Many Clicks but Little Sticks: Social Media Activism in Indonesia

Merlyna Lim

In November 2010, a CNN Tech report designated Indonesia – a country mostly known for "sandy beaches, palm trees, and smiling inhabitants" – a "Twitter Nation" in reference to a ComScore report (2010) where Indonesia was dubbed the most Twitter-addicted nation on the planet. CNN reporter Sara Sidner (2010) enthusiastically pointed out: "Indonesia is crazy about online social networking … but all the Tweeting, texting, and typing is not just for fun. It is also being used as a tool for change." CNN is not alone in highlighting the importance of social media in generating an unprecedented social movement within Indonesia's "online social networking-addict" society (Shubert 2009). Two successful social media activisms in Indonesia are most often mentioned in making this point: the so-called gecko vs. crocodile case (or the KPK case) and the Prita Mulyasari libel case (the Prita case). In the first, Facebook was used to support anti-corruption deputies, symbolised by a gecko, in their fight against Indonesia's senior police detective, symbolised by a crocodile. Beyond the online realm, Facebook supporters brought their activism to the streets in a show of support for the gecko and successfully forced the government to act in accordance with public demands and drop the anti-corruption charges.

The second case refers to the Facebook movement to support Prita Mulyasari, a 32-year-old mother of two who fought for justice after being prosecuted for libel when she complained about service at a private hospital in an email to friends and relatives. Tens of thousands of Indonesians joined a support page for Mulyasari on Facebook, shared their outrage on Twitter, and donated money to pay her court-imposed fine.

Echoing CNN, some observers say that social media is furthering democracy and freedom of speech, calling it democratising content (Sutadi 2011), "the

fifth estate in Indonesian's democracy" (Enda Nasution cited in Lutfia 2010), and a civil society's tool for social change (Nugroho 2011). Does social media merit these accolades? If social media is really a tool for social change and democracy, why are there not many other successful cases of social activism from Indonesia? Why were these cases successful and others not? Social media activism has a tendency for being fast, thin and many. In other words, online campaigns emerge each minute and often quickly disappear without any trace. The result can be many clicks, not equally distributed for each and every cause, but little sticks in the sense that very few causes make for mass activism in an online environment.

Public discussion of the political implications of social media in some ways reinforces earlier debates on the supposed democratising nature of the internet. At the heart of the debate about whether social media is furthering democracy is the concept of participation. Two streams dominate the discourse. The first focuses on the ongoing and growing concerns about public participation (or lack thereof) in modern democracies where online activism is often perceived as banal, superficial and failing to transform or renew democratic institutions (see, for example, Morozov 2009; Shulman 2009; Gladwell 2010). Along with this sceptical view, terms such as slacktivism (lazy activism), clicktivism (click activism), armchair activism and keyboard activism emerged to question the worthiness of digital activism, often deeming it subordinate to "real" (physical) activism. The second stream focuses on the rise of new forms of participation in public life, enabled by emerging new technologies, particularly the internet and social media, which promote a more enlightened exchange of ideas, transform political debates, increase levels of citizen engagement, enable societal change and reform political systems (see, for example, Kamarck and Nye 1999; Rheingold 2002; Kahn and Kellner 2004; Shirky 2011). These dichotomised views are partial at best. They simplify the complexity and dynamics of the relationship between social media and its users. Our understanding of both the democratic potentials and the impacts of the internet and social media requires going beyond the binary oppositions of utopian versus dystopian. The social impacts of the internet and media, or "change" in society, should be understood as a result of the organic interaction between technology and social, political, and cultural structures and relationships (Lim 2012a).

So, what is social media capable of facilitating in the context of participatory politics? How do we locate social media in the discourse of democracy?

Unquestionably, social media possesses the conviviality of its predecessor, the internet. Characterised by convergence, low cost, broad availability and reasonable resistance to and censorship, the internet is a "convivial medium" (Lim 2003, 274). As such, it provides "a greater scope for freedom, autonomy, creativity, and collaboration than previous media" (Lim and Kann 2008, 82).

Social media inherits these characteristics and pushes for even greater collaboration and social interactivity. Beyond the old internet, social media facilitates "organic content, distributed processing and interaction, and converging media format" (Andreas 2007, 2). This "new" internet has broken the usual pattern of media production and consumption. It is no longer a media by which dispersed individual consumers retrieve content from centralised media producers. Instead, social media "operates as an interdependent grassroots community of individuals, organisations, and sites whose relevance and authority are established through interaction and participation" (Andreas 2007, 2). However, social media should not be perceived as a causal agent having a pivotal role in promoting social change or advancing democracy. There is nothing intrinsic in social media that automatically achieves this potential. Societal contexts and arrangements around the technology are key to its impact on politics (Lim 2012a).

Using both successful and unsuccessful cases of social media activism in Indonesia as an empirical framework, I call for a much more critical approach to the promise of social media. Rather than dismissing social media activism as mere "slacktivism" (some repertoires of online activisms, such as online petition, are meant to generate clicks; they do not necessarily need to translate into the streets to be meaningful) or applauding it as the forerunner of social change in the contemporary society, I provide a more nuanced argument by revealing the complexity of social media activism and identifying the conditions under which participation in social media might lead to successful political activism. I argue that social media does not inadvertently generate an ideal public sphere in which effective and robust public participation takes place. Social media enables multiple and diverse networked spheres to emerge. While not aiming to advance and deepen democracy, these contested spheres allow individuals to have a greater participation, culturally and socially. Under certain conditions, social and cultural participation in social media spheres may translate into civic or political engagement. As we will see throughout the article, such translation, however, is neither automatic nor unproblematic.

The cases presented in this article seek to provide a new framework to elucidate the linkage between participation in social media and populist political activism (online, offline, or a combination of the two), namely that for the former to translate into the latter it needs to embrace the principles of contemporary culture of consumption: light package (content that can be enjoyed without spending too much time, can be understood without deep reflection, and usually has a hype-based component), headline appetite (a condition where information is condensed to accommodate a short attention span and one liner conversations) and trailer vision (an oversimplified, hyped and sensationalised story rather than a substantial one or the oversimplified

representation of actual information). In other words, only simple or simplified narratives can usually go viral. At the same time, simple or simplified narratives are associated with low risk activism and are congruent with ideological meta-narratives, such as nationalism and religiosity, have a much higher chance to go viral and generate massive activism. Success is less likely when the narrative is contested by dominant competing narratives generated in mainstream media.

Social Media in Indonesia

Before investigating the dynamic relationship between social media and politics in Indonesia, it is important to delve into the background knowledge on the social media in the country. While the internet serves only 55 million out of a total population of 240 million (in 2012), Indonesia has witnessed a tremendous growth in social media usage, with 90% of online activities devoted to browsing social networking sites (Galih and Ngazis 2012). Indonesia had become the third largest nation on Facebook (SocialBakers 2012) with 43 million users and fifth on Twitter with 29.4 million users (Semiocast 2012). The blogosphere has grown rapidly from only 15,000 bloggers in 2007 to 5 million as of 2011.

