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By Andi Windah

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STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

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STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

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STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	vi
1. LONG RUN ADVOCATION OF INCLUSIVE POLICY OF DISABILITY IN INDONESIA, Adrian Brahma Aditya	1
2. INNOVATION VS COMPLIANCE ON INDONESIA GOVERNMENT, Adi Asmariadi Budi, Sherly Artadita, Ridwan Saifuddin, Yulianto Suharto, Wawan Dhewanto	5
3. SURVIVAL OF PRINT MEDIA BUSINESS IN DIGITAL ERA (Management Strategy Analysis Of “Harian Jogja” In Media Industry Competition), Aen Istianah Afiati	15
4. INDONESIA’S PUBLIC LIFE, POWER VISIBILITY AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FROM NEW ORDER ERA TO REFORMATION PERIOD, Andi Windah, S.IKom., M.Comn&Mediast	20
5. EXPERIENCE OF COMMUNICATION AND SELF-CONCEPT IN FOODSTAGRAMMER IN BANDAR LAMPUNG CITY IN PHENOMENOLOGY PERSPECTIVE, Andy Corry Wardhani, Annisa Widya Putri	30
6. DIGITAL TOURISM IN MUSEUM ADAT KERATUAN SEMAKA LAMPUNG, Bartoven Vivit Nurdin and Damayanti	37
7. POST-TRUTH POLITICS REALITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDONESIA, Budi Kurniawan	45
8. CHILDREN’S RIGHT TO INTERNET DEVICES: A Social Approach On Indonesian Policy, Intan Fitri Meutia, Bayu Sujadmiko, Bismo Jiwo Agung	50
9. ADVANCES TECHNOLOGY IN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM TO SUPPORT PUBLIC SERVICE: An Analytical Environment of Organization Change In Lampung Transportation Department, Devi Yulianti, Devita Ershanty	56
10.EMPOWERMENT STRATEGY FOR BANDAR LAMPUNG TAPIS WOVEN CLOTH CRAFTSMEN IN CONVERGENCY ERA, Dewi Ayu Hidayati, S.Sos, M.SI, Dra. Yuni Ratnasari, M.Si, I Gde Sidemen, M.Si, DR. Benjamin, M.SI, And Asnani, S.Sos. M.A	61

11. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DISEMINATION RESEARCH RESULTS,	
Dewi Saraswati, Yoka Pramadi, Taufik Hidayat _____	68
12. E-TOURISM GOVERNANCE POLICY FOR COSTAL VILLAGE IN PESAWARAN REGENCY,	
Dian Kagungan, Intan Fitri Meutia _____	71
13. FACTORS AFFECTING ELECTRONIC BASED GOVERNMENT SYSTEM (E-Government) Readiness at Ministry Of Research, Technology and Higher Education of The Republic of Indonesia,	
Dimas Bagus Dwilaksono, Prof. Dr. Eko prasojo, MAg. Rer. Publ _____	86
14. ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT TENDENCIES MAPPING FACING THE UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS ELECTION 2019 IN SOUTHEAST ACEH DISTRICT,	
Effendi Hasan, Ubaidullah And Ardiansyah _____	92
15. PREDICTING MILLENNIAL LEARNERS' BEHAVIOR ON TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTICULTURAL, SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR ASPECTS AS 21ST CENTURY SKILLS,	
Fikri Yansyah _____	99
16. FACTORS THAT AFFECT REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS TO IMPROVE EASE OF INVESTMENT IN DKI JAKARTA,	
Ismi Hidayanti, Prof. Dr. Chandra Wijaya, M.SI. M.M _____	114
17. THE URGENCY OF PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) IN PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SERVICES (Study of PPP between BPJS Kesehatan and Private Healthcare Providers Semarang City, Central Java, Indonesia),	
Maya Wulan Pramesti _____	121
18. IMPLEMENTATION OF E-GOVERNMENT AS MEDIATRANSPARENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET MANAGEMENT IN RIAU PROVINCE,	
Dr. Muslim Afandi M.Pd, Syed Agung Afandi _____	135
19. SELF REPRESENTATION AND POLITIC IDENTITY OF WOMAN IN SOCIAL MEDIA INSTAGRAM,	
Ninik Tri Ambarwati _____	144
20. VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS MIXED MARRIAGE IN PADANG CITY,	
Novena Puji Astuti, Elva Ronaning Roem, Ernita Arif _____	153
21. TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM (Study on the Implementation of Applications-Based Lease Transfers),	
Nur Muharany, Dewi Brima Atika, Selvi Diana Meilinda _____	165
22. THE EXISTENCE OF JAVANESE TRADITIONAL KID SONGS AMONG JAVANESE PEOPLE IN THE DIGITAL ERA,	
Puthut Prehantoro _____	176
23. ROLE OF IPRAHUMAS IN SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT COMPETENCY,	
Renata Lusilaora Siringo Ringo, Yoka Pramadi, Dyah Rachmawati Sugiyanto _____	189
24. OER, OPEN ACCESS-DIGITAL LITERACY IN ART EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY BASED,	
Riyan Hidayatullah _____	200

