The Internet, Social Media, and Political Outsiders in Post Suharto Indonesia

A Case Study of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama

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School of Social Sciences

Media and Communication

2019
THESIS DECLARATION

I, Ezmieralda Melissa, certify that:

This thesis has been substantially accomplished during enrolment in the degree.

This thesis does not contain material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution.

No part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of The University of Western Australia and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint-award of this degree.

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The research involving human data reported in this thesis was assessed and approved by The University of Western Australia Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval #: RA/4/1/7931.

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This thesis does not contain work that I have published, nor work under review for publication.

Signature:

Date: 31st March 2019
ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the role of social media in political communication in Post-Suharto Indonesia. Focusing on the case of the rise and fall of the former Chinese Christian Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (better known by his Hakka nickname, Ahok), this thesis examines how social media both enables a more diverse and democratic public sphere in Indonesia by making visible non-traditional or outsider politicians, and at the same time reinforces the discourse of the existing power elite.

This thesis employs a mixed-method design of textual analysis of social media, participant observations of Ahok's political campaigning strategies, and content analysis of newspaper articles about Ahok from three campaign periods in 2012, 2014 and 2017. Through this triangulation of methods, this thesis shows that political communication is shaped by intricate interactions between political institutions, media and citizens. Indeed, it is evident that even as social media played a role in Ahok's rise to power by providing a forum for him to communicate directly to his constituents beyond the constraints of the daily media, it also facilitated the misrepresentation and amplified the spread of the allegations that led to his downfall and arrest for blasphemy. Thus it is evident that social media, in of itself, is insufficient to challenge the dominance of mass media in shaping political opinions, attitudes, and setting agendas, which are still predominantly controlled by the power elite.

Moreover, while it is apparent from the rise of political outsiders in the United States and Britain that social media increases the plurality and diversity of the public sphere, the case of Ahok demonstrates that when the function of electoral democracy is distorted by political populism, social media can also contribute to the reproduction of the conditions that perpetuate inequality and dominance.
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<td>Badan Pengawas Pemilu</td>
<td>Election Supervisory Board</td>
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<td>DPR</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</td>
<td>People’s Representative Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPRD</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah</td>
<td>Regional House of Representative</td>
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<td>FPI</td>
<td>Front Pembela Islam</td>
<td>Islamic Defenders Front</td>
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<td>Gerindra</td>
<td>Gerakan Indonesia Raya</td>
<td>Great Indonesian Movement</td>
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<td>Golkar</td>
<td>Golongan Karya</td>
<td>Functional Groups</td>
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<td>Hati Nurani Rakyat</td>
<td>People’s Conscience Party</td>
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<td>HIPMI</td>
<td>Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian Association of Young Businessmen</td>
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<td>ICMI</td>
<td>Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals</td>
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<td>Jokowi Alliance Social Media Volunteers</td>
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<td>JSC</td>
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<td>Jakarta Smart City</td>
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<td>KADIN</td>
<td>Kamar Dagang dan Industri Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry</td>
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<td>KIAK</td>
<td>Kawasan Industri Air Kelik</td>
<td>Air Kelik Industrial Area</td>
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<td>Corruption Eradication Commission</td>
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<td>LSI</td>
<td>Lingakaran Survei Indonesia</td>
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<td>MA</td>
<td>Mahkamah Agung</td>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
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<td>MAWI</td>
<td>Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian Church Council</td>
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<td>MK</td>
<td>Mahkamah Konstitusi</td>
<td>Constitutional Court</td>
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<td>MPR</td>
<td>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</td>
<td>People’s Consultative Assembly</td>
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<td>MUI</td>
<td>Majelis Ulama Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesia Islamic Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nasdem</td>
<td>Nasional Demokrat</td>
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<td>NU</td>
<td>Nahdlatul Ulama</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>PAC</td>
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<td>National Mandate Party</td>
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<td>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan</td>
<td>Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle</td>
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<td>Indonesian Unity Party</td>
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<td>PKB</td>
<td>Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa</td>
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<td>Partai Nasional Benteng Kerakyatan Indonesia</td>
<td>Indonesian National Populist Fortress Party</td>
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<td>PPIB</td>
<td>Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru</td>
<td>New Indonesia Union Party</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Partai Persatuan Pembangunan</td>
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<td>Partai Reformasi Tionghoa</td>
<td>Chinese Indonesians Reformation Party</td>
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<td>RCTI</td>
<td>Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia</td>
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<td>RRI</td>
<td>Radio Republik Indonesia</td>
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<tr>
<td>SARA</td>
<td>Suku, Agama, Ras dan Antar Golongan Ethnicity, Religion, Race and Intergroup Relations</td>
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EXPLANATORY NOTES

Traditionally, Indonesians do not have surnames and many only have single-word names such as Suharto, Sukarno and so on. At the same time, many politicians and public figures in Indonesia, even those who have multiple-word names, are better known by their nicknames. For instance, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is better known as SBY and Joko Widodo is better known as Jokowi. Therefore, following this Indonesian convention, politicians and public figures mentioned in this thesis are referred to by these popular nicknames.

This thesis uses the Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System, which was introduced in 1972. This system is chosen as it is the standard spelling system used in Indonesia at this time. Therefore, Soeharto is written as Suharto, Soekarno is written as Sukarno, and so on.

All English translations of Indonesian texts included in this thesis were provided by the author.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

At its broadest level, this thesis examines changes in politics and media in post-Suharto Indonesia and considers the impact of these changes on the process of democratisation in the country. By analysing the conditions that led to the rise and fall of the former Chinese Indonesian Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (better known by his Hakka nickname, Ahok), this thesis investigates how Indonesian political communication, through social media, has on the one hand enabled a more diverse public sphere that has contributed to an increase in the acceptance and popularity of a new breed of ‘political outsiders’ and on the other hand made more visible dominant forms of religious and political power. This thesis employs a mixed-method design by combining a textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts, my own observations of Ahok’s political communication strategies gathered during my internship at the Jakarta governor’s office, and a content analysis of newspaper articles from three mainstream newspapers: Kompas, Republika, and Pos Kota. This analysis focuses on media coverage of Ahok’s political career from the time he was elected as Jakarta’s deputy governor in October 2012 to the time of his imprisonment on blasphemy charges in May 2017.

This chapter surveys recent changes in Indonesian politics and media and how these developments have enabled political outsiders like Ahok to gain political traction and public visibility. This chapter also elaborates on the term ‘political outsider’, its political context, and how social media has assisted outsiders to win important political positions. Included in this chapter is a historical account of Ahok’s rise and fall, which provides insights into the interplay between social media and the process of democratisation in Indonesia. The last section of this chapter presents an explanation of the triangulation of methods that I used to collect and interpret my data before outlining the structure of the thesis.
1.1 Indonesian Politics and Media in the Reform Era

Since its declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, Indonesia has experienced three distinct political periods which are generally known as the Sukarno era (from Sukarno’s appointment as president in 1945 until he was overthrown in 1967), the Suharto era (also known as the New Order era, from Suharto’s appointment as president in 1967 until his fall in 1998), and the post-Suharto era (also known as the reform era or era reformasi, from the end of Suharto’s government in 1998 to the present time). This thesis focuses on the last period, which has seen significant changes in the political and social landscape of Indonesia.

1.1.1 The Fall of the Suharto Government

Suharto, whose regime is known as the New Order (Orde Baru), took the presidency in 1967 and controlled the country for more than 30 years. One major change that Suharto made early on after coming into power was the depoliticisation of Indonesia (Crouch 1979), which entailed the removal of political opponents and the consolidation of his position. To achieve this, Suharto introduced the Functional Groups (Golongan Karya, Golkar) as his political vehicle, even though it was not technically a party (Reeve 1985). Golkar was nominally made up of so-called functional groups representing workers, farmers, businesspeople, and so on; but in practice it was entirely under the control of the executive branch of government. The corrupt electoral practices of the Suharto regime ensured that Golkar would always get the majority of votes and that parliament would re-elect Suharto every five years (Reeve 1985). At the same time, the nine political parties that had survived the banning of leftist parties after 1965 were forced to merge into two. Muslim parties were amalgamated into the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP) and nationalist and Christian parties became the Indonesian Democratic Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia, PDI) (Reeve 1985). Unlike Golkar that
could regularly integrate its campaign messages into government activities, political activities for these two ‘opposition’ parties were very much restricted to short campaign periods prior to national elections (Reeve 1985). Despite the appearance of having a multi-party system, elections at this time mainly functioned as rituals to ensure the continuation of Suharto’s presidency. Golkar won every election and Suharto continued to receive a mandate to govern (Ward 2010).

Another strategy that Suharto employed in running his government was to make politics exclusive. The political system during the Suharto presidency was characterised by what Harold Crouch (1979) referred to as ‘Javanese patrimonialism’ where government functioned as ‘an extension of the person of the ruler’ (Anderson 1972: 36). During this time, politics was only open to a small group of elites who mainly consisted of army officers to back up Suharto’s position and western educated technocrats who helped Suharto to shape his economic policy (Crouch 1979). Suharto controlled his domination over these people through a ‘distribution of patronage’ where he rewarded loyalists with power and economic gain, while those who opposed him were retired or moved to less influential positions (Crouch 1979: 577). Apart from occupying important positions in the government, army officers also benefited from the opportunities to build their private businesses as Suharto gave them privileges in getting licences, credits, and business contracts (Crouch 1979).

During his presidency, Suharto also purposely excluded groups that were seen as threats to his government from being involved in political activities. According to Heryanto (2006: 200), the New Order government established a ‘fundamental discursive dichotomy’ of the extreme left (ekstrem kiri) that referred to Marxist oriented groups and movements, and the extreme right (ekstrem kanan) that referred to Islamic fundamental groups and
movements. This dichotomy was established to communicate the potential danger of these groups to the unity of the nation (Heryanto 2006). One of the subgroups often associated with the extreme left was Chinese Indonesians because of the close relations between China and the Indonesian Communist Party (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) prior to 1965. Although there were many Chinese Indonesians who held important positions during Sukarno’s government, they were excluded from political involvement during the Suharto era (Heryanto 1998). While denying the ethnic Chinese minority any political role, Suharto maintained close relationships with entrepreneurs from Chinese Indonesian background. These wealthy entrepreneurs, commonly called *cukong* (meaning ‘boss’ in Hokkien) were given economic privileges in the form of ‘protection, opportunities, licenses, inside information, dubious financial arrangements and, if necessary, coercive powers in return for massive amount of money’ (Ricklefs 2008: 326).

Suharto also encouraged these entrepreneurs to partner with army officers to run their business together to compensate for these officers’ lack of business skills (Crouch 1979). This arrangement to exclude Chinese Indonesians from politics and to provide them with economic privileges enabled the government to make many Chinese Indonesians dependent on the government, thus allowing it to have some degree of control in the private sector (Lim and Gosling 1997). These complex relationships between the government, the military, and the business sectors could also be considered as the beginning of the oligarchs in the Suharto era (Winters 2011).

Just as the New Order regime controlled the sphere of politics, it also applied strict regulations to the mass media. Although the media experienced some improvements in terms of cultural expressions, their content was very heavily censored and it was very difficult to get licences to establish new media companies (Sen & Hill 2000). Through the Department of Information, the government had the power to withdraw media licences if
they were seen to promote views that were critical of Suharto or his policies (Sen & Hill 2000). An example was the banning of *Tempo* magazine in June 1994, following its reporting of an internal conflict between the Minister of Research and Technology Bacharuddin Jusuf (B. J.) Habibie, the Minister of Finance Marie Muhammad, and some army officials (Steele 2014). In this report the magazine wrote how Habibie had ordered warships from Germany without the consent of the Indonesian military (Steele 2014). *Tempo* also reported that the fund used to purchase these ships was much higher than what the government had allocated (Steele 2014). Suharto was very angry with that reporting as he considered *Tempo* as a provocator ‘for fanning controversy and jeopardizing national stability’ (Steele 2014: 254). As a result of this reporting, the Minister of Information, Harmoko, revoked the licence of this publication and *Tempo* was forced to stop operating until the fall of Suharto in 1998 (Firmanto 2017).

Media in Indonesia at this time functioned as ‘an arm of government’ (Kingsbury 1998: 147). They were used as Suharto’s propaganda tool and were expected to only report positive information about the government. Broadcast media such as television and radio stations were obliged to relay news bulletins from the state-owned stations, *Televisi Republik Indonesia* (TVRI) and *Radio Republik Indonesia* (RRI) (Sen & Hill 2000) whose news mostly covered the success of Suharto’s government in making Indonesia a country with *gemah ripah loh jinawi* (abundant natural resources) and *toto tentrem karto rahardjo* (peaceful and orderly conditions). Meanwhile, conflicts and human rights abuses reported in some parts of the country, such as Aceh, Papua and East Timor, were censored (Sen & Hill 2000).

Towards the end of the New Order government, Suharto also tried to influence the media through ownership. Many new media that were established in the late 1980s to early
1990s were owned by Suharto’s family or his cronies. For example, it was widely known that Harmoko, who served as Minister of Information from 1983 to 1997, owned a significant percentage of shares in many publications, including the Pos Kota and Kompas Gramedia publishing groups, two of the biggest publication groups in Indonesia at the time (Kingsbury 1998). The first three commercial television licences that started to operate at the end of the New Order era were also owned by Suharto’s family (Sen 1994). Suharto’s children, Bambang and Tutut owned Rajawali Citra Televisi Indonesia (RCTI) and Televisi Pendidikan Indonesia (TPI) respectively, and Suharto’s cousin, Sudwikatmono, was one of the founders of Surya Citra Televisi (SCTV) (Sen 1994).

Although there had been growing dissent towards Suharto towards the end of his presidency, the 1997 Asian monetary crisis became the major catalyst for his fall. The crisis caused the Indonesian currency, rupiah, to lose almost 80% of its value (Enoch, Baldwin, Frécaut, Kovanen 2001), resulting in the increase of prices of everyday goods, the closing down of many companies, and the lay-off of hundreds of thousands of people all around the country. Soon after, Suharto was forced to step down following demonstrations, riots and ethnic violence protesting his handling of the crisis. On 21 May 1998, Suharto officially delivered his resignation speech and handed the presidency to his vice-president, B. J. Habibie. This marked the start of reformasi in Indonesia.

1.1.2 The Reform Era

Some members of the public received Habibie’s appointment as president with scepticism. These critics argued that Habibie’s close relationship with Suharto compromised his independence. Habibie had served in Suharto’s government for twenty years and was personally chosen as Suharto’s vice-president in early 1998 (Anwar 2010). Despite being seen as a dubious reformer, Habibie was able to bring some significant changes to
Indonesia. During his short presidency from May 1998 to October 1999, 410 new laws and regulations were passed (Anwar 2010), including several fundamental political reforms, inter alia, decentralisation of power to the regions, permission for the establishment of new political parties, the limitation of presidential tenure to two terms of five years, and media deregulation (Anwar 2010). Habibie also managed a general election in 1999, one year into his term. During this election, forty-eight political parties were allowed to participate and for the first time the domination of Golkar ended as it lost the election to the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDIP), a new party that separated from the long-established PDI and that was led by Megawati Soekarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia’s first president, Sukarno.

Considering his background, the reforms that Habibie instituted during his presidency should not have come as a surprise. Despite his close relationship to Suharto, Habibie could arguably be considered an outsider in the regime. Unlike many others who served in the Suharto government, Habibie did not have any experience in, or close links to, the military. Instead he was a technocrat who was most interested in developing technological infrastructure in Indonesia. Habibie was also one of very few New Order’s politicians who did not come from a Javanese ethnic background. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, who was Habibie’s presidential spokesperson, explained why she was not surprised at ‘Habibie’s enthusiasm for political reform’ (2010: 99). Having completed his education and developed a successful career in Germany before Suharto called him back to set up a local airplane construction company in 1973, Habibie was familiar with, and favoured, the western concept of human rights and democracy (Anwar 2010). Anwar (2010: 100) reported that Habibie reached out directly to many western leaders, including the US President and the prime ministers of Britain and Australia to assist Indonesia during this
transition period. He even asked the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to help coordinate the 1999 general election (Anwar 2010).

From the many laws and regulations that were passed during Habibie’s presidency, two in particular contributed most to the significant shift in the Indonesian political system. The first one was a legislative package of political liberalisation consisting of Law Number 2 of 1999 on political parties, Law Number 3 of 1999 on general elections, and Law Number 4 of 1999 on the structure and position of the People’s Consultative Assembly (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat, MPR) and the People’s Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR). These three laws laid the foundation for a more democratic Indonesia as they enabled the formation of new political parties with a variety of ideologies, provided the opportunity for Indonesians to directly elect their leaders under the supervision of an independent General Election Committee (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU), and empowered the legislative branch of government vis-à-vis the executive (Anwar 2010).

These laws enabled Indonesian citizens to participate more actively in politics, not only as voters but also as political actors. As there were more political parties that represented different ideologies, citizens had more choices to associate themselves with a party that was in line with their political aspirations. In addition, those who had previously been excluded from this field, such as Chinese Indonesians, were now guaranteed liberty to organise and to compete in elections. The first Chinese Indonesian party in the reform era was the Chinese Indonesians Reformation Party (Partai Reformasi Tionghoa, PRT), established on 5 June 1998 (Thung 2009). However, this party did not meet the criteria to compete in the 1999 election. Only one Chinese Indonesian party, the Bhinneka Tunggal
Ika Party (Partai Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, PBI), qualified to participate in the election. It gained one chair in DPR for the period of 1999-2004 (Suryadinata 2008).

Another law that helped to create a more democratic Indonesia is Law Number 40 of 1999 on press freedom. Along with the annulment of Law Number 1 of 1984 on media licensing, this law regulates the formation of an independent press council to guarantee freedom of the press that is protected from government intervention (Nugroho, Siregar & Laksmi 2012: 44). Following this change, the number of publications multiplied by almost six-fold from 282 in 1997 to 1,675 by the end of 1999 (Siregar 2002: 4). During this period, Indonesian media did not only increase in number, but also in genre and target audiences. New titles appeared and tried to satisfy a variety of niche audiences (King 2011). For the first time, the industry also welcomed licensed foreign media to the country. Popular lifestyle magazines such as Cosmopolitan, FHM, and Maxim were some of the first foreign licensed media to enter the Indonesian market (Handajani 2010). Due to these reforms, Indonesia has experienced much greater freedom of speech than under the New Order government. Indonesian mass media are no longer afraid to be critical in their reporting, even covering issues that are sensitive to the government, such as corruption cases and sex scandals involving high-ranking officials. At the same time, these have also led to more open political debates in the mass media and increased public interest in political discussion. Abdurrahman Wahid (better known as Gus Dur), who replaced Habibie in 1999, continued this deregulation process. Several weeks after his appointment, Gus Dur abolished the Information Department and introduced the State Ministry of Communication and Information. Unlike its predecessor, which exercised full control over the media, this Ministry only makes policies on content, frequency, and media ethics. King (2011: 287) argued that this marked the beginning of Indonesia as a country ‘with one of the freest and liveliest media in Asia’.
1.1.3 Oligarchy in the Post-Suharto Era

Although Indonesia has undoubtedly experienced a more open and liberal socio-political environment post-Suharto, politics and media in the country are still dominated by the elite forces from the Suharto era. For instance, despite the significant increase in the number of political parties, most of these new parties are still led by the old elites and primarily represent their interests. As an example, the party that received the most votes in the 2014 general election, PDIP, is led by Megawati Soekarnoputri. Other political aristocrats have also dominated politics in this reform era, such as Gus Dur (former chairman of the biggest and oldest Islamic group in the country: Nahdlatul Ulama, NU) who led the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB) and was elected as president in the 1999 election. Another is Amien Rais (leader of another very large Islamic organisation, Muhammadiyah) who led the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN). Even the current opposition coalition is led by the Great Indonesian Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Gerindra) whose chairman, Prabowo Subianto, was the former son-in-law of Suharto.

At the same time, despite the claim that Indonesian media are now free and diversified, most news is produced by only a handful of media organisations (Ida 2010). According to Ida (2010), the media deregulation that was implemented after Suharto only benefited the old players, who are mostly parts of Suharto’s family and cronies. After the deregulation, they continued to expand their businesses by buying small regional media and taking ownership of other forms of media such as newspapers, online media, and radio (Ida 2010). Hence, news reporting in Indonesia is still influenced and limited by the ‘ruler’s law’, which means that big corporations and political elites continue to benefit from ‘the corrupt legal system and defamation laws that favour the rich and powerful’ (Sen 2010: 7).
Currently, there are thirteen groups that dominate the media sphere in Indonesia, which include one state entity and twelve private corporations (Lim 2012). As shown in Table 1.1, from these thirteen groups, at least six have owners who have been involved actively in Indonesian politics. They include Bakrie & Brothers with Aburizal Bakrie (former chairman of Golkar), MNC Group with Harry Tanoeosediwo (founder of the Indonesian Unity Party, Partai Persatuan Indonesia, Perindo), Media Group with Surya Paloh (chairman of the National Democratic Party, Partai Nasional Demokrat, Nasdem), Trans Corporations with Chairul Tanjung (a close ally of former president, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono), Jawa Pos group with Dahlan Iskan (former Minister of State-Owned Enterprises during the Yudhoyono presidency and a cadre of the Democrat Party, Partai Demokrat, PD), and Lippo Group with James Riady (a strong supporter of Golkar).