With such expansion, some might expect social media to be utilised greatly for political and social events. Previous studies, indeed, demonstrate that the internet has had some major political roles in Indonesian society. Under Suharto's regime, the internet and its physical nodes – the warnet (cyber café) – had become a free space of resistance for middle-class Indonesians (Lim 2003). During the reformation struggle against Suharto, warnet was the major source of "forbidden" information (Lim 2003) and, consequently, the internet appeared as a medium for civil society to challenge the state (Hill and Sen 2005; Lim 2006). In the political history of Indonesia, the internet had acted as a "cyber-civic space" in which individuals and groups generate collective activism online and translate it into real-world movements in an offline setting (Lim 2006). By being convivial, the internet is also friendly to uncivil activism as exemplified in the ethno-religious conflict in Maluku, where the internet functioned as a site for the revival of primordial, ethno-religious and communal identities (Brauechler 2005).

With the recent expansion of the Indonesian blogosphere, the internet continued to retain its socio-political importance. The blogosphere, as exemplified in the cases of the anti-pornography law and the movie Fitna, has opened a novel path for participation in political discourse and a space for assimilating experiences and voicing opinions (Lim 2009; 2012b). Does social media retain the internet's trajectory in politics?

Social media is about social relations and social networking. Accordingly, networks created in social media resemble those existing offline. Individuals are clustered based on age, interests and other social and cultural commonalities. Most Indonesians under 25 naturally do not occupy the same networks as their elders. They are drawn to different groups, interests, issues and conversations. They blog about their music idols, fashion trends, their favourite sinetron (soap operas) or romance. On Facebook and Twitter they post links of global teenage pop sensations and Indonesian stars.

While occupying a set of different networks, the previous generation is not necessarily political. Indonesians over 30 also use social media mostly to interact with each other and to maintain relationship with past friends from high school and college. Parents mostly blog about about their children and use Facebook to broadcast their children's activities, share parenting tips, post photos of their children, the places they go, and the food they eat or make. Adult males use Facebook and Twitter to broadcast their "important" activities and achievements. They are also interested in popular culture, although their favourites are not those of the teenagers.

While political content exists, it is located on the fringe of social activities. In the blogosphere, some of the top Indonesian bloggers are political bloggers who are largely disconnected from other types of bloggers. The growth of social media, Facebook in particular, introduces a new dynamic. Generally, individuals are still socially clustered within groups. In Facebook, however, users usually belong to multiple overlapping networks.

This multiplicity is much more transparent than in offline settings. The infrastructure of Facebook can connect disparate social groups by breaking the walls separating them. Two questions arise: Can this collapse of networks create a new type of issue diffusion? Does it create a possible path of convergence between participatory popular culture and civic engagement?

Participatory Culture to Civic Engagement?

Social media provides a space for individuals, especially the youth, to participate in the act of consumption as well as in the production and distribution of ideas, knowledge and culture. This very act of participation is called participatory culture and it is manifested in affiliation, expression, collaboration, distribution and circulation (Jenkins et al. 2009). According to Jenkins and colleagues (2009), this participatory culture can serve as an infrastructure that may readily be borrowed and used by socio-political activities and transformed into civic engagement. While I agree that such transformation is possible, using Indonesian cases I argue that it is neither straightforward nor easy. The cases illustrate that social media is biased towards a certain type of movement/cause. As will be explained in the later sections, those that may

translate into civic engagement are of simple or simplified narratives that impersonate popular culture, associated with low risk activism, not incongruent with dominant ideological narratives, and uncontested by powerful alternative framing in mainstream media.

Two Successful Movements: KPK and Prita Cases

The first case is the Facebook movement to support the Corruption Eradication Committee – the "Gecko vs. Crocodile" case, and the second is the successful mass movement to support Prita – the Prita case. These two cases exemplify the convergence of participatory culture and civic engagement that resulted in two of the most successful online collective movements in the last decade in Indonesia.

Gecko vs. Crocodile

The Gecko vs. Crocodile case (or KPK case) started in April 2009 when Susno Duadji, the National Police chief of detectives, found that the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komite Pengentasan Korupsi, or KPK) had tapped his phone while they were investigating a corruption case. Indeed, KPK had armed itself with tools, such as warrantless wiretaps, to confront the endemic corruption among high rank public officials. In a press conference, Duadji expressed his anger and compared the KPK to cicak, a common house gecko, fighting buaya, a crocodile, which symbolises the police. In September 2009 two KPK deputy chairmen Chandra Hamzah and Bibit Samad Rianto, who had been suspended in July, were arrested on charges of extortion and bribery. The two men denied the charges, saying they were being framed to weaken the KPK. Most Indonesians perceived these charges as fabricated ones; some showed their support through an online campaign.

In July 2009 immediately after the case against KPK appeared in the mainstream media, especially television, Gerakan 1,000,000 Facebookers Dukung Chandra Hamzah & Bibit Samad Riyanto (Movement of 1,000,000 Facebookers Supporting Chandra Hamzah & Bibit Samad Riyanto)[1] was launched. By August 2009, the group has surpassed its goal of one million members in support of Bibit and Chandra. That particular Facebook support page was not the only one. Various other pagessupporting KPK also emerged.[2] The slogan of CICAK – meaning gecko but also an abbreviation of Cinta Indonesian CintA Kpk (Love Indonesia Love KPK) – symbolising the support for KPK, appeared everywhere online. The first line of a KPK jingle says "KPK di dadaku, KPK kebanggaanku," meaning KPK is in my chest, KPK is my pride, was catchy for broad online dissemination.[3] YouTube videos about the case quickly emerged, including one with a Javanese rap song that was also distributed as a downloadable ring-tone. Online cartoons, comics and posters with depictions of "gecko vs.

crocodile" soon proliferated online. When the Indonesian Corruption Watch organised a street rally online, 5,000 Facebookers showed up on the streets of Jakarta showing support for "the gecko." This was followed by demonstrations in several other cities in support of the two men. On December 3, 2009, this public pressure saw charges against Bibit and Chandra dropped.

Case 2: Coins for Prita

Prita Mulyasari was ordered by Tangerang High Court to pay a Rp 204 million (around US$22,000) fine for defaming the Omni International Hospital in Jakarta. The defamation suit was a reaction to an email complaint sent by Prita to her friends and relatives about bad service at the hospital. Hospital lawyers accused Prita ofviolating the Information and Electronic Transaction Law (Indonesia's "cyber law"). The accusation led to Prita's arrest in May 2009 when she was detained for three weeks. Her case was reported in the media and was quickly disseminated online. Bloggers were outraged to learn that a nursing mother was jailed for sending an email complaint and they started publicly protesting in the blogosphere. Due to public pressure, Prita was released from prison. In July 2009 the court reopened the case as Prita's doctors at the Omni Hospital succeeded in convincing the prosecutors to challenge her release. The Tangerang High Court found Prita guilty of defaming her doctors. The court ordered her to pay a fine and sentenced her to six months in prison.

