber TMII. The centralization of the media industry in general and the internet infrastructure in particular that is focused in Java was as a result of a long dominance of Suharto’s economic strategy. Theoretically, this dominant ideology, supported by the socio-economic practices of the internet infrastructure, becomes an ideological hegemony. However, the cold war that arose due to the issue of ‘Javanization’ shows the contrary. Blogging practices allowed members to form a resistance by information sharing and furthermore questioning other methods to ‘hegemonize’ the mosaic of ethnic groups that forms the Indonesian Blogger Community.

Such resistance would not be made possible through institutional media, namely television, both in Authoritarian and/or Post Authoritarian Indonesia. During Suharto’s regime, television was strictly regulated by the Ministry of Information – therefore ethnic sentiments that are ‘counter-productive’ towards nation building were prohibited. In Post Authoritarian Indonesia, the power has shifted from the state to the industry, allowing only materials that are of ‘the majority’s interest’ (read: ratings) to be present in nationwide ‘mediated text’. Through blogging culture, the produsers have rearticulated the power that constructs Indonesian nationness through comments, posts and criticism towards the ‘Javanization’. But at the same time, the ethnic identities that have become tools of counter-hegemony are the same territorial markers that are part of the (cyber) TMII.

Virtual environments are valuable as places where we can acknowledge our inner diversity [35]. The act of imposing...

25 The Head of 2008 Blogger Fest Committee is a member of Cah Andong Blogger Community.

26 The Head of 2008 Blogger Fest Committee is a member of Cah Andong Blogger Community.
ethnic and/or territorial (or any other cultural) markers on cyberspace derives from the notion of the Indonesian Blogger Community as a cyber TMII. It shows how the bloggers are possessed by a hegemonic ideology of (sub) nationality, a form of commonsense or, more appropriately, common(n)sense. What is occurring in the Indonesian blogosphere represents the issue that has been addressed by [36] in which the tendency of individuals to form a group is a defense mechanism against insecurity and loneliness. Isaacs clarifies that, on one hand, gathering or joining a group gives a secure and comfortable feeling to protect us from outer threats (others). We would also like to stress that on the other hand, multi-ethnicity does not always result in a strained relationship leading to a rigid sense of in-group and out-group among plural ethnicities within a nation.

Ethnic sentiment becomes a social identity that always distances in-group from out-group [37]. The debate in the Angin Mamiri Blogger Community member’s blog became a site for a combination between an identity clash in cyberspace and a primordialist ideology clash. Network became very personal in many aspects in which it provided a space of ethno-symbolism [38]. Each ethnic/territorially marked blogger community constructed a shared memory integral to every member’s cultural identity – forming a line between in-group and out-group. It is a delicate connection for the outsider who longs for person-to-person connections or are being ‘distanced’ from individuating information within the in-group. However, distance is not a matter of ‘place’, yet an issue of being a member of the out-group.

For some, they are obviously the online community’s out-group longing the person-to-person connection and furthermore not belonging to the ‘inner’ network. It is generally an accepted idea among scholars that compared to other (Western) societies, Indonesia is a collectivist nation [39] which cultivate the relationship of its members based on close, long-term commitment to the group they are a member of. In terms of online communities, cultivating relationships relate to the notion of ‘bear and gear’ [28] where the interaction in cyberspace is reinforced or strengthened by regular face-to-face interaction. The mandatory regular physical interaction implies that only those living in the same area can afford such contact. Information sharing in blogging culture depends on the consistency in the members’ participation in both online and offline activities. A member that is active online but does not participate in kopdar or a member that is active offline but does not participate online implicates their bond and membership intimacy.

Prior to the Internet, communities that are part of ‘Indonesia’ succumbed to higher political ideas; that as a sovereign nation, a community must be part of a ‘whole’. Through various spaces and methods the authoritarian regime succeeded in maintaining unity and the enforcement of a collective identity in many forms of social action. Among others, through banal nationalism such as TVRI (state-owned Television of the Republic of Indonesia or Televisi Republik Indonesia), batik clothing, the Indonesian language, routine Monday flag ceremonies in state and education institutions, singing the national anthem, etc. The essence of a collective social action lies in the ‘one-ness’ or ‘we-ness’ [40], which in the case of banal nationalism is the construction of a shared national culture overriding (sub) national ones such as ethnicity. Whether it is real or imagined, the collective identity strengthens its form through shared attributes and experiences among its members, subsequently developing a sentiment of the ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ or other (i.e. people from outside the community).

In Authoritarian Indonesia, the government had supervised the citizens, ensuring that they practice the determined collective identities beneficial to the projection of national culture. Suharto was one of Indonesia’s leaders whose rules were characterized by repressive control over the country’s unity. Lim [4] has outlined how Suharto’s regime carried out the rigid reign to have a lock on the national unity through all kind of rules to control ‘physical spaces as well as mental spaces’. We believe not all Indonesian citizens voluntarily practiced the imposed collective identity; they just did not have any choice but to practice them to avoid both legal and social punishments.

In Post Authoritarian Indonesia, the imposition of a collective national identity brings two consequences to the Indonesian people. Firstly, the practice gradually becomes something inherent, a layer of (cultural and national) identity. It extends to the political, economy, socio-cultural practices in daily lives. Many scholars studying identity have abandoned the notion that identity is essential, that it’s fluidity means that the construction is more a process than a fixed property [41], [42], [43]. But the Indonesian government has constructed one that is ‘hegemonic’ and that this hegemony forms a grand discourse for the citizens, crystallised into a taken-for-granted reality in their daily lives. Like or dislike, unconscious or consciously, many of Indonesian people practice their collective national identities within their social interaction in cyberspace that remains an extension of the authoritarian regime’s national culture project.

Secondly, the pride of diversity and the urge to unite as one nation is a double-edged sword. National identity has been constructed as a whole-ness or unity of otherwise fragmented groups, while its territory includes a pluralistic district consisting of hundreds of dialects and ethnicities. Constructing a sense of unity would invariably include the erasing of specificity. The late Professor Nurcholis Mardjif, former rector of Paramadina Mulya University, Indonesia, and advocate of pluralism says that the nation-building strategies have disregarded the true condition of Indonesia:

‘The practice of homogenization or equalization conducted by the New Order administration for the past 30 years has inattently denied Indonesian identity as a pluralistic nation’ (Kompas, March 2000).

Despite the fact that the territories within the archipelago falls within the jurisdiction of one nation (NKRI), distance (literally and figuratively) become one of the hindrances to bring about ‘total unity’ into reality – leaving the locality of ethnicity as a dominant issue in ‘Indonesian’ blogosphere. The work of [44] once emphasizes how Indonesian people differ themselves as citizens and as member of an ethnic community; which means that ethnic communities that has formed in the Indonesian blogosphere have never fully submitted to the idea of a nation. Or more precisely, the idea of an Indonesian
nationhood includes the idea that it overrides local ethnicities, as local practices are closer to every ethnicity’s daily activities. Nationalist efforts to achieve such unity at the same time stimulate enthusiasm towards the local. Although the state echoes the saying ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ (many and varied but one), it is easier, and much more reflective towards the phenomenon in Indonesian blogging culture, to emphasize more on the single term ‘Bhinneka’ (many and varied). These two issues, the history of ideological hegemony on one hand and ethnic sentiment on the other, surround the phenomenon of Indonesian cyber culture. In this case, the blogging culture of Indonesian netters. These characteristics have shaped the way they’ve established communities in cyberspace.

V. CONCLUSION

Despite the fundamentals to Indonesia is largely related to its slogan ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’ and that one of the most basic characteristics of Indonesian culture lies in the (ethnic, cultural, religious) diversity itself, Indonesian nation-ness historically has been shaped by those in power (hegemonic ideology). The roots to the nation [1] that lie in ethnic and cultural identity of its members interplay with hegemonic forces (Authoritarian state). It has been a long effort made by the state to downplay ethnic sentiments in favor of a wholeness of a nation. In this paper, we posit that the internet, by means of solving Indonesian blogging culture, has played a great role in rearticulating the power discourse within the country’s notion of Post Authoritarian nationhood.

Based on findings, we argue that that a ‘modern community’, one that is shaped by pragmatic institutional and economical practices, is not the case in the Indonesian blogging culture. The ‘networking’ function provided by blogging does not undermine the pagan lifestyle of its users: primordialism. We agree with Anderson’s [1] notion on the roots to nationalism, even though he did not yet speak of the internet and consider its distinctive features and notion of ‘space’ compared to institutional media. Anderson argues that nationality is shaped by old languages but mediated through new models. What differs in our stance compared to him lies in the notion of ‘simultaneity’; as he argues that it is the collective behavior and the consciousness of an invisible simultaneous media practice that helps shape nationhood.

Blogging culture becomes an important case study as its communities are shaped based on the ethnic/territorial markers established under the large scheme of Suharto’s national culture project. Ethnic groups are only as powerful as it is part of the nation. The Blogger Fest exemplifies this idea; local blogger communities become sub national groups as they become part of a larger whole-ness. However, in particular cases, such as the criticism towards the ‘Javanization’ of the Indonesian Blogger Community, ethnic sentiments override national unity – because the hegemonic ideology is limited to bordering the spaces but does not extend to undermining the ‘community in the mind’.

According to Anderson, to which we agree, nationalism is less related to ideology or the politics of a nation, rather it punctuates more on fraternity, power and time together (community moving steadily through history). The idea of a community that is built around ethnic sentiment shows that the (power) interplay is centered on the relationship between the characteristics of the internet and the geographical and cultural conditions in Indonesia. Rheingold’s [21] modern imagined communities consider the important role of the internet. The notion stresses more in the substance of information than it does on bordered territories and identity. [28]  

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28 We formulate this sentence with ‘less’ and ‘more’ because it has not been blurred to a point of misconception of the bordered territories. As an illustration, members are permitted to use pseudonyms, but they are still interviewed (by invitation).


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An assessment of Mobile Broadband Access in Indonesia: a Demand or Supply Problem?

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Abstract—Previous studies conclude that broadband plays an important role in stimulating economic growth by generating new employment, and improving access to health and education. However, most of these analyses are conducted for developed countries, with little attention being paid to developing countries. This study aims to find out which factors should be considered, following the assertion by the ITU (2010) that broadband, especially mobile broadband, should be developed further to narrow the gap between developed and developing countries. Moreover, this study questions whether the digital gap in broadband access is merely a demand or supply problem. The demand side is represented by income level, which is closely related to affordability issues, while the supply side is indicated by the impact of different geographical characteristics which shows the different stage of infrastructure development. To operationalize this aim, a Probit regression models the decision to subscribe to mobile broadband as a function of income and geographical area, as well as other control variables. The results indicate that income is less important than geographical area in explaining mobile broadband access. The study proposes that the supply-side factor related to infrastructure development should be prioritized as the focus of broadband policy in the short term.

Index Terms—Mobile broadband, demand, Probit.

I. INTRODUCTION

The more widespread adoption of broadband and related technologies has generated a significant economic dividend. ITU [1] considers broadband a catalyst for growth, stressing that it is the next tipping point for generating jobs, driving growth and productivity, and underpinning long-term economic competitiveness, as well as the most powerful tool to meet the Millennium Development Goals. Many studies have supported this view. Crandall et al. [2], for instance, show that approximately USD 63.6 billion of the capital expenditure in the U.S. economy has been accumulated through broadband development, while Lehr et al. [3] found that technology augmented economic growth (incremental employment growth) by as much as 1.5 percent in the U.S.

Summarizing the studies in some of the developed countries, Katz (2009) [4] shows that the multiplier of broadband is around 1.4 to 3.6 for the economy, indicating the significant impact of the diffusion of broadband for generating output enlargement.

With regard to the current development of broadband deployment, the gap between high-income countries and lower income countries is clearly visible. The high-income countries had achieved a 20 percent penetration rate by the end of 2007, with the upper middle obtaining 5 percent of the penetration rate. The lower middle income and lower income were left behind with a 1 percent penetration rate. Figure 1 shows the disparity in broadband penetration between the groups.

Fig. 1: Broadband penetration rate between groups of countries (Source: Infodev (2010))

From Figure 1 it can be concluded that without accelerating the supply and demand for broadband access, developing countries require more time to catch up with the broadband sector gap. Therefore, the investigation to determine the factors that affect broadband access is important, especially in answering which factors play important roles between the demand side and the supply side. Moreover, the need to investigate the impact of broadband development is also important, as the issue is relatively recent for developing countries, which has meant that fewer investigations have been conducted in country-to-country analyses and case studies [5].

In addition, when discussing the type of technology, it is often proposed that wireless technology plays an increasingly prominent role in the expansion of rural telecommunication networks in developing countries [6, 7]. More importantly, mobile technologies not only offer a substantial cost
advantage over fixed-line infrastructure for rural networks, but they are also better suited to service the demands of rural low-income populations [8]. In relation to this, ITU [1] stated that while high-speed Internet is still out of reach for many people in low-income countries, mobile telephony is becoming ubiquitous, with access to mobile networks now available to over 90 percent of the global population. ITU’s new data indicate that, of the estimated 5.3 billion mobile subscriptions at the end of 2010, 3.8 billion will be in the developing world. In conclusion, mobile phone penetration in developing countries now stands at 68 percent, and the benefits of broadband will be even greater once adequate and affordable access is available.

Of the limited studies on developing countries, the recent study published in “Information and Communication Development 2009” reports on the substantial impact of broadband development in these countries (The World Bank in [9]). The report shows that a 10 percent increase in the penetration rate of broadband will boost the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1.38 percent. Not only will broadband improve the level of productivity through remote monitoring, logistics management, and online procurement, it will also provide an increasingly vital device for accessing information to stipulate economic activity and ensure the implementation of good governance [10]. Thus, the impact on developing countries is more critical and moves beyond merely the economic impact, namely the GDP.

In addition, there are two concurrent aspects of equal importance as determinants. On the one hand, the supply-side analysis places great emphasis on the need to provide wireless networks and infrastructure, whereas, on the other, from the demand perspective, affordability and, thus, income has to be put as an important factor [11]. Income is still widely regarded as a major driving force for the diffusion, because many developing countries have a per capita income of less than 10 percent of those of developed countries. Consequently, only a limited proportion of the population in countries with a highly skewed income distribution can afford broadband. The reason is that when annual broadband expenditure is priced at more than 2-5 percent of a household’s income, broadband is considered unaffordable [12].

This study aims to answer the research question: How can mobile broadband access in Indonesia be investigated by comparing the influences of the demand and supply sides? This research question identifies the important factors to be considered in the development of mobile broadband access, with greater emphasis on the question of whether income and/or geographical characteristics matter in determining access. The paper consists of the following sections: Section 1 is an introduction and Section 2 discusses previous empirical studies of broadband analyses. The methodologies of the study and data analysis are elaborated in Section 3, while the results are showed in Section 4. Section 5 concludes the study.

II. THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF BROADBAND DEMAND

Together with other socio-economic variables, it is generally conceived that income is an important factor in determining the level of diffusion of ICT devices. Hausman et al. [13] and Rappoport [14] argue that household income is a critical predictor of broadband adoption. Cadman and Dineen [15] found that broadband penetration in the OECD is strongly influenced by income, with a 1 percent increase in income leading to a 0.78 percent increase in demand. This is consistent with the study by Rosston and Savage [16].

A study by Jackson et al. [17] employs a nationwide mail survey and aims to construct a profile of residential Internet access and investigate consumer preferences for bundled attributes in the U.S. The conclusions are that demand attributes and willingness to pay (for speed, always on, and reliability) vary between high and low-income users with higher income users’ value attributes being higher than those of lower income users. Besides this, the study shows that the willingness to pay for the speed attribute also increases with income.

Many studies place importance on the geographical area variable when determining broadband access (Rappoport [14] and Steinberg et al. [18]). Rosston and Savage [16] conclude that rural households value connection speed at approx. USD $3 more per month than urban households. The study also stresses that the availability of broadband connection largely depends on the urbanization rate, whereas ubiquitous broadband is also supported by a sufficient number of businesses and households to justify the cost of extending broadband services to that region. Therefore, even though the dichotomy between urban-rural also reflects the demand-side factor, when it affects the infrastructure development, the notion can also reflect the supply-side factor adopted in this study.

In the context of developing countries, the importance of geographical area is also a consideration in the study by Srinuan et al. [19], which investigated the determinants of the digital divide in ASEAN countries with the conclusion that beside the significant impact of income, geographical area is also an important factor in determining the digital divide. This means that as more people live in urban areas, the digitization index will increase. Thus, digitization policy also depends on how governments prioritize the infrastructure sector as part of the road map of development programs.

With regard to broadband development in Indonesia, the White Paper by the Ministry of Communication and Information [20] reports in detail on the current state of development of the telecommunication sector in Indonesia. In view of the diffusion of Internet access, it is reported that during 2007-2008, the proportion of households with internet connection increased from 5.58 percent to 8.56 percent, even though the figure is still dominated by Java, which recorded a penetration rate of 9.95 percent in 2008. The report also elaborated that except for Maluku and Papua, the majority of internet access is connected through DSL (approx. 60 percent), whereas dial-up is still used as the means of
connection by 30 percent of the users. Given the current situation, efforts are still needed, especially to achieve the goal set by the government, as mandated in the National Middle Term Development Planning (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional, RPJM) [21]. The document set the target to achieve 30 percent broadband connection, 50 percent Internet penetration, and 75 percent broadband penetration for cities and regional capitals by the end of 2015.

Moreover, having achieved a penetration rate for mobile phones of 70 percent at the end of 2009, it is believed that mobile broadband is an effective device to narrow the gap between digital connections in Indonesia. Sabry [22] argued that mobile telephony is the preferred broadband technology in emerging markets due to the ability to offer a quick and easy approach to address broadband demand. Given the limited capacity of maximum throughput, however, a fixed technology scale should also be developed for high-density areas and greater bandwidth demand, as the complementary policy. The challenge of developing mobile broadband in Indonesia is addressed by Santosa [23] who points out several obstacles regarding this issue. The main reason concerns the operators, who have difficulties ensuring quality of service, especially 3G and mobile Internet services, due to the declining profit margins of operators, as a result of more intense tariff competition. Therefore, an understanding of the pattern of mobile broadband access will not only be an important agenda for policy issue but also a crucial input for telecom players and operators.