Table 1.1: Media Concentration in Indonesia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Media Group</th>
<th>Group Leader</th>
<th>TV stations</th>
<th>Radio stations</th>
<th>Newspapers</th>
<th>Online media</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media News Corp (MNC) Group</td>
<td>Mary Tanoeosediwo</td>
<td>ETV, Global TV, MNC TV</td>
<td>ETV, GTV, IDTV, MNC TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh, James Riady</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNC Media Group</td>
<td>Erwida Dardak</td>
<td>MNCTV, MNC+TV</td>
<td>MNC TV, MNCTV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh, James Riady</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kompas Group</td>
<td>Jayadi Dewanto</td>
<td>Kompas TV</td>
<td>Kompas TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawa Pos Group</td>
<td>Dahlan Iskan</td>
<td>Jawa Pos TV</td>
<td>Jawa Pos TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Ria Ria Group (MNR)</td>
<td>Sutia Harism</td>
<td>Ria Ria TV</td>
<td>Ria Ria TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elang Mahata Technology (EMT) Group</td>
<td>Karya Kurniadi Santoso</td>
<td>XTRA TV</td>
<td>XTRA TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lippo Group</td>
<td>James Riady</td>
<td>Lippo Media</td>
<td>Lippo Media</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakrie &amp; Brothers (KFC Media)</td>
<td>Anthony Riady</td>
<td>KFC TV</td>
<td>KFC TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Corporations (Para Group)</td>
<td>Oktav Ariyanto</td>
<td>Trans TV</td>
<td>Trans TV</td>
<td>Surya Paloh</td>
<td>TV, film, music streaming, film production</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Lim (2012: 3)

Several scholars such as Robison and Hadiz (2004; 2013) and Winters (2011) believe that these instances reflect the reorganisation of power in Indonesia where ‘many of the old faces continue to dominate politics and business, while new ones are drawn into the same
predatory practices that had defined politics in Indonesia for decades’ (Robison and Hadiz 2013: 35). As political campaigns require strong financial support and links to the ‘entrenched political class’, existing bureaucrats and wealthy business owners have more opportunities to compete in the country’s reformed socio-political arena than newcomers (Mietzner 2010: 188). At the same time, Webber (2006) also noted the important role of the elites in the reform era. In his account, Webber (2006) described how despite the fact that student movements were one of the main forces behind Suharto’s resignation, their role in the transition process was not significant. Instead reformasi in Indonesia ‘was managed primarily through “elite networks” and “court politics”’ between the old regime and the opposition leaders (Webber 2006: 408). This claim was supported by the formation of the Ciganjur Group, consisting of four opposition leaders: Megawati Soekarnoputri, Amien Rais, Gus Dur, and the Sultan of Yogyakarta Hamengkubuwono X, whom Habibie appointed to implement the political transition plan after the 1999 general election (Robison and Hadiz 2004: 178).

Even after reformasi these elites still dominate legislative seats and occupy strategic positions in Indonesia. Even Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (better known as SBY), who won the first direct presidential election in 2004 and was re-elected in 2009, was a prominent army general during the New Order regime and also served as a minister in both Gus Dur and Megawati’s cabinets. These examples highlight the way in which oligarchy still prevails in Indonesia

1.1.4 The Rise of Non-Elite Politicians in the Post-Suharto Era

The changes instituted by Habibie have seen the rise over the last fifteen years of new politicians who have emerged to challenge the old political elites. These politicians represent a break from Indonesian political traditions in that they are not part of the
established elites, their cronies, or family members. Their emergence can arguably be seen as a major shift where popular forces challenge the oligarchic powers in Indonesian politics (Aspinall 2016).

Indonesia’s current president, Joko Widodo (popularly known as Jokowi), is an example of such a politician. Within a period of less than ten years, Jokowi has been able to speed up his political career; he has moved from being a small businessman selling furniture in Solo (Surakarta), a city in the province of East Java, to become the president of Indonesia1. In the 2014 election, Jokowi beat Prabowo Subianto by a margin of 6%. Prabowo, by contrast is the archetypal ‘elite’ politician with deep family connections going back to one of the most entrenched elite families who can trace their origins to a princely Javanese line. Prabowo had a very close relationship with Suharto both personally and professionally. Having a long and influential career in the Indonesian military and politics, he was also once married to one of Suharto’s daughters. His defeat would have been unimaginable in the pre-reform period.

Several scholars, such as Aspinall and Mietzner (2014) and Tapsell (2015), argue that contributing factors to Jokowi’s popularity and victory include ‘new forms of political campaigning and governance disseminated through non-traditional platforms and media that challenged the oligarch’s media dominance’ (Tapsell 2015: 35). Unlike traditional forms of political communication, such as formal speeches, official visits and television advertisements, implemented by politicians in Indonesia; Jokowi’s approach is much more

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1 Jokowi’s political career started when he was elected as the mayor of Solo in 2005. He was re-elected in 2010 but left office early to run in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Two years into his governorship, Jokowi once again left the office as he was elected as Indonesian president in the 2014 general election.
casual and interactive. Well known for his *blusukan* (impromptu visits), Jokowi promotes a more open and participatory communication with the electorates either face-to-face or through his social media accounts. At the same time, Jokowi involves volunteers to help with his social media campaigning in every campaign.

Apart from his more engaged communication style, Jokowi’s rise was also the result of the long-standing antipathy that Indonesians have felt against the political and financial elites. Like many developing countries in Asia, Indonesia has always been in the top list of the most corrupt countries in the world (Transparency International 2017). It is public knowledge that Indonesian government officials often take advantage of their power to gain material benefits for themselves. Hence, Indonesians have always been suspicious of their government and political leaders. Jokowi’s rise in popularity was also due to his track record as a clean and hands-on politician, especially after being named as the third best mayor in the world in 2012 (The World Mayor Project 2012). When he competed in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election with Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a Chinese Christian politician from Sumatra, as his running mate, their candidacy resonated with the hopes of many Indonesians who wanted to see real reforms in their government (Tapsell 2015).

Apart from Jokowi, other non-elite politicians who have risen to power include Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Jokowi’s former deputy governor turned governor of Jakarta), Tri Rismaharini (the mayor of Surabaya), and Ridwan Kamil (the mayor of Bandung). All of them have similarities in that they are young, are considered not part of the established

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*Blusukan* is impromptu visits that Jokowi likes to do to meet first-hand with the common people and hear their complaints. These are opportunities for these people to vent their spleen about the difficulties they face in their everyday life.
elites, have strong anti-corruption records, are approachable, and have a good understanding of how to use new online media to boost their political profiles.

1.2 Political Outsiders and Politics

As elaborated in the earlier part of this chapter, Indonesian politics in post-Suharto Indonesia has been mainly controlled by political elites who have a strong connection with the previous regime. At the same time, however, there has been a growth in new types of politicians that can be legitimately described as political outsiders. There is no precedent for this type of politician in the Suharto period and as a corollary it was very rare for someone who had a political career during Suharto’s presidency to be regarded as an outsider.

1.2.1 Political Outsiders: Definition and Characteristics

To the present time, there are only a handful of studies that focus on the emergence of political outsiders. One early definition of the term was made by Harold S. Becker (1963) who defined outsiders as ‘individuals who break a rule agreed on by a group’ (1963: xiii). In his definition of the term, Becker also emphasises how the term ‘outsiders’ is a way of describing how politicians deviate from established political norms and expectations. Another scholar to discuss political outsiders is Ralph K. Huitt (1961: 571) who talked about a group of American senators he refers to as ‘outsiders’ due to their non-conforming attitude towards the Senate and its system. A more contemporary definition of the term political outsider can be found in Anthony King’s study on Margaret Thatcher (2002). In this article, King developed a taxonomy of ideas around the concept and suggests that there are three different categories of outsiders. These include: social outsiders (being outsiders due to the differences in socio-demographic background), psychological outsiders (being outsiders due to the feeling of not being part of an inner
group), and tactical outsiders (purposely positioning oneself as outsiders to fulfil particular political purposes) (King 2002: 438–439).

From these studies, it is clear the definition of outsiders remains fluid. Yet, there are several common characteristics associated with the term, including: having different socio-demographic backgrounds than those of political elites; challenging the established political system, seeking support from their ideological allies and constituents rather than from in-group politicians, and pushing for change sometimes in a radical manner (Huit 1961; Becker 1963; and King 2002). At the same time, by looking through these characteristics it is clear that this kind of politician carries certain elements of ‘underdogness’ as part of their identity. Moreover, while the label can be used by others to describe a politician who deviates from traditional norms the term can also be exploited by politicians who would like to position themselves as alternatives to elite politicians.

The term ‘political underdog’ itself is usually used to describe politicians who come from minority groups facing discrimination (Schuman & Harding 1963). This term started to gain popularity in the field of politics when Diamandouros published his influential essay, ‘Cultural Dualism and Political Change in Post-Authoritarian Greece’, in 1994. In this essay, Diamandouros argued that Greek political culture was divided into two polarised ideologies: the modernising reformist and the underdog populist (in Ntampoudi 2014: 3). According to Diamandouros, underdog politics is not only ‘one of the main ideological entities of the modern Greek political system, but also the main source of resistance to the processes of modernization, Europeanization, and globalization’ (in Ntampoudi 2014: 1)
Although the term was popularised in a rather negative context, more recent studies discuss it in a more positive manner. In some studies (Vandello, Goldschmied & Richards 2007 and Paharia Keinan, Avery & Schor 2011), underdog identities are considered morally superior due to their assumed powerlessness, disadvantaged position, and perceived experience of discrimination. The study of Paharia et al. (2011: 775), for instance, defined an underdog as someone with ‘humble origins, lack of resources, and determined struggle against the odds’. Furthermore, they also highlighted the benefit of underdog identification for politicians. They argued that constituents generally have a great fascination and sympathy towards underdog politicians as they share the same concerns and frustrations as them. Thus, many politicians, especially those who are considered as outsiders to the elites, use this underdog identification in their political communication to generate public support (Paharia et al. 2011). Moreover, this study also reports that these political outsiders also tend to use alternative and diverse methods to communicate with their constituents (Paharia et al. 2011).

1.2.2 Political Outsiders and Social Media Campaigning

The first study that documented the role of new media in post-Suharto politics was by Sen and Hill (2000) who reported the use of websites by several political parties prior to the 1999 general election. This was followed by Nurhandryani, Maslow and Yamamoto (2009) who investigated how politicians and political parties used the Internet during the 2004 general election. Although their findings showed internet political campaigning was not widely embraced by the citizens at that time, the study also provided an important insight, which is that the failure of these campaigns was not simply the result of the nature of the medium, but was more about how the politicians used the medium (Nurhandryani et al. 2009). Most of the failures to integrate new media in political campaigning that happened in 2004 were due to the fact that politicians and political
parties still did not know how to use the Internet effectively, thus lacking the interaction necessary to engage voters in this virtual world (Nurhandryani et al. 2009).

A more recent study conducted by Murti (2013) shows that e-campaigning in Indonesia has developed with the integration of social media. He argued that social media has supported social activism in Indonesia as it gives people the opportunity to express their opinions and challenge the ideas offered by traditional media (Murti 2013). In both the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2014 presidential election, Jokowi employed this strategy when he took advantage of social media ‘that encouraged a “grassroots” campaign that mobilized many volunteers, prod-users, 40 and youth groups’ (Tapsell 2015: 36).

Social media is arguably an effective tool to disseminate politicians’ underdog stories which are commonly incorporated in their political communication. Firstly, this is because most outsiders do not have extensive access to the mainstream media that are often controlled by the elites. By promoting their messages through social media, outsider politicians can reach the electorates without their communication being mediated by the usual news gatekeepers, and they can encourage interactions, content creation and redistribution of their messages among the constituents (Coleman 2010). Social media can be particularly effective in Indonesia because although the country’s internet penetration level is low at approximately 50% of the population in comparison to other countries in the Asia Pacific region, Indonesians are some of the largest social media users in the world. A leading online statistics company, Statista, reported in 2016 that Indonesia had the fourth largest number of Facebook users in the world with 111 million users and one of the largest number of Twitter users with 24 million users.
Emerging in the late 1990s, social media -- officially recognised as Social Network Sites (SNS) -- enable users to communicate and engage each other through community-based relationships (Boyd & Ellison 2007). These relationships can potentially increase users' social capital (Esplen & Brody 2007), which can bring many advantages, including political support. Due to the popularity of social media in Indonesia, it has become a popular tool to influence public opinion or for political activism. Currently, many Indonesian politicians actively use social media to influence the public, either to lift their profile or to denigrate their opponent(s).

1.3 Ahok’s Rise and Fall

One of the political outsiders to gain traction in post-Suharto Indonesia was Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. He was particularly unusual in comparison to others who might be considered as ‘non-elite outsiders’ such as Jokowi, due to his ethnicity and religious background. Basuki was the only ethnic Chinese Indonesian to hold such a significant political position, where most politicians come from Muslim and indigenous backgrounds. At the same time, he was also seen as a reformist due to his type of leadership that was open, quick and direct (Tapsell 2015). This section aims to provide background information about Basuki, his political career, and the controversy surrounding his fall in 2017.

1.3.1 Family and Education Background

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama was born on 29 June 1966 in Manggar, a small town in East Belitung, on the east coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. Like many Indonesians, he is better known by his nickname³, ‘Ahok⁴, which was derived from ‘Ban Hok’ and means

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³ Most Indonesians have nicknames that are used by family members or friends to refer to them. While Ahok’s family could not have used his Chinese names in any government documents (such as birth
continuous learning in the Hakka language. His father gave him this nickname as he hoped that his son would always have a passion for seeking knowledge (Hairani 2014). Ahok is the oldest son of a Chinese Christian couple, Buniarti Ningsih and Indra Tjahaja Purnama. He has two younger brothers and one younger sister (Purnama 2008). Ahok’s family operated a mining company and had always been respected community leaders in Manggar. After finishing his junior high school in his home town, Ahok and his siblings moved to Jakarta to continue their studies. In 1990, Ahok graduated with an engineering degree in Geology from Trisakti University, Jakarta. In 1994, he obtained his MBA from Prasetya Mulya Business School Jakarta (Ripangi 2013).

Prior to entering politics, Ahok was a successful businessman and owned one of the biggest mining companies in his home town in Manggar. In 1992, he founded PT. Nurindra Ekapersada, a gravel pack sand factory in Belitung. This was followed by the opening of a quartz sand processing plant, the first of its kind in the island of Belitung. This processing facility also signified the conception of Air Kelik Industrial Area (Kawasan Industri Air Kelik, KIAK), which Ahok claimed to be one of the most promising integrated industrial areas in East Belitung (Purnama 2008).

1.3.2 Early Political Career
Ahok’s political career started in 2003 when he joined a small party, New Indonesia Union Party (Partai Perhimpunan Indonesia Baru, PPIB), which was founded in 2002 by the late Dr. Sjahrir, a well-known Indonesian economist. Ahok’s interest in politics grew out of his business dealings with the government. The discriminatory behaviour of

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*The word Ah (阿) is commonly used in Hakka dialect in front of someone’s name to express informality and familiarity.
government officials motivated him to join politics to improve the public service and bureaucracy in Indonesia (BT Purnama 2016, personal communication, 8 February).

Ahok was elected as a member of the Regional House of Representatives (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah, DPRD) of East Belitung for the period of 2004-2009. A year later, he competed in and won the election to become the Regent of East Belitung. This victory was quite surprising considering that Ahok was only supported by two small parties, PPIB and the Indonesian National Populist Fortress Party (Partai Nasional Benteng Kerakyatan Indonesia, PNBK). At the same time, Ahok was able to win the election in an area where 90% of its population were Muslims, despite religious issues being used to prevent the electorate to vote for him⁵ (Ripangi 2013). One of Ahok’s campaigners, Gus Soleh, did suggest that Ahok’s victory was mainly caused by his family’s good reputation in the area (Destryawan 2016). According to Gus Soleh, who is known as an Islamic preacher in East Belitung, Ahok’s family has long maintained a good relationship with Islamic communities in East Belitung. They even built some Islamic schools for children in that area (Destryawan 2016). Looking at his success in this election, Ahok decided to resign from his position as the Regent of East Belitung on 11 December 2006 to compete in the 2007 Bangka-Belitung gubernatorial election as a gubernatorial candidate. During this election, Ahok was supported by Gus Dur, a former president of Indonesia and the leader of one of the most influential Islamic organisations in Indonesia, NU (Purnama 2008). As a Muslim intellectual who was known for his liberal and pluralist ideas, Gus Dur campaigned for Ahok as he believed in Ahok’s track record and he wanted to see a minority representative have a chance to hold important positions in Indonesia’s government. Despite this support, Ahok did not win this election.

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⁵ During this election the local branch of Indonesia Islamic Council (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, MUI) released a fatwa, a legal pronouncement, which banned Muslims to vote for Ahok (Ripangi 2013).
After this defeat, Ahok tried to elevate his political career to the national level by taking a position as the secretary general of PPIB. However, he soon left PPIB due to internal conflicts in this party related to his candidacy in the 2007 Bangka-Belitung gubernatorial election (Ripangi 2013). In 2007, Ahok established a research centre with the name Centre for Democracy and Transparency that focused on conducting studies related to electoral politics in Indonesia. The establishment of this centre can be seen as further evidence of his commitment to democratic and transparent politics (Ripangi 2013). As a non-profit organisation, this centre employed volunteers, many of whom joined Ahok as his personal staff when he became Jakarta’s deputy governor in 2012 (Aziza 2013). Following this, the centre slowed down their operation and closed one of its main offices (Aziza 2013).

1.3.3 The Rise as Jakarta’s Governor

Since the beginning of his political career, Ahok could have been considered as a fickle politician as he never stayed long in one particular political party. In 2009, he moved to Jakarta as he was elected as a member of DPR for the 2009-2014 term, this time representing Golkar. In 2011, Ahok tried to gather support from the public to run as an independent candidate for the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, but he soon withdrew his plan when he failed to attract sufficient support (M Sianipar 2016, personal communication, 4 January). Ahok’s dream to compete in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election became a reality when he was selected to accompany the popular Mayor of Solo, Jokowi, in this election to represent PDIP and Gerindra. Ahok resigned from his position as a member of DPR, left Golkar, and joined Gerindra, especially as Golkar

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6 The Head of Gerindra party, Prabowo Subianto, proposed Ahok’s name to Megawati Soekarnoputri, the Head of PDIP, as a candidate for deputy governor to accompany Jokowi, who is a PDIP cadre. Some political analysts argued that Prabowo proposed Ahok’s name as a strategy to improve Prabowo’s reputation amongst Chinese Indonesians, which was ruined following his alleged involvement in the 1998 riots in Indonesia that saw many Chinese Indonesians became victims of violence (Saiful Mujani Research Centre 2012).
decided to support a different pair of candidates in this election (More 2012). In 2014, Ahok left Gerindra due to his disagreement with Gerindra’s decision to support the bill that aimed to cancel direct elections in Indonesia.

Apart from his dynamic political career, Ahok was also known for his rather eccentric character. Unlike other Indonesian politicians who are formal and are very careful with what they say in front of the public, Ahok was known for his bluntness. On many occasions, Ahok appeared impatient, scolding others (mostly public officials) that he found not doing their job properly. He was also not hesitant to use invectives to express his anger and frustration. Ahok’s short temper and potty mouth were perceived differently by the Indonesian public. Those who were fed up with the way the government functioned, praised him for his bravery. On the other hand, others saw him as arrogant and unethical as the principle of ‘saving one’s face’ is still highly respected in the Indonesian society.

Two years into serving as the governor of Jakarta, Jokowi announced his intention to compete in the 2014 presidential election. This announcement sparked criticism amongst many Indonesians who either felt disappointed that Jokowi did not keep his promise to complete his term as the governor, or who did not want to have Ahok as the governor replacing Jokowi. Gerindra, some members of the DPRD of Jakarta, and several Islamic organisations clearly stated their refusal to accept Ahok’s ascension as governor. On 24 September 2014, the Islamic Defenders Front (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), a hardline Islamic group, organised a mass demonstration to pressure the DPRD of Jakarta to impeach Ahok as it believed that Jakarta – where the majority of its inhabitants are Muslims – should not be led by a non-Muslim (Detik 2014). They also criticised Ahok’s rough demeanour, which they said was unbefitting of a public official. Despite all these
pressures, Ahok was officially appointed as the governor of Jakarta in November 2014. This inauguration marked an important milestone for Indonesian democracy as Ahok was arguably the first Chinese Indonesian to hold such an important position in the country’s capital.