While bloggers who write on political and social issues are mostly from an older generation and had tapped into this case from May 2009, the case did not get the attention of the younger population until it was diffused through social networking sites, especially Facebook. Once the Facebook support page was setup with the idea of contributing 500 rupiahs (~ US5 cents) to the fine – the "Coins for Prita"[4] – the movement took off and many more Facebook pages emerged. Posters were created and disseminated online and many Facebookers made the poster their profile picture. Some YouTube videos showcasing sentimental ballads for Prita also emerged.

It is important to note that while the movement began online, mainstream media channels, especially commercial television stations, played an important role in popularising the case. After being broadcast on television, the number of fans of the "Coins for Prita" Facebook pages saw exponential growth. The mainstream media coverage amplified the Prita case and expanded the "Coins for Prita" movement. The "Coins for Prita" campaign launched in Jakarta soon spread to other cities, such as Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and even to other islands. Indonesian communities abroad, such as students in the Netherlands, also contributed to the campaign. Some coins were donated through electronic bank transfer in the form of "electronic"

coins, some coins were sent delivered directly in person and sent by mail. The collection of coins that took place from December 5 to 14 in 2009 gathered around US$90,000, far exceeding the fine. When the court decided that Prita was not guilty on December 29, 2009, the money was donated to a charity organisation to help other "Pritas."

Leveraging Infrastructure

How can Facebook create a pathway for participatory culture to transform into civic engagement? From the infrastructure point of view, this pathway is made possible with Facebook's propensity to promote radical transparency and to diffuse issues in multiple weak-tie networks. As opposed to strong social ties, corresponding to family and close friendship, weak ties are less binding, involving acquaintance and loose/distant friendship that, as argued by Granovetter (1973, 1366), provide platforms and structures for better access to information and opportunities.

Involuntary, Radical Transparency

Unlike older platforms, such as mailing lists, forums, or even blogs, on Facebook consuming information is not always a voluntary act. In the blogosphere, for example, an interaction between bloggers and their readers requires a voluntary act of reading and commenting. On Facebook, such an act of reading or "glancing" is not always voluntary. When everything is thrown at you on your Facebook wall the possibility of cross-reading, cross-listening and cross-watching, which might lead to cross communication between strangers (you and your second-degree network), is high.

The communication between a user and her/his "friends" has become transparent in the sense that everybody can also read the communication. Of course, technically one has a choice to filter which contents are available to which groups. But such a choice is neither explicit nor easy to recognise. The core of the Facebook infrastructure, in Kirkpatrick's (2010, 210) term, is "radical transparency" which revolves around the Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's conviction that people, and even society, will be better off if they make themselves transparent. Ironically, while Facebook forces its users to be transparent, the company itself lacks of transparency, especially in its treatment of individual data and users' privacy.

Such "radical transparency" is almost unavoidable. Unlike the old internet where individuals could be anonymous and liberated from conformity, as reflected in the old adage "on the internet nobody knows you are a dog," on Facebook "everybody knows you are a dog." It brings back users to the "small town" dynamics where everybody knows your business. However, this forced

transparency easily leads to forced conformity as it generates peer pressure among interconnected users. Bak and Kessler's (2012) research on Facebook users shows that conformity is highest among frequent Facebook users. Likewise, Egebark and Ekstrom (2011) found that even though people do not communicate face to face, conforming behaviour exists among Facebook users and it stems from the fact that a large number of users can observe each other's actions.

In the cases of Prita and KPK, some online participants admitted that their participation in the movements began after they saw many of their Facebook friends joined the causes announced in their walls. Teen users were particularly driven to accept such an invitation to join the cause. One middle school student confessed, "I kept getting invitation to join the [KPK] movement, like a dozen times. I also saw that most of my friends had joined, so I joined" (interview with Lala, Jakarta, January 6, 2010). Another student commented,"I quickly joined the Prita cause because one of the boys I know, the cool one, had joined," implying that he, too, would look as cool as he showed his participation in his Facebook wall (interview with Andi, Jakarta, January 6, 2010). Certainly not everybody joined these causes because of peer pressure or the pressure to conform. Some joined for different reasons, as will be explained shortly later.

Issue Diffusion in Multiple Networks of Weak Ties

With Facebook, the act of writing creating and reading-watching-listening is changed to joining and sharing. It needs only one click of the "like" button to gain a membership to a Facebook page. The act of sharing can be done without any self-production, by sharing content on others' walls by simply clicking the "share" button. The infrastructure of Facebook also expands conversations from one-to-one to the combination of one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many all of which happens simultaneously in public. Interactivity easily shifts from two-way to multiple ways. For example, from writing and commenting to multiple steps of commenting: commenting on the comments about a comment (status), creating the "I know that you know that I know you know" network.

The effortlessness of sharing, joining and interacting makes it easy to diffuse information in multiple and overlapping networks. In fact, one cannot isolate an issue to a certain social group, as it would always travel in multiple directions penetrating several and various networks and groups. In both cases under study, some participants mentioned that an invitation from random Facebook friends had made them aware of the issue. They also stated that they received more than one invitation on the same cause from different types of "friends" thus seemingly increasing the cause's importance.

Unlike friends in offline settings, which are based on strong ties, a Facebook "friending" can often based on weak ties. Facebook encourages the rise and expansion of weak-tie networks. Granovetter's (1973) theory of "the strength of weak ties" provides an explanation of the process by which micro-level interactions on Facebook affect macro level phenomena, such as in the online mobilisation of the Prita and KPK cases. Granovetter (1973, 1376) argues that "weak ties are more likely to link members of different small groups than are strong ones, which tend to be concentrated within particular groups." Even though on the individual level weak ties have weaker absolute impact, they can potentially "unlock and expose interpersonal networks to external influences [from] individuals in distant networks" (Goldenberg, Libai, and Muller 2001, 213) to provide a trajectory for the spread of information to the masses.

Framing the Movement

As mentioned previously, the infrastructure of Facebook makes it easier to spread information and diffuse a cause. However, this does not provide any assurance that an issue would travel far and wide or that any Facebook-based mobilisation would be successful. What else should be done to ensure the successful convergence of popular participatory culture and civic engagement? One key element contributing to the success is how the movements are framed.