III. THE DEMAND MODEL

In this study, the investigation into mobile broadband access adopts the typical choice model commonly used in telecommunication demand estimation. The model can be found in Perl [24], Train et al. [25], Bodnar et al. [26], Train et al. [1989], and Taylor and Kridel [28]. The model basically measures the probability of being a subscriber of telecommunication devices (telephony, internet, etc.) as a function of some independent variables. For this study, the model is drawn in equation 1 below, employing the Probit model.

\[
\text{Prob } (Y = 1|x) = G(\beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{ age} + \beta_2 \text{income} + \beta_3 \text{geographical area} + \beta_4 \text{other control variable})
\]

From equation (1), it can be inferred that the Probit model estimates the likelihood of being a mobile broadband user \((Y=1)\), which is influenced by some socio-economic characteristics as the independent variables. Equation 1 is basically an access demand estimation of the interplay of the impact between the demand side and the supply side. A Similar discussion can be found in Koutrompis [29] for the case of the simultaneity of the broadband demand, and Thurman [30], Bettendorf and Verboven [31] for the more basic endogeneity problem when estimating the demand equation. Thus, in this study, the access demand for mobile broadband is affected by income (demand side) and geographical area (supply side). A couple of additional variables are also added to explain the likelihood of being a mobile broadband subscriber following previous studies; marital status, education and specific occupation, and bearer of payment. A complete derivation of the Probit model and the investigated variables are presented in the Appendix.

The independent variables in this study are chosen following similar studies in technology adoption. Morris and Venkatesh [32], for instance, suggest that age is the key element in the adoption of new technology. Their study shows that older people have “a perception of new technology and subjective norms” to a more significant degree than younger people do, especially during long periods of observation. In relation to age, Pagani [33] stressed that different age groups led to differently perceived values toward technology adoption. The study by Varian [34] described that the occupation and typical users influence the decision to access broadband, as well as typical heavy internet users. The latter is also part of the conclusion, based on the study by Jackson [17], which states that high-speed users value the attributes of internet access and usage more highly than other users do. The study also shows the importance of other independent variables, for instance, age, and education. With regard to education, it was found that respondents with a college degree value speed more, thus, the willingness to pay is positively correlated with education level. This conclusion is also echoed by Burton and Hicks [35], who state the importance of the education variable as one of the main determinants when estimating broadband demand.

The data in this study were collected from the survey conducted by Ericsson Consumer Lab, Regional South East Asia office in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, launched in 2009. The survey comprises answers by 3470 respondents on the four main islands of Indonesia (Java, Sumatera, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi) to more than 800 questions. The survey was carried out using a face-to-face method between the interviewer and the respondents and aimed to describe the characteristics of ICT access and usage. This section on mobile broadband is only one part of the whole data collection concerning other ICT devices: cellular, fixed line, TV, Cable TV, computer, etc.

The point of interest in this study, and the dependent variable of the model, is mobile broadband subscriptions. The survey reveals that only 5.2 percent of the respondents currently subscribe to mobile broadband. Having collected answers from 3470 respondents, this proportion leads to a conclusion that only 180 respondents currently subscribe to mobile broadband in this sample. This proportion is reasonably consistent with that reported by the ITU [1]. At the end of 2009, the penetration of mobile broadband was recorded as 3.5 percent (7.95 million subscribers), which was an increase on the previous figures in 2008, which were only 1.47 percent (3.3 million subscribers). It is therefore reasonable to have a penetration rate of about 4-5 percent in Indonesia in 2009, based on the survey figure.

Two independent variables that are important in this study
are explained further. The variable of household expenditure is used as the proxy for income and is divided into four classes. Based on this classification, almost 40 percent of the respondents are in the first category (lower expenditure), 9 percent in lower middle income, and 5 percent and 2.5 percent represent the upper middle and higher incomes respectively. In terms of the geographic variable, the distribution of the sample is centered on Java Island and its main cities (Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, and Surabaya). This is understandable, given the distribution of the population in Indonesia, which is also concentrated in these areas. The other cities investigated in this study are Medan, which represents the western part of Indonesia (Sumatera Island), and Makassar and Balikpapan, which represent the eastern part of Indonesia (Sulawesi and Kalimantan Island). Of the respondents in the survey, 65 percent live in Java, giving the best proxies concerning the actual distribution of the population. Amid the disproportion of the sample, this study is able to picture the actual population distribution in Indonesia. The Central Bureau Statistics of Indonesia (BPS) [36] reported that the distribution of the population over the 32 provinces is not even. Almost 59 percent of the total population inhabits Java, an island with an area covering only 7 percent of the total land area of the country. The rest, 41 percent, inhabits the other islands. In contrast, Papua with an area covering about 19 percent of the total land area is inhabited by only 1 percent of the total population. The survey also shows that there is a huge disparity in access, with 82 percent of mobile users living in an urban area. This data suggest unavailability of the existing wireless technology infrastructure to enable subscription from a rural one, which is also confirmed by the report by the Indonesian National Regulatory Agency (NRA), BRTI [23].

As discussed earlier, the decision to subscribe to mobile broadband is predicted by employing other socio-economic variables. In terms of education level, 5.7 percent obtained a higher education degree, which means that they have at least graduated from high school (Sekolah Menengah Atas, SMA). The respondents are quite well distributed in terms of age classification, denoted by the proportion of age1 (<25 years old), age2 (25-39 years old) and age3 (40 years old<). The proportions are quite similar, with age1 slightly below the other groups and age3 slightly over-represented. The detail explanation regarding independent variables in this study is presented in the Appendix.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As presented earlier, this study emphasizes broadband access in Indonesia, in particular for determining the supply and demand side as the important drivers. To obtain the range of the supply -side investigation, Model 1 generalizes the urban vs. rural classification; Model 2 explains the differentiation between Java vs. non-Java, while Model 3 observes the difference in terms of cities. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Access Demand Equation Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0.014**</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
<td>0.014*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>0.089*</td>
<td>0.085*</td>
<td>0.084*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age1</td>
<td>0.059*</td>
<td>0.059*</td>
<td>0.057*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age2</td>
<td>0.029*</td>
<td>0.031*</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure2</td>
<td>-0.02*</td>
<td>-0.022*</td>
<td>-0.019*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure3</td>
<td>0.006</td>
<td>-0.004</td>
<td>0.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure4</td>
<td>-0.009</td>
<td>-0.011</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
<td>0.027*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakarta</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.041*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bandung</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.036***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surabaya</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.065**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semarang</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.066*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medan</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makassar</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balikpapan</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batam</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.005</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavy internet users</td>
<td>0.057**</td>
<td>0.043***</td>
<td>0.054**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>-0.031*</td>
<td>-0.033*</td>
<td>-0.029*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own payment</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>0.019*</td>
<td>0.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>-0.007</td>
<td>0.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0.137*</td>
<td>0.11*</td>
<td>0.123**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *, **, *** denotes the significant at 1%, 5% and 10%.

Table 1 shows the Probit output from equation 1. Among the control variables, which consist of age, gender, and education, all the variables are found to be consistent in explaining the likelihood of being a mobile broadband subscriber. Age has a positive impact, indicating that teenagers and people of middle age have a higher likelihood of being subscribers (6 percent and 3 percent higher respectively) compared with the elderly. A higher educated respondent has 8-9 percent greater likelihood of being a subscriber, whereas gender gives a 1.3-1.4 percent greater edge for males to be subscribers. Married respondents are 3 percent less likely to be subscribers than unmarried respondents. This study confirms a priory hypothesis showing that the specific occupation of manager has the highest likelihood of broadband access, whereas this impact does not exist for technician. The impact
of heavy internet users (defined by users on the 60th percentile of Internet usage within the sample of the study) is also important, and they are 6 percent more likely to be subscribers than the rest of the sample. In addition to that, respondents who pay the billing of mobile phone on their own have the higher likelihood as the mobile broadband users.

While there are many aspects can be drawn on the other interesting independent variables, the analysis in this study centers on the comparison between the demand side and the supply side. Income (proxied by expenditure), as the demand side variable, plays a less important role in determining the likelihood of being a mobile broadband subscriber. The results show that a middle-lower income respondent has a lower likelihood of being a subscriber, but there is no statistical evidence explaining the conclusion for the higher income user. In contrast, geographical area plays a more important role based on the model. The urban respondent is 2 percent more likely to be a mobile broadband subscriber than a rural respondent (Model 1). If the dummy for geographic location is represented by Java and non-Java, the inference indicates that a respondent living in Java is 2.7 percent more likely to be a mobile broadband user. In addition, if the dummy for the geographical location is represented by cities, the results find, accordingly, that Surabaya, Semarang, Jakarta, and Bandung are the spots of the market, while Batam, Medan, and Balikpapan are not statistically significant.

V. CONCLUSION

The study is motivated by the evidence that broadband has undoubtedly contributed to economic development. Yet, there are still few studies investigating the broadband economy in developing countries that make the investigation important. In addition, supported by the fact that mobile broadband is becoming more important in closing the broadband gap between developed and developing countries, the observation on mobile broadband access is an important agenda. Furthermore, the study aims to identify the demand and supply factors that determine mobile broadband access. Two variables are proposed to obtain this aim, with income being used to represent the affordability issue, thus explaining the demand -side factor, whereas geographical characteristics are used to mimic the disparity in infrastructure development and, thus, show the impact of the supply -side factor.

The study concludes that income has a less important role in its effect on mobile broadband access than geographical area, indicating that affordability is not an issue to further develop broadband. The importance of geographical characteristics confirms the studies by Rappoport [14] and Steinberg, Degagne and Dough [18]. The fact that urban areas, and Java and its cities, are more developed in terms of broadband development leads to a need to develop infrastructure more evenly throughout the country. A schema for Universal Service Obligation (USO) is therefore needed, for instance, the type of partnership between the government and the private sector.

Realizing that infrastructure provision in telecommunications requires such huge investment, future research should be carried out in an attempt to identify the willingness to pay (WTP) for broadband and the demand for broadband usage in each region. This is important as a measurement for further policy, regarding type of technology and dispersion of infrastructure development. Such a method with the ordered probit model will be used to find characteristics of usage based on the technological aspect, speed level and price, whereas the multinomial logit will be adopted to find the type or variety of internet services used by the respondent in each region.

APPENDIX: DERIVATION OF THE PROBIT MODEL

In the data for which a random sample is available, the sample mean of this binary variable is actually an unbiased estimate of the unconditional probability that the event happens. Thus, letting $y$ denote the binary dependent variable, the probability of a success event can be explained by the following equation (1).

$$\Pr(y = 1) = E(y) = \frac{\sum y_i}{N}$$ (1)

Where $N$ is the number of observations in the sample, the probability equation from (1) can be translated into the Probit model in the following equation (2) and (3).

$$\Pr(y = 1|x) = G(\beta_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \ldots + \beta_k X_k)$$ (2)

$$\Pr(y = 1|x) = G(x\beta)$$ (3)

Where $G$ is a function taking on values strictly between zero and one: $0 < G(z) < 1$, for all real numbers $z$. The model is often referred to in general terms as an index model, because $\Pr(y = 1|x)$ is a function of the vector $x$ only through the index. The fact that $0 < G(x\beta) < 1$ ensures that the estimated response probabilities are strictly between zero and one. $G$ is a cumulative density function that monotonically increases the index $z$. The function of $G$ can be presented below

$$G(x\beta) = \phi(x\beta) \equiv \int_{-\infty}^{x\beta} \phi(v)dv$$ (4)

where

$$\phi(v) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi}} \exp \left( -\frac{v^2}{2} \right)$$ (5)

$G$ is the standard normal density to ensure that the probability of success is strictly between zero and one for all the values of the parameters and the explanatory variables.
**Variable Definition**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE</td>
<td>Dummy</td>
<td>MOBILE is a respondent who uses a mobile phone to connect to the Internet using either a desktop, laptop, or mobile phone (at least a device).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN</td>
<td>Dummy</td>
<td>The dummy variable of geographical location, where d_urban=1, refers to urban. The reference (based dummy) is non-urban.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List city names</td>
<td>Dummy</td>
<td>Indicates whether the respondent is living in a particular city. There are 8 cities in the observation: Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Balikpapan, Medan, Batam, and Makassar. Thus, d_jakarta=1 denotes that the respondent lives in Jakarta. The reference (based dummy) is other cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST ISLANDS</td>
<td>Dummy</td>
<td>Shows whether the respondent is living on a particular island. Thus, d_jawa=1 shows that the respondent is living on Java. The reference (based dummy) is other islands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE25</td>
<td>Dummy</td>
<td>Each dummy refers to the classification based on 3 categories of age: (a) Age1 refers to age &lt;25; (b) Age2 ranges between 25 and 39; (c) Age3 refers to age 40 and up; and (d) Base dummy is age3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>Dummy of gender</td>
<td>Shows male-female category. Thus, d_male=1, respondent is a male. The reference (based dummy) is female.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIZE</td>
<td>Household member</td>
<td>Number of household members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_high_edu</td>
<td>Education attainment</td>
<td>Regrouped from the global category of education (primary, high school, college, and post graduate). _high_edu denotes respondent attained/completed high school education (_global_edu&gt;2). The reference (based dummy) is lower education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_hhe_g1</td>
<td>Household expenditure</td>
<td>Each variable refers to the global expenditure classification. The lower group denotes expenditure up to IDR 900,000/month, the middle group represents the expenditure between the interval of IDR 900,000 and IDR 1750,000. The highest expenditure group is IDR 2,500,000 and above. Based dummy is g1 as the reference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HINTERNET</td>
<td></td>
<td>The variable refers to the heavy internet users. The reference (base dummy) is a non-heavy user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>The dummies refer to a particular type of occupation. The reference (base dummy) is neither a manager nor a technician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_technician</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOBILE</td>
<td>Mobile broadband ownership, 1 = Yes, 0 = No</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.051</td>
<td>0.221</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>Gender, 1 = Yes, 0 = No</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.485</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HED</td>
<td>Education degree, HED = Higher education (education &gt; 9 years)</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.056</td>
<td>0.231</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE25</td>
<td>Teenager (age &lt;25)</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>0.444</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE2539</td>
<td>Middle age (25-39)</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.392</td>
<td>0.488</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGE40</td>
<td>Older people (40 &lt;)</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td>0.472</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSPEND</td>
<td>Lower expenditure</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.386</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMSPEND</td>
<td>Lower medium expenditure</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.094</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPEND</td>
<td>Medium expenditure</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.218</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSPEND</td>
<td>Higher expenditure</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN</td>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>3469</td>
<td>0.594</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HINTERNET</td>
<td>High internet usage</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.022</td>
<td>0.147</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARRIED</td>
<td>Marital status (1 =Yes, 0= No)</td>
<td>3469</td>
<td>0.695</td>
<td>0.460</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d_own_pay</td>
<td>Paying the bill themselves</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.399</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNICIAN</td>
<td>Occupation as a technician</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.347</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MANAGER</td>
<td>Occupation as a manager</td>
<td>3470</td>
<td>0.012</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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REFERENCES


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Erik Bohlin is Professor and Head of the Division of Technology & Society, Department of Technology Management & Economics at Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg. He has published in a number of areas relating to the information society - policy, strategy and management.

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Erik Bohlin obtained his graduate degree in Business Administration and Economics at the Stockholm School of Economics (1987) and his Ph.D. at Chalmers University of Technology (1995).
The Internet and the Public Sphere in Indonesia’s New Democracy: a Study of Politikana.com

Agustina Wayansari

Abstract—This paper aims to explain how the new media has affected and is influencing politics in Indonesia’s new democracy. More specifically, this paper will explore the role of Web 2.0 based websites and how they are being used in promoting democracy in Indonesia, a country which ended an era of authoritarian government in 1998. The Web 2.0 website http://politikana.com will be presented as a case study to explain how this new Internet-based media affects the democratic process in Indonesia by expanding public sphere as well as an additional information source.

Index Terms— Democracy, Indonesia, Internet, Politikana.com.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet as a new form of media greatly affects the way we live and communicate as well as has become a major source of our information (Dutta-Bergman & Chung, 2007). In the political communication area, the Internet is believed to have the capacity to reinvigorate the public’s interest in politics as the Internet makes it easier for people to acquire political information as well as express political opinions (Dutta-Bergman & Chung, 2007). As Dahlberg argues, following Kellner (1998 as cited in 2001, p. 1), the Internet has produced “new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain the potential to reinvigorate democracy and to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas”.

The coming of the web 2.0 that offers more interactivity (Orr, 2007) between its users has strengthened the belief. Web 2.0 based media is seen as providing new avenues for discussion and interactivity between users, hence promoting democracy by generating public sphere. Among the genre of this web 2.0 based media that are popular, at least before Facebook and Twitter, are youtube and blogging, with the latter emphasizes in information exchange (Thompson, 2003; Zuniga & Rojas, 2009).

In Indonesia, particularly before Facebook and Twitter take over the arena, blogging has been popular and has reached a significant level in the society. It is estimated that some 500,000 blogs were present in the country as of October 2008 (Freischlad, 2008) and as of October 2009 Technorati estimates that there are 850,000 bloggers in Indonesia. The first annual Pesta Bloggers (Bloggers’ Party) was held in October 2007 and was attended by more than 500 bloggers from Jakarta and other big cities around the country (Adamrah, 2007; Freischlad, 2008).

Despite the vibrant development, however, it was not clear whether the internet, particularly blogging has expanded public sphere in Indonesia. The study of blogs and blogging in Indonesia up to the time this research was conducted was limited. A study about Indonesian blogs and blogosphere was conducted by Nadine Freischlad (2008) who looked at the group identity in Indonesian blogosphere.

This paper aims to look at how the internet based media has affected and is influencing Indonesia’s democratic endeavor. It explores whether and how a new media form of blog can promote democracy in the newly reformed country Indonesia by expanding the public sphere during and around the national elections in 2009. A user generated content website called Politikana.com, that was created during the campaign period by several prominent bloggers in the country with the main goal to provide medium for Indonesians to talk about elections and politics as well as daily public matters, is used as the case study. Politikana is chosen because it is the first user generated content website in Indonesia and it was born with the spirit of becoming a public sphere (Chuan, 2009).

The research is done in a desk study (internet research) method by observing the entries in politikana during and around the period of the elections. The findings show that politikana has functioned as an additional information source, especially about the elections and other important national issues such as terrorism and bombing, justice and freedom of expression as well as fight against corruption. The website has also served as an avenue for vibrant discussion and debates about those issues and many other topics of public matters. Moreover, politikana demonstrates to a large extent the characteristic of a public sphere in a Habermasian sense, which could be easily understood as “associational spaces”, encompassing the “core setting of informal public life” (Oldenburg 1989 as cited in Schneider, 1997, p. 12).

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Internet, democracy and the public sphere

One of the key topics discussed by experts in the field of political communication is whether the Internet as a new media has a potential influence in increasing or revitalizing democratic life (Banerjee, 2003b; Dutta-Bergman & Chung, 2007). Banarjee argues that technical characteristics of the Internet such as its non-hierarchical architecture and interactive features, its global dimension and natural resilience to any form of control also count as reasons why the Internet is believed to be potentially beneficial for promoting democracy.