Despite the many controversies surrounding his political career, Ahok gained a reputation as a clean politician for his anti-corruption policies. Ahok was known to promote the importance of transparency in government. Not only did he play an important role in the shift of government procurement and budgeting to an online system, but he was also the first public official who recorded the process of internal government meetings and distributed it through social media. In 2006, Tempo magazine featured Ahok as one of ten figures responsible for effecting significant political changes in Indonesia. A year later, he also received an anti-corruption award by Gerakan Tiga Pilar Kemitraan (an initiative of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, the Indonesian Ministry of State Apparatus Reform, and the Indonesian Transparency Community). In 2013, he received the Bung Hatta Anti-Corruption Award; an award in honour of Indonesia’s first vice-president, Mohammad Hatta who was known to be a politician of high integrity (Ripangi 2013).

1.3.4 Participation in the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election and the Blasphemy Case

Motivated by Ahok’s anti-corruption record, several young people who were involved in the Jokowi–Ahok gubernatorial campaign formed a group, Ahok’s Friends (Teman Ahok) on 15 June 2015. This group of supporters started a campaign to support Ahok as an

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7 Hendrik Hermanus Joel Ngantung (Henk Ngantung) was actually the first non-Muslim who was appointed by President Sukarno to be the Governor of Jakarta in 1964. Known as a pious Catholic, Henk’s ethnicity is still debatable. Henk Ngantung hailed from Menado, an area in Indonesia with a large Chinese population. Nonetheless, there has not been a clear historical account on whether or not he was of Chinese descent. Henk Ngantung was forced to step down in 1965 as he was accused of being involved with the PKI (Folia 2017).
independent candidate for the upcoming 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election (Teman Ahok 2016, personal communication, 18 February). At that time, Ahok was yet to publicly announce his candidacy in the election. In early 2016 Ahok finally met with Teman Ahok and agreed to run as an independent candidate. To register Ahok as an independent candidate, Teman Ahok had to provide the Election Commission, KPU, with the ID card numbers of 532,000 supporters in Jakarta (Teman Ahok 2016, personal communication, 18 February). In June 2016, a few months before the official registration for gubernatorial candidates, Teman Ahok reported that they were able to attract more than one million pledges of support, almost double the prerequisite set by the KPU (Roosy 2016).

Looking at the support Ahok received, several political parties approached him to express their interest in backing him in the election. Nasdem and the People’s Conscience Party (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura) were the first parties that officially announced their support for Ahok. This was soon followed by Golkar. Backed up by these parties, Ahok then decided to cancel his application to run as an independent candidate. Instead, he announced his decision to compete with the support of these political parties on 27 July 2016 (Prastiwi 2016). Ahok’s position became stronger when PDIP decided to support him as well as to let its cadre, Djarot Syaiful Hidayat, become Ahok’s running mate in the election.

Following this official announcement, Ahok’s electability appeared strong. Opinion polls conducted by several research centres in such as Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (LSI) and Saiful Mujani Research Centre (SMRC) showed that Ahok–Djarot were more popular

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8 KPU obliges every independent candidate to show that they are supported by a certain percentage of the electorate. During the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, the minimum number of support for an independent candidate was 532,000 or 7.5% of approximately 7.1 million of eligible voters.
than the other two pairs, Anies Baswedan (Anies) – Sandiaga Uno (Sandi) and Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY) – Sylviana Murni (Sylvi)\(^9\) (Fazli 2016). These polls also showed that 75\% of Jakartans were satisfied with Ahok’s performance as governor. This high approval rating shows that he would have more bargaining power to defend his policies in front of DPRD. The results of these polls seemed to show that Ahok had very good political viability.

However, in September 2016 a few weeks before the the start of the official campaign period, Ahok made a comment that was to ultimately end his political career. On 27 September 2016 Ahok made a public comment about how political opponents used a particular Qur’an verse to encourage constituents to vote against him. This comment was made during Ahok’s official visit to the Seribu Islands in North Jakarta where Ahok addressed the fish farmers who had just received fish seeds from the Jakarta provincial government to boost the fishery industry in the islands. In this video Ahok said:

> So please do not think ‘if Ahok is not re-elected than this program will be discontinued’. No, I will be (governor) until October 2017. So do not trust what people say. It is possible that in your heart you feel that you cannot vote for me. Because you have been lied to by using Al Maidah: 51 and such. It is your right, okay? So if you feel you cannot vote (for me), you are afraid that you will go to hell (because of voting me), it is okay. It is your call.\(^{10}\)

\(^9\) Anies Baswedan is a former academic and served as Ministry of Education from October 2014 to July 2016. Anies’s running mate, Sandiaga Uno, is a well-known businessman in Indonesia. Anies and Sandi competed with the supports of Gerindra and the Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS). Meanwhile the third candidate, Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono, is the oldest son of former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In this election Agus was paired with Sylviana Murni who was a high-ranking official in the Jakarta Provincial Government Office. This pair was supported by PD and three Islamic parties: PAN, PKB, and PPP.

The video of this speech went viral and sparked outrage amongst many Muslims in Indonesia after a university lecturer, Buni Yani, posted it on his Facebook account on 6 October 2016 with a title ‘A Blasphemy?’ (Penistaan kepada Agama?)\textsuperscript{11}. Tagged with the label ‘blasphemy’, many Muslims perceived Ahok’s comment as highly offensive and claimed that he had openly mocked their religion and their holy book. In subsequent interviews, Ahok denied this allegation stating that he never meant to mock Muslims or Islam. Instead, the comment was intended for political opponents who used the Qur’an verses to influence the electorate in their favour. Nonetheless, just a day after Yani posted the video on his Facebook account, several Islamic groups such as FPI and the Muhammadiyah’s Youth (Angkatan Muda Muhammadiyah) reported Ahok to the police. The MUI also released a legal pronouncement, a \textit{fatwa}, which described what Ahok had said in the video as blasphemy. On 14 October 2016 thousands of people, led by FPI leader Habib Rizieq Shihab, took to the streets to pressure the government to prosecute Ahok. At least six other demonstrations followed this initial protest between October 2016 and May 2017 with the biggest one being the demonstration on 2 December 2016. This last demonstration was able to gather an estimated 500,000 protesters and can be considered as ‘probably the largest single religious gathering in Indonesian history’ (Fealy 2016, n.p). This series of demonstration is also dubbed as ‘\textit{Aksi Bela Islam}’ (literally meaning actions to defend Islam) to highlight the discourse that these demonstrations were not a personal attack on Ahok, but instead these were a way for Muslims to defend their religion and the Qur’an. Due to these ongoing pressures, Ahok was officially prosecuted for blasphemy on 16 November 2016.

\textsuperscript{11} Yani allegedly edited the video by deleting the words ‘by using’ and posted it in his social media account. Ahok claimed that the backlash against him only happened after the distribution of this edited version. In late 2017, Yani was prosecuted and was sentenced to 1.5 year of imprisonment for promoting hate speech in social media (Ramdhani 2017).
As the blasphemy case started just before the beginning of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, Ahok had to divide his attention between both the trial process and his gubernatorial campaigning. On several occasions, he had to let Djarot to campaign by himself as Ahok had to attend court hearings. At the same time, protesters continued to participate in demonstrations to pressure the government to put Ahok in jail. Apart from this demand, these demonstrations eventually also introduced other agendas such as the prohibition of Muslims to elect non-Muslim leaders, the plan to change the Constitution with Islamic laws, and other issues that were related to ‘much broader Islamisation endeavour’ (Fealy 2016, n.p).

The first round of the election that took place on 15 February 2017 saw Ahok–Djarot received the highest votes with 42.99%. This was followed by Anies–Sandi with 39.95%, and Agus–Silvi with 17.06% (KPU DKI Jakarta 2017). Despite leading the voting, Ahok–Djarot and Anies–Sandi still had to compete in a run-off election on 19 April 2017. This second round was mandated by the Indonesian election law requiring a candidate in the Jakarta gubernatorial election to win more than 50% of votes to win the election. In this second round, Anies–Sandi beat Ahok–Djarot with 57.96% to 42.04% (KPU DKI Jakarta 2017). After this loss, the masses continued to pressure the judges to expedite Ahok’s blasphemy case and on 9 May 2017 Ahok received his guilty verdict and was sentenced to two years’ jail. His deputy governor, Djarot Saiful Hidayat replaced him as the governor of Jakarta until the end of their appointment in October 2017.

This research started at the time when Ahok’s star was rising. He appeared to be an example of a successful political outsider in Indonesia. The thesis sought to identify and analyse the factors that led to his ascendancy, highlighting his underdog status as a factor in his success. Often described in the media as ‘ethnic Chinese politician’, ‘political
outsider’, and ‘underdog politician’, Ahok connected well with common Indonesians who did not associate themselves with the political elites. His casual public appearance, colloquial language, and blunt—even brash—demeanour resonated well with Indonesians who were frustrated with corrupt bureaucrats and politicians. In the middle of fierce criticism from his political opponents and hard-line Islamic groups who used issues of ethnicity and religion to influence voters to go against him, Ahok was inaugurated as the governor of Jakarta in November 2014. This event signified an important milestone for Chinese Indonesians since this minority group had not been represented in Indonesian politics for more than three decades.

Despite these achievements, Ahok’s political career came to an end following his defeat in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and his incarceration for blasphemy. As a result of these events, the focus of the study shifted from looking at the contribution of new media to the rise of outsiders in Indonesian politics, to using the case study of Ahok as a lens to explain the potential and limitations of social media as political communication tools in Indonesia. Based on this focus, there are two main questions that this thesis aims to answer:

- How has social media affected political communication in post-Suharto Indonesia, particularly with the rise of political outsiders?
- What does the Ahok phenomenon show about the ability of social media to destabilise power and to influence the process of democratisation in post-Suharto Indonesia?

Generally speaking, debates surrounding the role of new media in contemporary Indonesia’s politics can be categorised into two groups. Scholars from the political economy tradition such as Robison and Hadiz (2004; 2013) and Winters (2011) tend to hold a rather pessimistic view on the potential of new media in challenging the oligarchy.
They argue that the fall of Suharto did not disturb the position of the oligarchs who quickly reorganised themselves and ‘continue to dominate politics and business’ (Robison & Hadiz 2004: 223). For them the new politicians such as Jokowi and Ahok are also forced to work within the oligarchy system that eventually draws them ‘into the same predatory practices that had defined politics in Indonesia for decades’ (Robison & Hadiz 2013: 35). Meanwhile, the second group that can be categorised as ‘pluralist’, such as Aspinall and Mietzner (2014) and Tapsell (2015; 2017), believe that despite the persisting power of oligarchy in Indonesia, new media are also one of the key contributors in the rise of new politicians such as Jokowi and Ahok. These pluralists also argue that ‘power contestations between elites and citizenry will continue to be conducted in the digital media space’ (Tapsell 2017: xxii).

By looking at the Ahok phenomenon as a case study of political communication and social media, I believe this thesis can contribute new insights into these debates by adding more nuances to the interplay between the Internet, social media and political communication in Indonesia. At the same time, this thesis also highlights the complex roles of new media in contemporary Indonesia’s democratisation process.

1.4 Methods and Structure of the Thesis

1.4.1 Methods

To answer the above-mentioned questions, this study adopts a mixed-method design of participant observation, textual analysis, and content analysis, which were employed reciprocally and interdependently.

I commenced with a participant observation that I undertook at the beginning of 2016, during my three-month internship at the Jakarta Governor’s office. As a situated
observer, I was able to see first-hand how Ahok implemented his political communication strategies, particularly during internal meetings with government officials and other institutions, and in media interviews and conferences. At the same time, the internship also provided me with access to talk with the Governor, his staff, and his group of volunteers directly. In parallel, I conducted a textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts. This analysis investigates Ahok’s political communication strategies, particularly those employed through social media. As social media is arguably less influenced by the gatekeeping practice commonly found in traditional mass media, this analysis also aims to explore the ways in which this medium enabled Ahok to represent himself, to engage with his constituents, and to challenge the negative discourses about him that were circulating in society.

Finally, I triangulate the two methods with a content analysis of media texts from three different publications, namely Kompas, Pos Kota and Republika. These printed newspapers were chosen as they are aimed at three key segments of the Indonesian population: Kompas represents the urban middle-class Indonesians, Pos Kota represents lower-class Indonesians, and Republika is a publication marketed to the Muslim majority. Samples were taken from three different periods, namely the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election period, the 2014 general election period, and the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. These periods were chosen since they represented important chapters in Ahok’s political career. Copies of the publications were obtained from the publications’ archives and articles were manually selected by searching for the keywords ‘Basuki Tjahaja Purnama’ or ‘Ahok’.

Content analysis is an appropriate method for this study as it is ‘a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of
communication’ (Berelson cited in Hansen 1998: 94). Replicating a model used by Tolley (2016) in her study on the representation of minority political candidates in Canadian media, I hope to fulfil three different aims from my content analysis, which are evaluating the importance of Ahok in these articles; investigating the common frames these publications used to talk about Ahok, and identifying the words used to describe Ahok in these texts. By triangulating my methods, my goal is to provide a more thorough analysis of a political communication phenomenon by using different standpoints or by an interdisciplinary approach (Halloran in Hansen 1998: 12-18).

1.4.2 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides discussion of the political system and the development of democracy in Indonesia, focusing primarily on the post-Suharto period. This chapter argues that the rise of political outsiders is not a phenomenon unique to Indonesia. Instead, it is part of a recent wave of changes in democracy that has arguably affected many parts of the world in recent decades. This chapter also discusses the issue of identity politics, focusing on the way it has been practised in Indonesia and how it has an impact on Indonesia’s politics. It argues that identity politics, or ‘othering’ has been a common feature of political contestation in Indonesia, particularly in targeting politicians from minority backgrounds.

Chapter 3 examines how the Internet and social media have changed the terrain of political communication and allowed political outsiders to rise and gain traction in elite-dominated politics. It discusses the changes that these new media bring to the relationship between politicians and their electorates. It argues that while social media has the potential to enable alternative voices in politics, it is also still influenced by
certain negotiation of power. As such, while the social media have arguably expanded the conceptual public sphere and made it practically borderless, the flow of information through this media is still considerably imbalanced. In this chapter, I also present two case studies, one of Jokowi and another one of Barack Obama, to illustrate how political outsiders can effectively use social media to engage and mobilise voters.

Chapter 4 is the methodology chapter where I describe the triangulation of methods used in this study. In this chapter, I show how my triangulation of methods provides analysis from different perspectives. The analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts provides insights into whether social media, a medium that is arguably not controlled by the elites, potentially provides alternative discourses of Ahok. In addition, participant observation and interviews provide in-depth insights into Ahok’s political communication strategies. Furthermore, the analysis of newspapers’ articles provides an understanding of how the power elites construct discourses about outsiders, in this case Ahok.

In Chapter 5, I elaborate on Ahok’s political communication strategies which I observed during my internship at his office and those he disseminated through his social media accounts. Textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts shows that generally these accounts were lacking in engagement. Instead of generating two-way conversations which can strengthen loyalty and commitment, messages conveyed through these accounts tend to follow the classic communication approach of public information. Moreover, textual analysis of public discussions on social media during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and other data gathered from secondary sources from the same campaign period also show that the blasphemy case, which began just before the start of this gubernatorial election, was so prominent that it overshadowed other discourses during that election. As the discourse of “othering” that surrounded the blasphemy case
was congruent with the long-standing metanarrative of Indonesia’s politics, this chapter shows that regardless of the quality of Ahok’s social media strategies, he would not have been able to challenge this dominant populist discourse.

In Chapter 6, I provide my content analysis of newspaper articles about Ahok. This chapter shows that in typical electoral process newspapers, which are still predominantly controlled by elite politicians and the oligarchs, tend to present news and reportage in accordance with the political aspirations of their respective owners and target audience. However, when a populist outbreak – like the one shown during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election – happened, there were some differences in their reporting. Firstly, newspapers can follow discourses originated from or circulated by social media. Thus, in these instances, instead of setting the political agenda they function more as the amplifier of this discourse or even a more extreme discourse that may or may not serve the political interests of the publishers, but which can be guaranteed to increase circulation. Secondly, this discourse of blasphemy was so influential that these newspapers did not conform to their usual political ideology in this 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Instead, they framed their news in accordance with the dominant sentiments expressed by the public with respect to the blasphemy case.

In the concluding chapter I summarise my research, discuss my research contributions, and present suggestions for further investigation. In this chapter, I argue that while social media has potentially had an important role in the rise of political outsiders like Ahok, at the same time it also reinforces the discourse of the existing power elite. At most, social media has changed the nature of the production, consumption and distribution of news; creating new forces between information consumers and producers. Thus, it can be considered as alternative ways that politicians can take to communicate
and engage with the public. And once again the case of Ahok also demonstrates that when the function of electoral democracy is distorted by political populism, social media can also contribute to the reproduction of the conditions that perpetuate inequality and dominance.
CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL SYSTEM AND DEMOCRACY IN INDONESIA

This chapter is a literature review that provides background information about the development of Indonesia’s political system and democracy. At the same time, this chapter discusses identity politics, focusing on the way it has been practised in Indonesia and its impact on Indonesia’s politics. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a historical account of Indonesia’s political system and the characteristics of Indonesia’s politics, focusing mainly on discussions about the oligarchy, political system and political discourse in post-Suharto Indonesia. The second section discusses the recent wave of democracy that has arguably changed politics in many parts of the world, including in Indonesia, characterised by the rise of political outsiders. The third section focuses on political outsiders and identity politics, primarily describing how identity politics has developed in Indonesia and its implications for political outsiders and their chance to get traction in Indonesia’s elite-dominated politics.

2.1 The Indonesian Political System Post-Suharto

2.1.1 Oligarchy and Elite Politics in Indonesia

The previous chapter touched on Suharto’s patronage politics and argued that this can be considered as the origin of oligarchic politics in Indonesia. In this section, I would like to explore in more detail what constitutes oligarchy in Indonesia and how oligarchs control and continue to dominate the Indonesian political sphere. The concept of oligarchy provides a useful way to analyse the power structure in Indonesia and how political outsiders emerge and negotiate their position within the political system.

Oligarchy can be defined as ‘a system of power focused around the private expropriation of public authority’ (Robison & Hadiz 2004: 3) or ‘the politics of wealth defense by
materially endowed actors’ (Winters 2011: 7). The actors, known as the oligarchs, use their substantial material resources as political tools to maintain their privileges in society (Winters 2011). Scholars suggest that oligarchs have to be differentiated from elites (Verney 1959; Winters 2011). They are far fewer in number and possess extreme wealth, which can be used to further their economic and political goals. On the other hand, elites negotiate their influence based on non-material power sources, such as official position and coercive power. While oligarchs can occupy elite positions, oligarchs do not have to hold an elite position to exercise their influence (Winters 2011). Many oligarchs in Indonesia prefer to stay behind the scenes by donating to politicians rather than competing in the political arena themselves. It is worth mentioning that oligarchy does not only exist in a new democratic nation such as Indonesia. Winters (2013: 13) argues, ‘oligarchs are the political product of extreme material stratification in society rather than the result of a democratic deficit’.

Many scholars (Robison & Hadiz 2003; Winters 2011; Crouch 1979) agree that the genesis of oligarchy in Indonesia can be found during the Suharto era. A former army general himself, Suharto acknowledged the importance of securing support from the army to consolidate his power. To maintain the loyalty of high-ranking army officers, Suharto strategically distributed patronage. This means that he placed military officers in ‘civilian posts that offered prospects of material gains’ (Crouch 1979: 577) and provided them with business opportunities with certain privileges, such as licences, credits or contracts. While Sukarno also exercised some forms of this patron-client relationship during his presidency, Indonesia’s unsteady political and economic conditions at the time could not support the emergence of oligarchs (Winters 2011).
Winters (2011) likened Suharto’s oligarchy to sultanistic rule. During his presidency, Suharto positioned himself as the king or the sultan who not only distributed power to his subordinates, but also controlled these powers as a means of reward and punishment. Those who were seen as loyal supporters were showered with privileges while those who opposed could easily be removed and placed in much less significant positions (Kingsbury 1998). Therefore, at this time, proximity to Suharto’s inner circle determined one’s power.

Apart from controlling the country’s armed forces, Suharto also realised that he needed a strong economy to sustain his position. To do this he employed western-educated technocrats to ‘formulate policies to control inflation, restore balance in foreign trade, and create conditions favourable for foreign and domestic investment’ (Crouch 1979: 581). The earliest technocrats in Indonesia included Mohammad Sadli, Emil Salim, Subroto, Ali Wardhana and Widjojo Nitisastro. With the assistance of these technocrats, Suharto was able to lift Indonesia from the economic crisis of the mid-1960s to the height of economic growth in the 1970s and 1980s.

Another measure that Suharto took to improve the Indonesia’s economy was to encourage more domestic investment and business activity. To do this he turned to a group of Chinese Indonesian businesspeople with a record of economic success. These

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12 In his article, ‘Technocracy in Indonesia: a Preliminary Analysis’, Takashi Shiraishi (2006) explained that these technocrats consisted of young scholars who were initially educated at the University of Indonesia, Indonesia’s first and biggest public university. These young scholars continued their studies in foreign countries, primarily in the University of California, USA, hence were known as ‘the Berkeley mafia’. Many continued to serve at the University of Indonesia as faculty members while also serving as Suharto’s ministers.