For social movement scholars, the concept of "frame" is significant in explaining how meaning is constructed to legitimise collective activities and actions (Gamson 1992). Originating in the work of Goffman (1974, 21), frames indicate "schemata of interpretation" that allow individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events and experiences in their life space and the world. By rendering events meaningful, frames function to organise and guide actions (Snow et al. 1986). Frames for collective action perform this function by simplifying the reasons for and rationales of participation. Beyond usual social movement framing, to be successful in social media, movements need to frame themselves to impersonate successful viral stories in mainstream popular culture.

Simplification of the Narrative

Not every issue is widely diffused. In the social media environment, networks are vast, the content is over-abundant, attention spans short and conversations are parsed into short incomplete sentences instead of complete paragraphs. This circumstance is evident in Indonesia, where a majority of social media users access the networking platform from mobile phones. In such an environment, those that go "viral" are of a light package, they tap into headline

appetites and they embrace a trailer vision. In other words, only simple or simplified narratives can usually go viral.

While the two cases represented complex problems, news producers, journalists and social media users framed them as simpler narratives. The case of KPK was framed as a simple story of hero versus villain, where Duadji was the bad guy who victimised the heroes, Bibit and Chandra. A similar narrative was presented in the case of Prita as well, which was framed as a non-ideological story of a good, innocent small person being victimised by a big and powerful bad guy. In terms of their media identities, Bibit, Chandra and Prita became "victims." Victimisation framing identifies specific villains or perpetrators – usually powerful actors such as political leaders and big corporations – whose actions purportedly threaten weaker individuals or groups. Such framing is not dissimilar to other "Cinderella" or "David vs. Goliath" stories present in popular culture. Victimisation framing is commonly used in contemporary television shows, especially in reality shows, as a way to capture audiences' enthusiasm and participation. This framing can be presented in a light package with a short, catchy, sensationalised caption and a simple tale to satisfy headline appetites. To fit the light package, such framing does not incite any dissonance, morally and ideologically.

Icons and Symbolic Representation

In addition to their simplified narratives and victimisation framing, both the KPK and Prita cases have strong symbolic representations that are non-ideological, compelling and resonate within multiple social clusters and successfully grab the attention of social media users and their trailer vision. In the KPK case, the icons used to symbolise the movements were extremely vivid and visual. A small cicak or house gecko can easily be associated with small, innocent, ordinary people, the majority; after all, geckos are literally harmless. In Indonesia, they live among humans and can be commonly found in most living rooms. A house gecko symbolises the common, the ordinary, the "us." On the other hand, a crocodile crudely symbolises a beastly characteristic of the powerful man. The juxtaposition of gecko and crocodile symbolises a battle between "them" and "us," unifying "us" against "them" as a common enemy. Discussing and defining "who we are," – the "us" – establishes "the profound ontological shift from a collection of individuals to a single unit" that provides a basis for members of a movement to act as a collective (Harquail 2006, 8).

The Prita case took a different route in its symbolisation. Prita Mulyasari had been portrayed textually and visually as an ordinary young mother of two. The most circulated image related to the case showed Prita wearing a head scarf with two infants on her lap. Symbolising religious piety, the scarf also

demonstrates the moral character of the subject in determining her status as an icon. The mother of two was a perfect icon to portray a "feminine movement," which is a movement "... that mobilises on the basis of women's traditional roles in the domestic sphere, usually as mothers and wives" (Baldez 2002, 14). As such, the movement appealed to both women and men who subscribe to traditional family values and gender roles. Just like cicak in the KPK case, for them, Prita symbolised the common, the normal and the women they knew. One participant who identified herself as a housewife stated: "She is just like us. If this could happen to her, it could happen to me, to any one of us" (interview with Gita, January 8, 2011).

At the same time, the very act of Prita in challenging the power of the big players – an international hospital and the government – can also be interpreted as a symbol of a feminist movement that explicitly challenges conventional gender roles in patriarchal society (Alvarez 1990). While lending itself to diverse interpretations, for Indonesian women, the Prita movement is a women's movement; a women's protest. What unites women – feminine, feminist and those in between – is their systematic "exclusion from the political protest and their collective status as political outsiders" (Baldez 2002, 15).

Easy Symbolisation, Amateur Production and Low-risk Activism

The rise of social media has developed a participatory culture characterised by "amateur and non-market production, networked collectivities for producing and sharing culture, niche and special interest groups, and aesthetics of parody, remix, and appropriation" (Russell et al. 2008, 45). These are reflected in both the Prita and KPK cases; the amount of amateurish artwork devoted to an issue is astounding, especially if we calculate how much individual time, energy and creativity spent to make digital posters, cartoons, animations, songs or video compilations. Easy symbolisation enables the amateur production of culture, in the visual and audio forms, to rise. The artwork in both cases helped the movements to embrace trailer vision even further and contributed to the movement's success in reaching various networks and groups.

In the KPK case, most of the artwork, including YouTube animations and videos, make use of a gecko and crocodile as central themes. There are also some different approaches to the artwork. One of the most attractive online posters is one that resembles a movie poster. Entitled Ketika Cicak Bersaksi (When a Gecko Testifies), the poster looks slick and professional. It showcases all "actors" in the case, including Susno Duadji, Bibit and Chandra, and some other politicians, and points out that they are part of the sinetron (soap opera) of Indonesian politics.

In the Prita case, much of its artwork doubled as campaign tools in the forms of logos and campaign posters. In this case, most of the artwork revolves around the central icon, with a headshot of Prita adapted and transformed in all manner of forms. While there were not as many YouTube videos in this case, one music video is particularly interesting, created by an elderly man who had never posted any YouTube videos before, showing himself playing a keyboard in music dedicated to Prita and juxtaposed with flashing images of her.

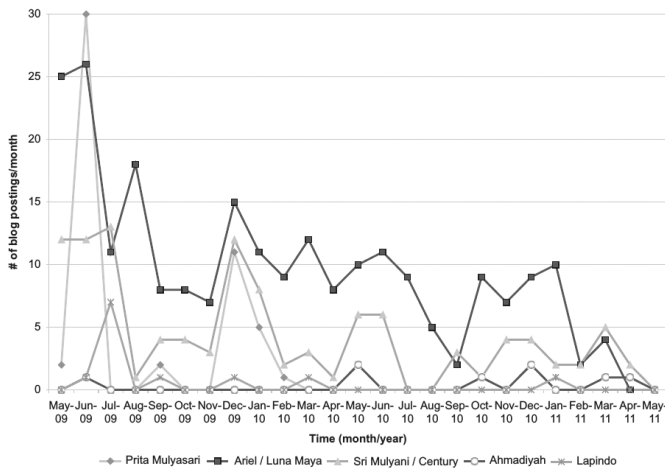
In all of this it is noticeable that the outcome is easy or low-risk activism. Such activism can function to reinforce a narrative and thus help translate online actions, such as clicking, typing and sharing, into offline collective movements. Certainly, low-risk, accessible and affordable action, such as giving one coin via a click, is easier to mobilise than getting protesters on to the streets. For example, in the KPK case, while there were more than one million clicks supporting the case, there were only 5,000 individuals who engaged in related street activism. By propagating the message that "your coins can solve the problem," the Coin campaign effortlessly transformed participants (coin givers) to be part of the solution, providing an instant gratification, and simplifying the actual problem embedded in the Prita case.