Furthermore, the Internet is seen as a place where citizens can seek a variety of political information that they want and need before making political choices. They also argue that the Internet has the capacity to reinvigorate the public’s interest in politics as the Internet makes it easier for people to acquire political information as well as express political opinions. Dutta-Bergman & Chung explain further that information in the Internet leads to deeper political learning which in the end will prompt more acts of participation. In this context, the Internet is seen as a means for educating individuals that can stimulate citizen participation. Moreover, the information available on the Internet will enable citizens to be better equipped so that they will make a rational choice in political actions.

Following Kellner (1998 as cited in 2001, p. 1), Dahlberg argues that the Internet has produced “new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain the potential to reinvigorate democracy and to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas”. This argument is in line with the idea that conversation, talk or discussion is a fundamental element in a democracy (Kim, et al. 1992, p. 362, Scheider, 1997)(1997, p. 8) Bruce Agre (1989) Huspek and Kendall (1991).

Schneider (1997) explains that conversation is very important as democracy is hard to sustain without the availability of skills and opportunities for every individual to engage with others in discussions about public issues. Schneider further argues that political discussion is essential in creating citizenship in a democracy. He says that the opportunity for citizens to talk and “converse” can be found through places called “associational spaces”, encompassing the “core settings of informal public life” (Oldenburg 1989 as cited in Schneider, 1997, p. 12). This space can be understood as what Habermas calls the public sphere.

Dahlberg further argues that the Internet also has the potential to enhance democracy as it is decentralized and it can enhance the public sphere made up by rational-critical discourse. The rational-critical discourse enables the formation of public opinion through which official decision making can be held democratically accountable.

The invention of Web 2.0 in the last decade of last century has strengthened the belief that the Internet has a positive impact on democracy and generating a public sphere because it provides new avenues for discussion and interactivity between users. Web 2.0 emphasizes user generated content, social networking and collaboration (Orr, 2007). The reason this new medium has such a capacity, according to many commentators, is because it is interactive, free, easy to use, relies on user-generated content, and “gives power to the people” (Grossman, 2006, p. 43 as in Orr, 2007). Grossman has noticed that Web 2.0 offers some interesting alternatives for political engagement although it does not change the factors that motivate people to participate in politics.

Echoing O’Reilly Media, Orr (2007) describes Web 2.0 as the second generation of tolls provided by the Internet which principles are participation and collaboration and with an emphasis on sharing of resources amongst users. Social networking sites, wikis, communications tools, file-sharing, blogging, vlogging and torrents are included in this group. Orr further explains that blogs could be considered as the core example of the Web 2.0 form. Blogs have developed rapidly and have become more mainstream in recent years. It is difficult to determine the total number of blogs worldwide, however Times Online estimates that the number of blogs has approached 200 million in 2009 (Appleyard, 2009).

Thompson (2003) finds that weblogs exist somewhere between electronic journals which deal with the writer’s own life and times and journalistic sites which adopt a pose of relative objectivity familiar in other media. In the discussion about the potential of blogs to generate a public sphere, Thompson argues that weblogs offer more open participation in an electronic public sphere because they allow two-way communication which does not exist in traditional broadcast and print media.

The two-way communication makes blogs and the blogosphere a potential means for fostering deliberation through rational discourse. Even pessimists like Sunstein (2008) acknowledge this, saying that to a large extent the blogosphere is a place for deliberation in a Habermasian sense. Citing Aristotle (1972 as cited in 2008, p. 90), Sunstein further explains that when various groups “all come together...they may surpass—collectively and as a body, although not individually—the quality of the few best”. Furthermore, he cites Rawl (1971) who argues that discussion is a way of combining information and enlarging the range of argument. Habermas’ work is also cited by Sunstein (2008), who argues that "rational discourse is supposed to be public and inclusive, to grant equal communication rights for participants, to require sincerity and to diffuse any kind of force other than the forceless force of the better argument". Using Habermas’ understanding of the “ideal speech situation” in the public sphere, Sunstein (2008, p. 91) argues that it could be said that the blogosphere operates to some degree in a “Habermasian fashion” as it has the possibility to foster the coming out of “the better argument”.

Dahlberg (2001) however, does not merely accept that the Internet will directly enhance democracy. In order to be considered as a public sphere, communication in the Internet has to fulfill the six requirements that he has developed, which are quite similar to what Schneider (1997) developed in examining the public sphere in a Habermasian sense. The six
requirements are (Dahlberg, 2001, p. 2):  
1. Autonomy from the state and economic power.  
2. Exchange and critique of criticizable moral-practical validity claims.  
3. Reflexivity or participants must critically examine their cultural values, assumptions, and interests, as well as the larger social context.  
4. Ideal role taking which means participants must attempt to understand the argument from the other’s perspective. This requires a commitment to an ongoing dialogue with difference in which interlocutors respectfully listen to each other.  
5. Sincerity. Each participant must make a sincere effort to know all information, including their true intentions, interests, needs and desires, as relevant to the particular problem under consideration.  
6. Discursive inclusion and equality. Every participant affected by the validity claims under consideration is equally entitled to introduce and question any assertion whatsoever.

B. The Development of the Internet and Democracy in Indonesia

As elsewhere else in the world, discussion about the Internet and its relationship with democratic dynamics is ubiquitous in Indonesia. The Internet came to Indonesia’s wider public when the country was in transition from an authoritarian to a democratic system. It is certain that other aspects of the nation were changing, yet the role of the Internet is pervasive. For many decades, the country has been under the control of the authoritarian regime of the Suharto government. Freedom of expression was restricted and freedom of the press was a utopian dream. Thus the Internet, which became popular in Indonesia coinciding with the end of the regime, can be seen as breaking down the wall of the state monopoly over the civic space (Lim 2006a, 2004b, 2004a, 2003b, 2003a) and it has also played a role as an alternative media source (Hill & Sen, 2005). Basuki (1999) believed that at that time, the Internet was regarded as an alternative medium for views and news that would otherwise have remained unheard and unwritten.

The Internet has grown significantly since it was first introduced in the 1980s and became publicly available in the second half of the 1990s. Internet users in Indonesia embrace the technology in their daily activities and always take part in the newest developments of the technology such as social networking sites, Web 2.0 communications and blogging. At the end of 2008, Indonesia recorded 25 million Internet users (Internet World Stats, 2009), about 50 times the 512,000 recorded in 1998. The business sector has embraced e-commerce, the government has applied the technology in the bureaucracy, and the public embraces it as a new space for communication.

III. CASE STUDY: POLITIKANA AND INDONESIA’S PUBLIC SPHERE

A. Talking Politics Online: 2009 Elections and Daily Politics on Politikana.com

Politikana.com is a user generated content (UGC) website established to facilitate discussions about the 2009 election and other political issues in Indonesia and is often referred to as the first political UGC website in Indonesia (Politikana, 2009a; www.theunspunblog.com, 2009). The official press release for the website launch in April 2009 claimed that Politikana was the only political website that implemented the concept of Web 2.0 and declared itself as the “the place of ideas”, where its users could have discussions, interact and express their opinions about politics in a broader sense.

According to Politikana’s publisher Enda Nasution, who is also one of the most prominent Indonesian bloggers, Politikana was established with its main goal of educating Indonesians, particularly younger people who have access to the Internet, about politics in general (Chuan, 2009a). Building people’s interest is important and it can be achieved through exercises of throwing around ideas and interactively discussing them with others. Arguing and forming opinion are also part of the important process of politics facilitated on the Politikana website. Nasution explains that politics can be understood as something beyond elections, political parties and government. However, not many Indonesian citizens have this sense. Thus, he argues that a site such as Politikana would be very important in educating people about their rights and responsibilities, social contracts with the state, and any aspect of citizenship in daily life.

He explains further that Politikana will let its users have control of the website’s management. The content will mostly be contributed by the users, although guest writers will be invited to contribute to give a more balanced perspective on the discussion. Users will also act as moderators through a rating mechanism. The rating options, which include: boring, interesting, cool, and important, will determine the position of an article on the main page of the website. The rating system is not only applied to the content, but also to the users’ image. A user could be rated (according to what they call image or pamor) by other users based on the content of their writings.

Some of Politikana’s management team members have media connections and the site is also supported by one of the leading news organizations Tempo, which manages Tempo magazine, Koran Tempo (a daily newspaper), and Tempo Interactive (an online portal). It also has a management team to run the website professionally, although so far it has not revealed any business activities. Hence, it is safe to presume that Politikana is basically born from civil society, from the people who have concern about social issues and an interest in politics and civic life. It has so far remained free from both corporate influence and state control, which fulfills the first condition of online public sphere required by Dahlberg (2001).

In terms of content, Politikana provides great freedom to its users to post almost any topic in various formats. Once registered as a member, users can post anything in the form of
opinion articles, reports, or any kind of writing. The management has made it easier for the users to put their posts into six different categories: *Nasional* for issues of national interest, *Daerah* for regional related issues, *Media Watch* for comment on news published in the mass media, and *Suara Internet* to accommodate issues or links to an Internet source. The other two categories are *Pemilu '09* for topics related to both the legislative and presidential 2009 elections, and *OOT* or Out of Topic which accommodates any kind of post that cannot be put into the previous categories. Users will have access to update their uploaded posts whenever necessary.

Those who want to contribute pictures are also welcome. They can upload pictures (photographs and other images such as cartoons) which are shown as a slide within any articles that are posted. Another facility is that users can post their comments or ratings for posts from other users, which contributes to the ranking of an article and the *pamor* of the post author. As the management puts it, the rating mechanism will determine the position of a post. A highly rated post will automatically be shown on the front page, while a poorly rated post will be on a less favourable page.

Contributors are invited to post their opinions on this website which, according to the management, is aimed at providing balance to the content. The contributors come from various backgrounds and areas of expertise, and include prominent journalist and poet of the Tempo group Goenawan Mohammad (GM), film director Iman Brotoseno, Roby Muhammad, a PhD candidate from the University of Columbia in the USA who is currently researching social networking, and M. Fadjroel Rahman, a political commentator who is always very critical of the government. During the election period, the website also put links to candidates and their partners’ websites so that readers could post something there. The Politikana management also invited political candidates to post something related to their campaign on the web in the section called “Suara Mereka” or “their voices”. Politikana also includes links to all presidential candidates’ website.

All these rules set in Politikana display the spirits of public sphere that include equality (Schneider, 1997) as it is open to all Indonesian (as long as they have Internet access). It also encourages participation (Schneider, 1997, Dahlberg, 2001) in any form be it through posting articles, comments, pictures, and for any topics related to elections and many other issues of daily public matters.

During the election period, issues related to the elections such as the legislative candidates, the KPU, political parties, election mechanisms, campaigns, presidential candidates and their vice presidential hopefuls were central to the discussions and postings. However, many other issues were also being posted and adding some colour to the debates.

1) Election Issues

The election momentum is a big enough reason to spark discussion on politics and citizenship and the theme of the election is so strong it has even been included in the tag line of the website which reads, “The 2.0 Discussion of Indonesian Politics, Election”.

In the Election 09 entry category, a total of 120 pages were found in Politikana. Discussion about the election is indeed widespread and lively, presumably because the election only come once in a five year and is the most obvious citizenship practice in a democratic society. As Indonesians have only been free from state repression for around 10 years, it would be reasonable to presume that people are still in a euphoric mindset about freedom of political expression.

Established to facilitate discussion about the election and raise awareness amongst citizens about their citizenship, Politikana can be said to be relatively successful. It has recorded a reasonably increasing membership and active discussion base. According to the official data, when Politikana was launched in April 2009 its users numbered around 1,000 and reached nearly 4,000 registered members as of 10 September 2009 (Nasution, 2009). The same data also shows that total visits reached 440,944 (between April 1 and September 11 2009) and that it has had quite a steady growth of visitors during that period, with a peak during the presidential election held on July 9, 2009. Presumably, it is prompted by the need to update information about what is going on during election time or to find out more information about the candidates.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 1: Monthly Visits</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Period</strong></td>
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<td>Apr 1, 2009 – Apr 30, 2009</td>
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<td>May 1, 2009 - May 31, 2009</td>
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<td>Jun 1, 2009 – Jun 30, 2009</td>
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<td>Aug 1, 2009 - Aug 31, 2009</td>
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<td>Apr 1, 2009 – Apr 30, 2009</td>
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*Source: Politikana official data*

Articles about the election vary, with discussions about the presidential candidates and their vice presidents are likely to be the most common, followed by posts about campaigns. Postings about SBY’s candidacy of trying for a second term raised different kinds of responses. Some people praised his accomplishment during his presidency and supported his candidacy in the second round. During his leadership, the Indonesian economy was relatively stable and its record growth even survived the global financial crisis. His most
notable record however would be the political stability. Politikana’s audience did not miss this and a few posts were made related to SBY’s record. However, other people were concerned with SBY’s lack of commitment to addressing the most challenging issues in the country such as corruption, Suharto’s cronyism, and his relationships with high profile businessmen in the country. The management of the Lapindo mudflow disaster in the East Java town of Sidoarjo was seen as one of his flaws in dealing with business power, in this case with Bakrie family business which is linked to the Coordinating Minister for Social Welfare Aburizal Bakrie.

Discussion on Politikana also revolved around the people behind SBY, including his campaign team the Mallarangeng Brothers. Andi, Rizal and Zulkarnain Mallarangeng are involved with SBY in different areas, which triggered public criticism. Andi is one of President SBY’s spokespeople, Rizal runs the political think tank Freedom Institute and Indonesia Survey Institute (LSI), while the youngest, Zulkarnain, is the main figure behind the political consultancy Fox Indonesia. They have become one of Politikana’s topics of discussion because LSI has conducted some surveys related to the Presidential election, while Fox is the consultant for SBY’s campaign.

Rusdi Mathari is one of the consistent critics of SBY. On one occasion he ran a series of articles about the Mallarangeng Brothers titled “Lompatan Mallarangeng Bersaudara” (Mallarangeng Brothers’ Leap) series 1, 2 and 3 which were published on 9, 10 and 11 June 2009 respectively (Mathari 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). The articles were considered very informative, giving a comprehensive picture of what links them, their institutions, and SBY. Rusdi’s posts gained a good response with two of them receiving more than 30 comments and the third article gaining 20, and being rated interesting (menarik) +10.

When SBY announced his choice for vice president as the current Governor of the Bank of Indonesia and former Coordinating Minister of Economics, Boediono, people also responded with both support and criticism. Boediono is not a politician. He was seen more as an economist, currently holding a position as the Central Bank Governor. He also assumed posts as Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of Economics, and is a professor at one of the most prestigious universities in the country. Although he has a clean record and good credentials, some critics say that Boediono is a neoliberal due to his American education for a doctoral degree from Wharton School University of Pennsylvania, USA, in 1979. Neoliberalism became familiar to Indonesians when Suharto opened the country’s market to foreign investment. To some degree, neoliberalism, which leaves the economy fully under the market’s control, is blamed for the collapse of the Indonesian economy and the economic gaps that are omnipresent in the country.

Rusdi Mathari wrote a series of four articles about Boediono and his neoliberalism association which generated somewhat discursive talks about SBY’s running mate (Mathari, 2009d, 2009e, 2009f, 2009g). Apart from whether the debates had any influence on the decision making of the voters, people could at least learn about the term and its impact on the Indonesian economy.

Besides Mathari’s articles, many posts were also made on this topic. A supporter of Boediono posted an article written by another economist Faisal Basrie that was published on Kompas online, titled Pak Boed yang Saya Kenal (Mr. Boed Whom I Know). Against most posting that focus on Boediono’s neoliberalism, Basrie’s article takes on another side of Boed’s personality as a person with a good and clean reputation as well as the humble attitude despite his high profile post in the bureaucracy.

Politikana web discussions have also made the topic of another candidate, Megawati and her running mate Prabowo Soebijantoro, a hot issue. Megawati’s aim to secure the presidential seat raised negative responses and lot of doubt about her ability; some people said nothing and a few expressed their support. Enda’s post on this topic is a very short intriguing article titled “Seriously, is there anyone who still wants Mega as President?” It received a rating of interesting +5 and 55 comments (Enda, 2009c).

Megawati’s choice of Prabowo Soebijantoro as her running mate is a controversial move, considering he was blamed as the man behind the kidnapping and killing of student activists during the reform movements between 1995 and 1998. He was then the commander of the Army’s Special Forces (Kopassus). Also, Prabowo was formerly a son in-law of former president Suharto, Megawati’s main political foe. Yet they agreed to build an alliance to compete with SBY-Boediono in the presidential race.

Indonesians forget quickly, but at least a few people still remember Prabowo’s past. While he has bombarded the public with his personal advertising on the national television network portraying his charismatic figure, these few people are trying to remind the public about his past mistakes, including through the Politikana website. Mas Paman posted an article titled Jangan Biarkan Penculik dan Pembunuh Memimpin Kita (Don’t Let Kidnapper and Murderer Lead Us) at 18.35, April 24 2009 (Paman, 2009). Rated interesting (menarik) +10 and receiving 32 comments, the article reminds people about Prabowo’s past mistakes. People praised his courage to write this article which generated more discussion about the track record of the candidates for president and their running mates.

The last pair, JK and Wiranto also could not avoid being the target of criticism on Politikana. Indonesians remember Wiranto as one of Suharto’s military men. He has been accused of being responsible for the shooting of Trisakti University students during a protest on May 13, 1998. The international community will also remember him as being largely responsible for the human rights abuses and organised violence in East Timor after the August 1999 referendum demanded independence from Indonesia. An article about the dilemma of choices for the presidential seat was posted by Herman Saksono at 14.12 on June 9 2009 (Saksono, 2009a). It received 68 comments and was rated inspirational (inspiratif) +7. Comments mostly spoke of a similar view on Wiranto’s bad record due to human right violations in Suharto’s era.
Issues of religion also affected the presidential candidates, particularly SBY-Boediono. They are Muslims, however they were not seen as Islamic figures but more as moderate ones. Neither of their wives wear veils (or jilbab in Indonesian), which raised public discussion during the campaign about whether they are actually Muslims. Ani Yudhoyono is a short name for Kristiani (Kristen is the literal translation for Christian in Indonesian), while Herawati Boediono is from Yogyakarta, renowned as the province where many catholic Javanese are from.

Jusuf Kalla is not a political favourite as he was seen as too pragmatic and business minded. However, he received a favourable response due to his personality that is straightforward and open as well as pragmatic. He is also benefited from the fact that he is not Javanese (he is from South Sulawesi), which raised the issue about equality of opportunity for different ethnic groups in Indonesian politics which so far is still considered to be dominated by the Javanese. Although only in a minor way, he has used his non-Javanese identity as one of his campaign strategies. It became more significant when one of the President’s spokespersons Andi Mallarangeng made a blunder in his statement that it was “untimely” for people from South Sulawesi to be president of the country (Hajramurni, 2009).