13 The growth rate of the Indonesian economy between the late 1960s and 1997 was one of the highest in the Southeast Asian region, with an average of 6.5% per year (Pesek 2010).

14 Chinese people came to Indonesia as economic migrants during three different periods. The first wave was spurred by trading activities dating back to the time of Zheng He’s voyage in the fifteenth century; the second wave around the time of the Opium War in the seventeenth century; and the third and last wave around the first half of the twentieth century (Coppel 2002). Since the time of Dutch colonisation, the ethnic Chinese have been known as tenacious and successful merchants in the archipelago.
Chinese businesspeople were encouraged to build partnerships with high-ranking army officers who could give them not only access to financial capital, but also protection. This partnership was part of Suharto’s patrimonial strategy in which the Chinese were bound by an unwritten social contract that gave them economic benefits but restricted their socio-political rights (Crouch 1979). Due to the economic privileges afforded them by this system, Chinese Indonesians soon gained disproportionate representation among the economic oligarchs. A 1995 study published by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated that roughly 75% of the market capitalisation value of publicly listed companies in Indonesia belonged to Chinese Indonesians (East Asia Analytical Unit 1995). This study also reported that nine of the top ten private companies at the end of 1993 were owned by Chinese Indonesians.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Suharto started to pay more attention to the indigenous (pribumi) businessmen. While Suharto had given business opportunities for these pribumi Indonesians -- mainly high-ranking army officers -- to participate in the business sector, they were still weak in relative terms. Resentment among pribumi businesspeople over the perceived economic dominance of the Chinese led Suharto to make some attempts to ease the tension and preserve his position. In part to cultivate new sources of support from the Muslim pribumi middle class, Suharto established organisations intended to boost the growth of pribumi businesses and to protect their business interests. These organisations included the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Kamar Dagang dan Industri Indonesia, KADIN), the Indonesian Association of Muslim Intellectuals (Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim Indonesia, ICMI), and the Indonesian Association of Young Businessmen (Himpunan Pengusaha Muda Indonesia, HIPMI). To further increase their economic position, these pribumi entrepreneurs also developed new partnerships with existing conglomerates, political aristocrats, and Golkar, the ruling
party during the Suharto regime, to giving them power in influencing not only Indonesia’s economy, but also its politics (Robison & Hadiz 2004).

In the 1980s a third group of oligarchs, which consisted of Suharto’s family members, emerged. As Suharto’s children grew up, they soon took important positions, at first in the business sectors, and later in politics. Winters (2013: 18) described these children as ‘the most predatory and disruptive force within Indonesia’s oligarchy’. Due to their unmediated access to the patron, they were able to secure the best business deals and opportunities. By the end of 1980s, four of Suharto’s six children – Sigit, Tutut, Bambang, and Tommy – were listed among the thirteen richest pribumi businessmen (Johansson 2014). The involvement of Suharto’s children in the business sector disrupted the dynamic of the oligarchs; other cronies felt insecure as they knew they could not compete with these children. Where previously the patron-client relationships in the regime were easily predictable, now Suharto would make impulsive decisions, especially when his children were involved (Johansson 2014). Consequently, the army generals who had once been part of Suharto’s inner circle started to lose their trust in the president.

The cracks in Suharto’s patrimonialism appeared more clearly when Suharto started to show ambition to prepare his children for political succession. For instance, soon after embarking on his last term as president in 1998, Suharto chose his daughter Tutut to be Minister of Social Affairs in his cabinet. This move was considered to be part of a plan to prepare Tutut as the next president of Indonesia. By this time, the elites and oligarchs realised that their patron-client relationships were susceptible to Suharto’s political ambition (Robison & Hadiz 2004). Therefore, when Suharto struggled to control the chaos that marked the peak of the economic crisis in 1997, the elites and oligarchs quietly retracted their support for the president (Robison & Hadiz 2004). Even the MPR, which
consisted of his closest allies, eventually threatened Suharto with impeachment if he refused to step down from the presidency.

After the democratic reforms, Suharto era’s elites and oligarchs are still omnipresent in Indonesia. Due to their detachment from the dictator prior to his fall and their last minute skillful maneuvering to switch their allegiance to the leaders of the new democratic system, none of them was really affected by the change of power (Robison & Hadiz 2004). When Indonesia entered a more democratic era, these elites and oligarchs had a competitive advantage that enabled them to reorganise and adapt to the new configuration of power to ensure their continuing domination (Robison & Hadiz 2004). Currently, the oligarchs continue to control different aspects of Indonesia’s life as they dominate the business sector, build media empires, hold important positions in political parties, or support others that can compete in Indonesia’s new democracy.

2.1.2 Reform and Changes in Indonesia’s Political System

Despite holding the presidency for only a year and a half between May 1998 to October 1999, Suharto’s successor, BJ Habibie, was able to make changes to the Indonesian constitution that were fundamental for the country’s transition to a more democratic era. Among the 410 laws and regulations that were passed during this time (Anwar 2010), two are going to be discussed here: Law number 2 of 1999 that regulates the liberalisation of political parties and Law number 22 of 1999 on regional autonomy. This section also discusses Law number 32 of 2004 on direct election as this law also provided an important legal basis enabling the rise of new politicians in Indonesia.
2.1.2.1 The Liberalisation of Political Parties

As discussed briefly in the introductory chapter, political competition during the Suharto period was highly institutionalised. Although Indonesia had the trappings of a multi-party system, with two ‘opposition’ parties – PPP and PDIP – competing against Golkar in regular elections, in reality PPP and PDIP never had a chance to win. This was not only because the government strictly regulated the parties’ activities, but also because it implemented strategies to make sure that Golkar would always get the most votes. Consequently, the government could always fill the legislature with its loyal supporters, who would then prolong Suharto’s presidency for the next five-year period.

When Habibie took over the presidency, he saw the urgency of reforming Indonesia’s electoral system. Soon after his appointment, Habibie called for a Special Session of the MPR to bring forward the general election from 2003 to 1999. As part of this decision, Habibie’s government also passed two important laws: Law number 2 of 1999 on political parties and Law number 3 of 1999 on general elections.

The first law allowed for new parties to be formed and greatly expanded the freedom to embrace alternative ideologies and platforms. Whereas the New Order government obliged all parties to adopt Pancasila as their sole ideology, this new regulation allowed

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15 Golkar was first established in 1964 as a joint secretariat of functional groups. This secretariat was formed by the military to counter the domination of the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) and communist ideology in Indonesia. When Suharto took the presidency from Sukarno in 1967 he transformed Golkar into the regime’s electoral vehicle. As it was considered as the government’s official party, civil servants were obliged to vote for Golkar as a sign of their loyalty to the government. Workers unions were also forced to affiliate with Golkar. In addition, the military also took an important role in monitoring the way the elections were conducted to make sure that Golkar would always come out as the winner (Reeve 1985).

16 Pancasila is the official national philosophy of Indonesia. Coined by Sukarno, Pancasila is composed of five principles, which are interrelated with one another:

1. Belief in the One and Only God (Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa),
2. A just and civilized humanity (Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab),
3. The unity of Indonesia (Persatuan Indonesia),
4. Democracy, led by the wisdom of the representatives of the People (Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan Perwakilan)
parties to adapt different political ideologies as long as they were not based on communism. Consequently, the number of parties that competed in the 1999 election significantly increased to 48 parties.\(^{17}\) Meanwhile, the second law regulated the foundation of an independent Election Committee, KPU, ending the domination of government in managing the electoral process. The 1999 election was also the first election in Indonesia where election monitors from Indonesia and abroad could actively scrutinise the election process (Anwar 2010).

The 1999 election showed that there were some major changes in Indonesia’s politics. First of all, it saw the rise of new political parties representing groups whose political participation was previously restricted. Examples of such parties included PBI that represented the ethnic Chinese and the Democratic Catholic Party (\textit{Partai Katolik Demokrat}, PKD) that represented the Javanese Catholic community. Secondly, the election also saw the end of Golkar’s domination as it was not able to secure the majority of votes and lost to PDIP. Finally, this election also highlighted the resurfacing of overtly Islamic politics. Of the 48 parties competing in the election, nineteen were considered Islamic parties. In addition, eight of these Islamic parties gained representation in parliament, accounting for almost 38\% of legislative seats (Ananta, Arifin & Suryadinata 2004: 14).\(^{18}\)

\textbf{2.1.2.2 Decentralisation of Power}

Another important piece of legislation enacted by the Habibie government was Law number 22 of 1999 on regional autonomy. During the Suharto government, regional

\footnotesize
5. Social justice for all Indonesians (\textit{Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia}).

\(^{17}\) 48 parties consisted exclusively of the ones who met the criteria to compete in the 1999 election. In fact, there were 200 parties which had registered themselves with the Minister of Justice following the enactment of this new Law (Anwar 2010).

\(^{18}\) Islamic parties here can refer to two kinds of parties: those that formally states Islam as their foundation, or those that claim to be nationalist, but were formed by Islamic organisations.
governments were not allowed to manage their own affairs. All decisions were taken by
the central government, including the appointment of regional leaders, public officers,
and the management and distribution of regional resources. This centralisation helped to
secure Suharto’s position, but at the same time heavily disadvantaged these regions. At
this time, Suharto would handpick his ‘people’ to lead the regions, allowing him to assert
full control of the regions’ social, political and economic activities (Anwar 2010).

Habibie’s idea of decentralisation was inspired by federalist ideas in which the central
government provides freedom to regional governments to regulate themselves in all
areas, except the five key areas of ‘defence and security, foreign policy, fiscal and
monetary affairs, the judiciary and religious affairs’ (Anwar 2010: 109). This
decentralisation not only helped the regions to boost their economies, but also helped to
change the face of regional politics as it created opportunities for new leaders to rise.
With this new system, regions were allowed to elect their own representatives who
would then be entrusted to appoint regional leaders. Although citizens still could not
elect their regional leaders directly, this regulation marked the beginning of a shift in the
Indonesian political system and was the basis of Law number 32 of 2004 on direct
elections.

During the New Order government, Indonesia practised what was known as
‘representative democracy’ (demokrasi perwakilan) where elections took place to elect
members of DPR at the national level and members of DPRD at the regional level. These
legislative members would then appoint the president, governors, mayors and regents.
With the arrival of regional autonomy, there were discussions about changing this
representative democracy to direct democracy where citizens can directly elect their
president, vice-president, governors, mayors, and regents (Hutapea 2015).
Although Law number 22 of 1999 gave more authority for the local parliament to appoint regional leaders, this move was still considered insufficient as democracy ended at the level of regional government (Hutapea 2015). Therefore, in 2004 Megawati’s government enacted Law number 32 of 2004 that established the right of citizens to directly elect their own leaders. During the first regional direct elections in 2005, new names dominated the elections as winners were elected based on popular votes rather than their political influence in the existing political parties. Most elected leaders in these elections were those considered as ‘sons of the soil’ (putra daerah); locals who were well known in the regions either due to their business activities or their family reputation.

Jokowi and Ahok are also the products of this new electoral system. A successful furniture seller in Solo, Jokowi first became the Mayor of Solo in this 2005 election. Meanwhile Ahok, who won the 2005 election as the Regent of East Belitung, also comes from a well-known family that has maintained one of the biggest mining companies in that region. While these politicians can be considered as local elites, they are not part of the entrenched oligarchy and central elite system, which is the legacy of the Suharto government. Thus, they can arguably be considered as outsiders and were able to promote their ‘outsiderness’ to the constituents who were fed up with the domination of oligarchs and elites in Indonesia.

2.1.3 Arche-politics and the Indonesian Political Discourse

According to Duile and Bens (2017), arche-politics has been the main paradigm in Indonesia’s politics, particularly during the Suharto government. Borrowing this concept from Žižek who described this term as ‘the “communitarian” attempt to define the traditional, close, organically structured, homogenous social space that allows for no void in which the political moment or event can emerge’ (in Duile & Bens 2017: 141), they
argue that Indonesian politics has always been centralised in one leader, who is perceived as the father figure (bapak) of the nation. In practising arche-politics, Suharto considered the nation as a family unit where he positioned himself as the bapak who regulated the order and position of everyone within the system. Central to this idea of arche-politics is the need to have a ‘constitutive outside’ (Derrida in Duile & Bens 2017: 145), a distinct separation of those considered in-group members and out-group members who are regarded as potential threats. The formation of a ‘constitutive outside’ during the Suharto government could be clearly seen when he listed four groups – the West, communism, fundamentalist Islam, and Chinese – as the four major ‘others’ in Indonesia (Heryanto 1998). Suharto promoted this discourse of ‘othering’ as a strategy of depoliticisation to curb any potential threats to his absolute power.

In the previous section on the Indonesian political system, I discussed how Suharto tried to depoliticise Indonesia by limiting the citizens’ political activities and imposing strict regulations on political parties. At the same time, citizens were encouraged to maintain their political neutrality and to entrust the political process to their elected representatives. In addition, all decisions made in the parliament were the result of a consensus (musyawarah mufakat) that was considered important to maintain the unity of the nation (Duile & Bens 2017). In its political discourse, the New Order government always reminded the citizens of outside influences that could potentially threaten this unity (Duile & Bens 2017).

While Suharto’s presidency ended twenty years ago, this discourse of ‘othering’ continues to dominate the current political discourse in Indonesia. Duile and Bens (2017: 147) argue that political discourse in Indonesia mainly circulates around two ‘transcendental signifiers’, which are ‘the nation’/‘people’ and ‘Islam’. These signifiers, also referred to as
‘metanarratives’ (Lim 2013), are considered transcendental as they have been embedded for a long time in Indonesia’s politics and as such have never been challenged. Duile and Bens (2017: 147) argued that ‘political actors seem to be compelled to refer to them in order to be able to enter the political discourse’. Thus, any political communication efforts that do not include these signifiers will potentially become ineffective or even completely fail (Duile & Bens 2017; Lim 2013).

Although these signifiers have been embedded in Indonesia’s politics since the colonial era, they became more prominent during Suharto’s time as he used them very effectively to consolidate his power and domination in Indonesia by portraying himself as the *bapak* who protects the nation from outside threats (Duile & Bens 2017). To the present time, most political messages in Indonesia circulate around religious issues or other issues that are considered important to safeguard the nation and its people (Duile & Bens 2017).

Apart from forming and maintaining a ‘constitutive outside’, arche-politics in Indonesia also relies on personalisation of political actors. Instead of debating certain policies or issues, political discussions in Indonesia more often focus on the individual presentation of the politicians (Duile & Bens 2017). Instead of being seen as representatives of certain parties or political ideologies, Indonesian politicians are seen more as leaders who should have the capabilities to bring progress to the nation. Consequently, candidates’ messages in electoral campaigns tend to concentrate on representing them as ‘men and women of virtue and faith, and as members of an entity they call “the people”, rather than as spokespersons for specific political stances’ (Duile & Bens 2017: 150).
2.2 New Wave of Democracy, Political Outsiders, and the Rise of Populism

2.2.1 The Growth of Political Malaise around the World

In the last few years, there has been a surge of political change globally. Citizens have manifested growing distrust of, and dissent against, their governments and have actively found ways to voice their disagreements. This is apparent in the street protests and mass mobilisations that, in many cases, have been able to shift the direction of democracy in their region. Several scholars, such as Zhukof and Stewart (2013) and Sönmez (2016) believe one of the contributing causes of these movements is an event in the Arab world in October 2010. The Tunisian Revolution was a civil movement that included a series of street demonstrations that broke out after a street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, set himself on fire as an act of protest for his mistreatment at the hands of the government. This movement symbolised citizens’ frustrations with their corrupt authoritarian government, eventually forcing President Ben Ali to step down and initiate a freer and more democratic election in Tunisia (Ryan 2011). This revolution helped trigger further revolutions in the region (Hofheinz 2005 and Zhukof & Stewart 2013) leading to the toppling of autocratic leaders in Egypt, Syria, Libya and Iran. Collectively, this series of revolts is a phenomenon often referred to as the Arab Spring. This eventually inspired many other movements around the world, creating a domino effect in Africa (i.e. Sudan and Algeria), South America (i.e. Argentina and Brazil), Europe (i.e. Ukraine and Turkey), Asia (i.e. Thailand and Hong Kong), and some other parts of the world.

The movements that aimed to topple established governments emerged out of frustration with political leadership. The growing professionalisation of political campaigning has seen political institutions adapt strategic marketing techniques, such as advertising and public relations, to communicate with the constituents and secure their votes (Chadwick 2006). The tabloidisation of news and the commercialisation of political communication
have also contributed to growing resentment among citizens and their growing mistrust for political institutions and their politicians (Chadwick 2006).

This decline of trust in political systems was also manifested in the falling of voter turnout. Many democratic nations such as the United States and the United Kingdom saw a drop in the number of voters participating in elections (Chadwick 2006). In 1998 the US experienced its lowest turnout for the post-war period, when only 33% of voters participated in the congressional elections (International Institute for Democracy Electoral Assistance in Chadwick 2006: 145). Meanwhile, only 59% of voters participated in the 2001 UK general election, far below the usual 70% to 80% (Chadwick 2006). Even the young generation, who usually showed strong engagement with politics, seemed to lose interest. Chadwick (2006) reported that during the 2000 election, voter turnout among 18 to 24 years old Americans was only 37%. The same can be said about the UK, where the voting participation among the 18 to 25 years old also fell to less than 40% in 2001 (Coleman & Gotze in Chadwick 2006: 145). Changes in the structure of the media industry and the professionalisation of political communication were not the only contributing factors to this rise of ‘electoral malaise’ (Chadwick 2006). Broader issues of changes in social structure and shifting loyalties to parties also contributed to this political disinterest. In today’s society, constituents are becoming more socially fragmented and socially fluid, causing political parties to lose their support bases (Chadwick 2006).

As a relatively young democracy, Indonesia was something of an exception, with the past four post-Suharto elections embraced with enthusiasm by the citizens.19 The International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) reported that

voter turnout in these elections constantly stayed above 75% for legislative elections and around 70% for presidential elections. This number reached its peak in the 1999 election, the first election after Suharto’s fall, where 93% of eligible voters participated (Hill 2003). Apart from the high voter turnout, the elections also show that Indonesia’s democracy is getting stronger as ‘political parties compete freely for popular support and a wide range of pressure or interest groups and mass media exercise or try to exercise oversight over the behaviour of elected representatives and national and local governments’ (Webber 2006: 396). Signs that Indonesia’s democracy is consolidated can also be seen in other areas with clearer separation of power between executive and legislative arms of government, increased independence of legal institutions such as the Supreme Court (Mahkamah Agung, MA), and the formation of new institutions, such as the Corruption Eradication Commission (Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi, KPK) and the Constitutional Court (Mahkamah Konstitusi, MK) (Webber 2006).

Despite these changes, citizens feel that the elites are still very powerful in Indonesia and that civil society still cannot participate actively in influencing the decisions taken by the government. Indonesia’s reform agenda has slowed down and Indonesia also has not been able to escape from its long history of patrimonialism. Indonesian politics are still largely controlled by the oligarchs who continue to assert their power for personal gain. For instance, although the KPK has aggressively investigated and prosecuted many corruption cases in the country, Indonesia is still ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world with a Corruption Perception Index of 37. The index is released every year by Transparency International, an anti-corruption NGO based in Berlin, Germany. Each year, Transparency International ‘ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean’ (Transparency
International 2017). At the same time, KPK has also faced several attempts that aim to weaken its authority since its establishment in 2002. The most famous one was the so-called 'gecko vs crocodile’ case that happened in 2009 when the Indonesian Police Chief Detective, Susno Duadji, compared KPK to a gecko that tried to challenge the crocodile (referring to the police). He expressed his anger to the KPK in an interview with Tempo magazine as he found out that KPK had tapped his phone while investigating a corruption case. Susno’s comment soon backfired as most Indonesians have long held dissatisfaction with and distrust of the law enforcers.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that Indonesians have lost their faith in democracy. Polling results consistently show that the citizens still support the democratic process in Indonesia (Webber 2006; Mietzner 2010). For that reason, Indonesians continue to long for politicians who can advance a more equitable and inclusive form of democracy; politicians who are considered clean, capable and, most importantly, not part of the entrenched elites.

2.2.2 Political Outsiders, Populism, and the Politics of Dissent

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the Indonesians’ desire to have new leaders has manifested since the regional elections in 2005 where for the first time they were given the rights to directly choose their leaders. The victory of political outsiders – whose political careers were unheard of during the Suharto era – signified the rise of populism in the country (Hamid 2014). This means that citizens support these politicians not necessarily because they are familiar with the politicians’ track records or understand their policies, but because they are expressing dissent against the status quo.
While there are different ways to understand populism (see for instance Germani 1978; Mudde 2004; and Stanley 2008), in the Indonesian context it can be understood as ‘an anti status quo discourse that simplifies the political space by symbolically dividing the society between the people (as the underdogs) and its other’ (Panizza in Hamid 2014: 87). By this definition, populist discourse is built upon the ‘politics of antagonism’ or ‘politics of dissent’ whereas citizens’ dissent against the status quo is used to encourage them to choose other politicians who are considered to be on the citizens’ side. These politicians are generally those who are seen as outsiders to elite power with some underdog characteristics (Hamid 2014).

