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Popular Mandate and the Coming-of-Age of Social Media's Presence in Indonesia Politics Post-*Reformasi*

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ABSTRACT

The itinerant rise of the professionalised class of political pollsters, consultancies and statistic-analytical institutes in the Indonesian electoral scene has, in recent months, been accompanied by an analogous rise of a proto opinion-mining, sentiment-tracking industry in cyber-space, facilitated by an increasingly mediated environment. While newer forms of online media platforms have yet to replace traditional mass-media, the felt effects of individual aggrandisement and vicarious political marketing derived from these platforms proved to be very effective. This paper explores aspects of new media and its nascent influence upon Indonesian politics in the race to 2014. It examines how a more participatory post-*Reformasi* climate had joined forces with various aspects of new media, providing the electorate with greater leverage over their choice of candidates following the precipitous rise of populist media doyens like Joko Widodo. This paper concludes that aspects of new media are steadily gaining currency as a legitimate mainstream indicator of candidature electability even as voters' allegiance gradually shifts away from party to personality in Indonesia.

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Popular Mandate and the Coming-of-Age of Social Media's Presence in Indonesian Politics Post-*Reformasi*

The Marriage of Media and Politics

On 3 July 2013, after officially announcing his intentions in running for presidency for the upcoming 2014 general elections, emeritus general and party chairman of Hanura (People's Conscience Party) Wiranto, waxed lyrical of his running mate Hary Tanoesoedibjo: "I thank the Almighty for the chance to meet with this young figure, Hary Tanoe, as a comrade-in-arms who shares the same concerns as I do about the need to bring change to the country".[1] Seen unequivocally as godsend by a politically-anxious yet indefatigable Wiranto, Hary Tanoe's credentials as businessman and media mogul of Indonesia's biggest and most profitable conglomerate – the Media Nusantara Citra (MNC) group – is the latest patron-client pairing between powerful media oligarchs and ex-Suharto cronies.[2] Wiranto's personal endorsement of Hary Tanoe and his quintessential "military-speak", illustrating a case of ebullient *esprit de corps* over a "comrade-in-arms" partnership, came at a critical juncture of Hanura's lackadaisical performance in popularity ratings and Wiranto's own fears of retiring into political obsolescence.[3] Already at 66, this may be Wiranto's last shot at politics. Hary Tanoe's joint partnership hinted at a nascent revival of Wiranto's last-ditched attempt at politics and an increasingly marginalised Hanura. Time will tell whether the Wiranto-Hary Tanoe pair is the winning formula. Nonetheless, this episode is revelatory of the symbiotic relationship between power politics and social media at the elite level in a largely decentralised Indonesia.

On a separate spectrum, the same clarion call for change had much humble beginnings in a different media-related setting earlier in mid-2012. Entitled "Cameo Project", a team comprising of Jakartan film and photography enthusiasts recorded a self-made parody on the daily travails of Jakartan life. It was uploaded onto YouTube and immediately went viral, drawing viewership of over 2 million.[4] What stood out apart from its slick, semi-professional production and well-coordinated storyline comically depicting the unsavoury aspects of Jakartan life, is its unstinting support for the Jokowi-Ahok (short for Joko Widodo-Basuki Tjahaja Purnama) pair. "Cameo Project" claimed they were not campaigning on behalf of the running pair for Jakarta's governorship but merely expressing what Jakartans in

[1] See Yeremia Sukoyo, Markus Junianto Sihaloho & Carlos Paath in "Wiranto and Hary Announce Presidential Bid", *Jakarta Globe*. Retrieved 25/7/2013: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/wiranto-hary-announce-presidential-bid/. See also Sabrina Asril in "Hanura: Wiranto-Hary Tanoe untuk Pencitraan", *Kompass*. Retrieved 25/7/2013: http://nasional.kompas.com/read/2013/07/03/2128413/Hanura.Wiranto-Hary.Tanoe.untuk.Pencitraan.

[2] This paring took place at the helm of Hary Tanoesoedibjo resignation from the National Democratic Party (NasDem) earlier in January over a split with party founder Surya Paloh, also a media tycoon in his own right. See Bagja Hidayat and Wayan Agus Purnomo in "Nascent Nasdem", *Tempo*, January 28 – February 3, 2013 Indonesia's News Weekly, pp. 14-9. On the reasons behind joining Hanura see "Hary Tanoesoedibjo: To be part of change I must go into politics", *Tempo*, February 25 – March 3, 2013 Indonesia's News Weekly, pp. 54-7.

[3] A survey in February 2013 by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) shows Hanura yielding 1.4% of the votes. See http://www.saifulmujani.com/blog/2013/02/04/golkar-teratas-demokrat-dan-pks-terjun-bebas#.UnBn7PmnqaI accessed on 30 October 2013. Presidential candidates in Indonesia have to be nominated by a political party (or a combination of parties) that have won either 20% of the national vote or control 25% of the seats in the House of Representatives (DPR).

[4] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-zR65eXXPc&list=PL-0OeuyUVVI-RxEIuIAinQgb4P4h7ktPy. Retrieved 26/7/2013.

general feel about the changes that should be taking place in their beleaguered capital city.[5] Nevertheless, the group could be seen donning the pair's signature chequered shirt in the video, street-dancing, singing and rapping over the cover song of popular teenage band One Direction's "What Makes You Beautiful" – edited in Bahasa Indonesia and retrofitted to appeal to the young. This was followed by a similar barrage of other YouTube videos, Twitter accounts, forums and vblogs with their own brand of parody and support for change in the Jakartan metropolis. The Jokowi-Ahok pair eventually emerged victorious in the governor elections, beating incumbents Fauzi Bowo and Nachrowi Ramli by a margin of eight per cent. This was an unexpected win no doubt, given that the former were relatively new-comers and are considered "outsiders" to the Jakarta governor race.[6] Although their win spiralled out of the collective campaign machinery of political parties PDI-P (Indonesia Democratic Party – Struggle) and Gerindra (The Great Indonesia Movement Party) in support of their own candidates (Joko Widodo and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama respectively), traces of volunteerism and active citizenship-journalism can be seen triggering popular participation. The likes of "Cameo Project" are evident of a new surge of online populism and participatory politics proliferating on new media platforms, distinct from the mainstream. These grassroots-oriented initiatives, aimed at popularising a specific candidate of choice voluntarily via new social media outlets, is a relatively recent innovation and a growing trend observable in an Indonesia where simultaneous political campaigning for various direct elections has been the order of the day.[7] The democratising properties of the internet had allowed a new breed of volunteer campaigners with relatively less resources to bring their message across to a large audience at little expense. The video from "Cameo Project" especially, was slick and seemed to be done up semi-professionally. Driven by frustration while coupled with a freer and more liberal press ethos in post-*Reformasi* Indonesia, "online campaigning" and "awareness movements" looks set to be the latest new-fangled instalment that could potentially unhinge electoral trends and patterns in the real world, weakening the hold mainstream outlets traditionally has on the electorate.[8]

The political union of Wiranto and Hary Tanoe stands both in accordance and contrast to the relatively understated YouTube upload by the sobriquet known as "Cameo Project". The former is a visceral display of the clientelistic marriage of media to politics at the highest level; the latter is a demonstration of the media's accessibility and its pairing to populist sentiment among the *rakyat* and *wong cilik* [common masses]. As far as their similarities take them, both allude to the strategic importance of the media in disseminating their political agendas. One, however, cannot help but notice the distinct contrasts between the extravagant demonstration of political elitism on one hand and a much more conservative, ground-level collaboration on the other. This inevitably led to the

[5] Jakarta suffers from perennial flash-floods, over-crowding, traffic congestion, bad air quality, poor sanitation and access to clean water (particularly in the slum areas). See Bruce Gale in "Huge Problems in Greater Jakarta" in *The Straits Times*, published 29/6/2012. See also Manifesto#saveJakarta http://www.savejkt.org/manifestosavejkt.pdf. Retrieved 31/7/2103.

[6] See Leonard C. Sebastian and Yoes C. Kenawas in "Jakarta Governor's Election: Implications for 2014", RSIS Commentaries, No. 180/2012 dated 27 September 2012.

[7] See Dirk Tomsa and Andreas Ufen in "Introduction: Party Politics and Clientelism in Southeast Asia", *Party Politics in Southeast Asia: Clientelism and Electoral Competition in Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines* (Edited Dirk Tomsa and Andreas Ufen: 2013) in Routledge Contemporary Southeast Asia Series, pp.1-2.