As described above, Politikana, as opposed to the traditional media of print and television, has becomes an easier platform for people to talk and converse or exchanging ideas about all these sensitive matters. For example, users discuss about sensitive issues of religiosity and unveiled ladies as well as ethnicity, which is a major step toward political maturity in Indonesia. Discussion and debates about those issues reflect desire to understand assumption, cultural value and interest as well as the larger social context of the issues. To some degree, politikana has also provided useful information (as well as platform) that could prompt deeper political learning. Discussion in politikana can be seen as a constructive way can erase prejudice, inform people about what others think about issues that in turn could enable users to make better and more rational decision in the elections (Dutta-Bergman & Chung, 2007).

They also demonstrate the critical examination or reflexivity as Dahlberg called it (2001) over elections related topics. In discussion about vice president hopeful Boediono, some users also seem to make sincere efforts to understand the arguments and ideas from other sides, while at the same time throwing their own ideas. Discussion and debates that remains ongoing shows that participants respect differences and each others’ perspective as required in online public sphere (Dahlberg, 2001). The process of exchanging information and opinion will only enrich their understanding about the Boediono and how he should be seen in the country’s political arena.

2) National Issues

More than half of the postings on Politikana belong to the Nasional category. Amongst the hottest issues being posted on the web are the arrest of the chairman of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) due to a murder case, the hunt for terrorists following the bombing of two high profile hotels in Jakarta not long after the presidential election, and the recent Pendet Dance saga between Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as the Bank Century bail out. The first posting on the Nasional category was by Enda Nasution, the publisher of the website titled “Ini adalah Posting Pertama” (This is the First Post) that explains Politikana is created based on the vision for a “public space” that is warm, informative and smart. It aims to be a place for real discussion that does not end in “talk” but lead to some real actions. Enda’s first posting was made at 10.58 am on Monday March 2 2009. It received 2 comments and was rated inspirational (inspiratif) +10. This chapter will look at a few major cases to demonstrate the political deliberation and expansion of public sphere in this website.

(a) Long Fights against Corruption: KPK and Antasari Azhar’s Arrest

The arrest of KPK’s chairman Antasari Azhar was a big surprise for the public. He was arrested over a weekend in early May 2009 for alleged involvement in the murder of Nasruddin Zulkarnaen, the director of a state-owned company and a former KPK witness. Zulkarnaen was shot dead in the middle of the day outside a golf course in Tangerang, on the outskirts of Jakarta. Media speculation has related this killing to a suspicion of a love triangle involving the two men and a 22 year old female golf caddy who was also Zulkarnaen’s wife number 3. Allegations that Azhar was the mastermind of the killing have thrown into turmoil the work of the KPK, which has claimed high-profile scalps and is considered one of Indonesia’s few clean institutions.

Under Azhar’s leadership, the KPK has rocked the graft-riddled legislature with a series of arrests of serving House members. This anti-graft body has also arrested and brought to court a State Prosecutor for receiving bribes. Another outstanding move by the KPK was its indictment of the former Bank of Indonesia Deputy Governor Aulia Pohan, the father-in-law of President SBY’s eldest son, for misuse of BI funds. The announcement of Azhar’s involvement came to public attention a couple of weeks after the KPK chief launched his latest case: an investigation into the procurement of electronic equipment used by the KPU, following the voter list fiasco in the recent legislative polls. The KPU, equipped with Rp 170 billion (US$15.86 million) worth of software, promised to finish the vote count in two weeks (Sabarini, 2009). It had to close its electronic tabulation centre two weeks after the polls, despite having only counted 13 million of the estimated 125 million ballots cast. The KPU count gave President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's Democratic Party the lead in the polls with 20.5 percent of votes.

How did Politikana users respond to this case? It was indeed a big topic, considering the whole situation around the arrest. One posting called for further investigation of Azhar’s case, questioning whether the love triangle was too shallow a motive for Azhar’s misbehaviour as showcased in the article “Kasus Antasari: Surat Terbuka untuk Pak Polisi” (Antasari’s
This posting, which gathered prior to his arrest, users praised KPK’s move toastic responses. Organizations such as Kasus Antasari, Scandal of the Yearally with Article's trial. It was a huge interest of report about Prita for defamation. The Tangerang police then could not sending it to various email groups. The hospital's management friends. The letter then spread to the Internet after her friends hospital in Tangerang, northwest of Jakarta and sent it to her d(privacy of information and critique, which some time triggered further discussions and debates show a huge interest of Politikana’s user put her in jail for 20 days. She was released later with a home detention status.

Prita’s case received huge attention from Politikana’s users and audience. A simple search by putting the key word “Prita” returns a result of 17 pages with an average of six postings per page. Thanks to social networking such as Facebook and Twitter which are very powerful in bringing an issue into a mass scale, Prita’s case gained attention from a wider audience and even caught the attention of the three president hopefuls who were aware of the political potential of the issue.

This case raised a public outcry for various reasons. Some people think that it is an act of tyranny when the strong beat the weak; the anti-socialists say that it is the fault of neoliberalism when the corporate sector can do whatever they want to financially weak ordinary citizens. Other groups see it as negligence by the authority that fails to protect its citizens, and more importantly it raised question about the function and effectiveness of the Law on Internet and Electronic Transaction (UU ITE) enacted the year before. The enactment of the Law has generated controversy, especially with Article No 27 that says “Anyone who deliberately and without any right to distribute and/or transmit and/or allow an access to an electronic information and/or electronic document containing a contempt and/or defamation, shall be imposed with a criminal sanction of six years’ imprisonment and a maximum of Rp 1 billion fine” (Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) & International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), 2009)

Prita’s case was so big that at that time many mainstream media sources also ran stories about it. This case also triggered “social activism” about unfair treatment of fellow citizens. A Facebook group was created to gain support for the housewife and seek her release from jail. It was a big success, with more than 64,000 members. The Twitter response and public outcry was also big and prompted several related organizations such as the Indonesian Lawyers Association (PBHI) and Indonesian Legal Aid Institute (LBH) to take action condemning the police move and asking them to release Prita. This is an example of what Enda said in his first posting on the website, that Politikana wanted to be a place for discussion that can lead to a real action.

One of the most notable articles in the Politikana forum is from Herman Saksono, which received 71 comments. The article, “UU ITE Menelan Korban Lagi” (UU ITE lost another victim) points out the relevance of Prita’s case to the UU ITE which was passed in the previous year (Saksono, 2009c). Herman explains that Prita’s case is not only about the bad service of a hospital; moreover it was very relevant to the fact that the new law did not guarantee the citizen’s freedom to express her opinion online. Enda responded with a posting encouraging people to create a movement called “Say No to OMNI Hospital”, which obtained enthusiastic responses. Meanwhile Heriyadi recommended bloggers to boycott checking and writing, which he believed would affect the business of the Internet service provider.

Enda’s email campaign post received the highest response of 137 comments and was rated important (penting) +10

Case: An Open Letter for Mr. Policeman) posted on May 6 at 10.31 (Teguh Usis, 2009a). This posting, which gathered 12 comments and is rated interesting (menarik) +6, mentioned that there may have been an effort to take revenge on KPK for its successful record in the high profile corruption cases involving those in the House of Representatives, AGO’s office, and Bank of Indonesia. Comments also gave similar opinions, although some people were disappointed to learn about Azhar’s flaws with women.

In an article titled “Kasus Antasari, Scandal of the Year” (Antasari’s Case, the Scandal of the Year) which was posted in May, prior to his arrest, users praised KPK’s move to suspend Azhar’s chairmanship (Syaifuddin, 2009). It was considered a very clever move to maintain the institution’s clean reputation. The writer also throws a triggering question on whether this scandal will leave a bad record at the end of the SBY-JK office, or instead is something that will move public attention to the parliamentary coalition between parties to “attack” before the election.

Amongst the comments was one from Heriyadi who said it was a good and critical piece of writing. He also mentioned the possibility of relating it to cases of the Deputy Governor of BI and DPR on May 2 at 5.26. Knalpot Putih at 5.53 said the posting was politically intriguing. More comments praised KPK’s good work and offered support for Azhar. However, some commented that Azhar indeed had a bad reputation, including when he was in charge of Tommy Suharto’s trial. He let former President Suharto’s son escape from the law (Google May 2, 12.20). A user Doliharahap at 15.00 on the same day said that the KPK’s chairman had been seen clubbing with “women”, despite his good reputation with KPK in recent times.

When the media broadcast the issue of CCTV footage in a hotel in South Jakarta, where Azhar was suspected of having a meeting with Rani, the golf caddy, a post about privacy was made post by a tourist on May 7 at 17.55. This post prompted different debates on this issue of privacy, private space and the public domain. It also brought up discussion about how to create simple technology to disrupt the work of CCTV (Tourist, 2009).

The dynamic of the discussion shows a huge interest of this matter. Many comments were posted and people also have different ideas and understanding about what happened. Although not always rational and critical, postings were generally informative. Discussion and debates show exchange of information and critique, which some time triggered further discussion and learning on related issues, such as CCTV and privacy.

(b) Prita Mulya Sari: More than Justice for a Housewife

Housewife Prita Mulya Sari made a complaint about her dissatisfaction with the treatment for her fever by Omni hospital in Tangerang, northwest of Jakarta and sent it to her friends. The letter then spread to the Internet after her friends sending it to various email groups. The hospital’s management could not accept the bad image caused by the email and filed a report about Prita for defamation. The Tangerang police then put her in jail for 20 days. She was released later with a home detention status.

Prita’s case received huge attention from Politikana’s users and audience. A simple search by putting the key word “Prita” returns a result of 17 pages with an average of six postings per page. Thanks to social networking such as Facebook and Twitter which are very powerful in bringing an issue into a mass scale, Prita’s case gained attention from a wider audience and even caught the attention of the three president hopefuls who were aware of the political potential of the issue.

This case raised a public outcry for various reasons. Some people think that it is an act of tyranny when the strong beat the weak; the anti-socialists say that it is the fault of neoliberalism when the corporate sector can do whatever they want to financially weak ordinary citizens. Other groups see it as negligence by the authority that fails to protect its citizens, and more importantly it raised question about the function and effectiveness of the Law on Internet and Electronic Transaction (UU ITE) enacted the year before. The enactment of the Law has generated controversy, especially with Article No 27 that says “Anyone who deliberately and without any right to distribute and/or transmit and/or allow an access to an electronic information and/or electronic document containing a contempt and/or defamation, shall be imposed with a criminal sanction of six years’ imprisonment and a maximum of Rp 1 billion fine” (Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI) & International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), 2009)

Prita’s case was so big that at that time many mainstream media sources also ran stories about it. This case also triggered “social activism” about unfair treatment of fellow citizens. A Facebook group was created to gain support for the housewife and seek her release from jail. It was a big success, with more than 64,000 members. The Twitter response and public outcry was also big and prompted several related organizations such as the Indonesian Lawyers Association (PBHI) and Indonesian Legal Aid Institute (LBH) to take action condemning the police move and asking them to release Prita. This is an example of what Enda said in his first posting on the website, that Politikana wanted to be a place for discussion that can lead to a real action.

One of the most notable articles in the Politikana forum is from Herman Saksono, which received 71 comments. The article, “UU ITE Menelan Korban Lagi” (UU ITE got Another Victim) points out the relevance of Prita’s case to the UU ITE which was passed in the previous year (Saksono, 2009c). Herman explains that Prita’s case is not only about the bad service of a hospital; moreover it was very relevant to the fact that the new law did not guarantee the citizen’s freedom to express her opinion online. Enda responded with a posting encouraging people to create a movement called “Say No to OMNI Hospital”, which obtained enthusiastic responses. Meanwhile Heriyadi recommended bloggers to boycott checking and writing, which he believed would affect the business of the Internet service provider.

Enda’s email campaign post received the highest response of 137 comments and was rated important (penting) +10
Another article from Herman Saksono titled *Pengacara Omni: Trombosit 27.000 itu kabur dan ga jelas* (Omni’s Lawyer: the thrombosis 27,000 is not clear) generated 85 comments and was rated important (penting) +10 (Saksono, 2009b).

Discursive characteristics are very evident in the conversation about Prita in Politikana and even after her release from jail, Politikana remained actively discussing the issue. But the most notable character of the discussion about Prita’s case that demonstrates the public sphere’s character is probably the rational-critical discourse which eventually forms a strong public opinion about how Prita should be treated before law. Politikana has functioned as “new public sphere and spaces for information, debate and participation...and increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas” (Kellner, as cited in Dahlberg, 2001, p. 1) about freedom of expression online and justice for regular citizens.

Moreover, conversations in Politikana aimed at solving problems. Prita’s case shows that the public want the government to take the necessary action to review the Internet and Electronic Translation Law (UU ITE) as well as enforce justice for an ordinary citizen. The other effects, thanks to Facebook and other social network sites as well as the traditional media, are that it caused a public outcry over the issue and forced the authorities to revise their treatment of Prita.

(c) The July Bombing and Terrorism

Aside from the arrest of KPK’s chairman which led to *Cicak-Buaya* (Gecko-Crocodile) fiasco between the anti-graft body with National Police and General Attorney Office, the recent bombing of two Jakarta luxury hotels was another big issue in the post-election period. Only a few days after the presidential election was smoothly run, Jakarta was once again attacked by terrorists. Two bombs exploded in the city’s prestigious hotels, the JW Marriot and the Ritz Carlton, at around 7.50 am on Friday, July 17, 2009 killing at least nine and injuring 53 people. The action was said to be targeting a regular breakfast meeting which was attended by prominent business figures, many of them expatriates. The JW Marriot was the target of a previous bomb attack in 2003 which took at least 14 casualties and injured 156 people (Kompas.com, 2009).

Jemaah Islamiyah, a fundamental Islamic terrorist group under the Al Qaeda network, is suspected as the perpetrator behind the blasts. Noordin M. Top, a Malaysian-born leader of the network was blamed as the mastermind of the blasts. He was later shot dead in a police raid in Solo, Central Java in September, bringing relief for the Indonesian police, who had a long battle with him and the Al Qaeda network over many years.

These blasts were seen as a severe blow for President SBY, who was re-elected in a landslide victory, with approximately 60 percent of the votes. Many speculations were made about the blast. Controversy and criticism also resulted from the bombings and how the President responded. SBY’s statement in the press conference following the blasts resulted in a criticism that he was too melancholic and was to some extents using the incident for his personal campaign. He said that the blasts were planned and that his intelligence had previously reported to him that he was targeted to be murdered by some people who did not want to see him winning the election. The President showed his picture which, according to him and based on intelligence reports, was used for shooting exercises by some “dracula” who did not want to see him resume his seat for a second term. The “dracula” is interpreted as referring to Prabowo, the vice president hopeful of Megawati, who was held responsible for the blatant killing of student activists in 1998 when he was a commander for Kopassus (Chuan, 2009b).

A regular contributor Fadjoel Rachman...on July 17 at 17.12 (Rachman, 2009) posted an article from Rakyat Merdeka online where he was quoted as a commentator. Rachman criticized SBY, saying that his statement could lead to different interpretations by the people, encouraged prejudice about his political foes, and could be a source of conflict in society. This post received 38 comments and was rated as important (penting) +7.

Rusdi Mathari also posted a similar criticism, writing that President SBY should not use the occasion for his personal image building. His use of intelligence reports was not wise, and he should be more careful in using intelligence reports as they could be disadvantageous for his political strategy. Comments on Mathari’s post on July 22, 2009 at 11.37 suggested that SBY should be calm and did not have to be worried about his political enemies as he had already won the game (Mathari, 2009i) . It received 38 comments and was considered interesting (menarik) +7.

On a different topic, the immediate response of Indonesians to the July bombing is that they were very shocked and then angry with the terrorists. Many speculations were shared about who was behind the devilish action, which in the end came down to Jemaah Islamiyah that has been a police target due to previous bombings including in those in Bali, the Australian Embassy in Jakarta, and the JW Marriot Hotel Jakarta.

Rusdi Mathari’s posting on July 17 at 10.50, titled “Indonesia Aku Malu” (Indonesia, I am Ashamed), was the first posting about the blast. It wrote that Mathari was embarrassed about being an Indonesian due to this irresponsible behaviour and narrow minded religious beliefs (Mathari, 2009j). Apart from being praised as the quickest posting following the incident, his article raised criticism about why he should be ashamed, including that it is not an act by an Indonesian and it is not reflecting Indonesian behaviour (Samsara, Harald Lukeson, Adhiyta). Rusdi’s post and other users’ response show that exchanges and critique of criticisable moral-practical validity claims (Dahlberg, 2001) took place in politikana.

Another topic discussed following the blasts was about terrorism and Islam, the religion of around 90 percent of the country’s population of 230 million. A posting by Warm titled “Muslim=Terrorist” was uploaded on August 21 at 7.30 (Warm, 2009). He slates the judgment of the people who
generalise that all Islam is equal to terrorism, and that all people with long beards are terrorists. This article gathered a reasonably good amount of 64 comments. The discussion developed into the topic of religion and religious values on terrorism, which was reasonably interesting. A post by The Crow at 14.21 included a comment that if (people) want to go to heaven they should not “create” hell in the world.

The conversation about terrorism remained vibrant and even gained intensity after the police special team Densus 88 shot dead Noordin M. Top, the mastermind behind the bombings in early September 2009. Again, politikana has served as a space for users to exchange information which leads to further learning and understanding about the issue of terrorism and Islam. It becomes a space to channel opinions about the terrorism and Islam.

IV. CONCLUSION

The case of Politikana provides an example on how an interactive website has become an accessible space for citizens to come together and discuss politics and other public matters during the period of March to September 2009. The five yearly general elections were the hot topic for most Indonesians over this period, including those who are engaged with the Internet. Discussion about politics and citizenship therefore became omnipresent, both offline and online, through informal conversation and formal media.

Politikana has also fulfilled the conditions of online public sphere set by Dahlberg (2001) and Schneider (1997). First, Politikana was established by civil society, not the state or big corporations. Although the management of the site has a partnership with the media organization Tempo, it is its own management team free from the control of Tempo.

Secondly, Politikana website has functioned as “associational space” for some citizens (with the internet access) to discuss public issues that matter to them. The website has developed into one of the public domains for individuals to talk and exchange opinions about elections issues, in one case justice for a housewife, that the law that can (or cannot) guarantee their freedom of expression online, that terrorism that has badly affected their country, and the issues of corruption and leadership in KPK.

Third, this paper also illustrated that Politikana applied equality for the participants, the first prerequisite for deliberation as proposed by Schneider (1997) as it is basically open to all “Indonesians”. The conversations in Politikana are also diverse, another dimension requested by Schneider (1997) and Dahlberg (2001). The platform in the website allows members to post on various issues under the category of National, Elections, Media Watch, Regional, and Picture, as well as Out of Topic to accommodate those whose views do not fit into other categories.