25.POLICY EVALUATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF DRINKING WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (SPAM) IN ACHIEVEMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN MERANTI ISLANDS REGENCY , Riza Alrakhman, S.Pd, M.Pd Sukarman, S.IP, Baskoro Wicaksono, S.IP,M.IP	207
26.MULTIMEDIA COMMUNICATION IN INCREASING THE MOTIVATION OF MEMORIZING THE QUR'AN , DR. Sarmiati, M.SI, DR. Elva Ronaning Roem, M.SI, Yayuk Lestari, MA	216
27.MEASURING USER EXPERIENCE OF M-RECRUITMENT FOR LOWER-MIDDLE CLASS USERS , Saskia Putri Agustine, Intan Rizky Mutiaz, Chandra Tresnadi	223
28.THE CHALLENGE OF COMMUNITY TELEVISION IN CONVERGENCE ERA , Talitha Ardelia	229
29.SERVICE QUALITY OF FREEHOLD TITLE BASED ON DIGITALIZATION IN LAND OFFICE OF BANDAR LAMPUNG , Feni Rosalia, Lilih Muflihah	238
30.EXISTENCE OF PEOPLE ORGANIZATION (ORMAS) IN POLITICAL PARTIES IN WEST DENPASAR DISTRICT, DENPASAR CITY , I Made Wimas Candranegara, I Wayan Mirta	248
31.ISIS' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH "YOUTUBE" (Case Study in Indonesia) , Gita Karisma Tety Rachmawati	256
32.THE CANIBALISM OF PUBLIC POLICY (The Controversy of Online Transportation on Policy Problems in Indonesia) , DR. Bambang Utoyo, M.SI., Yuditya Wardhana, S.A.N., M.SI, Ari Gusnita, S.A.N., M.SI	267
33.CHANGE DYNAMICS OF NATIONAL PETROLEUM POLICY: Indonesia experience , Syamsul Ma'arif, S.IP, M.Si	276

PREFACE

According to its vision, Lampung University is going to be the best 10 (ten) Universities in Indonesia. It also becomes a World Class University.

Over the last two years, FISIP Unila has seriously developed global-minded atmosphere to improve its research and publications and also teaching and learning based on e-learning and virtual classes.

This International Conference is basically part of FISIP Unila's contribution to realize the university's vision. Therefore, our faculty has fully been trying to compete at both national and regional levels.

Related especially to the theme about State and Digital Society, in the perspective of social and political science, the use of IT or digitization is simply a tool to convey something, helping the implementation public service, business, political functions, and so on.

But, in Indonesia, there are still a number of weaknesses in utilizing IT or digitalization.