[8] Press freedom and openness in contemporary Indonesia has its foundations that were enacted by Press Law No. 40/1999 (UU Pers 40/1999) following *Reformasi*. This led to the shift from public to private broadcast and the emergence of new private television series (such as Metro TV, Global TV, Trans TV).

question: Is the new social media in Indonesia a truly "democratising" tool, acting as an ersatz political voice for the masses in Indonesia? Where the utilisation of social media in the past has largely conformed to collaborations and collusions exclusively at the elite level, the embrace of new media the likes of Facebook, YouTube and especially Twitter in recent years has changed the electoral landscape somewhat, empowering the masses with a political voice of their own. What does this entail for an Indonesia going into general elections for the fourth consecutive time since *Reformasi*? Will the widespread usage of new media platforms and other unconventional means prove disruptive rather than complementary to the mainstream? How is it inter-linked with current electoral trends in contemporary post-*Reformasi* Indonesia that speak of the *golongan putih* group [non-participation in the political process that eventually culminate in voter-absenteeism], the steady decline of party identification or the rise of the professionalisation and commercialisation of the electoral campaign?[9]
Given Indonesia's recent electoral climate in which the personality is often conflated over the party, this paper argues that the dawn of new social media avenues has been increasingly utilised and are specifically suited as a preferential and strategic medium for the explicit promotion of individuals rather than parties within Indonesia due to new social media's instantaneous, personalised nature and the gradual erosion of party identification (party ID) within the populace. In other words, these new media tools are utilised more frequently and increasingly as a personal vote mobilisation tool. These changes are characteristically in line with the increasing strategic importance placed on watershed changes within the Indonesian electoral landscape in recent years including open lists proportional representation and direct elections at the legislative and presidential level.[10]

Such an outcry for a new personalism as projected by the new social media is context-specific and in recent years tending towards exasperation for change and reform that is detached explicitly from the stigmas surrounding populism and above its usual plethora of presidential incumbents, business oligarchs and old demagogues. Characteristic clientelism and money politics as popularised by researchers in the field (Tomsa 2010, Ufen 2008, Aspinall 2013) and seen as the scourge of progressive politics still exists in the politico-landscape, but its appeal as the conventional means by which politics is and should be conducted seemed to be waning. On the other hand, such high-handed approach has been incurring votes of unpopularity from the public.[11] Instead of the reigning clientelism weighing over all aspects of politics, this paper hypothesised of an opposing phenomenon: that the new media's effectiveness and reception towards the general electorate are symptomatic of public sentiment over the dominant state of affairs. In recent months, such public outcry can be gleaned quite effectively from their tacit endorsement and promotion of a particular figure via new

[9] By definition, *golongan putih* refers to the proportion of the Indonesian electorate that are disinterested and unwilling to be involved in the electoral process. According to Keith Faulks, professor in citizenship theory and political sociology, the levels of "White Group" in any election indicates a lack of interest towards involvement in conventional politics. See Keith Faulks, Sosiologi Politik (Bandung: Nusamedia, 2010), pp. 237-241. According to LP3ES Quick Count, the level of participation in the 2009 election was 72%, meaning that the remaining 28% of eligible voters did not participate in the electoral process, a significant increase from 15% in the 2004 elections.
[10] These changes were in the footsteps of watershed constitutional reforms made during the 2001 and 2004 People's Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat) session. See Harold Crouch, *Political Reform in Indonesia After Soeharto* (Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing: 2010) pp. 52-62.
[11] See Dirk Tomsa "The Indonesian Party System after the 2009 Elections: Towards Stability?" in Edward Aspinall and Macus Mietzner (eds), *The Return to Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2010) pp. 141-159; Andreas Ufen "Political Party and Party System Institutionalization in Southeast Asia: Lessons for Democratic Consolidation in Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand", Pacific Review 2008, 21(3): 327-350.

media – one that is seen to be absolved of any dealings pertaining to aspects of Indonesian clientelism.[12] In other words, a new kind of populism increasingly bereft of any form of external party loyalty but instead inclining towards the loyalty of the peoples' needs is seen to be driving aspects of the new media and its attendant hype. This has in several cases spilled over onto the mainstream – the main arbiter of political opinion. Nonetheless, such personalism should be seen within the ken of the party system in Indonesia.

This paper seeks to give a breakdown on the phenomenon of the rousing appeal of single, charismatic figures in the Indonesian and international limelight such as the "SBY phenomenon" in 2004 and the recent "Jokowi effect" in conjunction to the rising ubiquity and coming-of-age of new media's role in politics.[13] While it is evidenced that such forms of personalism existed even before the advent of the new media trailing Indonesia's transition into a middling democracy, it has been gaining ground given the eroding attachment to parties and the appearance of popularised-forms of new media. As Indonesia ventures into its fourth election post-*Reformasi*, premiums are increasingly placed on personalistic appeals rather than on a strong adherence to party ideology as it used to. The compounded effect of new social media in facilitating such rapid association with the individual was indeed much less of a revolution than a fragmented movement by parts of the media-savvy Indonesian populace – one that fitted in with a presidentialist turn in Indonesian politics since 2004. This, and in recent years the increasing public lamentations dealing with the state of political stagnancy and dynastism at the higher echelons of politics, have led to a vociferous outpour clamouring for change on one hand vis-à-vis the outlet of new media, and an endemic passivism and disinterest towards popular political participation on the other. This paper concludes with a new desideratum being preached specifically via the auspices of the new media.

The Rise of Post-*Reformasi* Presidentialism: Dominance of Style over Substance

Political parties in contemporary Indonesia are at a juncture whereby ideology is often compromised for pragmatism and convenience. Several scholars have argued on the demise of party identification and the rise of a new electoral professionalism in Indonesia in recent years.[14] This can be seen quite

[12] Other traditional Indonesian values deemed indispensable to the electorate also carry weight: being personable, humble, down-to-earth and distinctly *Indonesian* (or perhaps more specifically Javanese or Java-centric).

[13] Here, new social media is defined as social communication platforms related to the promulgation of unified communications or the integration of real-time communications such as instant messaging, presence information, telephony, etc. and non-real-time communications such as unified messaging. It is also generally referred as Information and Communications Technology or ICT. More recent permutations include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, etc.

[14] For the demise of party identification in Indonesia see Dan Slater, "Indonesia's Accountability Trap: Party Cartels and Presidential Power after Democratic Transition," *Indonesia*, 78, October 2004; Andreas Ufen, "From Aliran to Dealignment: Political Parties in Post-Suharto Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 16, no. 1, March 2008, pp. 5-41; Edward Aspinall, "Elections and the Normalization of Politics in Indonesia", *South East Asia Research*, vol. 13, no. 2, July 2005, pp.117-156. For the rise of a new electoral professionalism in Indonesia see Marcus Mietzner, "Political Opinion Polling in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: Catalyst or Obstacle to Democratic Consolidation?", Bijdragen tot the Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde, 2009, 165 (2): 95-126; Muhammad Qodari, "The Professionalization of Politics: The Growing Role of Polling Organizations and Political Consultants", in E. Aspinall and M. Mietzner (eds), Problems of Democratization in Indonesia: Elections, Institutions and Society, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 122-140; Andrea Ufen, "Electoral Campaigning in Indonesia: The Professionalization and Commercialization after 1998", *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs 4*, pp. 11-37.

evidently in the current electoral landscape of Indonesia where there is an effusion of presidentialised parties, pollsters, political advertising agencies and professionalised consultants, all catering to the explicit aggrandisement of the individual. This largely liberalised and increasingly commercialised state of affairs within the Indonesian political space appeared to be a relatively rapid development following the fall of Suharto's New Order regime in the short span of a decade. Where political parties and their activities were once repressed under Sukarno's call to "bury the parties" and Suharto's conception of a "floating mass" [*massa mengambang*] – both idealising the virtues of a demobilised and depoliticised population – parties are now free to openly campaign and politicise. Traditional *aliran* strongholds and ties are less restrained, including a significant appearance but weak performance among disunited Islamic parties. Election trends post-*Reformasi* paint a picture of increasing alternatives, variation and voter-selectivity. Political parties have wised up to the evolving political scene and are becoming strategic to the needs and accountability of both its electorate and the on-going adaptations of an amended constitution.[15] If the 1999 elections set foundations for an interim constitutional democracy for which new political rules were to apply thereof, the 2004 elections were clearly the early manifestation of what appears to be a new political order at its earliest formation – the onset of a new non-*aliran* Islamic party and, in particular, a presidentialised one at the behest of changes to electoral rules.[16] The 2009 elections then saw the further reification and consolidation of the political state of affairs with fragmentation of the political pie further split along new lines following the induction of minor parties: an indication of a new age of ascendant political personalism of the likes of Wiranto's Hanura Party [*Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat*], Surya Paloh's NasDem Party [*Partai Nasional Demokrat*] and Prabowo's Gerindra Party [*Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya*] into the fray. The transition, within a span of a decade and a half, from a mere 3 reigning political parties during the Suharto-era to an expansion of 34 competing ones in the 2009 general elections was nothing short of speculator in the scale of democratic reformism in the Indonesian electorate.[17]

The emergence of presidentialised party vehicles following PD's appearance was nonetheless the first visceral signs of a detachment from trenchant ideology and a shift away from party symbolism to an intentional, almost explicit focus on the individual. This came at a significant juncture during the 2004 general elections when electoral rules were more indulgent of democratisation over consolidation, where the powers of executive domineering by the presidency were made more salient. Such party vehicles were of course, a rather temporal and opportunistic attempt directed at capturing the voting bank in the shortest possible time. Nonetheless, it was also one that adapted and was partly made possible by the changing exigencies of the Indonesian electoral process, especially with

[15] This includes the direct election of the team of president and vice president, running as a team rather than individually. The running candidates need not be members of a political party. These teams would then be nominated by political parties or coalitions of political parties. Most importantly, the new amendments required the winning pair to win not only more than 50 per cent of the national votes but also at least 20 per cent of the votes in more than half the provinces. See Harold Crouch, ibid pp. 57.