As the reorganisation of oligarchs and elites to adapt to post-Suharto Indonesia’s politics and economy became more apparent (Robison & Hadiz 2004), anti-establishment candidates gained political traction. The discourse of populism has the potential to create a rupture in Indonesia’s politics due to the growing frustrations and uncertainties felt by the electorates. Thus, these negative sentiments against the status quo are usually used as the basis of these candidates’ political messages that focused on portraying them as agents of change who can improve the conditions of the nation.

Populism is not unique to Indonesia. As the frustrations against corrupt and authoritarian government emerge in many parts of the world, populism has become a global political trend in the past two decades. Some of the leaders that gained traction due to their populist appeal include Narendra Modi in India, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Turkey, Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand, Rodrigo Duterte in the Philippines, and Donald Trump in the United States. All of them won elections by ‘attacking a supposedly collective enemy (mostly, domestic or foreign forces accused of exploiting the country’s economic resources) and by appealing to the poor or the common people as their main
constituency’ (Mietzner 2015: xi). It should be noted however that populist leaders do not always have to be outsiders or underdogs. Although they are usually not part of the elites or have some underdog characteristics, their populism is defined by their political discourse that is framed as competing against the status quo. For instance, Barack Obama, who portrayed himself as an underdog throughout his presidential campaigns, could not be considered as a populist as he was part of the establishment and known to work within the system.

The populism discourse in Indonesia is rather unique in that it is used by both the political outsiders and those who are considered as the entrenched elite power. For instance, in his book *Reinventing Asian Populism* Mietzner (2015) described in detail how both Jokowi and Prabowo used this discourse in their campaigns for the 2014 presidential election. As we know, Jokowi rose as a prominent political figure in Indonesia by bringing forward the discourse of change. He emerged into Jakarta’s politics in the middle of Jakartans’ frustration with the corrupt and highly bureaucratic Jakarta government (Hamid 2014). Jokowi’s rival in the election, incumbent governor Fauzi Bowo (Foke) was a veteran in the Jakarta bureaucracy with more than twenty years of experience. Foke, who had served in the Jakarta government as Secretary of the Province for the period of 1998 – 2002 and Deputy Governor for the period of 2002 – 2007, was deemed incapable to manage the complex problems that existed in the capital city. In his campaign with Ahok, another politician who was also considered as a new name in Jakarta’s politics, Jokowi chose the campaign slogan ‘New Jakarta’ (*Jakarta Baru*), reflecting a fresh change that they promised to bring to the capital city. Branding themselves differently from traditional politicians, Jokowi–Ahok were known by their signature chequered shirts, casual attire that is often sported by young people, that symbolised their approachability and down-to-earth character. In addition, instead of
delivering public speeches, this pair preferred to conduct *blusukan*, impromptu visits, to see and communicate firsthand with their electorates, especially those who come from the lower class of the society. Moreover, Jokowi–Ahok also actively involved the youngsters and popular artists in their campaign, representing a new kind of leaders who are close to the people and far from the formality of traditional leaders, which characterised the New Order politics.

During the 2014 presidential election, Jokowi continued these same approaches. However, this time he competed with Prabowo who also used the discourse of populism (Mietzner 2015). Nonetheless there were striking differences in the way the two candidates used this discourse to secure votes. Prabowo Subianto is an example of a classic populist leader. His political communication was dominated by messages that attacked the ruling government. Positioning himself as a defender of the rights of the poor, Prabowo accused the government of being controlled by greedy and corrupt politicians (Mietzner 2015). In his speeches, Prabowo also actively used the discourse of a ‘constitutive outside’ by focusing on the threats brought in by foreign forces to Indonesia. He argued that foreign companies only came to the country to exploit its natural resources with the help of elite politicians who functioned as their cronies (Mietzner 2015). In term of policy, Prabowo proposed to bring back Indonesia’s prosperity. He argued that to do this Indonesia needed a strong leader who could implement strict controls on behalf of the nation. Therefore, he argued to annul direct elections of presidents and regional governors in Indonesia and return the country to the New Order’s system of *demokrasi perwakilan* where citizens could only vote for the legislative members.
Jokowi, on the other hand, was characterised by Mietzner (2015) as a ‘polite populist’. His approach is quite different from the traditional idea of populism in that it is not based on messages that attack the status quo. Instead of proposing a radical change to the political system, Jokowi promised that he would improve the system from within (Mietzner 2015). Jokowi showed that he was willing to work with the system to bring progress to the country. In the 2014 election, he chose to be paired with Jusuf Kalla, a seasonal Golkar politician who served as Indonesia’s vice-president in the 2004–2009 period. Moreover, despite criticism, Jokowi also showed his obedience to Megawati as the leader of PDIP, the party that nominated him. This willingness to please Megawati can be seen for instance when Jokowi chose Megawati’s daughter, Puan Maharani, as his Coordinating Minister of Human Development and Cultural Affairs. Moreover, instead of using the discourse of a ‘constitutive outside’, Jokowi actually portrayed himself as inclusive, opening discussions with minority groups in the country (Mietzner 2015). Finally, Jokowi also showed that he supported foreign investment, as he believed it would benefit Indonesia’s development (Mietzner 2015). Jokowi’s track record in both Solo and Jakarta along with his down-to-earth image have contributed to his high approval rating. Thus, it can be argued that Jokowi successfully ‘pitched his technocratic, intra-systemic populism against Prabowo’s ultra-nationalist, confrontational populism’ (Mietzner 2015: xii).

When Ahok started to gain traction in Jakarta’s politics, his image was closely attached to that of Jokowi. Before the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, Ahok was a relatively unknown political figure on the national stage. As Jokowi’s partner in the election and later as his deputy, Ahok also carried some elements of populism in his political communication. This strategy was continued until he replaced Jokowi as Jakarta’s governor in November 2014. For instance, Ahok was well known for his door-stopping
policy where common Jakartans could meet the governor as he arrived at the office to directly ask his help on any issues that they faced with regards to the services provided by the provincial government. However, he was also known for his brash demeanour and unforgiving evictions of people living in slum areas of Jakarta. Perversely it was this open and blunt style of communication – that was a part of his outsider image – which arguably contributed to the decrease in his popularity towards this 2017 election (Wilson 2017). I discuss Ahok’s political communication strategies in more details in Chapter 5 when I present my data from my participant observation in Ahok’s office and my textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts.

2.3 Identity Politics in Indonesia

With the rise of populism, particularly the rise of populist leaders with an agenda of ultra-nationalism, there is also an associated increase in the use of identity politics by these leaders to garner votes and win elections. This section discusses the definition of identity politics, its long history in Indonesia, and how it is currently used in Indonesian electoral campaigns.

The term ‘identity politics’ can be defined as a social movement that is based on the activation of people’s cultural identity (Berstein 2005). Throughout its development, identity politics have often been associated with movements representing minority or oppressed groups, such as the women’s movement, the disability movement, the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) movement and separatist movements (Bernstein 2005). Identity politics rose when these groups started to use the discourse of identity and oppression to encourage their members to show grievances to the status quo. Identity politics have been proven effective in generating massive support as identities
have a strong association with emotion and people’s life experiences, factors that are relevant for social change (Bernstein 2005).

While the development of identity politics as mentioned above started as a reaction against hegemonic suppression, it has, however, also been criticised due to the rebellious undertone that it promotes (Alcoff & Mohanty 2006). Alcoff and Mohanty (2006: 3) argues that the overemphasis on different identities and oppression ‘fractures coalitions and breeds distrust of those outside one’s group’. This can be seen in the recent populist movement in the United States for instance, where the right-wing groups used identity politics to bring about Donald Trump’s victory in the 2016 election. Trump’s political messages that focus on the threats posed by radical Islamic groups, mass immigration and other foreign forces, resonated well with some white Americans’ fears of losing their supremacy. By using identity politics, Trump effectively created the discourse of ‘othering’ that polarised America’s multicultural society.

In Indonesia, identity politics is a high-risk strategy because of the frictions it can cause among its diverse inhabitants. As a nation that comprises more than 200 ethnic groups inhabiting more than 13,000 islands, Indonesia often emphasises its diversity as one of its strengths (Cribb 2000). This optimistic spirit is often articulated, and is even preserved as the country’s motto, which is Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Unity in Diversity. Unfortunately, these cultural differences are also the cause of divisions in the country. Some of the biggest conflicts that were caused by inter-ethnic and inter-religion tensions in Indonesia are the violence against Chinese Indonesians during the riots in 1998, the conflict between the Muslims and Christians in Ambon in 1999, and the conflict between the Dayaks and the Madurese in Kalimantan in 2001.
The increased use of identity politics in political communication is consistent with the rise of populism in Indonesia. First of all, as identity politics focuses on the individual’s social and cultural differences as the basis of one’s political positions, many politicians like to use this discourse to create a sense of solidarity among their supporters by defining ‘us’ versus ‘them’. At the same time, as mentioned in an earlier section of this chapter, identity politics has actually long been integrated to Indonesia’s politics and has been reflected in the metanarratives framing political discussions in this country, which are ‘the nation’/‘people’ and ‘Islam’ (Duile & Bens 2017; Lim 2013). As the majority of Indonesians identify as pribumi Muslims, those who do not conform to this identification are most vulnerable when identity politics is activated. One example of this group is the Chinese Indonesians (Tionghoa) whom many still consider as a ‘constitutive outside’ of the nation.

As reported by some scholars such as Heryanto (1998), Lie (1999) and Ang (2001), many Indonesians are still very suspicious of and feel hatred towards this group, despite the fact that the Chinese have been an important part of Indonesian society since the nation’s early development (Coppel 1983). They even took a prominent role in Indonesia’s independence struggle; for instance one of the earliest Chinese newspapers in Indonesia, Sin Po, was known to often publish articles that were critical of the Dutch colonialism and spurred nationalism amongst Chinese Indonesians (Suryadinata 2004, Hoon 2008).

In his work on ethnic conflict in Africa, Mahmood Mamdani (2005: 2) suggests that ethnic violence in post-colonised nations is actually the ‘political legacy of colonialism, of the colonial state as a legal/institutional complex that reproduced particular political

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20 With Presidential Decree number 12 of 2014, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono decided that Tionghoa is the preferred term to refer to Indonesians of Chinese descent. This term is replacing the word ‘Cina’ that carries negative connotations about this ethnic group.
identities’. This is because the colonial state used race (differences and similarities in biological traits) and ethnicity (differences and similarities in cultural practices and perspectives) to make clear distinctions among the population, with different positions and regulations imposed upon these different groups (Mamdani 2005). In this system, settlers were treated based on their race and given their civic rights as subjects of the State. Meanwhile, native inhabitants were treated based on their ethnicity and governed through customary laws (Mamdani 2005).

The same can be said about Indonesia. The Dutch colonisers were actually the first ones that started to divide society members into different groups based on ethnicity. During this era, the society was divided into three social classes that consisted of European at the top level, foreign orientals (included the Chinese, Arabs, and Indians) in the middle level and the prihumi indigenous at the bottom level, and each group was given different treatments and rights in accordance to their level in the society (Hefner 2001: 17). In post-colonial Indonesia, the new independent government further discriminated against the Chinese; they were forced to live in specific areas, and they were prohibited from claiming ownership of local businesses (Coppel 1983).

The sentiment against non-pribumi, particularly the Chinese minority, was strengthened during the Suharto government (Heryanto 1998). Suharto aimed to separate the Chinese from the rest of the population and even acknowledged them as one of the four major ‘others’, alongside ‘the West’, ‘Communism’, and ‘Fundamentalist Islam’ (Heryanto 1998). The common discourses used to set the Chinese apart from other Indonesians were mainly based on the differences of their religion and cultural tradition. At the same time, in his political propaganda, Suharto always communicated the idea that the Chinese were ‘suspected of being deeply attached or essentially susceptible to communism’ (Heryanto
Based on these reasons, this group was portrayed as a threat to ‘the universal nationalist project of seeking native roots and authentic origins’ (Heryanto 1998: 97).

Although Suharto’s government clearly practised identity politics as a form of controlling its citizens, it also prevented issues of ethnicity being publicly discussed (Bresnan 2005). Suharto even made a strict regulation that any public discussions should not touch the issues of ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup relations, or what is better known in Indonesia as the acronym SARA (suku, agama, ras dan antar golongan). This regulation highlights the authoritarian characteristic of the Suharto government, which tried to curb any manifestation of friction between the country’s multi-ethnic citizens that could harm the ‘unity’ of the archipelago (Bresnan 2005: 143).

Several scholars such as Mujani and Liddle (2004), and Hamayotsu (2013) argue that identity politics is one of the major factors behind the slow development of democracy in Indonesia, especially since there have been growing religious sentiments and sectarian politics in the country in the past few years. Several populist leaders, although sometimes implicitly, have been promoting an agenda that centred on the return of political and economic control to the majority, in this case the prabumi Muslims.

In the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, it was clear that Ahok’s opponents used identity politics to defeat him. His ethnic and religious background made him an easy target for this kind of ‘othering’. The same discourse had been used during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election (when he was running as Jokowi’s deputy governor) and in 2014 (when he was replacing Jokowi as governor), however they were not successful as Ahok’s image as a politician who is clean and of integrity was more powerful than the negative discourses that tried to bring him down (Hatherell & Welsh 2017). Hatherell
and Welsh (2017: 174) also argued that by 2014, Ahok “has established a charismatic relationship with followers by positioning himself in opposition to some of the more pressing concerns in contemporary Indonesia”. In 2017 however, this discourse of ‘othering’ found its momentum, especially after Ahok’s slip of the tongue during his official visit that took place a few weeks before the start of the gubernatorial campaign where he referred to a Quranic verse when criticising his political opponents, leading to accusations of blasphemy. Consequently, this gubernatorial election was overshadowed by Ahok’s blasphemy case rather than discussions about the track records and policies of the candidates. Islamic groups were able to mobilise a large number of people by appealing to people’s piety (Fealy 2016). As described thoroughly in Chapter 1, this led not only to Ahok’s defeat but ultimately also to his incarceration for blasphemy.

In the aftermath of the election, identity politics dominated public discussions and has continued to do so until the present time. Political leaders are no longer shy of identifying themselves with hardliner Islamic groups to boost their image and increase their electability. At the same time, those who claim themselves as pluralists also present discourses that criticise Islamic values. The dichotomies of ‘moderate Muslim’ versus ‘radical Muslim’ or ‘tolerant’ vs ‘intolerant’ dominate everyday conversations among Indonesians (Lim 2017).

2.4 Conclusion

The fall of Suharto has brought many changes to the Indonesian political system. The decentralisation of power, introduced by Habibie, is one of the most important policies that altered the political dynamics of Indonesia. Most importantly, this policy gave opportunities for new politicians to emerge and compete with the existing elites and oligarchs. This new kind of politicians, defined here as ‘political outsiders’, presents a new
style of leadership. Unlike the New Order’s politicians who were known to be distanced, formal and, most importantly, corrupt; these outsiders are considered to be approachable and have a clean record.

The political legacy of Suharto, however, remains quite influential. The discourse of ‘othering’ that he used to depoliticise the citizens and protect his position during his presidency still dominates the political discourse to the present time. At the same time, populism is on the rise in Indonesia, with many populist leaders using identity politics to attack their opponents and secure votes from constituents.

The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election in particular illustrates how identity politics was used to defeat Ahok who comes from a Chinese Christian background. This understanding of populism and identity politics is important not only to examine how Ahok formed his political communication strategies, but also to analyse factors contributing to his struggle and defeat in this last 2017 gubernatorial election.
CHAPTER 3

THE INTERNET, SOCIAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA

Starting with the assumption that politics and communicative technologies are constitutive of each other, this chapter analyses how the Internet and social media change the terrain of political communication and allow political outsiders to rise and gain traction in elite-dominated politics. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents the debates around the interplay between media and politics. The second section elaborates on how the Internet and social media change political communication and discusses how these changes affect politics and democracy. At the end of the chapter, I also present case studies on non-elite politicians who have been able to successfully integrate social media in their campaigning.

That new media, like older media, are central to political processes is well understood, but the nature of the relationship is open to debate. This chapter aims to highlight the key studies on the effects that these new media bring to political communication and democracy. Broadly speaking, research in this field suggests that while new media have the capacity to transform power at a grassroots level, enable alternative voices, and make politics more flexible and pluralistic, they are not free from forms of institutional and structural control which may prevent citizens from engaging in deliberation or actively participating in the political processes.
3.1 The Interplay between Media and Politics

3.1.1 Defining Political Communication

Political communication can be understood as

the process by which language and symbols, employed by leaders, media, or citizens, exert intended or unintended effects on the political cognitions, attitudes, or behaviors of individuals or on outcomes that bear on the public policy of the nation, state, or the community (Perloff 2014: 30).

There are several points that we can take from this definition. First of all is the idea of a process, which means that political communication cannot be understood as a simple cause and effect. Instead, it entails complex interactions between three players: political institutions, media, and citizens, in negotiating power. The definition also emphasises the importance of communication in this political process. Political communication is based on the production, exchanges and interpretation of symbolic forms that have intended and unintended effects on politics and political participation.

Political communication is central to democracy as political institutions, media and citizens need to communicate with each other to shape the public policy. Normatively, political communication connects political institutions with the people they govern and it also allows citizens to respond to their leaders (Perloff 2014). However, in reality there are many variations in the dynamics of political communication.

First of all, media as the arena where politics takes place is never free from different forms of control. Media practise selection in presenting and framing the information that they send to the public by following certain criteria of newsworthiness, which are based on the media’s economic motivation. This gatekeeping process affects the other two players in political communication. Perloff (2014) argues that while media affects citizens’
perception of political issues, they also influence political institutions to package their messages to meet these criteria of newsworthiness.

Most theories on democracy stress the importance of active participation of informed citizens in politics. Nonetheless, in reality not all citizens are capable of or are interested in participating in politics (Perloff 2014). While Perloff bases his argument on the statistics of the American publics and their political engagement, this statement remains true in a new democratic nation, such as Indonesia. Although the voter turnout in Indonesia is still higher than the world average, the trends have shown some decline (Mujani, Liddle & Ambardi 2018). Indonesia’s voter turnout in the 2014 election was 75%, significantly lower than the voter turnout in 1999 – the first election after the reform – that reached 93% (Mujani et al. 2015). At the same time, researches have also shown that Indonesians who participate in online political campaigning have a low level of knowledge regarding the laws and regulations surrounding the issues that they are supporting (Molaei 2016). These facts show two different things. First, there has been an up and down of citizens’ interest in politics and political participation. Second, they also show that political literacy in Indonesia is still low, which influences the citizens’ capability in engaging in political discussions.

Another point to be considered with regards to the dynamic of political communication is that politics is exclusive. Politics does not provide the same opportunity for everyone to participate. This means that while citizens, along with political institutions and media, interact with each other as key players in politics, most of the time the rich and educated have more say and more access to the political process (Perloff 2014). This fact highlights two different things: first, certain political candidates who are not backed up by strong resources will have difficulty in competing and getting traction in the elite-dominated
political system. At the same time, it also shows that only a certain privileged group in the society can participate actively in political discussions, which may influence policies that concern a larger society.

3.1.2 Political Communication and Deliberation

In a democratic society, deliberation is central to political communication (Gastil 2008) as political institutions need the support of the citizens to gain and maintain their power, and this support cannot be acquired without the dissemination of information to the citizens. In a democratic government, this relationship is even more critical as the citizens have more ‘freedom’ to decide who will represent them in the government ‘on the basis on informed judgement on what is best for them and the country’ (Castells 2011: 96). This decision-making process, which is based on weighing different information that the citizens receive, is referred to as deliberation.

Despite different understandings of the term, deliberation here particularly refers to the process of carefully examining ‘a problem and a range of solutions through an open, inclusive exchange that incorporates and respects diverse points of view’ (Gastil 2008: xi). In this process, political institutions provide a diversity of information to the citizens that will assist them in considering their political choices (Castells 2007).

The concept of deliberation first emerged in the context of the rise of the public sphere. In his fundamental work, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (1962), Jürgen Habermas recognised the emergence of public discussions in eighteenth century British and French coffee houses, which allowed the (bourgeois) citizens for the first time to openly debate and critique the government, their policies and practice. These debates and discussions, he argued, later formed a collective view on a given issue, which we now
refer to as public opinion. In this work, Habermas (1962) also recognised the role of newspapers in supplying not only information, but also opinions, comments and critiques which became the points of reference for these ‘coffee-house’ discussions. While Habermas highlighted the importance of participation in deliberation, Dryzek (1996) argued that reflection is also an important part of deliberation. As deliberation involves the exchange of information and persuasion, participants of deliberation can exercise their preferences, change their opinions, or even decide not to deliberate in the process (Dryzek 1996).