The attitude of public criticism in social networks can not yet become a real social movement, nor can change the substance of policies that are not in line with public aspirations.

Even though e-procurement, e-budgeting, e-planning, in governmental services have been officially implemented, but the implementation is still inconsistent. So that, it still opens up various opportunities for corruption and illegal taxes.

Besides that, the use of government's websites cannot be a source of information for the public, which are characterized by the strength of old government. Utilizing IT in the process of public policy and political communication tend to be influenced by the dynamics of the existing political environment.

Technology platform can be used to perpetuate existing power relations that are very paradoxical with the characteristics of the ICT which are inclusive and egalitarian. For example, although many politicians who have a twitter accounts, they generally just use the accounts as an advertising board rather than as a media of communication.

Hopefully, what we are doing today can be beneficial for Indonesia's progress in facing the era of digitalization.

4

INTERTWINING INDONESIA'S PUBLIC LIFE, POWER VISIBILITY AND MEDIA DEVELOPMENT FROM NEW ORDER ERA TO REFORMATION PERIOD

ANDI WINDAH, S.I.KOM., M.COMN&MEDIAS

Abstract

Indonesia is considered the most powerful country among other Southeast Asia countries and its political growth has become an appealing object for large number of comprehensive studies. Two of the significant phases in Indonesia's political history that draws considerable attention from many foreign scholars and academics are new order era and reformation period especially in term of public life, power's visibility and media development. This article delivers an extended discussion of those three concepts as it draws upon several junctures of political development in Indonesian history to describe the practice of life in the country. It also explains how the power's visibility in Indonesia and media development intertwines by examining related literatures, data and information to the concepts. As recorded by history, the state's new order era was shaped by President Suharto's personal dan profesional qualities. It was administered by the regime's effort to curtail the society's direct participation in the state's decision-making process by increasing military intervention into the civilian sphere and increasing military interpretation of the business, diplomatic and political elites. Simultaneously, Indonesia's media was closely scrutinized by the officials under the regime. Following that, the downfall of Suharto and his New Order regime in 1998 had brought changes to Indonesia, such as the improvement of the society's role in the state's performance. It also stimulated changes within the law enforcement institutions and had provided more opportunities to the society to access information sources freely such as the rise of the Internet.

Keywords : power, visibility, media, suharto, reformation

Introduction

"No one knows what that man thinks.

That is the secret of his power"

(Mackie & MacIntyre, 1994, p. 45)

Indonesia is considered the most powerful country among other Southeast Asia countries and its political growth has become an appealing object for large number of comprehensive studies. Two of the significant phases in Indonesia's political history that draws considerable attention from many foreign scholars and academics are new order era and reformation period especially in term of public life, power's visibility and media development. This article delivers an extended discussion of those three concepts as they might apply to the specific context of Indonesia. The article draws upon several junctures of political development in Indonesian history to describe the practice of life in the country. The article also explains how the power's visibility in Indonesia and media intertwines.

7 STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

10 It is divided into two main sections. The first section describes the performance of the state and power's visibility in Indonesia during Suharto's presidential period which is commonly known as the New Order era. This is done by examining the New Order's authoritarian nature in state performance. The history of the law enforcement in Indonesia, particularly the Indonesian National Police and its administration during Suharto's presidential period is also addressed in this section. The section also illustrates Indonesia's media discourse at the New Order's era and how it was strictly regulated, especially in establishing the New Order's visibility.

21 The second section talks about Indonesia and power's visibility in the state after the fall of Suharto's regime. This is done by discussing some significant changes in the state brought by Indonesia's political transformation, including the state's performance and power's visibility. Following that, the section also addresses Indonesia's communication technology development, particularly by elaborating on the rise of the internet, new social media as well as the increasing phenomenon of instant celebrity. Lastly, the section also briefly reports on recent conditions of the INP.