[16] The 2004 elections saw the emergence for the first time of a non-*aliran* Islamic party the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS: *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera*) and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's or SBY's Democrat Party (PD: *Partai Democrat*), in which Yudhoyono the man is synonymous with PD the party.

[17] There are fluctuations in the number of political parties throughout the *Reformasi* era nonetheless. However, the trend is seen to be decreasing and towards the trimming and consolidation of political parties to within a scale of 15-20 as stiffer thresholds were applied. The 1999 general elections saw an unprecedented 48 eligible parties, followed by 24 in 2004 and 34 in 2009. The upcoming 2014 elections will see 15 eligible parties competing. See also RSIS Commentaries No. 162 "Indonesia's Democratic Evolution: Political Engineering Post-*Reformasi*" by Jonathan Chen and Adhi Priamarizki.

the advent of direct elections at all levels [*Pilkada* and *Pilpres*].[18] The prospect for direct elections were first championed and subsequently lobbied by the working team in the National Resilience Institute [*Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional* or *Lemhannas* for short] as a tacit means to counter vote-buying among parliamentarians. It was consequently put into law in November 2001 by the Indonesian House of Representatives (or DPR: *Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat*). The full effect of direct elections and the introduction of new party vehicles were to be felt in the 2004 elections when for the first time, what seemed like the forbearer of a proto-presidentialised party, Yudhoyono's Democrat Party (or PD: *Partai Demokrat*), stormed into the political scene commanding 7.4 per cent of the total valid votes and clinching 57 seats in the legislative elections. It was an unexpected triumph for the party. More astounding was the popular appeal of Yudhoyono himself. In the second round of presidential elections conducted on 20 September 2004, Yudhoyono soundly defeated Megawati to become the sixth president of Indonesia. Yudhoyono's win at the polls both at the legislative and presidential elections was seen by many as a personal triumph and achievement rather than an outcome that was contingent upon the party machinery of the newly-minted PD. Significantly, Yudhoyono's triumph was representative of the emergence of a new era of personalism-led populist politics in a largely democratised electoral landscape. This was followed in the footsteps in subsequent elections by other similar presidentialised outfits.

Short of a firm basis for its own institutionalisation, these newly-minted presidentialised party vehicles often functioned as extensions of the respective party leader at the helm. They did so by primarily exporting and capitalising on the brand-name and persona of its leaders (SBY, Wiranto, Prabowo and Surya Paloh) over espousing the vague and often generalised ideals/ideologues of their party. Their strategy was aimed at getting a reasonable slice of the voting pie with emphasis channelled through the distinct magnetism of the individual rather than the party as a whole. Motives are usually straightforward and clear: the individual is the centrepiece and clinching the presidency is the overarching objective. Talk of who is president often precedes everything else and presidentialism has come to dominate post-*Reformasi* politics in more ways than one.[19] The climate of presidential elections indisputably encourages a strong propensity towards voting-seeking behaviours among parties. Thus it is not a surprise that party pedestalisation of the individual has been increasingly prioritised over general party institutionalisation. Consequently, the inability of traditional, *aliran*-based political parties to capture at least 20 per cent of the legislative votes after 1999 gave these minor parties a considerable bargaining power.[20] Smaller parties are in alliance with majority parties, and their collaboration is essential if they were to form a government. Take for instance Gerindra and

[18] In particular, the 2004 general elections in Indonesia was a watershed in the aspect of the phenomenon commonly referred to by the political scientist Linz as "dual democratic legitimacy" (a political situation in which both the president and the parliament are directly elected by the people). The virtue of an Indonesian-based presidentialism was steadily being promulgated. See Priyambudi Sulistiyanto "The 2004 General Elections and the Virtues of Indonesian Presidentialism" in *Kasarinlan: Philippine Journal of Third World Studies 2004*, 19(2), pp. 4-24.

[19] For a more general context of presidentialism and its effects on societies, see David J Samuels "Presidentialized Parties: The Separation of Powers and Party Organization and Behavior" in *Comparative Political Studies* May 2002, vol. 35, no. 4, pp. 461-483.

[20] The presidential threshold increased to 25 per cent of the total legislative votes in the 2009 general elections from 20 per cent. Bigger and more entrenched parties have the option of partially accommodating to their smaller counterparts over a political deal in order to qualify for the subsequent round of the presidential elections after legislative elections had taken place. The 5 per cent increment would mean that smaller parties now carry a greater bargaining voice in the qualifying process.

Hanura. Both were birthed out of the factious splinter within Golkar during its 2004 and 2009 National Congress. Gerindra or the Great Indonesia Movement Party, led by Prabowo, was set up hurriedly in February 2009 (only seven months after Prabowo resigned from Golkar) and stood for legislative elections held in April 2009, barely two months since its official establishment. Hanura was the brainchild of former military commander Wiranto, who vowed to establish his own political vehicle after being ousted as presidential candidate running under the Golkar ticket. Set up in 2006, Wiranto gathered his own supporters within Golkar and ran for the 2009 elections. Both parties have met the baseline parliamentary threshold for the 2009 elections with Gerindra clinching 4.46 per cent and Hanura 3.77 per cent of the votes. Gerindra and Hanura have been in tandem with PDI-P as the opposition in parliament since the 2009 elections. The NasDem Party, a relative latecomer to the presidential race, started off from a civil organisation known eponymously as the National Democrat Organisation. It is the newest political party in the footsteps of Gerindra and Hanura that has yet to be politically tested. It features the face of Surya Paloh and has the tacit backing of his media empire following his split from Golkar.[21]

These parties share a few commonalities in their dispositions. For one, a strong media bent is present in their strategic pairings with powerful media oligarchs and businessmen. These parties also naturally position themselves as "catch-all" nationalist outfits. They are, however poorly institutionalised, remained under 5 per cent of the national vote and usually play a subordinate role in a coalition.[22] Nonetheless, one of them is seen gaining valuable political ground and may surpass the 5 per cent threshold. A recent popularity poll showed a high preference for Gerindra under the controversial Prabowo especially among the young at 16.5 per cent (for those below 21 years of age) and 11.8 per cent (for those between the ages of 21 to 30).[23]

The tides are changing, as can be seen in a wider acceptance of these party vehicles over entrenched parties that have long enjoyed a history and an affinity to earlier *aliran* roots, even though their slice of the electorate remains small. These party vehicles tend to capitalise on the distinct personalisation of their campaigns, especially after Susilo Bambang Yudhoyuno's Democrat Party's (PD) rousing campaign in clinching majority votes as the largest party in the 2009 general elections.[24] Aided and abetted by the nascent emergence of pollsters and professionalised consultants gaining predominance in the political scene, political parties have been readily influenced in the process. Dubbed the "makers and breakers of political campaign", pollsters and consultants have steadily become indispensable actors (for parties who could afford their services) in the competitive and

[21] Surya Paloh owns Media Group on MetroTV and *Media Indonesia* daily newspaper. According to Media Partners Asia (MPA), Media Group has about 3% of audience viewership in 2011. For Surya Paloh's split with the Golkar Party see Markus Junianto Sihaloho in "What's Next for Surya Paloh after Split with Golkar?" *Jakarta Globe*, September 8, 2011.

[22] This is with the exception of the NasDem Party that will be taking part in the 2014 elections.

[23] See Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) for April 2013, MoHA and National General Election Commission (KPU) for 2013.