The media are central to this process of deliberation as they play an important role in collecting, processing and disseminating large amounts of information, thus creating dialogues ‘between the mass public and “the professional communicators”’ (Gastil 2008: 50). However, whilst mass media should ideally operate by respecting the basic principles of journalism of neutrality, objectivity and impartiality (McQuail 1997), they have never been free of different interests. Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur (1976) stated that either directly or indirectly there is interdependence between the media, political institutions, and the economic system in which they operate. Agreeing with this, Castells (2011) argued that the institutions and practices of the media are shaped by the economic and political interests of the power holders through the process of selection and representation of content by media professionals. This means that this relationship will affect what the media choose to cover and how they cover and represent it to the public.
3.1.3 Political Communication as a Mediated Process

Political communication has always been a mediated process. Political institutions use the media to disseminate their messages to the citizens while as citizens we rely on media to provide us with information that shapes ‘our mental maps of the political and social world outside our direct experience’ (Jones & Pusey 2010: 23). Therefore, shaping public opinion is a key objective of any political communication effort. Due to its ability to disseminate information to mass audiences, the media is a vital tool to help political institutions to achieve this aim. Through the media, people obtain their information about their politicians, their policies, and how these influence their lives as citizens. In Castells’ words, ‘media make up the space in which power is constituted’ as the information that the citizens obtain from the media becomes the basis of their political participation and decision making (2011: 98).

In communication theories, there are two ways to understand how the media’s decisions affects public opinion. On the first level, mass media have the power to extensively cover certain issues to promote their significance (McCombs & Shaw 1972). This is when the mass media is said to have an agenda-setting role that can influence the public to think about these issues and put them in the forefront of the public agenda. On the second level, mass media also have the power to make the public think of an issue from a particular perspective, which is known as media framing (Gamson in Gastil 2008: 58). The framing that the media choose to cover certain issues will influence the way the public thinks about these issues.

However, citizens are not simply passive audiences. Instead, they actively select what media messages they receive and determine how they make sense of them (Hall 1973; Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch 1973). This means that citizens might disapprove of some
political messages that appear in the media and have their own alternative account on the
issues, despite not always having the opportunity to present it. This process of debating
the different stances on an issue is what makes deliberation legitimate. Deliberation is not
simply about trying to find a consensus; instead it should be based on debates and
discussions taking place in an open environment that is free from political biases and
unequal power dynamics (McNair 2011).

Before the Internet became ubiquitous in everyday life, the dominant mode of political
communication was through the mass media. In the 1920s, Walter Lipmann conducted
one of the earliest studies of political communication. In his work, Lipmann discussed
how President Woodrow Wilson used the press to justify America’s involvement in
World War I and to persuade the American public to support this decision (in Perloff
2015). By the mid-twentieth century, television had gained popularity and moving images
and sound captivated the public and allowed them to have the impression that they could
experience events first-hand (Thompson 1994). Research in this period, such as studies
conducted by Blumler (1970), and Lang and Lang (1968) showed how television has an
impact on the way citizens think about and react to politics. In their words, Lang and
Lang described how television ‘provided the means for direct participation without the
need for physical movement’ (1968: 17). As political events were now brought to the
citizens’ living room, they became more emotionally invested in politics and more
interested in discussing these events with others.

While the media continues to be the main tool for political message dissemination, the
way messages are transmitted has evolved following the development of media
technologies. When older media, such as newspapers, radio and television were still
considered the main sources of information, political institutions disseminated their
messages to journalists, who would then report them to the public based on certain gatekeeping criteria designed to shape public opinion (Castell 2007). In this equation, political communication flowed one-way, following the public information model (Grunig & Hunt 1984) that limited interactions between politicians and the public. However, this changed as the public developed an understanding of media bias, and the public started to lose their trust in mainstream news. At the same time, the Internet and social media started to become a pervasive part of everyday life. Those who could not get access to mass media could now disseminate their stories via these new outlets, changing not only the interplay between information producer and consumer, but also promoting more interactions among citizens and also between citizens and their leaders (Castell 2007; Perloff 2014).

So far, the discussion has shown that media provides the space for politics and has a role in pushing certain agendas and influencing public opinion. Thus, it is not surprising that political institutions want to influence mass media as a way to maintain their political domination. This control allows them to shape the news to be favourable towards their political agenda, thus giving them a better chance to gain support from constituents. The tendency of political institutions to influence mass media can be seen in both western and eastern contexts. In the US, for instance, it is widely known that Fox News Channel is a loyal supporter of the Republican Party and tends to promote a conservative or right-wing agenda (Brock & Rabin-Havt 2012). This connection has been developed since the very start when the owner of this cable news network, media mogul Rupert Murdoch, hired a former Republican Party media consultant, Roger Ailes as its founding CEO (Brock & Rabin-Havt 2012). The same trend can be seen in Indonesia. As mentioned in Chapter 1, six of thirteen media groups in Indonesia are owned by those who are actively involved in politics or are known as loyal supporters of certain politicians (Lim 2012).
Consequently, these links to politicians or political parties affect what and how these media report politics.

Naturally people look for news that confirms their political perspective, and the consumption of news from these partisan media potentially strengthens their pre-existing beliefs (Tremayne 2015). The tendency of media to present biased reporting that promotes particular points of view is not something new (Kuypers 2014). However, new media gives people greater capacity to filter the news that they receive, for instance by page subscriptions and personalised content feeds. As more people use the Internet and social media as their main sources of news, they also become more exclusive in their media consumption (Tremayne 2015). Hence, the polarisation of opinions continues to be prevalent and this is also reflected in their voting preferences (Della Vigna & Kaplan 2006). In the next section, I elaborate on the main changes that the Internet and social media bring to political communication.

3.2 How the Internet and New Media Change Political Communication

Contemporary literatures on media and politics tend to centre on the effects of the Internet and new media in democracy (Couldry 2003; Rheingold 2000; and Poster 2006). Generally, scholars appear to be divided into two poles with regard to this issue. The optimists, such as Rheingold (2000) and Negroponte (1995), consider the Internet as a powerful medium that can give people ‘a potential voice, a platform, and access to the means of production’ (Kidd 2010: 96). These scholars see the Internet as a new form of public sphere where citizens can actively and publicly participate in political discussions (Rheingold 2000; Negroponte 1995). Other scholars, such as Best and Wade (2009), also argue that the Internet has the ability to provide information to the public that will eventually help them to better determine where they sit on an issue. At the same time,
they believe that the Internet can also teach people how to organise collectively to make a political movement (Best & Wade 2009).

On the other hand, scholars such as Murdock and Golding (2003) and Franda (2002) are more doubtful about the democratising potential of the Internet. They see the Internet as the reproduction of Marxist power of the ruling class, which is used as ‘a Western project of dominance and penetration, if not cultural threat’ (Franda in Siedschlag 2005: 3). This concern comes from an understanding that despite its potential, not everyone can take advantage of the Internet as individuals not only need internet connection but also some knowledge on how to use it.

In Indonesia this issue of digital divide is quite prevalent since there are significant differences between the information haves and have nots in this country. The number of internet users in Indonesia only reaches 143 million people, or approximately 55% of the total population (APJII 2018). Although this number is higher than the world’s penetration average of 39%, it is still much lower than most of the countries in the Southeast Asian region (Internetworldstats 2017).

More recent studies in this area provide more nuances about the interplay between new media and politics. Many scholars have argued that while the Internet and social media have the ability to mobilise large numbers of people online for certain causes this does not necessarily lead to political actions at the level of the street and parliament (Morozov 2009, Gladwell 2010). Lim (2013) suggests that many times people prefer to be engaged in low-risk activism, which she refers to as ‘slacktivism’ (Lim 2013: 638). This kind of activism is more instantaneous as citizens can participate from the comfort of their mobile devices. Some political actions that can be included in this category are signing an online
petition, participating in an online political survey, or liking a social media page of a
politician; actions that usually only have minimal impact. Nonetheless, Lim (2013) also
argued that the Internet’s participatory culture can be adapted to increase civic
engagement and support political mobilisation, as long as this activism is only intended
to push forward simple issues that are congruent with the popular narrative in that
particular society.

Regardless of the diverse assessment of the Internet and political communication,
scholars agree that the Internet and new media bring important changes to the dynamics
of political communication. The Internet and new media make interactions between
political institutions, media and citizens become more complex. For instance, the Internet
and social media encourage direct interactions between political institutions and citizens,
creating more engagement between people and politics. At the same time, they also
reduce the domination of news media and distribute the power to the people, enabling
them to participate more actively in public dialogue.

3.2.1 The Abundance of Information, Transparency and Immediacy

When we talk about the Internet, we should note that it is actually not a single medium;
instead ‘it is a series of interlocking digital networks that convey information that has
been interpreted and mediated by traditional media as well as other outlets’ (Perloff 2014:
62). Considering this definition, one of the main changes that the Internet brings to
communication is the significant increase in the amount of information that is available.
This information has been derived from a variety of sources, is updated instantly and is
available any time we want it.
One of the main contributing factors to the increase in the amount of information available on the Internet and new media is the idea of conviviality, which Illich (1973) defines as a condition where a society ‘prefers the maximization of individual’s creativity, imagination, and energy to the maximization of outputs’ (in Sipitakiat & Cavallo 2003: n.p). In this society, Illich argued that tools (which he defined broadly as any rationally designed devices) should have the ability to facilitate new interactions amongst people and between people and their environment (1973: 26). While Illich’s idea appeared long before the advent of the Internet, his idea highlights the importance of user friendliness, user autonomy and equality, which characterise today’s new media. As tools become convivial, information is no longer the monopoly of certain groups of people. Instead, users can access this information, refine it, distribute it, and discuss it, resulting in what Illich called ‘knowledge of the individual citizen’ (1973: 100). Considering this, Slattery (2007) suggested that Illich had arguably predicted the arrival and prompted usage of the Internet as a convivial tool, in his elaboration of the idea of ‘learning webs’. ‘Learning webs’ were Illich’s way of theorising a technology to match people based on certain similarities, such as activities and interests in a network where there could be a non-hierarchical exchange of information and skills. Illich’s description of a convivial tool can also be seen in the Internet as it enables audiences to be producers of information, reducing the role of information gatekeepers by allowing users to present their accounts on the issues concerning society (Chadwick 2006).

Following Illich, Slattery (2007) also argued that one of the most important functions of the Internet as a convivial tool is to provide information to the users and to give them autonomy in selecting which information to obtain. The abundance of information available on the Internet means that users can build their knowledge by filtering the information from a variety of sources and points of view. Although naturally people
conduct selective perception as a way to cope with information overload, their selection is often not conducted carefully; instead most people do this by choosing sources that are congruent with their cognitive dissonance (Perloff 2014). At the same time, as modern life demands people to be continuously on the move, the way they access this information is also evolving. Nowadays, people consume information on-the-go through their mobile devices, preferring bite-sized information on the issues that they have previously pre-selected through several filtering features that these new media offer (Lim 2013).

By changing the dynamic between content producers and consumers, the Internet and new media also promote transparency of information. As anyone can present their content on the Internet, people can get access to information that used to be seen as confidential (Bennet & Iyengar 2008). Political information which was previously kept inside, such as government reports, court documents and private conversations, are now opened for citizens to scrutinise. Although this arguably allows citizens to actively keep an eye of their leaders, forcing them to be more responsible, this also means that political institutions start using this as a strategy to attack their political opponents (Perloff 2014). As generally speaking, people are driven to scandals, leaking sensitive information becomes a common political tactic to encourage citizens not to support particular candidates. Moreover, it also becomes more difficult to check the reliability of information on the Internet, thus hoaxes or fake news start to flourish and dominate internet-based information (Perloff 2014).

3.2.2 Community Formation, Volunteers and Influencers

As mentioned above, the architecture of internet technology makes communication more open in comparison to traditional mass media where editorial decisions and ownership have a strong influence on the information that these media distribute to the public.
(Rheingold 2000). Anyone, providing he or she gets access to the Internet, can broadcast his or her own content with little control from the power holders. The development of social media technologies makes this information sharing even easier. Social media users can create their content in shorter formats, link it to other media sources, and share it with their networks who will continue to pass on this information to an even larger network.

This user friendliness of social media increases not only the effectiveness of the message delivery, but also its impact. As users voluntarily choose what social media accounts they want to follow, they tend to give more attention to the messages shared by these accounts. At the same time, these messages are also perceived as more trustworthy as they were generated by users’ own networks rather than by big media companies (Kidd 2010). In addition, social media are also embedded with features where users can react and give comments to these messages. These comments can then be replied to by the account holders or by other users, creating interactive dialogues and stronger engagement between them (Kidd 2010).

One of the strengths of social media in comparison to other features on the Internet is its ability to ‘derive value primarily from user-generated content’ (Carr & Hayes 2015: 49). As social media content is basically developed from what users create and share with their networks, Kidd (2010: 4) argued that social media can be a neutral space for collaboration, sharing and conversations that is ‘completely outside the reach of the “big media”’. In terms of political communication, this means that social media not only allows citizens to discuss political issues with each other, it also supports engagement and personalisation between the politicians and their constituents (Karpf 2009). This dialogue is what Karpf (2009) refers as ‘politics 2.0’, which can be understood as political activities that benefit
from the relatively low-cost technologies and information abundance provided by the Internet, with a goal of building more participatory and interactive civil society.

The networking capability of social media also brings new opportunities for political institutions. Today, these institutions recognise the potential of social media campaigners to amplify the political messages by circulating these messages within their networks (Saraswati 2016). According to Saraswati (2016), this strategy increased supporters’ engagement with the candidates by making them feel a part of their favourite candidate’s victory. This strategy is actually not something new. Similar to the approach used in traditional marketing, the idea is to invite people who have a large number of social media followers to participate in the campaign. These people will then be encouraged to write content in favour of particular candidates and distribute them to their own networks. These networks will then continue to pass on these messages, creating a buzz for the respective politicians and their messages. Due to the nature of this promotion, these types of influencers are known as ‘buzzers’ in the Indonesian political scene.

Scholars such as Trent and Friedenberg (1995) and Bimber and Davis (2003) also recognise the benefits of using new media technologies to reach out to constituents. Looking at current trends in media consumption, today’s politicians can use social media to employ personalised campaigning as a way to interact with their constituents (Zittel 2009). Personalised communication assists politicians and political institutions to create and strengthen networks of supporters, determine the issues that citizens care most about, and respond to them effectively in campaigns (Ferdinand 2000). In addition, the lack of gatekeepers in social media mean that political outsiders are able to represent themselves without being prevented by the agenda and framing of traditional mass media.
It should be noted however that most people use social media to express themselves, socialise, or simply have fun, rather than to participate in real civic engagement (Lim 2013). While they might want to be involved in this collective communication, this does not mean that they will generate political actions that are capable of having an impact on government policies. At their best, social media ‘facilitates and amplifies a culture that helps establish a foundation, a training ground, and a learning space for individuals to express their opinions, to exercise their rights and to collaborate with others’ (Lim 2013: 654).

Communication through social media also has some limitations, Due to the openness of its structure, social media can potentially reduce the control that political institutions traditionally have over communication flow and messages (Sey & Castells 2004). On social media, users can exchange information that may not be part of the politicians’ key messages, and they can also alter these messages and produce new messages using campaign information that may benefit or harm the candidates (Sey & Castells 2004). Thus, research has shown that social media political campaigning works better for those who Kamarck (in Sey & Castells 2004) described as the ‘antiestablishment candidates’; those who are competing against established political elites.

At the same time, managing a successful campaign on social media requires an understanding of how these media networks work. Pew Research (2012) reported that many politicians who actively campaign through social media have not taken advantage of the opportunity to create engagement with their constituents. Most social media messages sent by these politicians are one-way and simply informational, promoting the politicians’ activities and policies rather than involving constituents in deliberation (Pew Research 2012). When members of the public are featured in these politicians’ social
media accounts, they are usually celebrities who are part of the campaign team or are politically aligned. These celebrities appear in these accounts to give testimonials about the politicians and to encourage others to vote (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez 2011). The lack of understanding of social media prevents political institutions and politicians from exploring the potential they offer for increased engagement and deliberation. The community-building function of social media is only effective when the politicians and followers actively engage with each other. It is in the politicians’ interest to both understand their followers and get their supporters to amplify their messages in social media. Supporters of particular politicians can interact with like-minded people, share information, and exchange ideas to amplify the popularity of their favourite politicians (Slotnick 2009). In line with the purpose of social media to build communities, Slotnick (2009) suggests that supporters should be encouraged to follow their favourite politicians on social media. In return, these politicians can use social media to mobilise their supporters and organise their off-line political activities.

3.2.3 Internet Algorithms, Bubble Effect and Polarisation of Opinions

From the point of view of the citizens, there are also several issues concerning the use of social media as a vehicle for political communication, such as polarisation of opinions and the restructuring of elite power. According to Avery, Ellis & Glover (1978) people generally have a tendency to prefer discussions with like-minded individuals. This tendency is likely to continue even if they are included in broader collective decision making. As a result, the existence of a large amount of diverse information available on the Internet and social media does not always translate to better deliberation. Instead, internet interaction promotes the existence of polarised opinion groups ‘where members’ interests, values and prejudices are reinforced rather than challenged’ (Dahlberg 2001: 618). The same view is shared by Habermas when he argues that the Internet produces
fragmentation in online population where the ‘public…remain closed off from one another’ (1998: 121).

One important factor contributing to the strengthening of polarised opinions in social media is related to the structure of internet technologies themselves. Social media systems are driven by algorithms that automatically choose what users would like to see or read based on certain information that the system has collected, such as the users’ location, group association, past click behaviours, and search history (Bozdag 2013). By doing this, social media creates a ‘filter bubble’ that minimises users’ exposure to different information that is not in line with their personal preferences (Pariser 2011). The filtering of information does not only depend on what information that users select. Phillips (2016) reported that Facebook news feeds, which users see on the front page of their account, are also influenced by the kind of news that the users’ networks select. This means that if our social media networks comprise the kind of people who support a particular politician or party, then our news feeds will tend to propose news that favours that politician or party.

At the same time, researchers also reported that many users do not realise that social media are not free from the domination of political organisations. Facebook, for instance, receives payment from organisations and politicians to make users pay more attention to their content (Phillips 2016). Although social media seem to provide more opportunities for citizens to discuss politics, these people are sometimes not aware that they actually live in a ‘bubble’ that prevents them from understanding the minds of people who either do not share their viewpoint or, more importantly, those who are not particularly interested in politics (Phillips 2016).
3.3 Politics in the New Media Era

As the Internet and social media enable new ways to communicate and deliberate, they also alter aspects of politics and political process and modes of engagement and participation. This section discusses such changes, particularly in the form of party competition, diffusion of power, and the ways politicians create their identity online.

3.3.1 Power Diffusion and Changes in Party Competition

One of the ways the Internet and new media change politics is by increasing party competition. Promoting candidates’ political messages on the Internet and social media is arguably less costly than distributing them through the channels of traditional media. Therefore, new players or candidates who do not receive support from big political parties can still promote themselves in these media networks through the use of blogs, personal websites or social media accounts (Chadwick 2006). This allows non-elite candidates or marginalised groups to bypass the restrictions imposed by the traditional power holders. Anyone can create his or her content on the Internet without being controlled by the gatekeepers found in traditional media.

Despite all of these possibilities, there are still differences between online politics and real-world politics (Norris 2000). Norris (2000) argued that the heated political discussions that happen online do not always translate to the same enthusiasm off-line. This means people might be willing to engage in online discussions, but might be more reluctant to participate in off-line political activities, such as attending protests, public debates and so on. At the same time, there is also still an unequal competition happening in online politics. As political campaigning is becoming an industry, more established candidates usually have the ability to employ better campaigners (Chadwick 2006). These
candidates are also backed up with more resources to support the distribution of their online campaign messages (Norris 2000).

Another debate pertinent to the impact of the Internet and social media on politics concerns the issue of power diffusion. Several scholars such as Ayres (1999) and Diani (2000) provide an overview of how the Internet can support grassroots organisations in pushing certain issues onto the mainstream political agenda. Chadwick (2006: 148) also noted the potential of the Internet to increase ‘grassroots control over candidates and party leaderships, resulting in decentralised network of structures’. The interactions promoted by these new media, between political institutions and the citizens, could potentially give citizens more opportunities to influence the policies that matter to them (Chadwick 2006). While political institutions are forced to narrowcast their messages to answer citizens’ demands; citizens are also becoming more informed and ready to scrutinise their politicians.

Nonetheless, Bimber (2003) warned against euphoria over the potential of the Internet to increase political participation. First of all, most political institutions still use the Internet as another medium for public information. Politicians tend to go to social media to organise their supporters for off-line activities rather than engaging them in deliberation (Bimber 2003). At the same time, although the Internet can increase citizens’ interest in politics, this interest does not always increase citizens’ interest in voting (Johnson and Kaye 2003). Johnson and Kaye (2003) argued that the political discussions happening on the Internet only strengthen the engagement of those who are already interested in politics, and that number is relatively small. The vast majority, who are not invested in politics either because of a lack of interest or a lack of resources, are still excluded from this political participation.
3.3.2 Outsider Identity in Social Media Campaigning

A final question to examine when assessing the influence of social media on politics is how political institutions and politicians create their identity online. Political identity is integral to politicians’ public performances to communicate their brand and their policies (Rai 2014). These performances can take multiple forms, such as discourses, rituals, symbols, and other things that distinguish the politicians from their competitors. Political performance should also be understood in a very specific socio-political context where the politics takes place (Rai 2014). Although politicians can decide what kind of performance they want to create, this performance ‘has to be representative of a particular political stand; it must engage the audience that is its particular target; it should satisfy the formal rules, rituals and conventions of the institutions through which the meaning is being projected; and be received as logical and coherent’ (Rai 2014: 1180) in order to be legitimate.