Fourth, the discussions on Politikana were vibrant and to some degree reflect reflexivity as some of the posts showed critical examination of their assumption and interest, giving a logical background before their opinion (Dahlberg, 2001). The discussions also reflect ideal role taking. Those who posted opinions and articles open to comments with differing views and embrace dialogue despite differences of opinions that occurred.

It is difficult to assess the quality, another important conditions for online deliberation, of the dialogue in Politikana, however this paper argues that in general it can be considered as favourable with people respecting others’ opinion and the dialogue were mostly about issues of public concern.

Rational-critical discourse as required in an idealized public sphere is always hard to establish, even in a more mature democracy. Within the context of Indonesia, where democracy is still in its infancy following 30 years of authoritarian regime, rational-critical discourse amongst its citizens is still a novelty. Yet some discussions in Politikana were rational and critical.

Overall, this paper has demonstrated that user generated content such as Politikana has proven to be useful in generating an active discussion and becoming a vibrant public sphere during the 2009 election. It is however worth mentioning in this concluding chapter that the conditions might change in the future. Politikana is a new website that was only established at the end of March and opened to public since April 2009, hence the membership is still growing as many people do not know of the site. The growth of membership, the dynamics of politics, the media, social and economic circumstances as well as the development of technology, all contribute a large degree in generating a public sphere or promoting democracy in a country.

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Agustina Wayansari is a Jakarta-based media and communications professional. She has an extensive experience in the communications and media management gained from over 7 years of working with The Jakarta Post English newspaper and as media consultant for various international NGOs and multinational companies in Indonesia. This current paper is an excerpt from the minor thesis for her Master Degree in Media and Communications at Monash University, Australia, in 2009. Agustina’s research interest is mainly in the area of media and communications, youth, pop culture and community-based media initiatives -- in the development context.
The Experience of NGOs in Indonesia to Develop Participatory Democracy by the Use of the Internet

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Abstract—The current paper aims to understand the experience of NGOs in Indonesia to develop participatory democracy by the use of Internet. The research focuses on cases study of three NGOs in Indonesia: WWF-Indonesia, WALHI, and Combine Resource Institution (CRI). The results show that the main strategic uses of Internet of the NGOs are varied. There are similarities regarding the main characteristics of Internet internal use within the NGOs. Internet is mainly used for communication and collaboration, workplace participatory democracy; and consumption and production. Information is the main characteristic of Internet use by NGOs. Mutual relationships between internal and external use of the Internet exist, as found at WWF-Indonesia and CRI. However, the use of Internet for workplace participatory democracy (internal) does not correlate to the development of public participatory democracy (external). The paper concludes that Internet is a potential medium for participatory democracy because it contributes to the main characteristics of participatory democracy. NGOs in Indonesia develop participatory democracy by creating websites, mailing list or forum. However, different strategic uses of the Internet exist, so the implementation and achievement in respect to stimulating participatory democracy are varied. Citizen journalism or community-based journalism is effective medium to develop participatory democracy.

Index Terms—Internet, participatory democracy, NGOs, workplace participatory democracy, citizen journalism.

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of the Internet is growing worldwide, including number of users, transactions, websites, and total traffic (Schuler, 1998) and influencing politics, business, education, arts, etc (Insua, et.al. 2007). Together with the emergence of the Internet, the issue of participatory democracy is also necessary. In many parts of the world there is growing demand for participation in public policy decision making (Insua, et.al, 2007) called as participatory democracy.

Although considered as an emerging issue, rapid development of the Internet in Indonesia has made more public participation and civil society socio-political activism was connected to the Internet (Nugroho, 2010a). The Internet is used to provide extensive public participation and socio-political activism. NGOs and activists used Internet to share information and consolidation to fight against the New Order authoritarian regime (Lim, 2006; Nugroho, 2010b) and to consolidate democratic process.

From a survey of 268 NGOs in Indonesia (Nugroho, 2010b), there were 94.03 percent of civil society organizations (CSOs) used personal computers (PCs) and 86.94 percent had access to the Internet. Most of NGOs in Indonesia and CSOs believe that Internet strengthens the achievement of organization goals. However, knowledge, competence, and skill in using ICTs by NGOs in Indonesia/CSOs are not implemented optimally. At this point, the issue of appropriation–using networked technologies strategically, politically, creatively–is amongst the most pressing that civil society faces in the information society (Surman & Reilly, 2003).

This paper is going to focus NGOs in Indonesia and how they use Internet to develop and optimize the potential of Internet as a medium for developing participatory democracy by focusing on (1) the main strategic uses of Internet for NGOs in Indonesia; (2) the main characteristics of Internet use to develop participatory democracy; (3) the correlation between internal and external use of Internet by the NGOs, and (4) constraints and opportunities to develop participatory democracy by the use of Internet.

The study has been done by measuring levels of information, interaction, participation, and decentralization. However, this paper actually focuses on participatory democratization processes (as the conditions that facilitate the creation of democracy and its stability), rather than participatory democracy (as a part of decision making process within the NGOs), by assessing the usage of Internet for participatory organizational activities.

Three NGOs have been selected as case studies: (1) WWF-Indonesia, (2) WALHI, and (3) Combine Resource Institution (CRI). The selection is mainly based on differences of the NGOs in terms of (1) focus of interest, (2) scope of work, and (3) historiography of the NGOs, particularly regarding their effort to employ ICT in their activities. First, based on the focus of interest the NGOs are different. WWF-Indonesia is an NGO focusing on environmental conservation; WALHI on
environmental advocacy; and CRI more on technology-based community empowerment. Second, differences also appear on their scope of work. WWF-Indonesia is an international NGO; WALHI is a national NGO; and CRI is a local-based NGO in Yogyakarta. Third, the historiography of the NGOs is also different. WALHI is the first NGO using Internet since 1989 and developing website in 1992 (Tejabayu, 1999) and has been integrated nationally through the Internet in 1994. WWF-Indonesia has used and developed Internet network since 1999, while CRI has started to use Internet as a part of the program since 2005. Differences are intended to get more variety of insights and experiences on how the NGOs develop participatory democracy by the use of Internet. Thus, the study is not aimed to make claim that the results are representative for overall NGOs in Indonesia. The case-study method (not statistical survey) which has been selected is largely exploratory, descriptive, and investigative, with relatively less emphasis on the ability to be generalized.

The study has been done by doing personal in-depth semi-structured interviews to the NGOs’ staffs and also web analysis of online media (website, mailing list, forum, etc.) used by the NGOs to describe the experience of the NGOs on developing participatory democracy.

II. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INTERNET

The Internet has been mainly used as a medium for communication, interaction, and information (Desember, 1996). It enables human-to-human communication in small or large groups, ranging from interpersonal to mass communication, such as email, mailing list, forum, blog, bulletin board, etc. It can be used to enable immediate interaction such as instant messaging, chats, webcam etc. The Internet is also used for gaining information; primarily where the user, with client software, retrieves information from a host or server. In actual practice, people can use Internet for a combination of communication, interaction, and information, in the same time.

The Internet has several attributes as a democratic medium. It is an informative medium which provides information and knowledge to be retrieved and shared. It is an interactive medium that enables direct contact for everybody. It is a participatory medium in which “participation has been a fundamental component of the Internet since its inception” (Bowman & Willis, 2003) and enables the individual to become a person who can shape the society he/she lives in. Internet can be used as a medium to deliver and to voice up the citizens’ aspiration in political process and to engage in the government’s business. It is a decentralized medium that serves a horizontal and equal interaction and participation in which non-hierarchical structure of Internet communications, as well as the lack of visual identity cues that predict social dominance (gender, race, age, class, etc), are absent (Lilie, 1998). It is a low-cost medium because the technology, software, and cost, are getting affordable. It is also a “convivial medium” (Lim, 2009: 82) because it can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired.

The concept of “convivial medium” was popularized by Ivan Illich (1973). According to Illich, “tools foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user” and “give each person who uses them the greater opportunity to enrich the environment with fruits of his or her vision” (Illich, 1973). These characteristics or attributes strengthens the claim that Internet provides the means for an effective and truly participatory democracy.

III. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

The notion of democracy comes from the Greek: demos (people) and kratos (rule, or governance) which means ‘people participate in making decisions either directly or through electing their representatives’ (Kersten, 2003; Escher, 2008) or ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’ (Heywood, 2002). The old concept of democracy is Athenian democracy, applied in Athena, a city in Greece, in 5th BC. They applied direct participation of its citizens (one man one vote) and did not elect officials to represent them. In this system, elections are the primary institution for active political participation.

Direct democracy imposes severe limits on the size of a democratic state. Representative democracy is used in which people are being represented by elected government officials. However, there is a lack of trust in electing representatives in a society that has grown over-organized, hierarchical, and authoritarian. Representative democracy tends to limit citizens participation to voting and leaving actual governance to politicians (White, 1997). This condition has urged a demand of greater citizen participation. The New Left in the early of 1960s and through 1980 promoted direct democracy so-called participatory democracy.

Participatory democracy means people participation is the most important quality of democracy. It is a capacity of people to deal constructively with its tensions so as to make and carry out decisions (Daubon, 2005) which emphasizes broad participation of constituents in the direction and operation of political system (Zittel, 2003) and promises a broadened citizen involvement and contribution, leading to greater legitimation and acceptance of public decisions, greater transparency and efficiency in public expenditure, and greater citizen’s satisfaction (Renn et al, 1995). It creates opportunities for all members of a political group to make meaningful contributions to decision making. It involves participants throughout the planning processes, from initiation to decision implementation and monitoring (Chambers & Kymlicka, 2002; Hanberger, 2001).

Participatory democratic theory envisions maximum participation of citizens in their self-governance, especially in society spheres beyond those that are traditionally understood to be political (e.g. the workplace and the family) (Hilmer, 2008). Here, participatory democracy characterizes democratic activities beyond the election process.
It is aligned with John Dewey, as the most important advocate of participatory democracy (Westbrook, 1991). Dewey draws on Jefferson’s idea of democracy as a way of life, a form of life, not only as a form of government. Democracy is understood as a certain ‘spirit’, as an approach, and it may be found in each sphere of organized social life; moreover, democracy and its methods of organizing social behaviour may be applied to every structure of society (Wegmarshaus, 2006). It is in line with Meijer (2011): “Democracy is not only about voting, about debate or about practice but about all three of these. Voting, debate and practice provide different venues for citizen input in public value production and distribution.”

Dewey’s term for participation is sharing and (mutual) contribution. As a way of life, democracy is part of a genuine way of human which is the social being that can be implemented everywhere and every time: in the family, communities, corporate, and government. Participation is a must. The consequences of the absence of active participation in public issues are ‘breeds indifferent, routine, and passive minds; a subtle form of suppression; and lack of effective responsibility’ (Visnovsky, 2007).

For NGOs, participatory democracy is understood as a societal model that seeks to extend the sphere of participation and people’s power to take decision for themselves beyond traditional policy making. The role and benefits of participatory democracy has been well summarized by the Platform of European Social NGOs (Social Platform):

“The primary objective is to engage all people in the fabric of society, and ultimately promote social cohesion, solidarity and social justice, creating a better quality of life for everyone. Participatory democracy also aims to achieve quality services for people that are better targeted to their needs. Participatory democracy creates public space for discussion and therefore gives people more ownership of decisions. It aims to engage with disengaged people who are not politically active (e.g. those who do not vote), nor active in associations, creating a more active citizenship. It sets people as actors in all areas of life, extending the concept of citizenship beyond the conventional political sphere (e.g. involving users in the provision of services, involving parents in schooling, etc)...By involving people to intervene, participatory democracy can produce solutions that are effective and legitimate, and go beyond traditional political divides. In that sense, it strengthens the legitimacy of decision makers/services providers since their decisions will be based on the real views of people. Participatory democracy therefore aims to improve trust and accountability” (Social Platform, 2008).

IV. INTERNET FOR PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

A truly participatory democracy in which people are engaged in every decision making process at each level of government may not be feasible. In this context, a medium is needed to facilitate this process. The Internet becomes new medium that can be used to develop or facilitate participatory democracy. Moreover, it will make participatory democracy feasible and easy (Thornburg, 1992) which allows millions of people to voice out their political decision directly, without representatives, and make their own contribution to the public debate free from any form of censorship (Ioannidis, 2002).

However, there is no real agreement to the true nature and consequences of the Internet to change the democracy. Opinions differ from whether or not the growth of Internet will result in expanded democracy. According to Muñoz & Soyz (2009), we can generally sort the broad range of opinions into three perspectives: (1) the cyber-optimist or cyber utopians; (2) the cyber-pessimist or anti-utopian or dis-utopian; (3) the cyber-skeptics.

Cyber-optimists or cyber utopians argue that the Internet is able to transform democratic process to be more egalitarian, informed, and participatory. It will allow for a true ‘participatory democracy’ in which citizens can govern themselves without interference of bureaucrats and legislators. Ordinary citizens are able to involve in direct democracy. Individuals and groups from around the world will be able to voice up and be heard within the public sphere. Cyber-optimists believe that political communication online is fast, easy, and cheap (Castells, 2004). They claim that the Internet facilitates freedom of expression and access to knowledge and information.

Cyber-pessimists or anti-utopians or dis-utopians or techno-realists emphasize the negative effects of the Internet, for instance: the risk of surveillance, concentration of wealth, elite control of information and the growth of inequalities (Gaynor D, 1996). According to Davis (1999), the Internet will not fundamentally change the character of the political process, he argues that Internet will simply provide a new forum for political participation and deliberation for those who are already engaged politically. Therefore, Internet is utilized by few political elites.

Scholars who have come to conflicting conclusions about the Internet’s political impacts proposed a key problem of access, so-called digital divide. It commonly refers to the gap between those who do and those who do not have access to new forms of information technology (van Dijk, 2006; Warshauer, 2003). Nielsen (2006) divided the issue of digital divide into three stages: (1) Economic divide: people can’t afford to buy computer/Internet; (2) Usability divide: people can’t use a computer (lower literacy skills); (3) Empowerment divide: not everybody will make optimum use of the opportunities that such technologies offered. From this explanation, the digital divide is not only regarding the physical access but also mental and skill access; or demographic variables use (income, education, age, gender, ethnicity, urban/rural background).

Van Dijk (2006) defines digital divide into mental/motivational access, material access, skills access, and usage access. Prior to the material or physical access came the wish to have a computer and to be connected to the Internet, emerged the motivational access (‘the-wants’ and ‘the-want-nots’). After having the motivation to use computer and physical access, one has to learn to manage the hardware and software. Lack of computer skills becomes the essential issue.
The final stage and ultimate goal of the total process of technology appropriation is to be able to use digital media. It is also perceived that societal participation is mostly influenced by skill access and usage access. If we want to achieve high participation, we need media literacy as an ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms (content creation).

Cyber-sceptics argue that the Internet does not have significant effects on societies, despite the hype. Skeptics propose the idea that technology is never fixed and will adapt to compensate for existing models and systems (Castell, 2004). According to the cyber-skeptics, Internet does not have a dramatic impact on the reality of ‘politics as usual.’

V. KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERNET-BASED PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Tobias Escher (2008) describes that in term of electronic democracy (e-Democracy), participatory democracy is in the middle of direct democracy and representative democracy with higher status of implementation (see Figure 1). From this figure, participatory democracy includes (or close to, relates to) strong democracy, deliberative democracy, and discursive democracy.

Strong democracy is a democracy that reflects the careful and prudent judgment of citizens who participate in deliberative, self-governing communities (Barber, 1994). Therefore deliberative democracy should be more than just a process for bargaining and aggregating preferences, because true participation requires citizens to engage in direct discussion with other citizens (Hindman, 2008). While discursive democracy is an approach which puts discourses at the centre of democracy, that starts from the assumption that the deepening of democracy requires the intensification of communicative exchanges in several social contexts, encompassing the definition of rules and institutions, processes of decision making and everyday interactions (Dryzek, 1990). XX Following these concepts, participatory democracy then can be summarized as a process of citizen participation through communicative exchanges and direct discussions in a deliberative and self-governing community.

Four key characteristics of participatory democracy will be proposed to measure the usage of Internet for participatory democracy, including: (1) information (knowledge and information); (2) interaction (deliberative, direct discussion, and communicative exchanges); (3) participation (citizen’s participation); and (4) decentralization (self-governance).

(1) Information comes from the concept of ‘informed citizenry’ in which Internet allows citizens to be better informed. As ‘informed citizens’, they can expand their abilities to access, use, create and disseminate information, and Internet allows the public to become more knowledgeable about public affairs and more articulate in expressing their views. Information is used as political ammunition and basis for political decision making, therefore access to information is an important component to participatory democracy: the wider access to information, the better chance to develop participatory democracy. Citizens must have more information and knowledge in order to know about the issue being considered or being addressed (Stromer-Galley, 2000) to participate in all kind of democratic processes, and to make rational decisions also to support or criticize current practice or policy.

(2) Interaction comes from the concept of deliberation as a discussion among free and equal citizens (Elster, 1998; Dahlgren, 2002). It (refer to? Interaction or deliberation as a discussion) is an essential procedure of open interaction aimed at achieving consensus through rational, tolerant, and civil interaction and debates (Zhou, 2008). Democracy requires interaction of all of a community’s voices, a public (Daubon, 2005). Citizen must be able to communicate, interact, with each other and discuss politics and public issue. Participatory democracy considers communicative interaction among citizens as a central element. In this context interaction is seen as the fundamental of (and expression of) participation.

Internet is a ‘master medium’ on the basis of interactive potential (Tedesco, 2007). It is the ability to respond to user, almost like an individual participating in a conversation (Roger, 1986) or the processes by which the user acts upon and reacts to information (Mitchell, 2003). Internet is more interactive than older (one-to-many) mass media because it combines certain features of both mass media and interpersonal media and gives the receivers more power. According to Roger (1986), source and receiver play interchangeable role, exhibiting reciprocal influence. So, it is impossible to think of a source and receiver in a communication system with a high degree of interactivity, but the Internet can make every member of the audience a potential publisher because of its ability to do interactive communication. It allows users to shape the content they receive and to interact directly.

(3) Participation means active involvement of citizen in decision making (as the optimal form of democracy). Citizens transform themselves from bystanders to actively involved people, aiming to realize what they perceive as the ‘public good’ or ‘common good’ (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). Internet
enables individual (who has his/her own will and ability) to shape the society he/she lives in, offers opportunities for citizen participation and maybe even more direct democracy (Escher, 2008). The existence of this power stimulates people's involvement and participation in decision making.

Meijer et al. (2009) stated that citizens use the Internet for participation can be categorized in to three types of participation: (1) policy participation (to support or undermine government policies). Internet allows to revive the direct democracy by online consultations, focus groups, opinion polling and surveys, public referenda, electronic voting (Vedel, 2006); (2) political participation (directed at influencing political decision-making and agenda-setting); (3) social participation (to increase social capital) facilitated by Web 2.0.