[24] See Jun Honna "Inside the Democrat Party: power, politics, conflict in Indonesia's Presidential Party," South East Asia Research 20, 4, pp. 473 – 489. It was asserted that many PD politicians were newcomers to the political scene and were all beneficiaries of the "Yudhoyono phenomenon" in the 2004 elections. Capturing 57 seats in 2004, PD went on capture 148 seats in 2009. The presidential election of 2009 ended in a landslide victory of Yudhoyono at 60.8 per cent of the votes in the first round.

varied electoral landscape.[25] This trend has in turn, quite inadvertently, given rise to the facilitation of political marketing and a distinct emphasis on stylistic personalism – the marks of a commercialised and populist phenomenon and an explicit market-oriented shift concerning political campaign in Indonesia. [26]

Consequently, the effect of democratic transition and its attendant decentralisation processes within the political sphere since *Reformasi* had led to younger parties competing on the grounds of stylistic differences over personality while older parties, with a greater depth of party institutionalisation as its trump card, stuck to its familiar retinue of dynastic juggernauts. In substance, these reigning parties within the legislature won their seats by way of what is termed commonly as "pragmatism" – that is, having the general characteristics of being catch-all, *Pancasila*-centric, religiously conservative and ideologically malleable even though differences owing to the path dependencies of more established, older parties are present.[27] In style however, variations abound. Prabowo of Gerindra may not be able to extricate himself from his controversial past, nonetheless he had been perceived as decisive, having a "strong leadership style".[28] Prabowo enjoys a large following among the rural and uneducated, and his style has been described to be similar to that of Thailand's infamous ex-leader Thaksin Shinawatra. Slowly but surely, part of Prabowo's strategy has been a consistent rebranding effort of setting himself up as a self-styled diplomat and evading his chequered history as a soldier. Wiranto, as former Commander of the Indonesian armed forces (or ABRI: *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*), earned his badge as a guardian in the early days of *Reformasi* especially during the tumultuous Habibie years, but was not as successful within the political sphere. Surya Paloh, despite ruffling some feathers in his past associations with Golkar, has been known as a tenacious

[25] Marcus Mietzer in "Political Opinion Polling in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia: Catalyst or Obstacle to Democratic Consolidation?" in *Bijdragen tot the Tall-, Land, en Volkenkunde*, 2009, pp. 107.

[26] This is undoubtedly, an increasingly common trend in the political landscape of Southeast Asia especially in reference to Thailand and the Philippines. See Duncan McCargo and Ukrist Pathmanand, *The Thaksinasation of Thailand* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2006).

[27] In particular, PKS (or the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, The Prosperous Justice Party) has come to terms with its Islamist orientation and becoming more accepting of non-Muslims in their midst, careful not to rouse the ire of Indonesian voters by adopting a national and democratic rhetoric in their campaigns. See Noorhaidi Hasan, RSIS Working Paper No. 184, Islamist Party, "Electoral Politics and Da'wa Mobilization among Youth: The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in Indonesia". While PDI-P (or the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, The Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle) had long relied on its Sukarnoist roots and Marhaenism ideals to garner its voting base, voter loyalty had declined considerably from the first elections held in 1999. On path dependencies, established parties PDI-P and Golkar were unique in these aspects due to their respective histories. PDI-P had roots in the Sukarnoist-led PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia) and is heavily infused with Sukarnoist and socialist ideals the like of *Marhaenism*. Golkar was creation of the New Order, a party that started out with the explicit backing and support of Suharto as a non-ideological electoral machine. Both are well-established and institutionalized.

[28] See The Jakarta Post in "Survey shows Prabowo's growing popularity among voters" in *Jakarta Post* (Thursday, August 09, 2012), pp. 4. In a recent public relations effort to boost his image and distance himself from previous human-rights violations held against him further, Prabowo has been seen reinventing himself as a human rights defender. He visited an Indonesian maid on Malaysia's death row accused of murdering her employer seeking clemency for her death penalty. Prabowo has also demonstrated his decisiveness time and again on pertinent issues including aspects of Indonesia's economy, juxtaposed against a hesitating SBY. See Lauren Gumbs in "Indonesia's Prabowo Turns Ambassador" in *Asia Sentinel* (Thursday, 26 September 2013). Retrieved 27/9/2013: http://www.asiasentinel.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5734&Itemid=175. See also Rebecca Lake in "A Man at Peace, Prabowo Makes His Case on Economy, Jokowi" in *Jakarta Globe* (Thursday, 26 September 2013). Retrieved 9/10/2013: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/news/a-man-at-peace-prabowo-makes-his-case-on-economy-jokowi/?utm_source=ISEAS+Library+Selects%3A+Daily+News+on+the+Southeast+Asian+Region+-+27+Sep+2013&utm_campaign=Info+Alert+20130927&utm_medium=email.

and fiery media mogul.[29] Their inherent personalities often hinges over the fate of the party more than the party itself. While Yudhoyono has been seen by his detractors as "hesitant, too gentle and indecisive", Prabowo, among the other presidential contenders, has benefitted by being quite opposite in demeanour and style.[30] His party and he himself, as a result, are seen as strong contenders for the 2014 elections. Notwithstanding, this is perhaps indicative of why personalities at the political helm with the right image and mould are able to rise above negative public perception of political parties in general given time, in spite of politically fallen individuals that may have tarnished the party's name.[31] Such rousing personalism however has come at the cost of a greater degree of vote absenteeism.

While vote absenteeism has been a common feature of established and democratising nations, it has been particularly worrisome in Indonesia given its huge rise in percentages after rousing voter participation in 1999. Voter unpopularity among parties in recent elections can be observed in the rising incidence of political apathy and voter abstention (or what is known as *Golongan Putih* or *Golput* for short in Indonesia) with particularly high numbers in the most recent 2009 general elections. **Table 1** shows the growing trend of *golput* figures during and after the New Order.

[29] See Pitan Daslani in "Surya Paloh Losing Perspective: Analysts" in Jakarta Globe (January 30, 2013). Retrieved 6/9/2013: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/archive/surya-paloh-losing-perspective-analysts/.

[30] On SBY's perceived leadership style see Taufik Darusman in "Taufik Darusman: Matter of SBY's Style", *Jakarta Globe* (November 29, 2009). Retrieved 6/9/2013: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/archive/taufik-darusman-matter-of-sbys-style/. Recently, SBY has also been criticized for his "inconsistency' and indecisiveness of not requesting his ministers to step down and resign from their ministerial roles even as they participate in the inaugural Democrat presidential convention. See Ina Parlina in "Palace quiet over ministers' presidential bid", Jakarta Globe (September 22, 2013). Retrieved 27/9/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/09/22/palace-quiet-over-ministers-presidentialbid.html?utm_source=ISEAS+Library+Selects%3A+Daily+News+on+the+Southeast+Asian+Region+-+23+Sep+2013&utm_campaign=Info+Alert+20130923&utm_medium=email.

[31] Not many parties in Indonesia can escaped unscathed from accusations of corruption. In 2013, two prominent parties PD (Partai Democrat or The Democratic Party) and PKS had been investigated by charges of graft. See Tempo, February 11- 17 (2013), May 20-26 (2013) and June 17-23 (2013).

Table 1: Voter Participation Rate and *Golput* percentages for General Elections in Indonesia for the years 1955-2009[32]

No.	General Elections	No. of Political Parties	Voter Participation Rate (%)	Golput (%)
1.	1955	118	91.4	8.6
2.	1971	10	96.6	3.4
3.	1977	3	96.5	3.5
4.	1982	3	96.5	3.5
5.	1987	3	96.4	4.9
6.	1992	3	95.1	6.4
7.	1997	3	93.6	7.3
8.	1999*	48	92	8
9.	2004*	24	84	16
10.	Pilpres I**	24	78.5	21.5
11.	Pilpres II**	24	76.7	23.3
12.	2009*	34	72	28
13.	Pilpres I***	34	72	28

From the table above, it seems that the abrupt increase of political parties post-1998 did not correspond well with a sustained voter participation rate. On the contrary, since legislative elections were held in 2004, Indonesia had been running a double-digit increment in its *golput* levels. With at least 144 positions and elections scheduled for governor, *bupati* (district chief) and mayor in the year of 2013 alone, there has been a fair amount of confusion and perhaps a sense of election *ennui*.[33] Indonesia may have overplayed its hand in this aspect with *Golput* figures being especially high even as Indonesia embarks on a democratisation mission. There are a myriad of reasons why this may be so, ranging from administrative incompetence to voter suppression and simple apathy.[34] More importantly, it is glaring of the state of affairs concerning democratic politics post-*Reformasi*. With presidentialism established as a *de facto* political norm within the orbit of an increasingly clientelist-led voting system and parliamentary structure, faces and personalities, rather than parties, dominate the executive level of political interest among the electorate. Coupled with endemic dynastism and oft-mentioned predatory nepotism infiltrating the gamut of local-based *bupati* and governor elections, the