In the past few years, there have been many politicians, mainly those who are considered as outsiders, who have integrated the underdog narrative into their campaigns. In 2010, several Harvard scholars introduced the concept of an ‘underdog brand biography’ to describe an emerging trend in branding that centres on the brand’s ‘humble origins, lack of resources, and determined struggle against the odds’ (Paharia et al. 2011: 775). By concentrating on their disadvantaged backgrounds, and passion and determination, Paharia et al. (2011) argue that this kind of biography can increase purchase intentions, real choice and brand loyalty.

This underdog narrative is an identity that many people across different cultures, contexts, and time periods can relate to. These underdog stories can be found in politics, consumer products and pop cultures since people usually respond positively to this
narrative. Schuman and Harding (1963) argue that the underdog narrative triggers people’s sympathy as it speaks directly to a fundamental part of human nature. Barack Obama’s very successful 2008 presidential campaign is one example. Messages distributed around the campaign highlighted Obama’s underdog story as an African American who worked hard to beat the odds to become a president. Although at the time of the candidacy, Obama’s credentials could actually classify him as an establishment candidate, his political communication strategy portrayed him as a politician with underdog characteristics and this resonated well with many voters who could see the same struggle in themselves.

Coleman (2010) explains that social media is a suitable medium for storytelling techniques, particularly ones that incorporate the underdog narrative. Social media itself has a humble beginning as it was created and used by ordinary people to share their everyday stories (Coleman 2010). At the same time, people’s interactions and stories are in the centre of social media. This means that people who use social media ‘aren’t necessarily wholly focused on the product, but rather on the people behind the product and their desire to create value together with their customers’ (Coleman 2010: 1). Although at the beginning consumer brands were the ones that actively took advantage of social media to promote their products, it is now a common practice for politicians to use the underdog narrative to engage their constituents.

To highlight how the underdog identity can be adapted by political institutions, I touch briefly on two case studies of successful political campaigns that centred on social media: Barack Obama’s presidential campaigns and Jokowi’s campaigns for both gubernatorial and presidential elections.
3.3.2.1 Barack Obama’s Presidential Campaigns

The most prominent example of the use of social media to successfully support a politician is Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign in the United States. Even though many candidates in previous elections had used the Internet and social media in their campaigns, Obama was the first to make the Internet and social media his primary communication platform (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez 2011). By integrating different internet technologies such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, Obama was able to set himself apart from his political opponents (Fraser & Dutta cited in Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez 2011). Obama’s team also introduced a novel strategy where the public was encouraged to show their support for the candidate by giving direct donations for his campaign. This strategy was successful because it not only enabled the collection of donations to fund the campaign, but also created a sense of empowerment for his constituents as they felt that they directly contributed to help their preferred candidate to the presidency (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez 2011).

When Obama planned his second election in 2012, he also relied on social media. In April 2011, Obama officially announced his candidacy for re-election via an online video titled ‘It Begins with Us’ (Adams 2011). In 2012, 18 months before the election, Obama sent messages through e-mails, short message services (SMSs), Twitter, YouTube and Facebook with the question ‘Are You In?’ (Bor 2013: 32), which was the call for Obama’s supporters to get ready for the upcoming election. In addition, Obama’s team also developed an app, TargetShare, which was a peer-to-peer advocacy tool linked directly to Obama’s Facebook page (Bluestatedigital 2012). This app was intended to influence swing voters by allowing committed supporters to disclose how they had voted in the hope that this information would persuade undecided voters within their Facebook networks. The campaign was quite successful as not only did it manage to collect more
than 690 million USD from electronic donations\textsuperscript{21}, most importantly it also secured Obama’s victory for the second time (Scherer 2012).

Contrary to common assumption, Obama’s social media campaign strength lay not in reciprocal dialogues between the candidate and his constituents (Pew Research 2012). Most messages in these accounts were directed one-way and did not encourage interactions with the followers. Instead, the Obama campaign’s social media accounts were used mainly to create a sense of shared identities amongst voters. Voters, especially the young ones, used social media to express their political stands and their solidarity with those with similar opinions (Pew Research 2012). For politicians, this dynamic is a highly effective way of mobilising a large number of supporters. Obama’s campaigns are considered to be the largest online grassroots movements in the world. Throughout both periods, the campaigns were able to mobilise tens of millions of American voters (Bor 2013).

\textit{3.3.2.2 Jokowi’s Gubernatorial and Presidential Campaigns}

A similar trend can be seen in Indonesia as many politicians start to integrate social media into their communication strategies. One of the earliest Indonesian politicians to embrace social media was former president, Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono, popularly known by his initials SBY. SBY launched his official Twitter account in April 2013, which was soon followed by the launch of his official Facebook fan page in July 2013. In early 2014, SBY was listed as the most popular Asian politician on Twitter with more than 5 million followers (Raghunathan 2014). In his social media accounts, SBY did not only share his official statements on major issues having an impact on the country, but he also sometimes clarified reasons behind his political decisions to the public. SBY’s wife, Ani

\textsuperscript{21} This amount counts all donations that were made online, including donations that came from mega donors (Scherer 2012)
Yudhoyono, is also well known in the social media sphere, maintaining a popular Instagram account where she shared both official photos of presidential visits and activities and personal photos of her everyday life with family and friends. Despite maintaining regularity in his social media postings, SBY’s communication via social media still lacked engagement; messages were rather impersonal and one-way, thus they do not function as a ‘bridge of aspiration between himself and the public’ (Rizal in Bland 2013: n.p).

Another social media savvy politician in Indonesia is none other than the current president, Jokowi. Popular with his impromptu visits to meet the underprivileged and listen to their problems, Jokowi has cultivated a very different image to other politicians who are usually very formal and distant from the public. This is also evident in his social media campaigning. Postings appearing in his social media accounts use a lot of colloquial language and include photos of him, usually positioned in the midst of his citizens. Recently, Jokowi has also followed the social media trend of making regular vlogs (an abbreviation of video blog). In these videos, his followers can see President Jokowi records his daily activities with his own personal mobile phone. The introduction of these videos in Jokowi’s social media accounts makes him appear ‘cool’ and relatable, especially to the youth. This groovy image is strengthened as Jokowi is the only state leader in Asia, if not in the world, who vlogs regularly.

The same down-to-earth approach also characterised Jokowi’s social media when he campaigned for the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2012. Apart from employing professional communication advisors, Jokowi also relied on a group of volunteers to execute his social media strategies. This group, which called itself JASMEV (an abbreviation for Jokowi Ahok Social Media Volunteers during the 2012 Jakarta
gubernatorial campaign, and was later changed to Jokowi Alliance Social Media Volunteers during the 2014 presidential election), consisted of university students and young professionals who dedicated their time to promoting Jokowi in the social media sphere. Their function was mainly to create positive images for Jokowi and his running mates, to report Jokowi’s achievements, to answer questions from the public, to counteract smear campaign messages, and to monitor election results.

The Indonesian presidential election in 2014 was dubbed as a ‘social media election’ due to the extensive use of social media by both candidates (O’Neil 2014). With stronger financial backing, Prabowo Subianto, Jokowi’s opponent in this election, was able to employ a high-profile American political consultant, Rob Allyn (Jemadu 2013). This appointment resulted in a more structured campaign for Prabowo with more consistent and integrated messages in his social media campaigning (Jemadu 2013). Despite that, Jokowi still garnered more positive conversations in social media with 72% in comparison to Prabowo who was only able to garner 28% of positive messages. In addition, a well-known political communication monitoring agency in Indonesia Politicawave, also reported that Jokowi generated more discussions (60%) in social media than Prabowo (40%) (Jemadu 2013). At the same time, Jokowi was also quite popular within the creative media industry. Domestic and international celebrities eagerly showed their support for Jokowi in their social media accounts by giving testimonies and words of encouragement. This association with celebrities is a very effective way to attract support, especially from the young, urban voters who were a dominant part of his constituency.

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22 Measuring positive and negative sentiments of social media conversations has become a common practice done by political pollsters as one of many different ways to show political candidates’ electability. This measurement is usually done by employing specific algorithms and integrating them in computerised text analysis software.
As can be seen in these two case studies, these politicians have not actually taken advantage of social media to create engaging dialogues between them and their constituents. Neither did either politician maximise the potential of social media as a medium of democratic deliberation. Both case studies show that successful political social media campaigns still relied heavily on the ability of social media to create a sense of community and to mobilise supporters for off-line activities.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how the Internet and social media have changed political communication and enabled the rise of political outsiders. It is evident that media provide the conceptual space for the enactment of politics and that social media has facilitated new modes of political engagement between elected officials, politicians and their constituents. Certainly, Obama and SBY demonstrate these new modes of engagement which include immediacy, interactivity and transparency. Moreover, new media has also changed the nature of production, consumption and distribution of political news; creating new forces between information consumers and producers and new expectations of politician’s accessibility and transparency. However, while new media clearly has the capacity to transform power at a grassroots level, enable alternative voices, and make politics more flexible, pluralistic and transparent, new media is not free from forms of institutional and structural control which may prevent citizens from engaging in deliberation or actively participating in the political processes. Indeed, Castells (2007) believed that the Internet is a symbolic environment of social and political reality and tends to reproduce the power system that already exists in the society. Even Rheingold (2000: 8), who often defends the Internet’s democratic nature, also recognises the bias embedded within this medium when he says:

Online citizens needed to educate themselves in order to leverage the emerging forms of political and economic power enabled by new
media… The technology will not in itself fulfil that potential, this latent technical power must be used intelligently and deliberately by an informed population.

New media are affecting democratic practices and revealing how many citizens are not invested in online deliberation. The information overload that people experience every day pushes them to be very selective with their media consumption. The filtering features offered by new media technologies allow them to select information that is in line with the pre-existing beliefs, resulting in a ‘bubble effect’ where citizens tend to only get one-sided information and to discuss this with like-minded individuals. Consequently, the public discourse everywhere has been more emotive than deliberative, more polarised than deliberate, and this has strengthened citizen’s cognitive dissonances.
CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter elaborates on the methodology employed in this study. The chapter begins with a discussion of the changes in the field of Communication Studies that dictate a new approach in investigating political communication. The next section elaborates on different methods used in this particular study, along with data collection and analysis techniques. Finally, the third section explains the triangulation of methods and the ways in which this approach will enable a more comprehensive evaluation of the interplay of forces in the rise of political outsiders.

4.1 Researching Political Communication in the Era of Digital Technology

In the previous chapter, I discussed the changes that the Internet and new media have brought to the practice and study of political communication. In summary, new media technologies change the field by altering the roles of three main players in politics, namely political institutions, media and citizens, creating new dynamics and increasing the complexity of the interplay among them. At the same time, these new media technologies also give more control to individuals, enabling those who were previously known as media audiences to create their own content or to alter existing content produced by traditional media organisations.

All of these changes have created what Chaos theory refers to as ‘an apparent lack of order in a system that nevertheless obeys particular laws or rules’ (Poincare in Chiweza 2013: 9). This means that the line between media producers and consumers blurs. Political messages no longer follow the top-down flow from political institutions to the citizens, but instead they can come from different directions and are distributed horizontally within the networks (Castells 2007). In their 2004 study of the Bill Clinton
and Monica Lewinsky’s case, Williams and Delli Carpini argue that new media technologies disrupted the existing one-way flow of political communication and enabled a more fluid and multi-axis communication.

Drawing on Williams and Delli Carpini (2004), Castells (2007: 254) states that there are three developments in the media and communication field that enable this chaotic shift:

1. The style of contemporary media that becomes more tabloid-like, mixes news and entertainment, and in the process weakens their own role as the authoritative gatekeepers of political news,

2. The change to the 24-hour news cycle, which means that the media are pressured to gather news and report it as fast as possible. This has forced the media to minimise the editing process in the production of news, while creating ‘new opportunities for non-mainstream political actors to influence the setting and framing of the political agenda’,

3. The expansion of media, both in numbers and variety, enabling a great diversity in news and political content.

Despite the excitement surrounding the interplay between new media and democracy, scholars actually know very little about ‘whether and how new media affect contentious politics’ (Aday, Farrel, Lynch, Sides, Kelly & Zuckerman 2010: 3). In their report on media and politics in America, Aday et al. (2010) note that most scholarly works in this area still lack rigorous research design to respond to the recent changes.

According to Karpf, Kreiss, Nielsen and Powers (2015), political communication research in the past few decades has been dominated by the use of quantitative methods such as surveys, opinion polls, and content analysis, all of which are highly influenced by certain
aspects of political science and the media effects paradigm of mass communication. This is actually quite contradictory to the tradition in the field of Political Communication that favours the triangulation of methods, reflecting its interdisciplinary nature (Karpf et al. 2015). However, with the change in the flow of communication as described above, the exclusive use of one methodological perspective will no longer be appropriate as it does not portray the nuances in the interactivity between new media and today’s political communication. Several scholars in the field have explicitly shown their concern about the ‘growing disjuncture between the prevailing research strategies and the socio-technological context of political communication’ (Bennett & Iyengar 2008: 707). Bennett and Iyengar (2008) argue that audience fragmentation, information overload, rapid development of technologies, new media interactivity and personalisation are some examples of recent phenomena that the quantitative approach may fail to address. Another critic, Barthust (2011), also argued that key concepts commonly used in political communication research, such as framing, agenda setting and public opinion cannot capture the complexity of the current process of political communication. Considering these criticisms, it is clear new methods are needed to investigate political communication in the era of digital technologies.

As mentioned above, the use of mixed-method design in political communication research is not experimental. Early researchers whose works are still considered key studies in the field, such as Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944) and Lang and Lang (1953), had already employed this mixed-method design in the 1940s and 1950s (Karpf et al. 2015). Political communication is a field influenced by a variety of other fields. It has a strong connection with social science fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, linguistics, journalism, public relations and economics (Benett & Iyengar 2008). Therefore, it is only natural if political communication research starts to follow the
mixed-method methodological framework, which has been used extensively by some of these fields.

Combining both quantitative and qualitative methods not only provides richer data, but it can also provide data from a variety of perspectives and can help researchers ‘to explore how citizens, journalists, and political elites interact, experience, and engage in political communication’ (Karpf et al. 2015: 1890). Karpf et al. (2015) further argue that the employment of qualitative research, such as observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups, are more appropriate to study contemporary political communication phenomena. These first-hand fieldwork observations will produce more substantial data as they ‘excel at answering empirical questions that are a precondition for developing new theoretical understandings’ (Karpf et al. 2015: 1890). At the same time, this approach also enables social researchers to immerse themselves in ‘the realities of social life’ (Gans in Karpf et al. 2015: 1890).

4.2 Combining Participant Observation, Textual Analysis, and Content Analysis

This study implements a mixed-method design which includes participant observation, textual analysis and content analysis. In the next few sections, I will elaborate on each method, its variations and strengths, and my data gathering and analysis techniques.

4.2.1 Participant Observation

The first method that I used to collect my data is participant observation. As an ethnographic technique, this method has several advantages for qualitative researchers. Ethnographers have to immerse themselves in the community or culture that they investigate, thus they will gain a cultural understanding from what is defined in ethnography as the ‘insider’s point of view’ (Hoey 2014). So far, ethnography is one of the
best methods to ‘provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice’ (Hoey 2014: 1). While ethnography can be done through different ways, participant observation and interviewing are two of the most common methods employed by traditional ethnographers (Hoey 2014). Thus, I chose these methods to gain an insider’s understanding of the way Ahok employed his political communication strategies.

Although ethnography promises the researcher an insight into the life of his or her research subject, an ethnographer needs to be aware of the potential biases that he or she has towards this subject. An ethnographer needs to realise that he or she usually comes to the field with prior knowledge and subjective feelings about the research subject (Roller & Lavrakas 2015). As in all qualitative methods, the researcher is actually the research instrument who controls the research design, data collection techniques, and interpretation of these data (Roller & Lavrakas 2015). Therefore, the researcher should have an ability to identify his or her own biases, consider how they might influence the researcher’s readings of the data and develop strategies to minimise these biases.

In the next few paragraphs I will elaborate how my participant observation at Jakarta’s Governor’s Office enabled me to experience Ahok’s political communication firsthand while opening several opportunities for me to conduct in-depth interviews with several key informants. At the same time, I will also elaborate on my background to highlight the kind of observer biases that I might have during my observation and what strategies I employed to overcome them.

From January to March 2016 I participated in a ten-week internship program at the Jakarta Governor’s Office. This internship was introduced as a regular initiative after Ahok became deputy governor in 2012. The purpose of this program was to introduce the
operations of the Jakarta government to young Indonesians, while allowing them to participate actively in guiding the programs and policies of the provincial government (Sianipar 2016, personal communication, 4 January). In the past, the program was not formalised, thus interns were recruited based on recommendations from the governor’s staff or acquaintances. In October 2015 however, the governor decided to formalise the program and the internship was widely promoted in social media. In line with Ahok’s increased popularity, the program was able to attract hundreds of applicants to fill around thirty available places in each internship batch.

My involvement in this program came after I saw an advertisement on social media in October 2015 about the opening of application for the next internship batch. To apply, I had to submit two essays: one explaining my motivation to join the program and what I expect to contribute to the team; and another one explaining my views on Indonesia’s development and proposed solutions to overcome some development challenges. Short-listed candidates were then invited for an interview. Two of Ahok’s most senior staff conducted the interview via a videocall as I was not in Indonesia at the time. During this interview I revealed to them that I was conducting research on Ahok and his political communication as part of my PhD thesis. The interviewers said that they would be more than willing to help with information and access to important people if I were selected for the program. In November 2016, I received the formal acceptance letter for this internship program.

Being accepted in this internship program was very exciting for me for two main reasons: the opportunity to get access to data which were not readily available to everyone and to interact first-hand with Ahok, a politician who inspired many, including myself. Not only that he seemed to be very progressive and innovative in implementing new policies to
I was very aware of my attitude towards Ahok and I always tried to be critical to my own field notes. At the end of every working day, I took time to re-read my notes and question myself whether these notes were written purely by observation or whether they were influenced by my biases. Thus, I decided to have two separate notebooks: one that was used to record detailed descriptions of the phenomenon that I observed and another one that recorded my reflections towards this phenomenon or any other feelings I had during the observation. Wellington (2000) argued that ‘being reflexive’ is one of the approaches that an observer can take to minimise biases. By doing this, I felt that I had the opportunity to distance myself from the subject, which eventually helped me to be more objective in my analysis.

Roller and Lavrakas (2015) also suggested observers to try seeing the phenomenon from a different perspective. To do that, I purposely tried to mingle with those whom I assumed as being more critical of the Governor. Searching these people within the City Hall was quite challenging, not because they were non-existent, but because most staff
and officers in the City Hall were aware that I was part of the governor’s team\textsuperscript{23}. However, I was able to meet these people when I got the chance to work outside the City Hall. In one occasion, I was helping the education team to monitor the implementation of the Jakarta Smart Cards\textsuperscript{24}. While visiting the recipients, I met several people (both civil servants and common citizens) who expressed their disagreements with some of the Governor’s policies. This kind of meeting was very refreshing for me as within the City Hall people were either die-hard supporters of Ahok or were to afraid to be critical of him.

As for the structure of the internship program, every internship batch consisted of approximately thirty interns. During my internship, these interns were divided into nine teams in accordance with Ahok’s leading programs, which consisted of human resources, region-owned enterprises, health, education, governance, provincial budget, infrastructure, integrated one-door public service, and law and regulations. The ten-week programs started with an introduction week where interns learned about the structure of the Jakarta provincial government, visited government projects, met exemplary public officials, and attended a formal reception with the governor himself.

Starting from the second week, interns immediately handled allocated projects under the supervision of Ahok’s staff. These staff were not civil servants, they were professionals employed personally by Ahok to ‘guide the programs of Jakarta’s provincial government’ (M Sianipar 2016, personal communication, 4 January). It is interesting to note that of approximately twenty governor’s staff\textsuperscript{25} working at Ahok’s office, seventeen people were less than thirty-five years old and mostly educated abroad, especially in prestigious universities. This profile was replicated by the interns who were also dominated by

\textsuperscript{23} All interns dressed up in corporate wear, rather than the usual uniforms worn by the civil servants. In addition, we also wore a special tag that clearly wrote our role in the Governor’s team.

\textsuperscript{24} The Jakarta Smart Card is one of the Jakarta government’s key programs to provide educational funding for school-aged children who come from low-income families.