Discussion

Exploring the Historic Indonesia

5 According to Mody (1987, p. 1) Indonesia is "the most powerful country" among other Southeast Asia countries and its political growth has become an appealing object for large number of comprehensive studies. One of the significant phases in Indonesia's political history that draws considerable attention from many foreign scholars and academics is the New Order era. The New Order era was a period of Indonesia's governmental system from 1966 to 1998, which was the period of Suharto's presidency. The idiom of "New Order" itself was simply coined to differentiate the regime from its predecessor, President Soekarno's Old Order government. In its broader explanation, the "New Order" phrase was chosen to reflect a new system of political, economic and cultural life of the state from that based on "Sukarno's populist Guided Democracy" (Hill & Sen, 2000, p. 3) to "Pancasila Democracy" with "the pure implementation of the 1945 Constitution" (Mody, 1987, p. 179). Both Pancasila, or five principles, and the 1945 Constitution are the official philosophical and governmental foundation of the Indonesian state which implementations were believed to have been eradicated by the Old Order Government.

However, some scholars consider that Indonesia's concept of democracy during the New Order was not a real democratic system. Liddle (1999) even depicts the regime attempt of implementing the Pancasila Democracy as "Orwellian deception" (p. 40). In other words, it was just an intellectual political strategy to conceal what were the regime's real aims, such as Suharto and his cronies' absolute control over the society. Leifer (1998, as cited in Vatikiotis, 1998, p. 1) supports this by saying that the former president Suharto was "employing the form of democracy to political advantage". Almost all powerful political entities in Indonesia during that time were regulated by his elite cronies or under Suharto's direct command such as through the selection of the People's Consultative Assembly members and the party system (Emmerson, 1983; R William Liddle, 1999; McIntyre, 2005). It was also believed that Suharto owned around "75 % share of personal shareholding in [more than] Rp. 18,000 million investment" in many companies around the country (Robison & 1990 p. 19), securing his entire family and cronies with a profitable business empire. Given these facts, it is clear that Indonesia in the New Order era was indeed an authoritarian state rather than a democratic one.

As Mackie & MacIntyre (1994, p. 45) claim, the New Order was "shaped by Suharto's personal qualities as much as the Old Order was by Sukarno's", it is then reasonable to explain the nature of the New Order's regime and its authoritarian performance by tracing back to Suharto's background and personality. Gun (1979, p. 762) further agrees with this argument by explaining that the New

STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

Order had become “a personal regime whereby Suharto makes [all] the decisions [in the state]”. Thus, one possible way to understand the New Order’s authoritarian performance, particularly the regime’s relation to its society, is by elaborating Suharto’s personal qualities. To begin with, Suharto’s deep root in Javanese culture has been claimed as one of the major reasons behind the regime’s agenda of curtailing the society’s direct participation in the state’s decision-making process (McDonald, 1980). This means that Suharto tried to manifest his power in Indonesia by adapting the traditional Javanese concept of power that political decisions are made only by ruler and the society’s immediate participation is restricted.

For example, many campaign activities of non-government parties were strictly scrutinized during the New Order era (R William Liddle, 1999). Similarly, the New Order’s practice of centralized power in the hand of executive elites is also argued to be drawn from Suharto’s Javanese background. Like most rulers in old Javanese kingdoms whose supremacy was obtained from other minor power nucleuses, the New Order’s regime accumulated its enormous power by entrusting its authority in most of Indonesia’s predominant fields such as “ banking, logging, trade, crumb rubber, flour milling and cement” (Robison & 1990 , p. 18). All of these were done, of course, to suppress the growth of society-based party and limit the society’s fair share within institutions, which in turn would threaten Suharto’s dominant position in Indonesia’s political and economic discourse.