[32] Bismar Arianto, "Analisis Penyebab Masyarakat Tidak Memilih Dalam Pemilu [An Analysis on the Cause of Non-Voting Behavior]" *Jurnal Ilmu Politik dan Pemerintahan* 1, No. 11, 2011 p. 52.
*See "Mendagri: Partisipasi Pemilu Terus Melorot [Election Participation is declining] *Tempo.co* 26 August 2013. Retrieved from http://www.tempo.co/read/news/2013/08/26/078507415/Mendagri-Partisipasi-Pemilu-Terus-Melorot accessed 5 November 2013, 5:16 PM,
**See "Fenomena Golput, Ketidakpercayaan Pada Partai Politik dan Figur Kandidat, [Golput Phenomenon, Distrust to Political Parties and Candidates]" *Universitas Gadjah Mada*. Retrieved from http://www.ugm.ac.id/en/berita/361-fenomena.golput.ketidakpercayaan.pada.partai.politik.dan.figur.kandidat accessed on 5 November 2013 5:36 PM.
***See "LP3ES: Angka Golput Pilpres 2009 Mencapai 28% [LP3ES: Golput in 2009 Presidential Elections had reached 2%]" *Okezone.com* 8 July 2009. Retrieved from http://pemilu.okezone.com/read/2009/07/08/268/236970/lp3es-angka-golput-pilpres-2009-mencapai-28 accessed on 5 November 2013, 5:32 PM.
[33] See Article 56 of Law 32/2004. Under this new law, independent candidates (non-partisan) can run in local elections. Local elections will involve all 33 provinces, 398 districts and 93 municipalities within Indonesia (ADEKSI 2011).
[34] See Andrew Thornley "Golput's Proud Tradition of Bucking the System Needs a Modern Twist" in *The Jakarta Globe*, 25 April 2013. Retrieved 22/10/2013: http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/opinion/golputs-proud-tradition-of-bucking-the-system-needs-a-modern-twist/.

Indonesian public have been loath to vote.[35] In a survey on contemporary Indonesian youth done by the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in partnership with the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (LP3ES), results show that Indonesian youth view the current political party configuration as untenable. Results show that although the youth accept Indonesia's current multi-party political system, they rather prefer it trimmed to a maximum of 10 participating parties.[36] Additionally, in a telling statistic, over 58.7 per cent of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the performance of the legislature.[37]

Traces of presidentialism not only manifest itself in president-oriented parties but have recently seen to arise within traditional party lines over particular promising individuals, even though they are not leaders of their parties, as in the case of PDI-P's Jokowi. A furniture trader by profession, Jokowi's humble roots did not deter him from garnering public fame as mayor of Solo and governor of Jakarta. He was then subsequently placed under the glare and suggestion of a presidential hopeful, fanned by the media. The emergence of the enigmatic figure of Jokowi, a non-affiliated, action-oriented, incorruptible, down-to-earth champion of the *wong cilik* and darling of the media may yet signal a twist in the current climate of presidentialism – one that is increasingly being claimed by the electorate themselves rather than party- or self-appointed figures.

Quantifying Candidate Electability in New Media

Where do new media feature in this aspect? New media in Indonesia certainly loomed larger than life in the archipelago, with Indonesians outflanking others in their unprecedented embrace of new social media platforms the likes of Facebook and Twitter. In the wake of the astounding success of Facebook, Indonesia emerged as its fourth largest clientele after India, Brazil and the United States in 2012. Indonesia is also the world's fifth largest consumer of Twitter.[38] That is, despite Indonesia's internet penetration within the region ranging at 21 per cent.[39] Correspondingly, 70.05 per cent of internet accessibility is concentrated within the islands of Java and Bali (in terms of ownership and access per household respectively).[40] Social media enjoyed a phenomenal upsurge throughout the world, but more so in Indonesia. Twitter in particular has been singled out as the most distinguishable social media/texting platform among Indonesians with a Comscore report crowning Indonesia

[35] Decentralized port-*Reformasi* Indonesia has seen a proliferation of political dynasties at the regional and district level. Some of the families include the Tubagus Chasan Sochib family (Banten Province), the Narang family (Central Kalimantan Province) and the Yasin Limpo family (South Sulawesi Province). See Yoes Chandra Kenawas, "The Rise of Political Dynasties in Decentralized Indonesia", dissertation submitted at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies for the year 2012/2013.

[36] See RSIS/LP3ES Survey on Generation "Y" and Indonesia's Future Outlook (2010), pp. 29. Among those survived, 49.9% expressed their preferences for a participation rate of 1-5 parties while 25.9% for 6-10 parties.

[37] See RSIS/LP3ES, ibid pp. 37.

[38] See Socialbakers, Indonesia Facebook statistics. Retrieved 23 October 2013: www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/indonesia. Facebook and Twitter users in Indonesia are listed at 43 million and 19.5 million users respectively.

[39] See The Nielson Company, "The Digital Media Habits and Attitudes of Southeast Asian Nations" (October 2011) in the *Nielson Southeast Asia Digital Consumer Report 2011*.

[40] See Yanuar Nugroho and Sofie Shinta Syarief, "Beyond Click-Activism? New Media and Political Processes in Contemporary Indonesia" in *fesmedia Asia* 2012, pp. 50.

eponymously as a "Twitter Nation".[41] Not wanting to lose out on the Twitter bandwagon, Jakarta has also recently enjoyed the twin acclaim of being the world's number one "Twitter city" for number of tweets sent. Being very community-minded and close-knitted, data from *saling-silang.com* (2011) have correlated Indonesian twitter users with the unenviable tendency of transferring that same loquacious spirit across channels via Twitter, sharing almost every aspect of life from football to gossip.[42] Mobile access to social media is particularly dominant, with approximately 87 per cent of tweets sent over mobile phones. This is hardly surprising considering almost 84 per cent of Indonesians owned at least one mobile phone.[43] It is also understood in a separate survey that Twitter is a key driver of social TV interaction or TV-related content in general, an important but often overlooked aspect.[44]

It certainly looks as if the alleged dominance of the new media has a distinct advantage shaping Indonesian society and politics in more ways than one, given the effectively liberal and open environment post-*Reformasi*. Nonetheless, effects of the much anticipated preponderance of new media over traditional ones within a highly participatory Indonesian political landscape went shallower than expected. Many have waxed lyrical about online activism as a tool for social activism in Indonesia, and the result have been routinely ambivalent (Nugroho 2011, Sutardi 2011, Lim 2013). Indonesia neither conformed to the mould of *slacktivism* (lazy activism) as espoused by critics of internet-centricity (see, for example, Morozov 2009; Shulman 2009; Gladwell 2010), nor allowed for the internet-related media to differentiate itself prominently as a noticeable "fifth estate in democracy" (Enda Nasution cited in Lutfia 2010). Of course, the internet can be seen ideally as a democratising tool for the masses, yet it has also been readily appropriated by politicians of varying hues for their own interest. It is also understood that certain issues are well-received than others depending on the context.[45] Merlyna Lim in particular captured quite succinctly the tendency of social media activism within Indonesia of possessing the characteristics termed "*fast*, *thin* and *many*", that more often than not led to cases of *many clicks* but *little sticks*.[46] However, despite the hype over new media's potential for activism, such idealism has blinded many to a more relevant aspect: how the new social media presents itself as a personalisation tool and measurement index for political campaign and mobilisation in a presidentialised climate. In Indonesia, new media and its populist strands stand out not merely because of its revolutionary nature in furthering democratisation but for its other inherent qualities – favouring the crowd and destabilising aspects of elite politics.

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[41] See Comscore report, June 2010. Retrieved 23 October 2013: www.comscore.com/Insights/Press_Releases/2010/8/Indonesia_Brazil_and_Venezuela_Lead_Global_Surge_in_Twitter_Usage.

[42] *Saling-silang.com* is a company that provides timely summaries of social media topics that are in vogue within Indonesia. The company regularly holds social media events for *Kopi Darat* (or euphemistically referring to real-time meeting), as well as other initiatives such as Social Media Fest (2011, 2012), PicFest and Ngerumpi Days Out. The website has been closed down since January 2013 by the owners and is now defunct.

[43] See Nicolas Picard and Michelle Chang, "Will Indonesia's Online Youth Shape 2014 Elections?" in *The Asia Foundation*, 16 October 2013. Retrieved 24/10/2013: http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2013/10/16/will-indonesias-online-youth-shape-2014-elections/.