The Limits of Social Media Activism

The two cases discussed in the previous section have shown that social media activism can translate into populist political activism. Successful cases, such as Prita and the KPK, however, are not the rule. As mentioned previously, social media activism generates many clicks, but little sticks. Many others have failed to achieve critical mobilisation. The social media environment is not neutral, being bound to disparity and subject to domination. Conversations and information that dominate social media reflect the interests, choices and preferences of its users. Issues propagated by mainstream media that engage urban middle-class interest receive the most coverage. As illustrated in Figure 1, even bloggers who are concerned about social and political issues tend to discuss issues that were popularised by mainstream media. In Figure 1, we see that the Prita case was intensely discussed only in June 2009 and a pornography scandal involving artists Ariel and Luna Maya engaged ongoing discussions from July 2009 to March 2011. Meanwhile, the Lapindo and Ahmadiyah issues, which involved the poor and a religious minority, received minimal coverage (details on both cases will be provided in a later section).

While not generating massive participation like Prita, the Sri Mulyani Indrawati/ Century (SMI) case in Figure 1 did attract significant public attention and was discussed among top bloggers especially in July and December 2009 following widespread television coverage. The SMI case refers to the

controversy around the bailout of Century Bank in 2008 by the Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani Indrawati who has a reputation as a reformer and a clean politician. In 2009, the legislature, spearheaded by Golkar Party, accused her of crimes, pointing out that the bailout was done without legal authority and without proving a capital injection was needed (see Barta 2010). Sri Mulyani Indrawati defended the bailout as necessary given the global economic uncertainties at the time. In all of the investigation of the Century Bank bailout there was no evidence that she profited from her decision. Like the KPK and Prita cases, the SMI case was often portrayed in the media as a conflict between a symbolic figure in Sri Mulyani Indrawati and predatory interests identified with Aburizal Bakrie of the Golkar Party. The largest Facebook SMI group had more than 50,000 followers. In its later development, the SMI case became more complex and, hence, did not translate into massive activism.



[Figure 1] Popularity of issues in top 80 Indonesian socio-political blogs. Source: author's calculation based on the occurences of blog postings that contain keywords associated with five selected issues. The figure is generated from 4.065 postings recorded in 80 blogs.

The first two cases, Prita and KPK, show that social media activism can be successful in mobilising mass support by embracing simplified narratives, popular symbols, and low risk activities. In the next section, I will look at unsuccessful cases – those that failed to gain mass support – to provide a more rounded understanding of the dynamics of social media activism in Indonesia. In order to demonstrate that the above-mentioned features are crucial to turn social media into successful mobilisation, I will present an analysis of how the absence of these features has prevented the mobilisation of the masses in other cases.

Lapindo and Ahmadiyah Cases

The Lapindo case refers to a mudflow disaster in a sub-district of Porong in Sidoarjo, East Java, where the blowout of a natural gas well drilled by Indonesian oil and gas exploration company Lapindo Brantas Inc., created the biggest mud volcano in the world. The main shareholder in Lapindo Brantas was the Bakrie family, one of the country's wealthiest. The disaster began on May 29, 2006, when hot mud starting erupting from the ground. The flow rates quickly increased and the volcanic mud covered over 7,000 hectares of lands, impacting eight villages and displacing more than 17,000 people. Some scientific evidence claimed the disaster was caused by Lapindo Brantas drilling, yet the company argued the cause was an earthquake in Yogyakarta, 250 km away. The company asserted that the incident had natural causes, meaning responsibility for the damage lay with the government. The company's argument was often repeated by Aburizal Bakrie, a Lapindo Brantas owner, who also was the Minister of Welfare at that time. Currently, Bakrie is the chairman of the Golkar Party, one of the most influential political parties, and is running to become the party's nominee for the 2014 presidential election. Lawsuits against Lapindo Brantas had been filed since 2006, but the current legal status of the incident is still pending with no foreseen certainty. In the meantime, the residents affected by the mudflow have not been properly compensated.

With frequent mass media coverage, including national television, discussions of the Lapindo case extended into the online sphere from May 2006 to 2009. These discussions, however, did not trigger mass reactions. Activists attempted to mobilise Indonesians to seek justice for the victims by setting up support pages on Facebook[5] and, yet, only received modest participation. Nearly every year on the anniversary of the incident, including in May 2012, activists and the victims held small street protests and online activisms. In 2010, activists held the competition of Lapindo-related Facebook status and in 2011 a similar competition was held for blog posts. After years of undertaking, activism is slowly growing, and thus far still has not generated substantial public participation.

Ahmadiyah is a religious movement founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in India in 1889. There are about 200,000 Ahmadis in Indonesia. Like mainstream Islam, its teachings are based on the Quran and the Hadith. The difference is whether there can be other prophets after Muhammad. Ahmad claimed that he had fulfilled the Quranic prophecy of the second coming of the Mahdi, the Messiah, awaited by Muslims. Because of this claim, Islamist conservatives and many mainstream Muslims perceive Ahmadiyah as a heresy and it was suppressed under a 2008 Presidential decree requiring Ahmadis to "stop spreading interpretations and activities that deviate from the principal

teachings of Islam" (The Jakarta Globe, February 25, 2011). Violations of the decree can result in jail sentences up to five-years.

The Ahmadiyah case refers to the February 2011 brutal attack on the Ahmadiyah community in Cikeusik where three were killed by a small group of radical Islamists who considered the Ahmadis as heretics. Following the attack, disturbing footage of the victims' bodies being repeatedly stoned and beaten, while police watched, were circulated on YouTube. Such videos took the incident global and triggered condemnation from international organisations, such as the Human Rights Watch. Despite the videos, the incident generated very little social media activism. As seen in Figure 1, the incident was hardly discussed among top socio-political bloggers. Following the attack, groups condemning the attack appeared on Facebook. Other groups, supporting Ahmadiyah to be a recognised religion, also emerged.[6] While these groups attracted only a handful of members, by June 2012 there were 104 anti-Ahmadiyah Facebook groups advocating the repression of the group and even supporting the killing of members of the group.[7]

While the Lapindo and Ahmadiyah cases represent important challenges for Indonesia and involved far more victims than the Prita case, attempts to use social media to mobilise public opinion resulted in very limited participation. Despite the propensity of social media to promote radical transparency and to diffuse issues in multiple networks, activism around these cases failed to reach critical mass. Unlike KPK or Prita, both Lapindo and Ahmadiyah did not lend themselves to easy simplification. While both can be framed as David vs. Goliath stories, these cases are complex and do not easily fit mainstream popular culture.