Another exemplification of how Suharto’s personal qualities influenced the New Order’s relation with society is in the visibility of the regime’s affairs. As biographical and autobiographical materials written about this man agree with what Mackie and MacIntyre (1994) reported; that Suharto had always built certain impressions of him by presenting himself as a “calm, dignified and restrained” (p. 45) president. Following that, the same characteristics were also reflected in his New Order regime. One ideal mirror image of this secrecy issue is probably the practice of Mysterious Killing, also known as *Pembunuh Misterius* or “*Petrus*” in Bahasa, in early 1980s. The practice was claimed as the regime’s surveillance system organized by General Benny Murdani whose authority covered the armed forces and military intelligence in Indonesia (Barker, 1998, p 17). Petrus is recorded in Indonesia’s history as a massive murder of people who were considered by the regime as threatening to the security of society. However, how the regime identified which person was put onto the list remained secret. Likewise, the list itself had never been brought up to public. In other words, even though most of people in the Petrus list were likely recognized as “criminals, gang members, or ex-prisoners, frequently tattooed and almost always young and male” (Bourchier, 1990, p. 184), some of the victims were noted as “local heroes in their local communities” (Barker, 1998, p. 20). Barker (1998) further points out the Petrus list confidentiality was the regime’s attempt to behold its “exclusivity of state knowledge” by keeping decision-making process behind the scenes.

At the same time, the Petrus phenomenon also marks another component of the New Order era, the law enforcement agents. In fact, it is considered a vital factor that made Indonesia’s authoritarianism. As mentioned by Gunn (1979, p 762) the New Order “has been characterized by the phenomena of both increasing military intervention into the civilian sphere and increasing military interpretation of the business, diplomatic and political elites”, it was clear that the armed forces played important roles during the New Order era, including the Indonesian National Police (INP). Related to that, the following paragraph will present a brief historical development of the INP during the New Order era.

In the New Order era, Indonesian armed forces, commonly known in Bahasa as “*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*” (ABRI), consisted of the Indonesian National Police (INP) together with the navy and the air force. The INP itself was initially separate from ABRI due to its nature as a civilian-based force. Prior to 1959, the INP operated under the Prime Minister’s command not the Minister of Defence and Security (Jansen, 2008). It was then under the administration of Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno, and fully firmed by Suharto, to aggregate the INP with the military forces. It was

STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

also the aggregation that caused the INP to acquire its paramilitary characteristics. Described to possess a set of “militaristic, authoritarian approach to law enforcements and a more hierarchical structure in the organisation of police response” characteristics (Bull & Stratta, 1995, as cited in, Meliala, 2001, p. 421), the INP in the New Order era had to perform *Dwi-Fungsi* or Dual-Functions.

Dwi-Fungsi ABRI was interpreted as “an euphemism for military surveillance and control of national life’ that ‘legitimised the involvement of soldiers in non-military fields – the legislature, bureaucracy, regional government, to name but a few – and also encouraged the repression of government critics, political parties, a free press and other vestiges of civil society” (Schneier, 2009, p. 296). This is saying that, in one hand, the INP was obliged to protect the society and maintain law as well as social order among them. On the other hand, the institution also served as the New Order’s subordinate in many important fields as well as the regime’s watchdog by scrutinizing all activities in the society which might potentially put the regime in a dangerous state. Sukma and Prasetyono (2003) provide example for the latter function by illustrating on how an Indonesian needed to seek permission from the INP to conduct a social gathering as simple as a wedding party (p. 16). These dual functions, however, become a seed of debate among many keen observers of the INP and served as the main target of criticisms during the democratization era. The criticisms then stimulated changes to the institution (Jansen, 2008; Meliala, 2001) as addressed in the next section.