[44] See State of the Media: The Social Media Report 2012 by NM Incite, a joint venture between Nielson and McKinsey.

[45] These cases include Gecko vs. Crocodile case (or KPK case) and the Prita Mulyasari libel case. Less well-received ones include the Lapindo case and the Ahmadiyah case.

[46] See Merlyna Lim, "Many Clicks but Little Sticks: Social Media Activism in Indonesia" in *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 43, No.4 November 2013 pp. 636 - 657

New social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) differ from mainstream, conventional media in some crucial aspects: (i) easy facilitation of two-way interaction with large audiences, (ii) non-existent censorship in the absence of interlocutor controlling content, (iii) fluid accessibility and low costs, (iv) advantage of mobility and instantaneity, and (v) elimination of natural borders and boundaries limiting information flow. Given these distinctive features of new media (a wholly new medium facilitating traditional *viva voce* communication online), new media sit itself quite comfortably as a new domain of popular media in Indonesia. New media enjoys easy access and widespread connectivity by mass audiences and since its advent, often complementing other avenues (talk radio, tabloid newspapers and infotainment television news) as a viable medium for raising and espousing public and populist-centred views and sentiment, termed "media populism".[47] Its immediate appeal and widespread usage by the public has been symbolic of its "democratising" nature, albeit purposes that are often more mundane than others. Nonetheless, elements of new media have been seen to give greater credence and political voice to the *rakyat* (ordinary masses), while providing more sympathetic coverage to (neo) populist movements. Heuristically-speaking, new media concomitantly brings out the personalisation aspect endemic in the post-*Reformasi* electoral climate. This aspect in turn has been utilised as measurement indices for the purposes of suggesting and/or promoting the possibility of certain candidates to the mainstream. With Twitter being the most prevalent form of social media and Facebook a close cousin, the number of online adherents one has in comparison to others are increasingly perceived as a good preliminary gauge of popularity not just on the internet but also among a certain tier of the more savvy, "plugged-in" Indonesian populace. Although such online popularity may not be of direct equivalence to widespread grassroots support on the ground or even present itself as a viable measure of electability a particular candidate has, in president-crazy Indonesia, it has already been appropriated by mainstream social media and opinion pollsters in galvanising support for particular individuals for the position of presidency.[48] The rise of monitoring websites using online popularity rates and media guidelines as a legitimate political gauge for electability such as *politikawave* and *Saling-silang.com,* are but a few. The devised methodologies and techniques involved include measures and indices such as the "Net Sentiment (NS)", number of "buzzes" (or "mentions" online), "Net Brand Reputation (NBR)" and "Earned Media Share of voice by Sentiment (EMSS)". Immensely popular personalities such as Jakarta's governor Jokowi have been polled and included collectively into the pool of possible presidential potentials.[49]

Graph 1 and **2** show the number of Twitter followers and Facebook "likes" among potential presidential candidates pre-selected by the media. **Graph 3** shows the current candidate electability

[47] See Gianpietro Mazzoleni "The Media and the Growth of Neo-Populism in Contemporary Democracies" in *The Media and Neo-Populism: A Contemporary Comparative Analysis* eds. Gianpietro Mazzoleni, Julianne Stewart and Bruce Horsfield (Praeger Series in Political Communication: 2003), pp. 7-9. Also interview with Asst. Prof Sulfikar Amir, Division of Sociology at the School of Humanities and Social Science in Nanyang Technological University, 1 August 2013.

[48] At the same time it must be noted that online support for certain personalities may also be subject to manipulative tactics such as internet bots, "web spidering" tactics, "ghost supports", etc. Accompanying that, a veil of anonymity often shields these processes from scrutiny. Hence it is never definitive but provides a good basis as an emerging gauge of popularity.

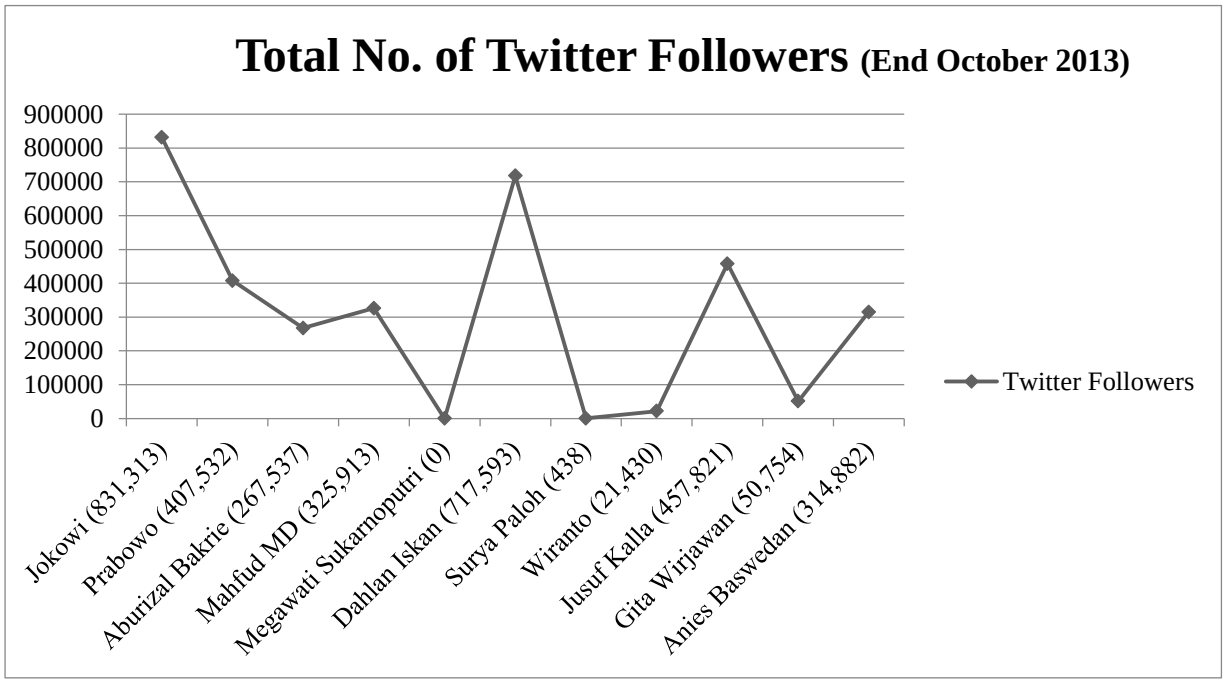
[49] See Yuliasri Perdani and Margareth S. Aritonang "Jokowi Looks Unstoppable, Parties Jitter" in *The Jakarta Post*, 27 August 2013. Retrieved 29/10/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/08/27/jokowi-looks-unstoppable-parties-jitter.html.

*Respective Online categories refer to new media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs, news, videos and forums.

among potential presidential candidates, according to trends in new media, in graphic format. Candidate electability here is measured in terms of combinations of a few criterions including "Sentiment Index", EMSS and "Unique User Count". "Sentiment Index" here refers to the sentiment margins between each candidate based on the total net sentiment of all selected candidates. Its function is to quantify the perception of each candidate by the online community along a metric range. EMSS or "Earned Media Share of voice by Sentiment" is an aggregate measure of the *perceived* favourability of each candidate within the community and can be calculated with the formula: *EMSS = (% total positive mentions per candidate/% total positive mentions per online category) + (% total neutral mentions for candidate/% total neutral mentions per online category) – (% total negative mentions for candidate/% total negative mentions per online category). "Unique User Count" is a measure used to determine the reach of a particular candidate and is commonly used in measuring the popularity of a website. However, in this context it measures the number of active netizens who frequently mention a particular candidate in any one of the online platforms/categories. **Table 2** shows a summarised tabulation of the total "EMSS", "Sentiment Index" and "Unique User Counts" for particular candidates based on **Graph 3**.