(4) Decentralization means the process of dispersing decision-making governance to get closer to the people or citizens (Caluser M & Salagean, 2007). It is the concept that brings the government ‘closer to the people’ and more easily allows the community to engage in the practice of democracy (Bland, 2002). It enables active citizens to involve in decision-making processes. Internet is an open, global, decentralized network which provides the potential use for non-hierarchical communication that allows these things to happen because these systems will be immune to censorship, monopoly, regulation, and other exercises of centralized authority (Agre, 2003). It enables small groups of individuals to become creators and users in the production of their information environment and reducing hierarchical barriers to communication and promoting more opportunities for citizens to communicate with political leaders.

Internet emphasizes principles as delegation and decentralization and not centralization and hierarchy (Holitscher, 2004) also eliminates 'intermediary bodies' (Vedel, 2006) so that citizens are able to involve in public affairs directly. Internet is a cyberspace which substitutes public places for political gathering and discussion in the past. Now, such gatherings take place online which transcends geography, national identity, and all kinds of hierarchies: race, class, age, and gender (Ioannidis, 2002). Internet is the new public sphere in which democratic processes are conducted in the form of a decentralized public discourse. It is a decentralized communication system (Poster, 1995) in which everyone may initiate a call and send a message to many receivers, in ‘real time’—the same manner of the broadcast system.

Case 1: WALHI

Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia (WALHI) or Indonesian Forum for Environment is the largest forum of non-government and community-based organizations in Indonesia. Established on October 15, 1980 in Jakarta by 10 NGOs, WALHI focuses on increasing public awareness of environmental issues, including air pollution, water pollution, pesticides and forest protection. WALHI conducts campaigns with federations and other international networks which have the same concerns on environmental justice. WALHI is represented in 25 provinces and has over 438 member organizations (June 2004). It stands for social transformation, people’s sovereignty, and sustainability of life and livelihoods. The organization works on a variety of issues, including: forestry, mining, fresh water management, pollution, foreign debt and corporate-driven globalization, coasts and oceans, disaster management, national policy and law reform, and good governance.

As an organization focusing on political issues of environment, WALHI uses Internet strategically for mobilization and advocacy work. They conduct collective actions, such as protest or demonstration, donation, petition, political pressure and critics for government. The organization believes that Internet is more effective, easier and cheaper for mobilize people and supporters.

Externally, WALHI has used the Internet for advocacy campaign, monitoring, and shaping public opinion. For example, as a means for monitoring online newspaper and websites and if there is human right or environmental violation, Internet is used to blow up issue. It is easier and more effective to gain international support by sending chronologies and invitation for support and put on the website. For some cases, they use personal email and ask colleagues to spread email to their network.

As a national organization with 25 executive regions in Indonesia, WALHI needs an effective and efficient medium for collaboration and communication. Internally, Internet is a very important medium for WALHI, especially for communication, collaboration and workplace participatory democracy. According to Djatmiko (2009), 80 percents of their communications are using various applications of Internet because of the effectiveness of the Internet. “Building a discussion for decision making for 25 provinces using conventional media is expensive and slow,” said Djatmiko.

However, the use for workplace participatory democracy is not clear. Internet, especially internal mailing list, has been used for discussion for trivial issues, but they still rely on face-to-face meeting. WALHI realizes that they need citizen’s involvement and participation and Internet has opportunity to develop participatory democracy. However, according to Djatmiko (2009), it has not been applied yet because Internet access in Indonesia is still lacking.

WALHI uses intranet or internal website as information resource. Data are classified based on issues, office needs, and asset management. In advance, it enables direct connection, especially for updating data and information from regional executives. For day to day communication, mailing list and email are used. Internal mailing list is used for communication and decision making. Discussion has been conducted via mailing list in a certain time with specific topic led by moderator. They use one-to-one communication via Skype and Yahoo Messenger (YM) instead of using video conference because the bandwidth of Internet is lacking. For internal communication, they still rely on face to face or direct communication because internal mailing list is only used for discussing trivial issue which do not influence the policy of WALHI. As for policy decision making, WALHI has annual
meeting in which all regional executives are gathered.

The WALHI official website (http://www.walhi.or.id) has been used to facilitate one-way communication from WALHI to external/public (to disseminate information, news, statements or protest towards environmental policy). Issues of campaign are classified into environment, water, disaster management, pollution, energy, globalization and debt, forest, coast and oceans, reforming environment and natural resource, mining. Almost all articles, statements, and protest posted were created by the staffs.

This website is open and focuses on media, academicians, and politicians as target audience but the quantity of information is less. My observation at 07/04/2009 found that articles posted in 2005 still appeared. Even though the new version of the web published in May 2009 presented more information and more sophisticated, yet the new version of website was still lack of interaction between readers and author and among users. Interaction has (only) been facilitated via Contact-hyperlink, address, fax, phone, and email address. Level of participation is medium. This website invited participation through call for action, fund rising, and online polling. Fund rising has been conducted through Sahabat WALHI. Decentralization level of this website is low because it does not provide chance for public to organize themselves. Although content management was organized by WALHI, yet Sahabat WALHI as a group of members was not well organized. For example, there is no information on what kind of activities they do after registration and whether they can organize themselves through Internet.

The WALHINews mailing list (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/walhinews) is a mailing list developed by WALHI since 19/07/2002 to overwhelm public with updated environmental issue from WALHI executive regions. It tends to be one way communication although the members can be taking part in giving information. But as an open mailing list, the audience of this mailing list was dominated by environmental activists and WALHI staffs. The number of the members decreased from 415 (07/02/2009) to 396 (24/06/2009). Level of information of the mailing list is medium and mainly used for disseminating information and press releases of WALHI. Level of interaction is low. Less discussions and interactions happened on it. Feedbacks or comments from the members and also participation are low because only few members shared information and posted messages; most of them are lurker (passive). Decentralization level is also low because almost nothing happened on it.

**Case 2: WWF-Indonesia**

WWF-Indonesia is an independent member and a network of WWF International which affiliates in almost 100 countries worldwide. WWF-Indonesia prioritizes their work in important centres of biodiversity known as the Global 200 eco-regions and running conservation programs in 23 sites in 16 provinces. The organization strives to save the diversity of species by promoting sustainable conservation that can give continued social and economic benefits to local communities.

WWF-Indonesia has used Internet strategically for communication-collaboration, knowledge management and contribution to environment such as Action Network program. They used the Internet to communicate lively from the field. Activity has been updated using notebook equipped with broadcasting satellite for taking pictures and publishing it to public. The Internet also contributes to knowledge management with many valuable documents have been opened to public; people can freely access all final documents put on the server. Internet has also direct impact to environment by reducing flight transport. WWF has followed a movement of giving compensation for flight with online meeting is used to cut travel cost as a way to strategically use the Internet to reduce carbon foot print.

As an international NGO, Internet is very important for WWF-Indonesia, such as for communication, collaboration, knowledge management, and workplace participatory democracy. All staffs are registered to use Intranet or global intranet for internal communication. All documents are put on it so that they can use it for collaboration. They also use email and portal as a central website for all information divided into several community work practices or workgroups. The Internet is used as communication medium because Internet enables people wherever they are, they can be contacted. So, there is no constraint of communication.

The Internet is also used to facilitate and develop workplace participatory democracy, for instance discussion has been done through internal mailing list and online conference. They gathered inputs and opinion from employees via Internet to be used in internal decision making. Internet also facilitates sense of togetherness and belonging among employers and between employers and managers so they have a chance to participate in decision making process. Participatory democracy has done through online polling. For example, there was a plan to build a new office, so they posted a plan and design on the website and ask people to choose. However, the intensity of WWF members related to public engagement towards public policy is low. Participatory democracy involving citizens in policy environmental decision making through Internet did not exist. They just proposed a position paper as inputs for the stakeholders such as about Jakarta flood issue and climate, and put their idea on the website. Mailing list and website are used to develop external communication. WWF Supporter mailing list is used as interaction medium for WWF and supporters to share information about nature conservation.

The WWF-Indonesia website (http://www.wwf.or.id) is an official website of WWF to provide information about WWF and focuses on giving information about programs, fund raising for supporters, job vacancy, etc and academic publication (reports, position papers, campaign materials). There is also online library (http://raflesia.wwf.or.id/library) in which publications, books, articles from the media; news, etc can be retrieved. Level of interaction on this website is low. Since June 2009, this website has provided comment box, yet the feedbacks are lacking. Level of participation is also low. WWF-Indonesia has asked active participation such as “how you can help”; “make a donation”; “getting involved”,

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and “reduce your impact”, but the participation is still not improve. Level of decentralization on this website is medium. According to Primayunta (2009), WWF-Indonesia website provided a space for citizens to send and publish articles and invites them to join WWF Supporter, give donation, take action, and send e-petition; they have used it to organize members by using citizen journalism approach.

The WWF-Indonesia Supporter website (http://www.supporterwwf.org) is a community website used as a medium for communication and information between Supporters and WWF-Indonesia to provide online supporter activities. Level of information of this website is medium, mainly about WWF activities and program and interactive information via video and online bulletin. Level of interaction is high because it enables everyone to post comments and questions via Shout Box. Interaction can be seen through WWF Supporter forum (http://supporterwwf.org/forum). However, only registered users (active members) can interact on the forum. Level of participation in the website is medium. It provides rooms for members to participate (fund raising, recruiting members, sending creativity, such as articles, tips, pictures, or wallpaper design, etc) and to get involved in WWF environmental conservation program by giving annual donation and helping WWF campaign. Level of decentralization of this website is high. Through this website, supporters are able to create program, develop activities, and organize their group by themselves (WWF staffs are only as facilitators).

The WWF Supporter mailing list (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/supporter-wwf) was created in 18/04/2006 as a medium for discussion for WWF, Supporters, and public to share news and information, opinion, debate, protest, etc. This mailing list is open for public. Members are consist of environmental activist, professional, citizens, etc which increased from 1.107 (in 27/05/2009) to 1130 (in 25/06/2009). Level of information of this mailing list is medium. Information ranges from 50 to 222 per month, provided by members and WWF staffs. Level of interaction and participation are high as seen by [Re:] symbol. Level of decentralization is medium. Although it is organized by the WWF-Indonesia, it provides rooms for supporters to organize and to develop plan and activities based on their own idea.

Case 3: Combine Resource Institution (CRI)

The idea of community based information network (Combine) started in 1999. In 2001, Combine grew into Combine Resource Institution (CRI); focused on marginalized communities such as the urban poor, peasants, labours, indigenous and geographically-isolated people. Their concern is how to develop network of knowledge and information to empower poor or marginalized communities which allows possibilities of distributing and sharing information among members of communities, between communities and external parties. Combine has set its goals: utilizing local wisdom, focusing on good governance and encouraging small society oriented economy that supports the values of community productivity, environmental sustainability, humanity and justice by providing resources and expertise in consultation; training and research specifically related to information systems, community based journalism, community organizing and participatory planning. CRI now scales itself up by including the use of ICT in its program. CRI realizes that ICT will be helpful, if the organization can use it strategically. Integrating ICT with community media is also part of their agenda. CRI develops programs, such as software for village to support transparency of local government.

CRI has used Internet strategically to develop content management, strengthen grassroots, and develop citizen journalism. As an NGO focuses on media development, CRI develops convergence between radio and Internet. Radio is used to connect with community as information centre by people because the Internet is still accessed by a few people. Then, they provide internet connection to the radio so that radio has ability to develop content management. Internet is chosen because it enables citizens to build network and to develop citizen journalism, so citizens are able to manage content of the community and share local problems (Tanesia, 2009). The idea behind this vision is that marginal communities only become an object of information for all the time. If they have their own ability to manage information, they will be stronger and are able to build network among them. However, talking about this issue in Indonesian context is too far because information is still assumed as unimportant. Information did not become a mainstream yet. CRI has to struggle hard to promote this issue (Nasir, 2009).

To develop community media, they need to raise capacity of people. CRI focuses on developing network by making link among community media. To make this such link, technology is needed. The Internet is chosen as a medium because CRI wants to develop three communication patterns. The first is in bridging existing gap between elite and grassroots; they try unearthing elite’s term by modifying article and academic document so that it can be understood by grassroots; whilst the second is mainstreaming: issues and discourses in grassroots sometimes are regarded as irrational, non-academic. CRI wants ‘to mainstream’ local issues. The third is horizontal communication among citizens and communities (Nasir, 2009).

According to CRI, Internet is the most possible medium which enables such communication patterns. Since 2005 CRI has used Internet for achieving this purpose. They developed Internet network among community radios to share information mutually and manage website together. As a result, information exchange occurred, real exchange, for example business transaction among communities will occur. If horizontal transaction happens, cost and price will be lower.

CRI is eager to develop citizen journalism because rapid progress of citizen journalism will encourage democratization. In citizen journalism approach, citizens do not become object to the media. They are able to publish events and issues among them. As a result, public spaces are not monopolized by elites’ opinion. Citizen journalism are able to cover the
lack of news material when the mainstream media only prioritize big scale magnitude and never take in to account common people in covering news. CRI develops citizen journalism using portals and facilitates convergence of community radio stations and citizens bulletin. The Internet has been used for many purposes in internal organization, such as consumption and production, communication, and workplace participatory democracy. In consumption, they used Internet to search material for training, writing, and reference; in production, they published online media for campaign. There are some facilities, features, and Internet applications used for communication: (1) Internal website is used as an information medium for people to know about CRI. (2) E-mail is used to communicate with partners and donors. (3) Yahoo Messenger is used for online meeting or conference with staffs outside. (4) Internal mailing list is used to update the progress of the program and activities. (5) Virtual office is used to put valuable archives and agenda about activities and programs. (6) Website is used for donors to give input, critique or suggestion and interact through website directly. Server is used as a place to save valuable data which can be accessed from outside. Internet is helping to implement workplace participatory democracy. According to Nasir (2009), participatory democracy emerges when everybody is able to give input, suggestion, and discussion via the Internet. For example, decision making process occurs by taking in to account the dynamics emerge in the mailing list. Discussions list can be brought to managerial meeting and sometimes the decision is made directly in the mailing list. Transparency occurs, for instance, when Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) can be accessed by everyone through Internet. Decentralization occurs when everybody can propose program. However, they still rely on face-to-face official meeting. The CRI website (http://www.cri.or.id) is an official website of CRI used as a medium for general information about CRI. It provides hyperlinks, such as About (Vision, Mission, and Person), Services (Community Media Development, Production House, Publication, Research, Public Library, and Applied ICT); Activities (Accomplished activities and On Going Activities), and Partners (NGOs and International Organization, Civil Society Organization, Government Institution, and Funding Organization).

Suara Komunitas (http://www.suarakomunitas.net/) is a community website organized by community media (community radio, print media community, and individual contributor). Differences become basis for the existence of Suara Komunitas. It aims to disseminate information to competent authorities. For example, when there is corruption in a village, Suara Komunitas has obligation to publish this case to get attention from the authority. Community media activists publish it to their community (via bulletin, community magazines, and community radio), while Suara Komunitas publishes it to external community so that the information get bigger resonances. Citizen journalism approach by collecting and sharing concepts, ideas, and events in the community has been developed by creating a system which enables them to share information and knowledge through Internet. They apply their own news worthy (do not emphasize on high magnitude) which is different with mainstream media. Suara Komunitas provides information from villages, regions, and smalls cities in Indonesia. It is open to various topics focus on local information as long as based on fact, not gossip or rumour.

Suara Komunitas website is updated frequently, around five postings per day. Community news has dominated the content of this website. However, the quality of information is low. It makes sense because the authors are commonly citizens who lack of skills, knowledge, and professionalism in journalism. Level of interaction of this website is high. Visitors and users are able to give feedback on the postings or articles. Everyone can give comments without moderation and registration. Level of participation is also high. Most of all information is created by citizen or community media activist. Level of decentralization is also high. It develops self-governance community through citizen journalism approach. Everybody can register easily. Users are able to post news, information, pictures, or articles on the website. People are provided by Press ID card so that they have access to political decision maker and write news/events about public issues. The main characteristic of this website are participation and decentralization. CRI provides spaces and opportunities for people/members to organize their selves.

Jaringan Informasi Lingkar Merapi (Information Network of around Merapi volcano) (http://merapi.cri.or.id) or Jalin Merapi was developed as an early warning system organized by the cooperation of three community radios in the area of Merapi volcano: Radio Lintas Merapi, Radio K FM, and Radio Merapi-Merbabu Community (MMC). Level of Information of the website is medium. It is aimed to provide information about the condition of Merapi volcano and the dynamic of the community around Merapi slope. The website has been updated frequently. However, the quality of information published is low because authors are not professional journalists. Level of Interaction is low. Comment boxes are not available. Interactions are facilitated through moderated Shout Box and SMS. Level of participation on this website is medium. Information are taken from the field and investigated by citizens. Level of decentralization is medium. It develops citizen journalism approach in which citizens can post articles and opinion about events and the dynamics of the community. It gives chance for citizens and community radio activists to get involved and to organize this website.

Saluran Informasi Akar-Rumput (SIAR) or Information Channel for Grassroots (http://www.siar.or.id) is a medium for co-organizing information among community media in Indonesia. SIAR utilizes Internet to create a medium fulfilling the element of speed, accuracy, interactivity and democracy. SIAR is aimed as an effort to build synergy among community media through information network. This website is used for sharing news and information among communities and to facilitate content diversity which enables cooperation for communities to prevent monopoly of information. Information is mainly local content because contributors are citizens from
community radio. However, the level of information is low. The website was not managed well. Information published is lacking. Information was not updated frequently. Interactions are facilitated by comment box, Shout box, Guestbook, and SMS. The level of interaction is low. Comments from visitors are lacking. The level of participation is also low. However, the level of decentralization is medium. SIAR is handled by citizens. They participate, interact, and develop self-governance community through Internet.

From the above explanation we can see that CRI has used the Internet mutually to develop workplace participatory democracy (internally) and public participatory democracy (externally) by providing Internet hosting, website, and training so that people are able to organize their own community media. CRI has integrated Internet and radio community. It is very effective. For citizens who have no Internet connection, they can still be facilitated by community radio.