Another dimension which is also interesting to discuss when addressing the New Order era is the development of media during that period, particularly when the regime’s visibility is taken into account. In the New Order era, media was defined to some degree as “vehicles for the creation of a “national culture” that would allow uncontested implementation of its development policies and more generally its authoritarian nature” (Sen & Hill, 2000 , p. 11). In other words, communication channels such as television, radio and press were created and developed to assist the regime in spreading its propaganda of national identity which was aimed to reinforce the state’s power. Consequently, the society was provided with very limited opportunity to access information outside what the regime has provided (Kitley, 1994; Lim, 2003)

Under the New Order regime, Indonesia’s media was closely scrutinized by the officials. It was the regime’s prerogative to decide which images, sounds and news to display, talk and report. The media content, of course, needed to favour the regime’s affair. In fact, if any of these communication channels showed any inauspicious “tactic” against the regime, the regime held an absolute right to retract their publishing licence (R William Liddle, 1999, p. 43). The perfect case to illustrate the regime’s relationship with Indonesia’s media and the power it held within the discourse is the banning of three major Indonesian news publications, namely *Editor*, *DeTIK* and *Tempo* in 1994. The banning cases were considered as a shocking quandary since *Tempo*, particularly, had been acknowledged to have a “special relation” with the regime. Media analyst even stated that the relationship between the magazines and the regime was like “a parcel or a packet” (Dhakidae, 2003, as cited in McCargo, 2003, p. 78).

Tempo former chief officer, Goenawan Muhamad, explained *Tempo* and the regime’s relationship as follows:

Our strategy was not to be close to the government, but not to be distant from it - for the sake of power, access to information, we had to be close . . . So you have to keep some distance from certain elements of the government, and keep some proximity to some elements (2003, as cited in McCargo, 2003 p. 79).

However, as the magazine became more critical of the regime’s activities, especially of Suharto as the president, the relationship between the two was heated. It was believed *Tempo*’s article on B.J.

7 STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

Habibie, Suharto's most favourite disciple, caused the discord to reach its climax (Human Rights Watch, 2295). The article itself presented a critical report on the regime's conflict at its back-stage arena, over "the purchase of 39 former East German warships" for which Habibie as the minister of Research and Technology was responsible (Neumann, 1998, par. 8). In short, the media in New Order era was strictly regulated, when the visibility of the regime is taken into account.

Eyeing Reformed Indonesia

As mentioned by Daniel Khakidae (2003, as cited in McCargo, 2003, p. 79), one of Indonesia's media analysts, the banning of *Tempo* in 1994 was considered "a form of suicide by the Suharto regime". Thus, it is considered as one initial force among many indispensable grounds behind the fall of this regime. Schwarz (1999, as cited in Wessel, 2005, p. 10) believed it was Suharto's "lack of vision" that triggered the fall. Likewise, Robinson and Hadiz (2004, p. 73) also reported that the society's dissatisfaction over Suharto and his family dominance in politic-economic fields across the country had served as ground behind the regime's collapse. Similarly, the regime's unfair share of development, which was mainly concentrated in Java and less distributed to other provinces, had also contributed in Suharto's resignation (Wessel, 2005, p. 10). However, it was believed that the high level of corruption in the country, which evoked national economic crisis, that held the main key to the regime's downfall (Ramage, 2007; Robison & Hadiz, 2004; Webber, 2006). In short, the regime finally reached its downfall due to some authoritarian dispositions.

Following that, the downfall 8 Suharto and his New Order regime in 1998 had brought changes to Indonesia. Reformation in Indonesia's political system and revitalization in its economy has been noted as a "near completion of [the state's] transition to democracy" since Soekarno's era (R. William Liddle, 2000, p. 32). However, some scholars doubted those conditions as genuine indications of the state's democratization. Wessel (2005, p. 12), for example, showed the fact that the presidential selection in 1999 was "more a horse trading than a democratic procedure". He verified this by illustrating how Megawati, whose party won the election, had to give up her future head of state position to Abdurrahman Wahid, an well-known statesman who unfortunately later on led the country with policies full of "contradiction, [and] manipulation" (p. 13). Although Megawati was finally able to take her "throne" back over Gus Dur (Wahid) less than 2 years after the election, the democratization in Indonesia was still not significantly progressing. Some of Megawati's policies, for example, were seen to reflect that the leader had similar principles to her predecessor, Suharto (Anwar & Crouc, 2003).