Voice, the Poor and Ambiguity

In the Lapindo case, the victims are the rural poor. The poor lack the voice and recognition necessary to engage in civic action (Appadurai 2004, 63). Framing the struggle of the rural poor so that it resonates with the interests of the urban middle class is a particular challenge. Often without strong symbolic representation and no iconic figures thrusting themselves into the fore-front of the issue, the plight of the poor often does not generate headlines. Remarkably, given the scale of the disaster, Lapindo activists failed to gain popular support. Part of the reason for this is that the legal process provides no clear-cut picture of whom to blame for the disaster. While sympathising with the victims and developing a sense of pity, the case's ambiguity makes it difficult for social media users to mark it as distinctive from other disasters. Unable to deliver a black-and-white story of victimisation, the case does not fall into a light package category.

Additionally, mainstream media, especially national television, has been successful in shifting the framing of the case as a special incident – where there are perpetrators and victims – to a "usual" natural disaster. Bakrie's own television channel, TV One, has been very active in endorsing this frame (on ownership, see Sudibyo and Patria 2013). TV One has re-named the incident Lusi, abbreviated from Lumpur Sidoarjo (Sidoarjo mud), instead of Lapindo mud, distancing Lapindo Brantas from the disaster. As a result of the prevailing intervention of TV One, the term Lusi is now widely used by the mainstream national media (Novenanto 2009). The Lapindo case indicates that social media is influenced by the larger media system where control through ownership can be extended online and determines the course of social media activism by the mainstream framing of events. Hence, we see that a movement would be less likely to succeed if it is contested by more powerful competing narratives.

The Ahmadiyah case is even more problematic. Its complexity sets it far away from a light package principle. While the Ahmadis are victims, many apparently see the attack as somehow justifiable. For those who are anti-Ahmadiyah, the attack is perceived as a defence of Islam and a reaction to the Ahmadiyah's claimed blasphemy. Here, the narrative does not fit the simple framing of David vs. Goliath and Ahmadiyah is transformed into the perpetrator. The belief that Muhammad is the last prophet is one of the core teachings of Islam, making it a meta-narrative for most Indonesian Muslims – a grand narrative that gives a totalising account based upon the appeal to universal truth (Lyotard 1984, 29) – and, thus, it is considered taboo to challenge it.

What was missing was a considerable body of users who were prepared to voice theiropinion and join pro-Ahmadiyah groups, leading to a supremacy of anti-Ahmadiyah accounts in social media. There are two explanations for this loss of voice. First, some Indonesians are not for Ahmadiyah. While they are against the killing, they are in a great doubt that Ahmadiyah's teachings are acceptable in Islam. Hence, they did not belong to any Ahmadiyah-related groups and were silent. Second, some Indonesians believe that the attack was inhumane and that Ahmadiyah's rights should be protected. They, however, felt they were in minority and avoided expressing an opinion publicly. The latter situation reflects the "spiral of silence" where people tend to keep their opinions or thoughts to themselves when they think they are in minority, fearing separation or isolation from those around them (Noelle-Neumann 1974). The Ahmadiyah case demonstrates that any sub-narrative that complicates the story can make the case unqualified for light package activism. The case also indicates the supremacy of religious meta-narrative and how it influences how people express themselves in social media.

At the same time, lacking iconic value, the Lapindo and Ahmadiyah cases did not generate the production of amateurish arts. While visual and artistic symbolisation serves as a tool to communicate a narrative in a more salient way, it becomes difficult where narratives cannot be transformed into simplified problem definitions and causal interpretations. Additionally, in a religious society, such as Indonesia, moral assessment is significant in symbolising narratives. Easy identification of right and wrong, good and bad, moral and immoral, is important in the production of symbols. The Lapindo and Ahmadiyah cases present a challenge to such binary moral judgements. In the absence of easy moral identification, neither cases generated visual symbolic representations needed in embracing a trailer vision.

As noted above, low-risk activism tends to encourage more participation. However, the risk is not always associated with action. Low-risk actions, such as clicking, can also be perceived as high risk if the movement represents or involves non-mainstream ideologies. In the "I know that you know that I know you know" network where conformity is desirable, such a click can incite undesirable social consequences. Further, the presence of ideology can complicate the narrative that is, otherwise, relatively simple. Nationalist and religious narratives are the strongest ideological narratives in Indonesia. Naturally, to be associated with any issue that is incongruent with these ideological narratives is perceived as risky. This risk was particularly apparent in the Ahmadiyah case. To sympathise with this non-mainstream religion was and is a risky choice where such an action can be interpreted as anti-Islam.

Beyond the case studies, it is useful to look at other issues that help us to understand the role of ideology. Human rights abuse in West Papua is one such example. The Papua case is ideological by its association with the story of separatist Papuans where their struggles for self-determination are perceived as endangering the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). NKRI harga mati (NKRI is final, absolutely nonnegotiable) is a nationalist mantra often used to suppress ideologies and movements deemed not a part of "Indonesia." With the absoluteness of nationalist meta-narratives such as this, it is difficult to mobilise any issues likely to be associated with an anti-NKRI stance. While violating human rights can be morally framed as "bad" and "wrong," the West Papuans cannot be simply classified as "victims" because many non-Papuan Indonesians associate them with anti-NKRI actions. In addition to separatism, in the nationalist meta-narrative, communism, socialism and atheism, too, are associated with anti-nationalism (see Anderson 2001; McGregor 2007). Social media activisms associated with these "isms" would find it difficult to gain popular support.

To provide a subtler example of the role of ideology, it is worth briefly revisiting the SMI case, as depicted in Figure 1. Despite its early popularity, unlike the KPK and Prita cases where their supporters reached millions, the SMI case

never yielded immense activism. While the SMI story easily generated an icon, activism around the SMI case was deeply polarised. SMI supporters perceived Sri Mulyani as a victim as well as an idol.[8] Some others questioned the real motive behind her decision to bailout the Century Bank. Further, Sri Mulyani's friendly relationship with the West, especially with some in the USA, led to her association with neo-liberalism (antek neolib), deemed as a "foreign" ideology that would corrupt Indonesia and nationalism. When, ultimately, Sri Mulyani left the ministerial post for the World Bank position in Washington DC, some saw this as evidence of her neo-liberalist agenda.

The Simplified Narrative

The cases presented suggest that participation in social media leads to populist political activism when it embraces the principles of contemporary culture of consumption: light package, headline appetite and trailer vision. Simple or simplified narratives that are associated with low-risk activism and are congruent with ideological meta-narratives have a much higher chance of going viral and generate significant activism. Success is less likely when the narrative is contested by dominant competing narratives generated in mainstream media. Why does political activism in social media need to be couched in simplified terms that resonate with terms of popular culture? The answer can be drawn from the following underlying explanations.