No | NGO | Online Media | Key Characteristic |
---|---|---|---|
| | | Information | Interaction | Participation | Decentralization |
| 1. | WALHI | Official web | Medium | Low | Medium | Low |
| | | Official mail list | Medium | Low | Low | Low |
| 2. | WWF-I | Official web | Low | Low | Medium | Low |
| | | Supporter website | Medium | High | Medium | High |
| | | Supporter mail list | Medium | High | High | Medium |
| 3. | CRI | Official web | Medium | Low | Low | Low |
| | | Suara Komunitas | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| | | Jalin Merapi | Medium | Medium | High | High |
| | | SIAR | Low | Low | Low | Medium |

Table 1: Comparison of key characteristics

No | NGO | External Use | Internal Use | Correlation |
---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | WALHI | Mobilization, Advocacy, monitoring, shaping public opinion, Collaboration | Communication and Collaboration, Workplace participatory democracy | No correlation |
| 2. | WWF-I | Communication and Collaboration, Knowledge management, Environmental contribution | Communication and collaboration, Workplace participatory democracy | Mutual |
| 3. | CRI | Content management, Strengthen grassroots, Develop citizen journalism | Consumption and production Communication, Workplace participatory democracy | Mutual |

Table 2: Internal Use and External Strategic Use

VI. COMPARISONS

Table 1 shows comparisons of the key characteristic of the Internet use by the NGOs. Information is the main characteristic of NGOs’ activities using the Internet/online media. The level of information, interaction, participation, and decentralization reflects different level of participatory democratization of the NGOs’ activities using the Internet.

Participatory level of the NGOs’ official websites is at low position. It makes sense because in general, the NGOs mainly use the official websites as communication medium from NGOs to public (one-way communication). Participatory levels of NGOs’ online media are varied. WALHI is the lowest, while WWF-Indonesia and CRI are higher because they develop and facilitate members/supporters/communities with online media using citizen journalism approach.

Table 2 presents internal and external strategic use of the Internet. WALHI uses Internet for mobilization; advocacy, monitoring, and shaping public opinion; collaboration, and supporting political movement. Internally, they uses the Internet for communication, collaboration, and workplace participatory democracy. However, there is no positive-correlation between internal and external use for public participatory democracy developed by WALHI.

WWF-Indonesia uses Internet for communication and collaboration; knowledge management; and environmental
contribution. They use Internet internally for communication, collaboration, and workplace participatory democracy. There is mutual relationship between internal and external use of the Internet for participatory democracy.

CRI uses Internet for content management; strengthen grassroots, and develop citizen journalism. Internet is used internally for consumption and production, communication, and workplace participatory democracy. There is a mutual relationship between internal and external use of the Internet for participatory democracy.

Scholars who have come to conflicting conclusions about the Internet’s political impacts proposed a key problem of access, so-called digital divide. It commonly refers to the gap between those who do and those who do not have access to new forms of information technology (van Dijk, 2006; Warshauer, 2003). Nielsen (2006) divided the issue of digital divide into three stages: (1) Economic divide: people can’t afford to buy computer/Internet; (2) Usability divide: people can’t use a computer (lower literacy skills); (3) Empowerment divide: not everybody will make optimum use of the opportunities that such technologies offered. From this explanation, the digital divide is not only regarding the physical access but also mental and skill access; or demographic variables use (income, education, age, gender, ethnicity, urban/rural background).

Van Dijk (2006) defines digital divide into mental/motivational access, material access, skills access, and usage access. Prior to the material or physical access came the wish to have a computer and to be connected to the Internet, emerged the motivational access (‘the-wants’ and ‘the-want-nots’). After having the motivation to use computer and physical access, one has to learn to manage the hardware and software. Lack of computer skills becomes the essential issue. The final stage and ultimate goal of the total process of technology appropriation is to be able to use digital media. It is also perceived that) societal participation is mostly influenced by skill access and usage access. If we want to achieve high participation, we need media literacy as an ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms (content creation).

VII. CONSTRAINTS

There are some constraints of developing participatory democracy by the use of Internet. In term of digital divide refers to Nielsen (2006), basically the NGOs have no constraint of access or internet connection. Internet has been used as an important medium in daily activities by the NGOs. On the other hand, the NGOs have problem of empowerment divide (Nielsen, 2006) or mental/motivational access (van Dijk, 2006).

Some constraints found on this study including (1) internal constraint and (2) cultural constraint. The effort to develop participatory democracy within the NGOs sometimes has to deal with internal constraint such as (1) un-equal participation: there are very active members and also passive members (lurker), refers to the act of viewing other peoples' conversations but not participating by themselves (silent participants); (2) written communication using Internet sometime enables miss-communication, and (3) negative image of Internet communication (for some people, Internet communication is assumed as ‘a-social’).

Cultural constraint includes (1) limited use of Internet by government officials especially in decision making, although in certain levels, they have been actively using the Internet. Instead of using the Internet as a medium for official communication, they still use traditional communication, such as sending letter and hard copy (Fadli, 2009). (2) Un-expressive characteristic of Indonesian citizens in which they are not easy to be open to express their thought and opinion (Pehrama, 2009). (3) Negative image of Internet. Media dominantly publish negative image of Internet (such as pornography, crime) and rarely to publish, for example, that Internet can educate children (Nasir, 2009).

Connected to this issue, according to Nasir (2009), majority of Indonesian people perceive the Internet as ‘consumption tool’—they use Internet more ‘to download’ and not ‘to upload’. “The same condition happens for the NGOs’ activist. Although they have been facilitated by Internet but they did not optimally use it. Compared to non-activists, the NGO activists are less active. For example, it is difficult to ask NGO activists for sharing information. In majority, they perceive information as an exclusive thing need to be kept. It is the contrary of the Internet nature: sharing” (Nasir, 2009).

So, the main problem is about content, not about technology, as stated by Nasir (2009):

“Our approach is not by teaching people (such as farmers or fishermen) to use Internet, but how we can utilize the Internet. If in a certain area there is no Internet, no problem. We can use other technology, such as radio. We perceive community radio just as a medium, but as a nodal information point in the community which can be used strategically and optimally for community. As an example, community radios are searching information on the Internet, translate it in to local language, and then publish it through radio. It answers two issues: first, language issue: they become translator. Second, technical issue: not all people need to search information through the Internet. They just listen to the radio.” (Nasir, 2009)

According to Nasir (2009), the competence of human recourse is not trivial in this regard. To develop participatory democracy means to enhance the capacity of people so that they can speak and express their thought. Sometimes it is not easy because of the education level, computer literacy, and internet literacy of the people is low.

VIII. OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST?

As demonstrated by the cases study, NGOs in Indonesia have used the Internet for quiet sometimes. The important of this usage was demonstrated by WALHI which has made 80 percents of their communications using the Internet. But, in
reality the usage of the Internet for participatory democracy is less. Decision making process is still rely on face-to-face meeting instead of using the Internet.

The NGOs consider that Internet has potential to develop participatory democracy and public participation. However, the implementation depends on the strategic implementation and approaches to how the NGOs use the Internet. CRI, for example, has emphasized vision and mission on ‘developing people empowerment through community’; and so the usage of the Internet to develop participatory democracy is more significant and advanced, compared to WALHI and WWF-Indonesia.

NGOs in Indonesia have facilitated workplace participatory democracy in internal organization by the Internet. Therefore, they can easily implement participatory democracy in a broader context to public. On the other hand, this argument needs further consideration. From this study, it is clear that the practice of workplace participatory democracy (internal) does not directly influence to the development of participatory democracy (external).

The Internet essentially enables citizens to develop self-governance without the interference of the NGOs. The role of NGOs can be minimized for facilitation, assistance, and supporters. By minimizing it, Internet can stimulate solidarity, sense of belonging, and solidarity among citizens. As demonstrated in the case of WWF-Supporter and the communities developed by CRI, individuals and group members will be able to voice up and be heard within the public sphere. It allows citizens to participate in sharing information, interactions, and debates in a deliberative way. If these conditions are supported by a clear vision and the understanding and awareness about the influence of the Internet, there will be a more significant role of Internet to strengthen participatory democracy and to empower citizens.

From the experience of WALHI, WWF-Indonesia, and CRI, Internet has a potential to be used to develop participatory democracy. This approach may be further optimized by applying citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is the concept of members of the public "playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information" in order to provide independent, reliable, accurate, wide-ranging and relevant information that a democracy requires (Bowman and Willis, 2003). The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others (Glaser, 2004).

One example is Suara Komunitas (http://www.suarakomunitas.net). Through this website, CRI wants to show that people have big power to determine the direction of change. Suara Komunitas has aimed that two-way communication between grassroots and authorities occurs and that people have bargaining power vis-à-vis authorities. Suara Komunitas emphasizes on social, political, and cultural changes and local economic growth by doing promotions and using inter-regional network. The increase of local economic potency has been managed in Pasar-Komunitas (Community Market) website (http://www.pasarkomunitas.com) which aims to strengthen the potencies of local economy by providing information focused on economic issue or community empowerment. This website is opened to community media and community groups where they can post articles and also promotion of products.

Citizen journalism approach or model can be used to further develop participatory democracy through Internet because (1) the rise of citizen journalism is mostly due to the fact that there are some popular topics ignored by the conventional newspapers. This hints at the need for a place to voice out some perspectives held by the public that are not taken into account by the media (Vivijanti, 2007b). (2) This model channels citizens' voices and promotes people's involvement in the public arena—in an independent media from the public, for the public (Yuliyantri, 2007). Citizen journalism can be used to change traditional journalism; to find and create a new type of journalism; and "to change the world" (O'Connor, 2007). (3) The increase of citizen journalism in Indonesia could really complement the media, as the journalist can seek out public views and get more news direct from the source. The rise of citizen journalism could make a great change as people will have access to a wider spectrum of viewpoints. As an example, citizen journalism (netizen) will make the local newspapers and government focus their eyes on an issue that had been neglected. (4) Citizen journalism is developing a writing culture. Studies revealed that Indonesians are closer to verbal culture than writing culture (Permana, 2009; Vivijanti, 2007b).

IX. OPPORTUNITIES

There are some opportunities of developing participatory democracy by the use of Internet. The first is the significant grow of Internet users. According to data from the Associations of ISP in Indonesia (APJII), in 2005 there were 16 million Internet users. Internet World Statistics of January 2007 shows that the number of Internet users in Indonesia was 2 million in the year 2000 and increased to 30 million in 2010. Although there is still limitation of the infrastructure and access to the Internet (not everyone can access the Internet in Indonesia, especially in the Eastern part of Indonesia), Internet connection is getting affordable.

Digital divide is getting narrow because cellular phone is getting cheaper and Internet connections are ubiquitous, particularly by the existence of ‘Warung Internet’ (Warnet) or Internet kiosk. Warung Internet is one of the solutions created by citizens to provide Internet access for people and to reduce digital divide. Although it cannot cover all Indonesian people yet, however it offers lower cost for people to use Internet. Without having PCs or ISP, everybody can use the Internet through Warung Internet. According to APJII survey (2007) more than 42% Internet users in Indonesia are accessing the Internet from Warung Internet. Internet has come to the village by the program of Internet Desa (Internet for village) and Internet untuk Warga (Internet for citizens) or RT-RWnet.
In some community radios, the Internet is not only used for the need of internal radio. They also distribute the Internet for communities, such as 'Internet for village' program called Kusir Angriringan in Timbulharjo village, Bantul, Yogyakarta.

The second is the emergence of Web 2.0. Web 2.0 has been perceived as an opportunity for participatory democracy. Public can discuss and express their opinion. Information can be received from the public using certain verification mechanism. However, the implementation of Web 2.0 by the NGOs is still far. “The use of Internet within the NGOs is still few. They only use email, mailing list, and messenger. Most of them use the Internet only for communication.” (Nasir, 2009)

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Friendster, YouTube, and Kaskus are very popular. Indonesia is a very prominent country in the global mapping of social networks. It shows that Indonesians are a large group of devoted people who regularly engaged in connecting and networking via the Internet. As a medium using Web 2.0 platform, Facebook is promising. There are many NGO activists joined in Facebook. They have tried to build online community or group NGO members using Facebook. However, it is not clear to what extent the Internet has potency to connect the virtual and real world (Nasir, 2009). There is also a question if Indonesians can go further than just for ‘networking’, for example, if the network can incubate and execute some ideas which will be useful for people.

The third is the increase of citizen journalism movement. Citizen journalism can be described as anything that included add-on reporting, blogging, online forums and anything else open to public commentary (Aini, 2009). Indonesian citizen journalism does have talent to grow. There are some websites developing citizen journalism approach, such as Panyingknl.com, Wikimu.com, Kabarindonesia.com, Halamansatu.net, etc (Vivijanti, 2007a).

The increase of citizen journalism movement in Indonesia is also supported by social networking sites (Facebook, Friendster, Wordpress, Kaskus, Twitter), which also provide tool for citizen journalists to report any events they see, a compliment to what the mainstream media is lacking; sharing expression and a room for amateur journalism. These approaches are used as a compliment to what the mainstream media is lacking; sharing expression and a room for amateur journalists. It is also influenced by the increase of technology and mobile internet, in which we can write, take a picture or footage, record, and upload the news to the Internet. It is real time news that makes citizens journalism exist (Aini, 2009).

X. CONCLUSIONS

1. NGOs in Indonesia have developed public participatory democracy using Internet by creating websites, mailing list or Internet forum. However, they have different strategic uses, so the implementation and the achievement in respect to stimulating participatory democracy are varied. This study found that CRI is more advance in developing participatory democracy by the use of the Internet rather than WALHI and WWF-Indonesia.

2. In order to further strengthen Internet for participatory democracy, citizen journalism approach is effective means to develop participatory democracy because it enables people to collect, report, and share news and information and allows people to interact and discuss with other members and enables people to manage content of information and organize themselves.

3. The main strategic uses of the Internet by NGOs in Indonesia vary among different organization, yet there are similarities regarding the main characteristics of Internet use in internal NGOs. Communication and collaboration are the main characteristic of Internet internal use of the NGOs. While, the second is workplace participatory democracy and the third is consumption and production.

4. Regarding the main characteristics of Internet external use, Information is the main characteristic of Internet use by the NGOs. CRI is more advance in respect to using the Internet as a means for developing participatory democracy than WWF-Indonesia and WALHI. CRI has optimized different key characteristics of Internet to develop participatory democracy.

5. There is a mutual relationship between internal and external use of the Internet, as demonstrated in the case of WWF-Indonesia and CRI. However, the development of workplace participatory democracy does not correlate directly to the development of public participatory democracy. WALHI, for instance, has developed workplace participatory democracy by the use of the Internet. Conversely, the implementation of public participatory democracy by WALHI is only basic.

6. Several factors of why the NGOs did not optimize the use of the Internet to develop participatory democracy, such as (1) different vision and mission of the NGOs and (2) constraints of the developing participatory democracy by the use of the Internet, such as physical constraints (lack of Internet access of the citizens) and cultural constraints (internet literacy, character of Indonesian people, etc).

XI. REFERENCES


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XII. INTERVIEWS

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Fadli, M. (Head of Institutional and Resources Management Department of WALHI), 15 January 2009

Nasir, A. (Director) of Combine Resource Institution (CRI), 20 January 2009
The Role of Local e-Government in Bureaucratic Reform in Terong, Bantul District, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia

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Abstract—This article aims to describe the application of local e-Government by the Government of Terong, Bantul District, Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. The method used in the research is case study. This research shows that the government of Terong has succeeded to develop community based e-government model, namely Sistem Informasi Desa (SID/Village Information System). This model is a result of media convergence which already exist, such as community radio, community news letter and citizens forum. Besides media convergence, involvement of all elements in Terong played important role in the development of SID. Strong leadership and good will from local government also contributed to the process of SID. The result of this effort is better public service by local government. These findings conclude that bureaucratic reform can occur with the help of ICT.

Index Terms—Local e-government, bureaucratic reform, good governance.

I. INTRODUCTION

The poor performance of government bureaucracy in Indonesia is of public knowledge. The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) report 2009-2010 cites Indonesia and Thailand among the most corrupt countries in Asia, with much higher corruption scores than other Asian countries such as Malaysia and Singapore. The survey put Indonesia on a score of 9.27, with 10 indicating the highest level of corruption. Responding to public demands, the government of Indonesia launched a bureaucratic reform program as an effort to achieve good government. Good governance was created to improve accountability, responsiveness and transparency in governance and state (Prasovic, 2003). The use of ICT to support government activities has become one of the achieving goals of this strategy.

However, the Indonesian government is still apprehensive about the implementation of e-government. Ratings of the e-Government in Indonesia (PeGI) conducted by the Directorate of e-Government Directorate General of Applications and Telematics Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Indonesia in 2007 shows that the implementation of e-Government in Indonesia is still relatively low. This is indicated by the value of the overall provincial which is in average low of 2.32. The rating was conducted at 11 sites of e-government owned provincial-level governments across Indonesia. The low implementation of e-government in Indonesia is an accumulation of various constraints, such as lack of human resources, lack of support from leaders, cultural issues and so forth (Furuhol & Wahid, 2008; Sujarto & Nugroho, 2011).

Despite the availability of data on a macro level there is little research conducted that shows the relationship between the e-government and bureaucratic reform. In light of the lack of such research, the author conducted an in-depth case study of the village of Terong in Bantul District of Yogyakarta Province. The village of Terong has developed and applied a systematic information resource management which is in line with the notion of e-government aiming to achieve good governance. Using the story of Terong as a case study to understand the dynamics at the micro level, this article argues that the implementation of local e-government has affected the performance of the bureaucracy at the village level. The use of ICT has changed the way local government services local residents and improved these services significantly. The author, thus, is convinced that local e-government has played an important role in achieving good governance.

This article will be presented as follows: The first part contains the background information, followed by a literature review on e-government, bureaucratic reform. This is followed by the description of the case study on development of e-

1 http://www.terong.terong.net/index.php?pid=26
2 http://www.terong.terong.net/index.php?pid=26

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government in Terong village and closed by the conclusion section.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Bureaucratic Reform

The result of the PERC survey reflected the condition of Indonesian bureaucracy since the New Order era. The bureaucratic system of the New Order Indonesia can be perceived as the worst system ever implemented in the country. This centralized and patronial bureaucracy of the New Order is characterized as slow, rigid, closed, and corrupt.

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, came a demand to make significant changes in all elements of the bureaucracy, among others, institutional, human resources, management, personnel accountability, oversight, and public service. These changes are referred to bureaucratic reform. According to the MENPAN (Menteri Negara Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara or The State Minister of the Utilization of State Apparatus) regulation number PER 15/M.PAN/7/2008, bureaucratic reform is defined as:

"...effort to reform and fundamental changes to the system of government administration in order to realize good governance."

The important element in bureaucratic reform is the change in mind-set and culture-sets and the development of work culture (Effendi, 2006). Therefore, political will and strong commitment is needed to achieve this goal at all levels, from top leaders to heads of the lowest governmental unit. In addition, community support and participation is very important aspect in realizing the agenda.

The idea of bureaucratic reform is, by and large, a reaction to the government's poor performance. This is marked by the emergence of new paradigm, namely new public management by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler in Reinventing Government (1992)⁵. According to Osborne and Gaebler, government bureaucracy should be turned into a bureaucracy that takes into account of public participation, teamwork and co-worker control and no longer dominated by superior control. The central problem of governments today according to Osborne and Gaebler is:

"...is not what they do, but how they operate."