However, like other countries that 16 experienced the same condition, democratization in Indonesia does takes time. It was six years after the fall of Suharto's regime; Indonesia finally consolidated its 15 democratization by having the 2004 general elections which was the second governmental election since the downfall of the New Order regime. This election proved that democracy in Indonesia is not a "mission impossible" as suggested by Samuel Huntington, who stated that it took two elections to fully establish democratization in any authoritarian country (1991, p. 266). The elections had endorsed the society participation by implementing new election systems. Rather than having one phases in which the parliament's member vote for the future president, the 2004 electorate was performed in three rounds, entitling it as "the most fragmented [elections] in Indonesian history" (R. William Liddle & Mujani, 2005, p. 119). The first round was conducted to elect members of legislative bodies at local and national level, while the last two rounds were aimed to vote for the president.

In each phase, Indonesians actively participated. The General Election Commission (or *Komite Pemilihan Umum* - KPU) reported that more than 147 million people in 440 regencies across the country gave their vote during the elections (Komite Pemilihan Umum, 2004). In other words, the

STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

development of political system in Indonesia has encouraged the society to be actively involved in the state's performance, especially at its back-stage region such as political decision-making process. Likewise, the new election systems had also denoted the state's amendment in approaching its visibility. This condition was proved by the presence of Election Supervisory Committee (or *Panitia Pengawas Pemilu – Panwaslu*) as an attempt to show that the new government encouraged transparency in the state's affair. Panwaslu is the group of notable independent institutions, such as University Network for Free and Fair Election (UNFRELL) and Aliansi Pemantau Pemilu Independen (APPI), authorized by KPU to supervise the electorate. This is done by locating Panwaslu's representative in each electorate post to observe the election process and produce an independent report about it (International Development Law Organization, 2008). To sum it up, the development in Indonesia's political arena had stimulated changes in the state's relationship with society as well as its visibility.

The democratization period in Indonesia had also stimulated changes within the law enforcement institutions, especially the Indonesian National Police (INP). As briefly mentioned earlier, the armed forces received large amount of criticism due to its dual function under Suharto. For the INP itself, most of the criticisms were aimed at its administration, which was supposed to serve as the society's protector, not the regime's "praetorian guard" (Sukma & Prasetyono, 2003, p. 17). Moreover, the segregation of the INP into ABRI had also recorded a lot of rejection from the INP's internal elements (Said, 1987). For example, the segregation was noted as the main reason behind early retirement of the INP's first Police Chief, Soekanto (Jansen, 2008, p. 431). These conditions then forced the armed force to perform thoroughly external and internal reformation. One of the reformation efforts was to give back the INP's independence by separating the institution from the military forces. The INP was also given full authority in maintaining internal security of the country, and this time without having the military forces to interfere it (Lee, 2000).

Following that, the wave of democratic euphoria in Indonesia had also splashed the country's technology determinant as Indonesia's technology growth has always been coherence with its political development. In other words, the democratization period in Indonesia had provided more opportunities to the society to access information sources freely. One of those opportunities was the rise of the Internet. The internet came to Indonesia⁸ early 1990s, introduced by the "Habibie's kids" which consists of local and international experts under the office of Habibie, the minister of Research and Technology at that time (Hill & Sen, 2000, p. 195). Reported to be used "extensively by the urban middle-class opposition to get around¹⁴ the regime's censorship of broadcast media" (p.194), the Internet was argued by some scholars to play significant role in the downfall of New Order's regime (Basuki, 1998; Marcus, 1999). However, this argument was rejected by others, who pointed out the low percentage of internet users in that time, estimated to be not more than 1% from total population (Lim, 2003, p. 275). Internet usage started to increase as platforms to access the net was widely provided. The growing number of Internet Cafes (*Warung Internet – Warnet*) and later on cheap mobile phone equipped with large internet capacity were believed to pay major contribution to the trend (Wahid, Furuholt, & Kristiansen, 2006). Since then the number keeps on mounting, noted to reach 55 million users by the end of 2011 (Internet World Stats, 2012).