Social Media Ecology: Network is Vast, Content is Overabundant

A first explanation originates from the ecology of social media itself. Social media epitomises the most extreme example of an overall acceleration of production and circulation of information. In social media, a user is part of multiple, hyper-connected "communities" which constantly produce and consume. How to appeal to the mass in such an environment? Moreover, social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, do not encourage long "conversations." Their features direct users to nurture short quick interactions and encourage multi-tasking. The escalation of velocity and size of information combined with the rapidity and briefness of interaction make social media more hospitable to simple and/or simplified narratives than complex/complicated ones. Obviously an image of a small gecko fighting against a huge crocodile in the KPK case is more likely to stand out in the information abundant environment of social media than a seemingly generic image of poor mud-flood victims in the Lapindo case. Similarly, a familiar story of Hollywood-style victimization, such as the story of Prita, can easily be told and retold in a casual online chat by exchanging just a few quick lines whereas a sensitive and complex story of Ahmadiyah cannot be discussed in the same manner.

Social Media as Part of a Larger Media System

The second explanation comes from the dependency of social media on the larger media system. While bloggers and social media users produce their own information, when it comes to news and events, most of them tend to become the echo chamber of traditional mainstream media, especially television channels. The more convivial environment of social media does encourage the rise of citizen journalists who produce alternative news. However, the alternative production is still too miniscule to challenge the dominance of mainstream content.

As we can see in the case studies, commercial national television channels played significant roles in amplifying, curtailing and intervening issues in social media activism. The successes of the KPK and Prita cases were reliant on a boost coming from national television channels. On the other hand, the Lapindo case saw TV One intervene with a more powerful competing narrative, reducing social media-generated participation. Because social media is embedded in systems of control, power and domination in the larger media system, issues and interests that dominate mainstream media also influence social media activism.

The success of social media activism is dependent on its congruency with the mainstream media culture. A sound bite is characterised by a short, quotable, and memorable remark that captures the essence of the larger message or conversation (Burke 2010).Using the case of weekday evening network news-casts in the USA, Adatto (1990) reveals that the average sound bite fell from 42.3 seconds in 1968 to only 9.8 seconds in 1988. Today, the average sound bite is even shorter. For social media activism to permeate the media network, its message size needs to fit the shrinking sound bite.

Techno-materiality of Social Media Access

The third explanation falls under the logic of access. Social media is not free from the techno-materiality of access, which not only determines who has access, but also how they access and consume information, and what kind of information they prefer to consume. There are two aspects to techno-materiality. First, the distribution of access and, second, the device to access. Regarding the first, the internet infrastructure in Indonesia is not equally distributed throughout the country. Rural areas lack access to even the most basic telecom infrastructure. Of the 76,613 villages, 57% remain disconnected from the internet and 16.8 million rural households (27% of the population) still have no electricity service (Depdagri 2011; Suhendra 2012). Access to social media strongly reflects this pattern, with over 60% of traffic coming from big cities, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Medan, Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Semarang (SalingSilang 2011). Most of the users prefer entertainment to other online

content (Galih and Ngazis 2012). To attract public attention, a political message needs to contend with the pervasiveness of entertainment content that predominantly serves urban middle-class consumers.

On the second aspect, from 2009 to 2012 online access through internet cafes declined from 64% to 42% and access on mobile phones increased from 48% to 62% (Miftachul 2012). The proliferation of mobile phones, with over 220 million users in 2012 (MobileMonday 2012, 6), growing exponentially from only 32,792 in 1993 (Lim 2002), has become a driving force of the growth of the mobile internet. This is supported by cheaper internet rates and the increased availability of the wireless network in urban areas. One-third of 55 million internet users access the internet from mobile phones (MobileMonday, 2012, 6). The prevalence of mobile internet usage not only makes social media more portable and accessible, it also influences the way people consume content. The shift from the rich features found in laptops and desktops to mobile devices inevitably comes with a loss of some of its richness with a smaller screen, smaller text, fewer options and lower fidelity. Mobile has enabled people, in a disruptive sense, to produce and consume content more frequently, yet, mainly in "bite-size chunks." In Indonesia, where the speed and bandwidth are generally low, it is neither easy or nor cheap to download heavy rich information. For example, Indonesians I interviewed spoke about how they had to get YouTube videos completely retrieved before watching them as real-time streaming was not possible. Mobile device suits social networking tools that are tailored for consumption based on light package, headline appetite and trailer-vision principles.

Conclusions and Implications

Using the Indonesian context as an illustrative case, in this article I offer a critical perspective to the existing literature of social media activism. There, some specificities of the argument, such as the dominance of certain meta-narratives and the state of internet infrastructure, may not always be applicable to other contexts. The overarching argument, however, can be applied more generally. Similar explanations derived from cases presented here can help us to understand social media activism in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and the USA. In Tunisia, the story of Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation saw a poor street vendor who never finished high school become an unemployed university graduate slapped by a female official even though nobody knew whether the slap really happened. This framing and its strong symbolisation through Bouazizi's burning body images enabled a working class movement to culturally and politically resonate with the rest of the population, especially the educated urban middle-class youth (Lim 2013).

Similarly, in Egypt, Khaled Saeed, a young man who died under disputed circumstances after being arrested by Egyptian police, was mythologised as "a powerful figure who can encapsulate the young generation: young, social media savvy, anti-authoritarian, and was martyred at an internet café … By elevating him into a figure with saint-like qualities, minimises and simplifies the dynamics of his life" (Ali 2012), Egyptian activists conveniently used Khaled Saeed as a symbol of resistance that resonated with the entire population (Lim 2012a).

The successful Invisible Campaign in mobilising people to support the Kony 2012 cause, a video about the Lord's Resistance Army that went viral, is another example (see Drumbl 2012). As argued by Zuckerman (2012), the campaign:

> is so compelling because it offers extremely simple narrative: Kony is a uniquely bad actor, a horrific human being, whose capture will end suffering for the people of Northern Uganda. If each of us does our part, influences powerful people, [the United States] military force will take action and Kony will be captured.

Using an overly simplified narrative and calling for a low-risk activism that easily transforms individuals to be part of the solution, the Kony campaign is the quintessence of the light package activism that fully gratifies headline appetites and skilfully embraces trailer vision.

Such instances suggest that the Indonesian experience is not unique. At the same time, social media activism cannot be viewed in a dichotomous perspective. Rather than viewing it as a harbinger of progressive social change or dismissing it as "slacktivism," the article provides a more nuanced argument, identifying the conditions under which participation in social media may lead to successful political activism.