Osborne and Gaebler's proposition to change the nature of government organization, is in-line with the goal of bureaucratic reform. The main goal of bureaucratic reform is the implementation of good governance. According to the World Bank⁴, good governance entails

sound public sector management (efficiency, effectiveness and economy), accountability, exchange and free flow of information (transparency), and a legal framework for development (justice, respect for human rights and liberties).

The UNDP⁵ recommends some governance characteristics, namely: political legitimacy, cooperation with civil society institutions, freedom of association and participation, accountability, bureaucratic and financial, an efficient public sector management, freedom of information and expression, a fair and trusted judicial system.

Governmental innovations cited in Osborne and Gaebler's book generate criticisms from scholars of public administration. Louis Winnick⁶ in Is Reinventing Government Enough? (1993) states that although the book contains examples of public management's innovation, Reinventing Government is only a blueprint since its innovations cannot be replicated. Because of this other governments at the state or local level cannot imitate the innovations. Therefore, local governments are unable measure success or failure.

Bearing in mind the local values in Asia, in order to reinvent a government, it is necessary to take into consideration the local culture in order to achieve its aim (Leung, 2004). Nevertheless, Leung offers an interesting suggestion, namely to harness governmental reinvention using information and telecommunication technology (ICT).

In the context of this article, governmental reinvention or bureaucratic reform can be aided with the use of ICT in local government. Despite of the difficulty of replicating innovations, the local e-government implemented in Terong is easy to imitate and come from the real needs of local staffs. As a consequence, its development continues to grow with the adoption of technological inventions.

B. Bureaucratic Reform in the Information Age: E-government

Transparency and the right to obtain information as two of the characteristics of good governance are the focus of the study in this article. The study is based on the premise that both of these will encourage the birth of good governance. The author believes that transparency and the right to obtain

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⁵ http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/policy/chapter1.htm

⁶ http://www.city-journal.org/article01.php?aid=140

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information are the pathway to be free from corruption, authoritarianism and inefficiency. Generally speaking, freedom to obtain information can support the formation of a clean government/governance as it is capable of preventing corruption, as well as improving the quality of public participation in the formulation of public policy, and improving the quality of public oversight.

The spirit of transparency and accountability can be realized through the utilization of ICT. ICT in government usually appears in the form of e-Government development. In accordance with the objectives of good governance, all e-government activities are intended to support the creation of clean, transparent and credible government. The World Bank Group defines E-Government as follows:

“E-Government refers to the use by government agencies of information technologies (Such as Wide Area Networks, the Internet, and mobile computing) that have the ability to transform relations with citizens, businesses, and other arms of government.”

To seize the goal of good governance, Heeks7 (2008) identifies several potentials of e-government, e.g. cost saving, time savings, boundary-breaking, better decisions, changed behavior of public servants, changed behavior of public sector clients, empowerment. Even though Heeks believes in the potential of the use of ICT, he is careful to state that ICT is only a tool, since transparency and accountability require more than just employing technology.

The definition above shows that e-government can more widely used by governments. The scope of e-government can be categorized into three, namely: government to government (G2G), government to business (G2B) and government to citizen (G2C) (Indrajit, 2002). Research shows that the interaction level is the most widely implemented by governments in developing countries (Kunstle and Vintar, 2004). Building a website that contains information, application forms and e-mail addresses online involves no great effort or any change in existing operations.

The enthusiasm of governments around the world in implementing e-government apparently did not match the expected results. According to Heeks (2003), the majority of e-government projects – particularly in developing countries – fail with varying levels of failure. 35% are total failures, 50% are partial failures, and 15% are successes. The failures were caused by a variety of factors, such as the lack of human resources, lack of support from leaders, cultural issues and so forth (Furuholt & Wahid, 2008; Sujarwoto & Nugroho, 2011).

In Indonesia the development of telecommunication and information technology as an early stage in applying e-government started in early 2005 with the merger of the former Directorate General of Post and Telecommunication (Direktorat Jendral Pos dan Telekomunikasi or Dirjen PosTel) under the Ministry of Transportation with the Department of Communication and Information (Departemen Komunikasi dan Informasi or Depkominfo). In Indonesia the definition of e-government according to the Ministry of Information and Communication covers efforts to develop a governance-based electronic implementation (use) in order to improve the quality of public services effectively and efficiently. As a basic reference for the implementation of e-government at central and regional levels, the Indonesian Government issued regulations through Presidential Instruction No. 6/2001 on Telecommunications (Telecommunications, Media and Information) and Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003 on National Policy and Strategic Development of E-government.

Implementation of regulations and laws is taken seriously by government agencies and local governments. Since 2002, 69 central government agencies and 403 local governments have launched official websites as an early stage of development of e-government (Sujarwoto and Nugroho, 2011). Over time, the stage of development of e-government in various state and local governments has become more diverse. Although most of the developments are still at the level of information delivery, some provincial governments have managed to step on the transactional stage so as to increase local revenue.

Despite the support by a legal umbrella from the central government, the implementation of e-government in Indonesia is still apprehensive (Donny BU, 2004). According to Donny (2004) there are 468 local government level of provinces, districts/cities in Indonesia, but only 214 local governments have created a website as a first phase development of e-government. Out of the 214 sites, 186 websites are in operation and can be accessed, while the remaining 28 cannot be accessed (under construction/not found). Meanwhile, the Indonesian e-government readiness was ranked 85th in 2004. This position fell by 6 points in 2005 to 96th position, and even lower in year 2008 to the 106th position (Rokhman, 2008).

Without denying data above, this article attempts to showcase that at the local level, e-government projects can be developed within reasonable cost and beneficial for the community.

III. CONSTRUCTING THE CASE: E-GOVERNMENT IN TERONG

A. Methodology

Data in this article were collected qualitatively by employing in-depth interviews, participant observation and literature study. In-depth interviews were conducted to analyze the question ‘why’ and ‘how’, using both structured and unstructured interviews. In this way a comprehensive understanding can be obtained. In order to achieve this aim, the author interviewed the Chief of Government of Terong and his staffs, local residents and community leaders. Additionally documents and existing local e-government systems were analyzed in order to evaluate their effectiveness. The author interviewed the developers of local e-government systems and

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7 http://www.egov4dev.org/transparency/evaluation/benefits.shtml
was involved in their evaluation process. The collected data was then edited, categorized and analyzed using the steps of data analysis as suggested by Miles and Huberman (2001), namely: data reduction, data display and conclusion.

B. Case Study

This research is located in the village of Terong, in the sub-district of Dlingo, Bantul, within the Yogyakarta Special Region. The village located in the hills with an altitude between 325-350 meters above sea level and is located approximately 30 km from the city center. The village has an area of 775.8615 hectares and is inhabited by 6484 people. The village is divided into 40 RT (neighborhoods).

The village government of Terong, Terong Government office, July 2010.

The SID is a series of advanced electronic information from a variety of information and telecommunication technology devices and software applications which are operated by the government. The system was developed in 2009 and was used to support the acceleration of work-quality improvements of public services by the government to the local village community. The villagers can access data and public information through a variety of information technology devices, both inside and outside the local village area. The main aim of this system is to strengthen the basics of planning and decision-making in the village development processes. By doing so, the village will improve its trajectory to become developed, open and accountable.

The SID was initiated because of problems faced by the village government relating to their duties. As part of the governmental organization, the government of the village of Terong often receives requests for demographic data from other government agencies, such as district/county/province or other technical departments. The problem is that sometimes a request comes in suddenly and must be completed immediately. This problem is made complicated because it is difficult to calculate the number of residents manually and then to group them by age, due to the fact that the demographic data is stored in a thick village-population data book. Moreover, the addition of new data and the request to classify based on new categories introduces further problems. As Sugiyanto described, in order to fulfill a request, the village government of Terong often times will have to:

“ngitung lanange piro, wedhoke piro [...] Kadang rentang umur yang diminta itu tidak sesuai dengan data tertulis. Jadi kita harus ngolak-alik (mengutak-utik). kira-kira umur sekian berapa, umur sekian berapa, sesuai permintaan tadi [...] Karena masing-masing instansi itu nek golek data itu berbeda-beda. (data yang diminta berbeda) Rentang umurnya, ada yang (meminta) rentang 3 tahun ada yang rentang 5 tahun...” 9

(“...count how many female and male residents in Terong village [...]. Sometimes the requested age range is not in accordance with the written data we have. So we must be creative and find our own way... how many people in the group of age as requested earlier [...]. Because each government agency asks for a different set of data. [For example] they ask for a different group of age range, some agencies ask for the range of 3 years, while the other ask for 5 years range ...”) 9

This kind of problem would potentially disappear if the village government of Terong had digitalized their demographic data. However, their lack of capabilities and knowledge was the main obstacle prompting the government

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8 Focus Group Discussion with SID developers in Combine Resource Institution (CRI-wwwcombine.or.id) office. CRI is non governmental organization who support the development of SID, especially in technical aspect. FGD was conducted in CRI’s office in July 2010.

9 Interviewed with Sugiyanto, Head of Economy and Development in the village government of Terong, Terong Government office, July 2010.
to conduct a joint collaboration with another institution.

Technically, the SID was developed using a free-open operating system platform. The technical aspects of SID were developed by an NGO based in Yogyakarta who provided technical support to implement the idea of the village government of Terong. The SID is a web-based system and has been developed since 2005. The SID began to be deployed to assist the management of the village in 2009.

The use of SID is supported by various forms of media that are converged to achieve the purpose of e-government. A media convergence strategy is implemented to facilitate citizens to access data and information, in accordance with the media that Terong resident possess. These consist of websites, community radio, community newsletters, and posters and touch screen devices.

The official website of the village government of Terong is http://terong-bantul.web.id. Established since March 2010, the website contains data and information about Terong. This website is a window to the various media used to support e-government in the Terong village. Various information such as news, both text and audio, photos, videos, and reports are stored in the dynamic section of this website. Profiles of the village and of the village institutions are stored in the static sections of this website.

In addition to information exchange, Terong villagers can interact directly via the SMS Gateway (Short Message Exchange Gateway) feature in a specific format. Messages would be shown on the website, without being edited by webmaster, and be delivered automatically to mobile phone devices.

Another element that supports the SID in the village of Terong is the existence of community radio Menara Siar Pedesaan (MSP), broadcasted in the frequency of 87.1 MHz and 107.7 MHz. The MSP plays an important role in the development of the SID. Before the SID was developed, the MSP radio has been widely adopted by the village of Terong and used by village government to deliver information about the village, as well as entertaining the public. Every year through the MSP radio delivers the Chief of Terong accountability report, by broadcasting it live. This program allows people to monitor the performance of the village government in the previous year.

In the context of e-government development, the MSP radio holds a strategic position in providing information for local residents. The village government of Terong uses it as a tool to inform local residents about the Terong government’s agenda related to SID. In this way local residents can keep up and participate in the process. As described by Nuryanto,

"Peran radio komunitas di sini secara aktif menyampaikan bahwa akan ada pendataan, promosi SID, dan menyampaikan informasi yang sekarang ini ada dalam SID."  

("The role of community radio is to actively convey that there will be data collection, socialization of SID, and convey the information that now exist in the SID.")

The internet infrastructure in remote locations in Indonesia is known to be poor, including in Terong. Additionally, computer ownership in this village is still miniscule. As a result, local residents have difficulty in accessing information provided by the village government. Fortunately, most of the villagers Terong possess a radio. This vehicle of communication was used by the government to increase local residents’ participation in governance.

In addition to the community radio, the SID is supported by a local news bulletin called Buletin Warta Terong (BWT). The BWT was initiated in a training session at the Village Community Media Management Terong in March 2010. This bulletin is published every two weeks and is circulated to the entire Terong community to serve those who do not have access to the Internet or to radio. The content of BWT is similar to the content of the website, for example the latest information about Terong or the latest regulations related to local resident’s right and obligations. With this bulletin, the government has expanded the dissemination of information as well as broadened public participation.

IV. DISCUSSION

"... anda boleh tinggal di desa, tapi kemajuan (teknologi) bukan hanya milik orang kota ..."

("… you may live in a village or remote area, but technology innovation doesn't only belong to urban people...")

The use of ICT in Indonesia has increased rapidly. Based on data from www.internetworldstats.com, at the end of 2009 internet users in Indonesia reached 30 million people, or 12.3% of the population 11. This number has doubled from

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10 Interview with Nuryanto, MSP community radio activist, July 2010
2005, namely 15 million users. According to the Telematics Community of Indonesia (Masyarakat Telematika Indonesia or MASTEL), the percentage of fixed telephone subscribers (fixed line) in Indonesia in 2008 reached 12.69% (of a total population in 2008 of 228,523,300 inhabitants). A total of 24.51% of subscribers live in urban areas, while the rest are in rural areas.

The quotation above came from Sudirman, the village chief of Terong who spoke about the relationship between technology in the village and a degree of self-esteem and pride. He said that although new technology inventions are popular among people who lived in big cities, one cannot forget that villagers also deserve their benefit. Sudirman's expression can be regarded as a form of resistance and protest about the unequal penetration of the ICT infrastructure and services in Indonesia. The SID in the Terong village is the evidence that innovation does not only occur in big cities. The Bantul District Government recognized this advancement, and awarded Terong second prize in a Lomba Desa (Village Competition) in 2009.

The award is the result of hard work involving all elements of Terong community. According to the UNDP definition of good governance, involvement of community can be regarded as a form of participation. Whilst according to IDA (International Development Agency), participation is

"...the opportunity to participate during the formulation of development strategies and that directly affected communities and groups should be able to participate in the design and implementation of programs and projects."

Participation as one of the characteristics of good governance may be seen in the process of the development of SID. The success in developing the SID is the result of hard work and smart work of all elements of society in the village. The Badan Permusyawaratan Desa (Village Representative Body or BPD) as the house of representatives of this village, supported the effort by issuing village regulations (peraturan desa or perdes) as an umbrella for the government to continue its idea. The BPD also extended its 'blessing' by allocating the Alokasi Dana Desa (Village Allocation Fund or ADD) to financially support the system.

Recognizing the lack of human resources capabilities, the government has involved youth and community radio activists in this project. The government recognized that young people’s natural flexibility to better absorb and apply new knowledge and skills compared to the older generation. With the help from the youths, data collection and entry regarding Terong residents was completed earlier than the target date.

As such, not only did the young generation of the village contribute to this project but all levels of the village government, too, were involved in collecting data.

The principle of participation did not only happen when the SID was developed, but continued when the SID is used. The use of ICT, through a variety of media convergence, enables people to participate in every process of development and governance. This is in-line with the concept of transparency and accountability which is the goal of good governance. The concept and spirit of good governance marked by the spirit of transparency and accountability of government could not have been realized without the support of various parties in the community. ICT enables communities to supervise and monitor the performance of the government's staff members.

In addition, every transaction occurring in the village is recorded and well documented, so that if these data are needed for a report it can be obtained directly from the SID.

The existence of community radio in the Terong village has played an important role in disseminating information for and by society. For the village government, the existence of this radio is useful. It functions as a media to deliver the village government's report of its performance during the year. In the past, the annual reporting event delivered by the village headman was attended only by a handful of parties or persons in the village. With the use of the MSP community radio, the entire village now have an opportunity to hear the report.

Research on e-government shows that strong leadership is key to a successful implementation and development of e-government (Furuholt & Wahid, 2008). The nature of bureaucracy, which is the hierarchy of authority, leads a subordinate employee to simply obey their superior. As such, a strong leader who has vision is needed to direct changes in the organization.

In the context of developing e-government, leaders who understand the goals and objectives of e-government will be able to fight for these ideals. In Terong, the role of the village chief in influencing the BPD village body to approve the SID development plans was very clear. As result, the BPD, the village chief and local residents were able to issue regulations to allocate funding to support the development of the SID.

As mentioned in section II, good governance requires a good public management sector, based on effective and efficient service performance. In line with this concept, the public service should facilitate the business of their clients, not the other way around. In the context of Terong, local residents as clients, deserve good and friendly services from local government staffs. This is well recognized by the village chief, Sudirman, as inscribed in his statement:

"Kuncinya bagaimana kita memberikan hak pada mereka. Kalo kita sudah melayani mereka dengan baik, kalo kebutuhan mereka sudah terpenuhi, kalo kita sudah transparan, maka menjalankan pemerintahan yang bersih, gak sulit."

12 http://www.mastel.or.id/index.php?q=statistik
14 Interview with Sudirman Alfian, July 2010.
The people's right to receive good service was effectively accommodated by the use of ICT so that:

"...dalam pembuatan Surat Keterangan Catatan Kepolisian (SKCK) dapat di layani hanya dalam waktu satu setengah menit... semua (teknologi) sangat membantu bagi kami, dan pelayanan (kami) terhadap masyarakat pun sangat cepat."15

("...when requesting the issuance of a police record certificate, residents can now be served within one and a half minutes ... all (technology) is very helpful for us, and our service to the community is also very fast.")

The development and implementation of the SID still needs improvement. As reflected in other e-government projects in various countries, the SID is also facing some challenges. One of them is regeneration of leadership. The Terong village chief will reach the end of his period of leadership in 2012, whilst his replacement is not yet available. In addition, the transfer of knowledge from the NGO who developed the SID to the Terong government is not fully completed. Given the lack of technical knowledge of the local government staffs, currently any technical problems with the SID system are resolved only by calling in a SID technician. This dependence is quite risky as the SID system is now used to fully support the daily administration of the village.

V. CONCLUSION

A transparent and accountable government is part of the ideals of the Indonesian government in realizing good governance. Various efforts and initiatives have been undertaken to achieve these objectives, including the use of ICT in the form of e-government. The use of ICT in the governance process is believed to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability of government.

Although located in the corner of Bantul district of Yogyakarta, the implementation of SID in the village of Terong is a clear evidence of how ICT can effectively used and positively exploited. Limited resources, located in remote area and lack of technical knowledge, are the obstacles faced by Terong. However, these shortcomings did not undermine the Terong government's spirit. With the help from various parties, the information system has improves the provision of services by the village government for its citizens. Nevertheless, the implementation of SID in Terong still needs improvement since its development is only in the stages of information delivery and interaction.

The success factors explained in the earlier section of this article have left a number of questions. The focus of this study has been solely on the government service, and, as such, further exploration is needed to examine the responses from the users of SID. Further question to be explored is about whether the SID system helps the local people in obtaining government services. Furthermore, this article has not addressed the effects of ICT in remote areas. The lack of knowledge regarding ICT and the low level of education of people in remote areas, have resulted in the concentration or centralization of ICT knowledge to a select group of actors. This is somewhat contrary to the spirit of good governance, which involves decentralization, accountability and transparency.

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