What kind of activities do 55 million Indonesians engage in when they are online? In his article, Citizens in @action, Nugroho (2011, p. 31) addressed that question³ by proposing social media websites engagement as the answer. His answer was supported by data from the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information that listed Facebook, YouTube and Twitter among top-10 most visited websites by Indonesians (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2010, p. 47). These three social media websites apparently have had Indonesians under their spell. Facebook, for example, has noted more than 78% users of the total online population across the country (Check Facebook,

STATE AND DIGITAL SOCIETY

³ 2011), This remarkable statistic of online participation had indicated that people in Indonesia have been diffused the power of new social media for various activities. Those activities including fund raising, such as Coins for Prita and Coins for Bilqis (Fauzi, 2010; Rusbianti, Pontoh, & Reiter, 2010) or engaging in the INP's affairs like creating twelve Facebook groups which named after General Susno Duadji, a Chief of Indonesian National Police, to support him in fighting the INP's corruption (Detik.com, 2010).

Another interest that Indonesians keenly do in their social media platform is sharing videos of their daily activity such as performing lip-synced songs. Surprisingly, this kind of activity had succeeded in generating an increasing phenomenon of instant celebrity in Indonesia. One remarkable example of social media celebrity is Shinta and Jojo and their video, "Poisonous Snail" or *Keong Racun* in Bahasa (StarkyJogya, 2010). Just like Justin Beiber who got his fame through YouTube channel, these two girls also enjoyed their minutes of fame once their video went viral through the same platform (Mahmud, 2010). The girls' fame developed amazingly once Indonesia's news media discovered them. Within less than one month, the girls successfully signed contracts with two well-known Indonesia telecommunication providers, to do the companies' commercial ads. In addition, several famous talk shows also offered their host position to Shinta and Jojo (Kurniawan, 2010). In short, new social media has capacity to turn ordinary people into stars.

¹³ The phenomenon of social media celebrity in Indonesia obviously does not stop here. The cases of Norman Kamaru, Bripka. Karno and Evan BRIMOB had pointed out that the phenomenon is still gathering momentum. In a glance what they did in social media are similar with what other Indonesians do when they online. However, having status as members of Indonesian National Police, those officers have stimulated interesting debates especially when the INP's visibility is taken into account. Following that, the cases have also presented challenges to the INP's performance and mechanism in managing their visibility in order to maintain its legitimacy and accountability. These issues then serve as an array of interesting topics to be further analysed in the next future.

Conclusion

Reflecting back on Indonesia's history, the New Order era and reformation era provided many great topics to enormous researches about the country. As the new order era was known as Suharto's regime of control in sustaining the absolute authority of his authority. As the country's president for almost 32 years Suharto's leadership style was associated a lot with his characteristics and backgrounds, especially his military experiences. It can be seen by most of his governmental policies which mostly involved aggregation with the Indonesian Armed Forces. Consequently, the government was enforced to integrate the military values to its once society-based organizational culture. In that period, public life were highly scrutinized by the armed forces as well. At another point, Indonesia's media were strictly regulated and closely controlled by the regime. The regime did not hesitate to "brendel" (ban) any media that tried to reveal the unfavourable dimension of the New Order regime, the best-known example being Tempo magazine.

These kind of practices lasted for more than three decades until the downfall of Suharto which enabled the country to transit from an authoritarian state to a democratic country. This democratic transition has changed almost every aspect in Indonesia, including power visibility, public life and media development. In terms of power, the reformation government upheld transparency as the country's new value, by initiating society's involvement in many important events such as general elections. In the meantime, media in Indonesia is experiencing a different condition. As the country's social and political development progressed so as its communication technology, in particular the emergence of new social media. Indonesia's society is progressively fused these web 2.0 applications into their daily activities which in turns has produced many instant social media celebrities.

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