(**Caveat:** Merely a snap-shot macro-view taken of each particular potential candidate in pre-election season end October 2013 which will be subject to fluctuations and should not be seen definitive of events taking place in 2014.)[50]

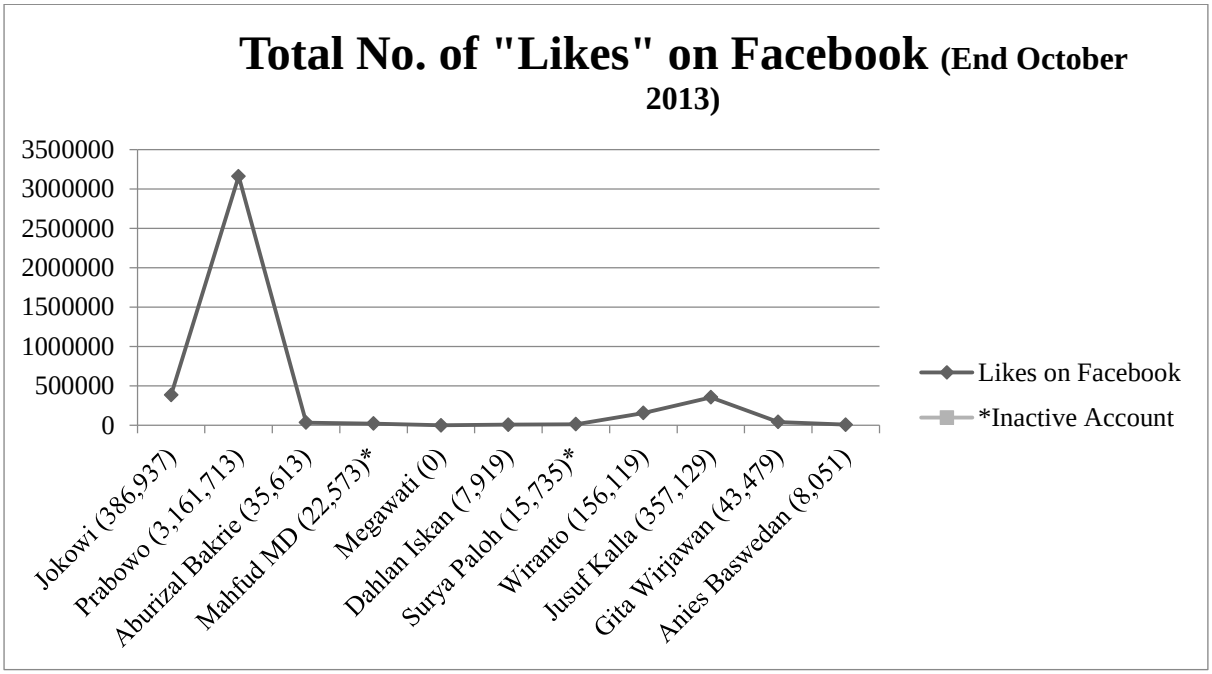
Graph 1: Total Number of Twitter Followers among Potential Presidential Candidates (End October 2013)[51]



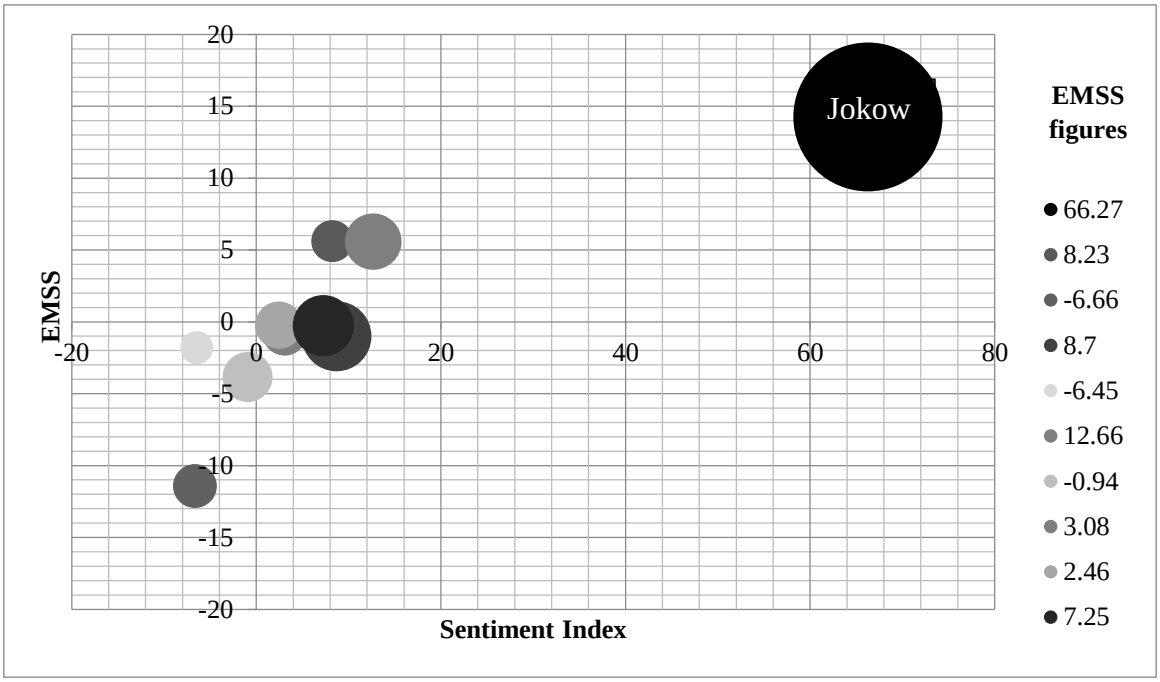
[50] The tables are intended primarily to add description to the dynamics occurring within social media in a specific period of time (daily or weekly). They do not represent conclusively or concretely the exact political popularity of each individual in the selected presidential hopeful lists.

[51] As much as possible, the number of Twitter followers is based on official Twitter page of each respective candidate. In most cases, official Twitters have been marked with a "verified account" logo.

Graph 2: Total Number of Facebook "Likes" among Potential Presidential Candidates (End October 2013)[52]



Graph 3: Candidate Electability among Potential Presidential Candidates according to New Media Trends (End October 2013)[53]



[52] As much as possible, Facebook figures are based on *official* Facebook pages of each respective candidate. Nonetheless, some candidates have a few Facebook "fan" pages including fake ones. With such complications, the Facebook page with the highest number of "likes" among others is cautiously taken as the *de facto* Facebook page of the candidate.

[53] See also *Politicawave* at http://www.politicawave.com/nasional.

Table 2: Tabulation of EMSS, Sentiment Index and Unique User among Potential Presidential Candidates

Candidate	EMSS	Sentiment Index	Unique User Count
Jokowi	66.27	14.26	23675
Prabowo	8.23	5.61	1888
Aburizal Bakrie	-6.66	-11.42	2052
Mahfud MD	8.7	-1	5206
Megawati	-6.45	-1.8	1166
Dahlan Iskan	12.66	5.58	3407
Wiranto	-0.94	-3.84	2679
Jusuf Kalla	3.08	-0.8	2137
Gita Wirjawan	2.46	-0.23	2406
Anies Baswedan	7.25	-0.27	3997

As observed, the leading candidates in terms of numbers of followers and "likes" within the social media domains of Twitter and Facebook revolve around a few. Jokowi by far enjoys the highest reach for Twitter at 831,313 followers followed by the Minister for State-Owned Enterprises [*Menteri Badan Usaha Milik Negara*], Dahlan Iskan at 717,593 and Prabowo at 407,532. In terms of Facebook figures, Prabowo fared correspondingly well having an astounding 3,161,713 "likes". Jokowi trailed at 386,937 while Wiranto had a surprising sizable 156,119 "likes". In terms of online exposure on new media platforms Twitter and Facebook, it can be observed that leading candidates mainly centred on younger politicians. Interestingly, old hats like Megawati Sukarnoputri and media tycoon Surya Paloh did not feature very much in them. In particular, Megawati, a veteran figure in politics, did not have a Twitter account and her Facebook remained inactive. On a more statistically relevant note concerning electability (See **Graph 3** and **Table 2**), Jokowi is not only enjoying unprecedented popularity currently – being the most talked-about candidate and political figure in cyberspace – with an estimated 23,675 unique users, he is also rated very favourably based on his EMSS. The "Sentiment Index" for Jokowi shows a very positive reception by netizens, standing at a high of 14.26. The graphic representation depicts Jokowi's positive electability as a distinct outlier among the rest of the candidates. A distant contending candidate is Prabowo who registers a positive count of 8.23 and 5.61 for his EMSS and "Sentiment Index" respectively but paled in comparison when it comes to his online reach at 1888. Correspondingly, although some candidates enjoy a relatively healthy unique user count, they have both reception and favourability figures in the negative. A case in point is current Golkar candidate Aburizal Bakrie. Both his figures for EMSS and "Sentiment Index" are in the red at -6.66 and -11.42 respectively, ranking him at the bottom despite having a unique user count of 2052. Notwithstanding media tools and online variables alone, if various surveys are to be believed, most have ranked the electability of Jokowi as "very high" on their list among others.[54]

[54] Many surveys and polls on electability have caught on to this new rave of the "Jokowi effect" and have included Jokowi as one of its variables. Results on his electability differ less significantly among the various surveys due to his immense popularity. A survey by CSIS ranked Jokowi as the most popular presidential candidate at 28.6%. On the other hand, Political Weather Station (PWS) ranked Jokowi's electability at 70.1% as its highest while Alvara, a research institution, ranked Jokowi at second place behind Aburizal Bakrie at 76%. See "Jokowi-Priyo alternative candidate ticket for 2014 election: Survey" in *The Jakarta Post*, 27 October 2013. Retrieved 5/11/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/10/27/jokowi-priyo-alternative-candidate-ticket-2014-election-survey.html. See also "Aburizal's popularity unable to boost electability: Survey" in *The Jakarta Post*, 28 October 2013. Retrieved 5/11/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/10/28/aburizal-s-popularity-unable-boost-electability-survey.html.