By studying social media activism in Indonesia, we learn that the participatory nature of social media certainly is most suitable to disseminate popular culture-related content. While this participatory culture can be borrowed for civic engagement and political mobilisation, it is limited in its capacity to mobilise complex political issues. The limitations are derived from, at least, three circumstances. First, in social media, the network is vast and the production and circulation of information is constantly accelerated.

This environment is more genial to simple and/or simplified narratives than complex/ complicated ones. Second, social media is not independent from the large media system. Social media activism, thus, needs to attune with "the incredible shrinking sound bite" culture of mainstream media. Third, social media is not detached from its technomaterial aspect, namely the distribution and device of its access. With a high concentration of social media access in

urban areas, the narrative of activism always competes with entertainment content tailored for urban middle-class consumers. Furthermore, a high proportion of users access social media from mobile devices that are tailored for the quick bite experience.

Social media activisms, thus, are most successful when their narratives, icons and symbolic representations mimic those that dominate the contemporary popular culture. In other words, they have to embrace the principles of contemporary culture of consumption: light package, headline appetite and trailer vision. Beyond that, the activism must neither be associated with high-risk actions nor ideologies that challenge the dominant meta-narratives (such as nationalism and religiosity in Indonesia). Further, it also needs to be uncontested by powerful competing narratives endorsed in mainstream media. As such, social media activisms are always in danger of being *too fast*, *too thin* and *too many*. While online activism may see *many clicks*, these are *little sticks* – while we may witness many clicks, there are very few causes that make for widespread activism in the vast online social media environment.

Social media activism marks a period of innovation and experimentation in the use of new media technologies and participatory culture. Online expression, popular culture, combined with sociality, create multiple spheres where millions of Indonesians come together. On Facebook, Twitter and the like, these Indonesians find each other, organise, collaborate and act. Social media, however, does not lend itself to facilitate deliberative discourses on complex, difficult issues. It does not lend itself to the deliberation needed in a deepening democracy. As noted elsewhere, "[r]ule-bound deliberation is slow and ponderous, emphasises the acquisition of knowledge and expertise, focuses on government laws and policies, and succeeds when citizens partners with government in the service of good decisions, political legitimacy and social stability" (Lim and Kann 2008, 100).

These characteristics are unmatched by the features of social media, which is, first and foremost, social. Social media activities for urban middle classes mostly revolve around fun, self-expression and social gain. None of these is readily categorised as part of civic engagement that contributes to democratic processes. Social media does not inherently promote civic engagement and should not be perceived as a causal agent for social change and democratisation. At its best, it facilitates and amplifies a culture that helps establish a foundation, a training ground, and a learning space for individuals to express their opinions, to exercise their rights and to collaborate with others. By understanding the nature and limitations of social media activism and its conditions for success, activists may utilise, employ and transform it into meaningful civic engagement and political participation.

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Notes

1 Available at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gerakan-1000000-Facebookers-Dukung-Chandra-Hamzah-Bibit-Samad-Riyanto/192945806132 (accessed January 25, 2013).
2 Examples include http://www.facebook.com/SelamatkanIndonesia and http://www.facebook.com/pages/Saya-Cicak-Berani-Melawan-Buaya/167520472821 (both accessed January 25, 2013).
3 The jingle can be found at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSHwQDhDvF0 (accessed January 25, 2013).
4 The original page was at http://apps.facebook.com/causes/290597?m=7c7df20b. It is no longer available.
5 An example is http://www.facebook.com/groups/26083340518 (accessed January 25, 2013).
6 Examples of pages supporting Ahmadiyah are http://www.facebook.com/antikekerasan.ahmadiyah (accessed January 25, 2013), http://www.facebook.com/pages/Dukung-Ahmadiyah-Menjadi-Agama-Baru-di-Indonesia/190168814338999 (the link no longer works as the page has been closed) and http://www.facebook.com/groups/197293916964081/ (accessed January 25, 2013).
7 Examples include http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gerakkan-FACEBOOKers-bubarkan-AHMADIYAH/102692336450372?ref=ts and http://www.facebook.com/groups/188601241161606/ (both accessed January 25, 2013).
8 Loyal supporters of Sri Mulyani continue to use social media for further, more ambitious, agenda by campaigning for her nomination as a 2014 Presidential candidate. Some SMI social media activists became part of the newly-formed Independent People's Union Party (Partai SRI), whose main goal is to support Sri Mulyani's campaign in the 2014 Presidential election.

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Annotation

Nishant Shah

Merlyna Lim's essay is perhaps demonstrative of all the concerns that this Reader espouses. It helps us understand that the digital cannot be taken too literally. It requires qualifications and contextualisation. Digital is not just about the access to technologies and cannot be reduced to questions of penetration and adoption. She shows clearly that there is a gentrifying effect that the digital has, as only certain communities and class-clustered individuals get access to digital playing fields, thus producing skewed representations of reality. Within Indonesia, she shows the need to look at the population that is getting wired, to understand why certain political positions are being taken and how the impulses of transformation are shaped by the contexts of these users who can easily stand in for the larger population that has limited or no access to these spaces of intervention and discourse. At the same time, the essay, in its analysis of how the digital gets operationalised in mobilising social and cultural movements and protests, shows that the digital is not as universal as we would have imagined. While there might be structural similarities that emerge from the form and aesthetics of the digital platforms and apps as they traverse around the world, the movements cannot be merely labelled as the same, under labels like "Facebook protests" and "Twitter Revolutions". Even as the number of tools and spaces of expression get reduced under the massive monopolies of digital social web, it is important to remember that these tools get hugely shaped by the contexts where they are put into practice. Decoding them as micro processes and understanding them as specifically used to address particular questions of the region is important so that we do not privilege the digital in the formulation of 'Digital Activism'.

Her take on activism also mimics this need to qualify and substantiate

what we mean by activism. Drawing upon the dual nature of responsibility and entitlement, of safety and openness, of privacy and trust, she shows how we need to think of activism, not only as a goal based solution to a problem but the beginning of a series of processes that have different material and experiential practices. Particularly in her critique of clicktivism, Lim helps to understand how we might need to reconsider the traditional indicators like impact and spread, which have been the measures of the efficacy of activism. New faces of digital activism, which are more tactics than strategies, require a new vocabulary and new imaginations of what it means to act, when that act is a click. Her conception of activism demands that we see action in different registers, and look at a value-chain of actions, where we see the chain reactions which are not necessarily aimed at a pre-defined goal but reveal the possibilities of digital engagement.

The formulation of 'Digital Activism', for Lim, is still not free of the geographies of operation and intention. She shows how taking the geographical locations – national, regional, global – is not only important but necessary in understanding what it means to be active and the subjectivity of this actor based on the place of the body. Ensuring that her critique is embedded in the specificity of Indonesia, and the diversity of the social, cultural, and political terrain of the region, Lim argues for a need to find the materiality and the geography of the digital, when it becomes a space for activism and intervention.

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