What do these figures mean? Social media often act as a primer in which mainstream media picks up upon. Current measurements of online popularity may not be standardised; nonetheless, there is an attempt at quantifying popularity. With polls and indices such as these, Jokowi, a media doyen to begin with, have seen his popularity at new media further transmuted into pronounced popularity at the mainstream level. Mainstream media and even foreign ones are now covering Jokowi and his Jakartan governorship on a frequent basis, boosting his favourability even further.[55] The vicarious effect of both online and mainstream media popularity can be seen evidently: media hype over Jokowi's popularity is seen making inroads into a more subtle kind of "unintentional" political campaigning that is has been linked with a heuristic association in what is known as the "Jokowi factor" – a combination of abstract traits and perceptions including clean-governance, self-effacement, action-oriented and closeness to the people (*blusukan* campaigns).[56] It is not far off to say that Jokowi's popularity is not merely skin-deep. On the other hand, one can also see oft-mentioned candidates that are not as well-received by the online community, and by extension the electorate. Figures like Megawati, Wiranto and Aburizal Bakrie, although already well-acquainted and established, represented the lot that actually received negative figures for favourability (EMSS) and perception/reception (Sentiment Index). Are these figures also indicative of the Indonesian electorates' perception of older groups of presidential incumbents and veterans?

While new media rankings on candidates' electability may not catch on with the Indonesian general public yet, there may still be a promising role reserved for them. With electoral rules and guidelines slated for consolidation and change in the 2014 general elections, new media may yet be in an enviable position facilitating a *new theatre* for political campaign and promotion of the individual in the years to come, giving cyber space a distinct edge over the physical – with 2014 as its preview. Current electoral guidelines going into phase limit placements and specifications of campaign advertorials [*iklan kampanye*], banners, posters and billboards to certain locations and timings. This is in line with efforts by the general elections committee [*Komisi Pemilihan Umum*] to root out opportunistic poll campaigns or unwieldy guerrilla canvassing on mainstream channels.[57] With the tightening of restrictions placed on offline brick-and-mortar campaigning, new media as an untapped political space may be worth exploring as it has the potential to create an unlimited coverage, although smear and predatory campaigns (i.e. blasphemy, defamation, slander and character assassination) are no strangers even to online communities. Notwithstanding, new media often served as exclusive channels and sources of voter/electoral information for large numbers of the

[55] See Joe Cochrane "In Indonesia, a Governor at Home on the Streets", in *The New York Times*, 25 September 2013. Retrieved 28/10/2013: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/26/world/asia/in-indonesia-a-governor-at-home-on-the-streets.html?_r=1&.

[56] See Aboeprijadi Santoso "The Jokowi Factor and the Future of Indonesia's Democracy", in *The Jakarta Post*, 8 September 2012. Retrieved 29/10/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2012/09/08/the-jokowi-factor-and-future-indonesia-s-democracy.html. Already in 2012 there has been mention of a "Jokowi factor" in mainstream news. Back in 2008, there has been mention of his mayoral achievements in the city of Surakarta (Solo). See Blontank Poer, "Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo: Changing the face of Surakarta" in The Jakarta Post, 29 October 2008. Retrieved 1/11/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2008/10/29/joko-%E2%80%98jokowi%E2%80%99-widodo-changing-face-surakarta.html.

*Having elucidated aspects of media electability, it is nonetheless important to stress that it is virtually impossible to accurately measure or predict the impact that the mainstream and virtual media will have on the final election results in 2014.

[57] See Peraturan Komisi Pemilihan Umum (peraturan KPU) Nomor 15, Tahun 2013 (Pascal 17).

external Indonesian population of immigrant workers and students based overseas.[58] In many ways, having a veritable social media presence nowadays has steadily become a normative practice as it often translates into much political cache compared with none.

Can the New Desiderata Triumph?*

Jokowi's immense popularity seems to follow in the footsteps of a predecessor: current President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY). Barely a decade ago, the relatively little-known political player, then Coordinating Minister of Political and Security Affairs, emerged from the "political moratorium" of Megawati's presidency, breaking the deadlock that was the preserve of the reigning PDI-P and Golkar political cartel.[59] That was before the widespread advent of Facebook in Indonesia or the founding of Twitter. SBY's victory and inauguration (sometimes termed the "SBY phenomenon") came on the back of the introduction of direct presidential elections. SBY benefitted greatly from its onset and the early phases of presidentialism in Indonesia post-*Reformasi*. Ten years later, while the leading political outfit in parliament is now overtaken by PD, entrenched presidentialism is clearly the order of the day. In addition, one must also not neglect that the surge of populism, driven by the tools of new media, has only very recently started to feature more prominently in the equation of Indonesian politics. All of a sudden, image management within online media circles becomes an increasingly critical consideration and may be the ultimate determinant of success at the polls.

Despite popular sentiments, both online and offline, backing the tremendously electable candidate of Jokowi, these sentiments may all be but conjectural.[60] Several obstacles stand in the way of his nomination. First, his current commitments as Jakarta governor may not allow him the possibility of standing for elections without a justification reason and back-up. Second, Jokowi is no commander-in-chief of a party outfit, but merely a PDI-P cadre that has Megawati as its chairwoman. More importantly, Jokowi is not part of the PDI-P leadership structure.[61] This puts him at a "systemic" disadvantage in comparison to candidates like Prabowo, Surya Paloh and Wiranto. Jokowi may have tacit support of the electorate but not backing of the party and that is his dilemma. While the old desideratum of a greater participatory climate among the electorate has been expressed via direct elections in 2004, it did not remove the existing patrimonialism that is still required to get to the top.[62] Party representation is still a mandatory requisite while politicians at leadership positions are not willing to shed power yet. Younger, perhaps more promising individuals have no other recourse but in toeing the line of the party leader despite soaring popularity. However, such frustrations are now

[58] See Alan Wall "Indonesia: A Long-established System for External Voting at Diplomatic Missions" in Chapter 2: The History and Politics of *External Voting of Voting from Abroad: The International IDEA Handbook*, pp. 53-56. In 2004 between 405,000 and 460,000 registered as external electors over an estimated 2 million Indonesian overseas. Turnout averaged 55 to 60 per cent. Significantly lower than in mainland Indonesia. However that was before the advent of new social media.
[59] See Dan Slater "The Ironies of Instability in Indonesia" in *Social Analysis*, Vol. 50, Issue 1, Spring 2006, pp. 208-13.
[60] See "Jokowi's candidacy is still conjecture: Expert" in *The Jakarta Post*, 20 October 2013. Retrieved 1/11/2013: http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/10/20/jokowi-s-candidacy-still-conjecture-expert.html.
[61] See also Jonathan Chen and Emirza Adi Syailendra "Youth and the "Jokowi Effect": Strike while the Iron is Hot?" in RSIS Commentaries No. 108/2013 dated 17 June 2013. Retrieved 1/11/2013: http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS1082013.pdf.
[62] See also Dan Slater "Indonesia's Accountability Trap: Party Cartels and Presidential Power after Democratic Transition" in *Indonesia*, Volume 78, pp. 61-92.

being channelled into social media. Verily, the new desiderata, as reflected both in increased *golput* numbers and online electability ratings, is seen as a mounting opposition against the reigning continuity of New Order incumbency.[63] Correspondingly, the "Jokowi effect" can be seen as the provoked collective voice of the new desiderata – with new media as its latest political steed.

In conclusion, the 2014 general elections is not just a watershed election in the search for a presidential figure espousing the new *raison d'état* post-SBY. More significantly, it is the coming-of-age of two entities: rejuvenation of belief in popular mandate selected at the *rakyat* level and the increasing role of social media within the sphere of electoral politics. The "Jokowi factor" as a household appendage owes every bit of its ubiquity and acceptance to both new and established media. Pushing for electability as determined by the *rakyat* may be a start, but it remains to be seen whether the new desiderata will triumph despite the existing overarching party and electoral system.

[63] See Barry Desker "Election 2014 and the Ghosts of Suharto's Reign" in *The Straits Times*, 30 October 2013.

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