\textsuperscript{25} This is the official position title given to these professionals. They were recruited directly by Ahok and received payment from the Governor’s operational budget rather than from the Jakarta government’s human resource budget.
international graduates. Another interesting thing to note is that although they were not officially divided, interns could see that there were actually two groups of governor’s staff. The first group, which interns referred to as ‘the first ring’, consisted of staff who were the closest to the governor. They have worked with Ahok for a long time, worked in the same office room as the governor, and did not regularly interact with interns. The second group of staff, which can be referred to as ‘the second ring’, were the ones who worked closely with interns and supervised interns’ work.

During this internship, I was placed in the human resources team with two other interns and two ‘second ring’ staff. The main goal for this team was to improve the remuneration scheme for civil servants working within the provincial government of Jakarta. Our main tasks were to guide the Jakarta government’ human resource working unit in establishing Key Performance Indicators for all first and second echelon civil servants in Jakarta and to develop a new regulation that would integrate these performance indicators in the new remuneration scheme.

Throughout this field work, I took the roles as both an ‘insider’ and an ‘outsider’. As an insider I was actively involved in my assigned team and engaged with Ahok’s ‘second ring’ staff and other interns. As I shared many similar backgrounds with these interns and staff (as in being young, urban, and western educated), I feel that I did not find difficulties in interacting with and being accepted by them. My supervisors in the human resources team treated me and the other interns as colleagues rather than subordinates and we were expected to participate actively in the team’s decision making. At the same time, these staff were also very open and were always ready to answer any questions I had about their work or about the governor.
During this internship program, every intern was given the opportunity to have private lunch sessions with the governor, attend his internal meetings with his upper-level officials, and follow him to other official events such as press conferences, public hearings and ceremonies. By doing this, not only was I able to observe the governor’s political communication firsthand, I was also able to discuss his political communication strategies directly with him.

Despite having the opportunities to interact directly with the governor, I feel that most of the time the interactions were one-way. Although the governor was very open and keen to answer questions but he is someone who is larger-than-life. This personality means that he dominated most conversations with many stories about himself and he seldom posed questions back to the interns. I found this to be rather disappointing as one of Ahok’s character that stood up in the media was his engagement with his citizens. Nevertheless, it should be noted though that to me Ahok never came off as arrogant; despite his dominant character I could see that he was genuinely a raconteur, a very animated and lively story teller. For instance, I remember one occasion when I had a chance to have lunch with him and several of his staff, I asked him a question about his recent policy to introduce e-payment in all government transactions. This one question led to Ahok talked about different anecdotes surrounding that policy that lasted until the end of our lunch time. His body guard even had to remind him to quickly finish his story as he had to attend another important meeting afterward.

For that reason and the lack of regularity in my interactions with Ahok, I mostly consider my role as an ‘outsider’ in this regard. The same thing can also be said about the ‘first ring’ staff. Unlike my relationship with ‘second ring’ staff, I could feel the power distance between these ‘first ring’ staff and the interns. For instance, when I would like to
interview Sakti Budiono, the head of Ahok’s Media and Communication’s team, the interview had to be secured by appointment several days before it was scheduled.

As I mentioned above, I had been very open about my motivation to participate in this internship since the very beginning. I informed Ahok’s team that I wanted to conduct my research in his office. While Ahok’s team and staff were fully aware of my intention, I am not sure that the governor was aware of this. Although I never formally asked Ahok to sign a consent form to participate in this research, he always said to me and to other interns that anything he told us was on the record.

As I became more familiar with the governor and his staff, I saw an opportunity to conduct in-depth interviews with several key informants, which included the head of Ahok’s communication and media team Sakti Budiono, the head of staff of Jakarta Smart City, Ellen Nio, and the founders of Ahok’s volunteer group Teman Ahok, Amalia Ayuningtyas and Singgih Widiyastono. These informants I believe were in the best positions to provide insights into the operationalisation of Ahok’s political communication strategies.

As already described above, the interviews with the governor were not conducted formally as they usually happened during lunch sessions attended by staff members and other interns. Nonetheless, these interviews were very fruitful as Ahok has an open character and liked to share stories with his staff and interns. These interviews were unique opportunities as they allowed me to hear what the governor had to say about his visions in a setting that was arguably very comfortable for him.
By contrast to my interviews with Ahok, interviews with the head of his media team and the head of staff of Jakarta Smart City were arranged formally. I feel that my position as an intern gave me an advantage in securing these interviews as these staff members were usually not easily accessible. As I mentioned above, they did not normally mingle with interns and were considered to be the most important people within the governor’s circle. My experience with the process of interviewing members of the Teman Ahok group sheds some light on the functioning of this group. Before I left for Jakarta, I had contacted Amalia, the spokeswoman of Teman Ahok, about my intention to interview them for my research. However, there was no response to my request. After starting my internship, I asked one of Ahok’s staff, who had made contacts with the volunteer group, to link me with them. Due to this connection, I was able to secure an interview within a few days. Hence, while Amalia and Singgih claimed that this organisation was independent from Ahok’s managerial influence, I still believe that there was still some coordination between Ahok’s team and this group.

All of these interviews, those with Ahok’s staff and the one with Teman Ahok, were semi-structured and lasted around 45 minutes each. Before the interviews, I provided the informants with a participant information form and requested them to sign the consent letter. All interviews were conducted in Indonesian and audio-recorded.

The interview with Sakti took place in the meeting room within the governor’s office. Questions generally circulated around Ahok’s political communication messages and strategies and what he hoped to do for the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign. The interview with Teman Ahok was conducted at its headquarters in South Jakarta. For this interview, I asked the founders about the history of Teman Ahok, their main activities, and their relationship with the governor. My last interview was with Ellen Nio, the head
of staff of Jakarta Smart City. I chose to interview her as this centre was one of Ahok’s most important initiatives that aimed to generate a more open information flow with the citizens, thus encouraging a more active civil engagement (E Nio 2016, personal communication, 10 March). This interview was conducted at the governor’s office and concentrated on the main activities of the Jakarta Smart City centre and what the governor envisioned as the outcomes of this centre.

4.2.2 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis can be understood as a method of studying texts to ‘understand the way in which members of various cultures and sub-cultures make sense of who they are and how they fit into the world in which the live’ (McKee 2003: 1). As a qualitative method, textual analysis enables researchers not only to investigate how texts create meanings, but also how they are possibly interpreted differently by different people (McKee 2003: 70). McKee argued that while conducting a textual analysis we are only able to make an ‘educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of a text’ (McKee 2003: 70).

In textual analysis, text does not only refer to verbal materials. Instead, it encompasses all materials – articles, report, film, audio, picture, ideas and so on – that convey meanings to people (McKee 2003). In his application of textual analysis, McKee (2003) took a post-structuralist approach by acknowledging that the researcher’s interpretation of the text might be different to what the maker of the text has intended. However, it does not mean that the researcher’s interpretation is not valuable; instead it brings light to ‘the limitations and advantages of our own sense-making practices’ (McKee 2003: 1). This was the same approach that I adapted for my textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts. While my background as someone who was born and grew up in Indonesia
enabled me to read these accounts from arguably the perspective of common Indonesians, I also acknowledge that my reading of these texts was interpretive in nature. Thus, it should be understood by looking at the specific cultural and political contexts from which these texts were produced.

For the purpose of this study, my textual analysis concentrated on Ahok’s social media accounts. These include Ahok’s personal accounts and his official campaign accounts in three social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The purpose of this textual analysis is to examine the messages from the point of view of the sender, in this case Ahok. By doing this, I aimed to see any differences between the way the newspapers represented Ahok and they way Ahok represented himself. To do that, at first, I was looking at the overall characteristics of these accounts such as layout, design, types of content, main themes and so on. Then I scrutinised these accounts in more detail to see the discourses that Ahok promoted in these accounts, the responses from his accounts’ followers, and other strategies that he implemented to engage and interact with his constituents. I particularly focused on seeing the common themes that Ahok used in his social media messages, his engagement with netizens, and his responses to the negative discourses about him in the media.

To complement this analysis, I also gathered social media analysis from secondary sources to help me understand the political situation that took place when these texts were created. Data from these secondary sources were very useful in giving me a contextual overview that assisted the accuracy of my interpretations of the texts. Moreover, they also enabled me to predict public’s responses to the discourses about Ahok that circulated at that time.
4.2.3 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a traditional form of text analysis whose usage can be traced back to the seventeenth century (Krippendorff 2004). It can be understood as ‘a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective’ (Krippendorff 2004: 3). Content analysis can range from a primarily quantitative to a primarily qualitative method, but most of its variants include some element of each. Nonetheless, when implementing content analysis, researchers commonly count the presence of certain words or concepts to derive the importance of those words within the phenomenon being investigated (Busch et al. 2012).

Content analysis has several advantages for communication research as it does not only measure the outcomes of communication, it can also explain the relationships between communicators that contribute to such outcomes (Busch et al. 2012). Moreover, content analysis can reveal the embedded purpose of messages that the senders intend to convey, thus enabling communication researchers to comprehend ‘how contemporary society operates and understands itself through its texts’ (Krippendorff 2004: xx). While some scholars such as Krippendorff (2004) and Busch et al. (2012) might argue that content analysis can generate objective readings of the text, this method actually requires researchers to interpret the meaning, both manifest and inferential, that the text conveys (Stokes 2013). Therefore, content analysis is particularly appropriate for researchers who are familiar with the sociocultural context from where the text is being produced (Stokes 2013). As this method involves interpretive work, a good understanding of the society in which the communication takes place and of the systems of communication used in that society is necessary to conduct this method effectively (Stokes 2013). For this reason, my position as a native Indonesian who has experienced the transition from the authoritarian era of Suharto to a more democratic Indonesia provides me with a strong cultural and
political context in which to investigate and interpret political communications through content analysis.

Traditionally, content analysis can be divided into either quantitative or qualitative method (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). While quantitative content analysis focuses on counting the frequency of words or content in a given text (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein in Hsieh & Shannon 2005), qualitative content analysis continues this tabulation by analysing the meaning behind these words and content (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005), qualitative content analysis has three different approaches: conventional, directed or summative.

The main difference between the three approaches is in their coding process. In conventional content analysis, coding categories are derived directly from the text. When researchers employ this method, they need to read the text carefully and repeatedly while making and refining the categories in the process (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Directed content analysis is the opposite of conventional content analysis. This is a deductive method where coding categories are derived from existing theories or prior research (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). Finally, summative content analysis involves a two-step process where it begins with ‘quantifying certain words or content in text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words or content’ (Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1283). Following that, the researcher will analyse the meanings behind these texts or content, which is also known as latent content analysis (Holsti in Hsieh & Shannon 2005: 1284).

For this particular study, I chose to employ summative content analysis to investigate how Ahok was represented in newspaper articles; media who are still considered as being under the influence of certain elite groups. I chose this method because I was interested
not only in the variety of words or concepts in the texts, but I was also interested in the underlying meaning that these texts try to convey. Bicquelet and Mirwaldt (2012) argue that summative content analysis will provide researchers with the rigour of quantification from its quantitative element and the richness of context from its qualitative element. Moreover, summative content analysis is appropriate for my study as I was generating my coding categories from a model proposed by Erin Tolley (2016) in her study of minority politicians’ representation in Canadian media. While this model was useful to analyse the common themes or framings used by media to represent Ahok, the model was constructed in a different cultural and political settings than Indonesia. Therefore, instead of only presenting the common words or themes found in the texts, I also needed to provide interpretive readings of the potential embedded meanings within these texts which do not always follow Tolley’s Canadian model. Before I start explaining my data gathering and analysis technique, I will now provide background information about the media I chose as my sampling archives.

Although newspaper readership around the world is declining, newspaper is still a medium that sets the news agenda for other media (Greenslade 2011). In his essay about press influence on the British political agenda, Greenslade (2011) argues that current affairs programs on television and radio usually follow the headlines found in major newspapers. This pattern is also found during political campaigning and election periods, thus ‘papers still command the nation's central political narrative’ (Greenslade 2011: n.p).

MacNamara (2014) argued that new media also have an important role in shaping the political news. However, this role is arguably contextual, depending on different factors such as the scale of news, the importance of news sources, and the demographics of the media audiences. For instance, ‘big news stories’ that involve key political leaders,
government officials, and important government policies usually receive more coverage from the major mass media (MacNamara 2014). This is because this type of news is usually able to generate more attention from Internet users and can quickly become viral as users share it to their networks; these networks continue to share it with their networks and so on. At the same time, social media such as Twitter is also very quick in reporting news as the event is unfolding, especially news about celebrities or public figures (Rosenstiel, Sonderman, Loker, Ivancin, & Kjarval 2015). Hence, many journalists might look for what is trending in social media as part of their news search strategies.

The situation is somewhat similar in Indonesia. At the beginning of the reform era, Sen and Hill (2006) recognised the important role of newspapers in dictating the news agenda. They generally maintain this dominant role, despite social media which can be used by publications as another platform for the distribution of their news. Thus Indonesian political leaders want to gain control of newspapers through ownership (Tapsell 2012b; Ida 2010; Haryanto 2010). For the purposes of this study, three newspaper titles, *Kompas, Republika* and *Pos Kota*, were chosen to represent the different demographic characteristics of Indonesia’s inhabitants. The following sub sections provide background information of each publication, including its history, ownership and journalistic characteristics.

4.2.3.1 History, Ownership and Characteristics of the Publications and Twitter

a. Kompas

*Kompas* is the highest circulating publication in Indonesia that targets middle to upper class Indonesians. *Kompas* was founded in 1963 following the idea of the army general Ahmad Yani to establish a national newspaper that could compete with *Harian Rakyat*, People’s Daily, the popular communist newspaper and the biggest publication at the time
General Ahmad Yani then passed on this idea to the Minister of Agriculture Frans Seda, who was also known as the leader of several Catholic organisations. Seda later asked Petrus Kanisius Ojong and Jakob Oetama, his fellow Catholic leaders who had experiences in establishing publications, to realise this idea. These Catholic leaders then involved several Catholic organisations such as the Indonesian Church Council (Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia, MAWI), the Catholic Party and the Indonesian Catholic Students Association (Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Indonesia) to form Yayasan Bentara Rakyat, the People’s Movement Foundation, an organisation that later became the core of Kompas (Pontoh 2001: 3). At first, the new publication was going to be named Bentara Rakyat, guards of the people. It was President Sukarno who changed the name of the publication to Kompas to reflect the publication’s mission to provide guidance to the people (Pontoh 2001).

PKI saw this publication as a threat to its position and it tried to prevent Kompas from commencing its operation. Finally, after two years trying to obtain its business licence, Kompas distributed its first edition on 28 June 1965 with the motto 'Amanat Hati Nurani Rakyat' (mandate for people’s aspirations) (Pontoh 2001: 3). This first edition of Kompas only consisted of four pages with twenty news stories and six advertisements. During this time, Kompas only published once a week. It was only in the beginning of the 1970s that Kompas started to be a daily newspaper (Mallarangeng 2010).

Today, Kompas is a business entity owned by Kompas Gramedia Group, one of the largest media groups in Indonesia. Since its establishment, Kompas has expanded to several business units that include Harian Kompas, the daily newspaper, Kompas.com, a stand-alone news site that produces news in a more up-to-date manner, and Kompas TV, a private television station that focuses on educational content. As my concern is the
broadsheet newspapers, my content analysis will only generate data from *Harian Kompas*, which will be referred to as *Kompas* in the rest of the thesis.

*Kompas* has an estimated readership of 2,000,000 according to Kompas data listed on their website in 2016. From this number, around 25% are readers who still subscribe to the printed edition (Kompas 2016). The number of subscribers to the printed edition that reaches 500,000 makes *Kompas* the publication with the highest circulation not only in Indonesia, but also in Southeast Asia (Kompas 2016).

In its company’s profile that I accessed in 2016, *Kompas* claims to be a publication that can be enjoyed by everyone. The division of male and female readers is balanced. However, the majority of readers, 54%, come from middle to upper class backgrounds. A readership survey conducted by *Kompas* in 2016 also show that 60% of its readers are those who have a university degree and 64% are within the productive age of twenty to forty years old.

To the present time, *Kompas* is still considered to be the market leader of Indonesian newspapers. This reputation is gained not only due to its high circulation rate, but it is also due to the high quality of its news. Although *Kompas* gained a reputation for its ‘analytical depth’ and ‘polished style’, it was also known to avoid reporting that could offend the government and its policies (Sen & Hill 2000). This practice of protecting the government interests continued throughout the New Order period (Sen & Hill 2000).

In Indonesian contemporary politics, *Kompas* is known to be a supporter of Jokowi. Tapsell (2014) reported that the owner of *Kompas*, Jacob Utama, actively lobbied Megawati to nominate Jokowi as a presidential candidate from PDIP prior to the 2014 election. Jacob Utama has been known to actively promote ethnic and religious pluralism.
in his media outlets and he also openly endorsed Jokowi during the 2014 presidential election as he believed Jokowi to be a better candidate for multicultural Indonesia (Tapsell 2014).

b. Republika

The second publication, Republika, has a circulation of 110,000 and a readership of around 300,000 to 400,000 (Republika 2016). Although Republika is not very big in circulation, it is still the largest self-proclaimed Islamic based publication in the country (Republika 2016). A Nielsen media report even placed Republika at number three in the list of the most-read newspapers in Indonesia (in Steele 2013).

Republika was first published on 3 January 1993 by Yayasan Abdi Bangsa, a foundation that was supported by ICMI, which at the time was chaired by B. J. Habibie (Hefner 1997). Following Habibie’s resignation as president and the decline of ICMI’s political role, Republika was sold to Mahaka Media in the late 2000s, a media group owned by a Muslim businessman Erick Thohir. This change of ownership brought quite a significant change to the style of the publication. Under previous owners, Republika’s content was heavily reliant on Islamic teachings. Currently the publication tries to appeal to a broader audience while still including content of specific interest to its Muslim readers (Steele 2013: 30) This means that Republika adapts it content and style to the preferences of modern Muslim readers who come from ‘Indonesia’s urban middle class, comfortable with both their religious values and a more consumer-oriented lifestyle’ (Steele 2013: 30). During his interview with Steele, Republika’s Chief Editor, Nashin Masha, stated that there are five principles that define Republika: ‘it is modern, moderate, Muslim, nationalist and populist.’ (Steele 2013: 28).
In terms of readership, a readership survey that *Republika* conducted in 2016 shows that a significant part of *Republika*’s readers are male (70%) and come from the middle-aged bracket of forty years old and above (49%). This survey result also shows that while 40% of these readers have obtained a university degree, 46% of them can be considered as middle to low class with an average income of 1.2 million IDR – 5 million IDR (approximately 83 USD – 342 USD) a month.

Following the development of digital technology, *Republika* also created Republika.co.id with a reporting style that is more concise and up-to-date in comparison to the printed edition. My content analysis of *Republika*, however, is exclusively derived from the printed edition of this publication.

c. *Pos Kota*

PT. Media Antarkota Jaya (better known as Pos Kota Group) was founded on 15 February 1970 when several prominent Indonesian media practitioners – Yachya Suryawinata, Harmoko, M Tahar, S Abijasa, S Harsono and Pansa Tampubolon – decided to develop a newspaper to target the middle and low income earners in Jakarta (Solihin 2011). Nielsen media index in 2000 reported that *Pos Kota* had a readership of 2,321,000, placing it in the top five of the most-read newspapers in Indonesia. This number is even more significant if we consider that *Pos Kota* only circulates in Jakarta. This means that their circulation in the capital city is the highest among the other newspapers. Today, *Pos Kota*’s readership has reduced to 600,000 (Pos Kota 2016).

*Pos Kota* aims to provide news that uses simple language and which is accompanied by clear photography illustrations. Most news stories in *Pos Kota* are human interest stories related to social problems facing the inhabitants of the metropolitan area of Jakarta such
as violence, crimes, poverty, celebrity scandals and so on. Thus, this publication is often considered as the prototype of ‘yellow journalism’ in Indonesia (Solihin 2011).

From its motto ‘Harian Independen’, the Independent Daily, Pos Kota claims to be free from any political, cultural or religious association. Despite this claim of independence from the government’s influence, it should be noted that the main shareholder of Pos Kota, Harmoko, was a long-service Information Minister who later became the Head of the House of Representatives during Suharto’s regime. This close relationship with the government continues to the present time and can be seen in its reporting style. Pos Kota tends to maintain positive coverage about the government and appears to report favourably about Jakarta’s government and the incumbent governor.

Like the other two publications, Pos Kota also has a web-based news portal, poskotanews.com, which presents news not only in articles and photos, but also in video format. Nonetheless, the same as with the other two publications, Pos Kota articles used in this study are also taken from the printed edition of the publication.

d. Twitter

In addition to the newspaper articles, I also conducted a content analysis of tweets about Ahok. Twitter is a microblogging site where users can post short messages of 140 characters to their followers, commonly known as tweeps (Twitter 2016). Tweeps can then re-post the messages with or without their own additional comments; an action known as re-tweet. In the Twittersphere, the motivation of users to follow others is mainly based on their interest in the persons or organisations behind the accounts and this connection is not necessarily reciprocal. It means that there is no necessity for users to follow back their tweeps. This is quite different to other social media where
connections are usually made of shared community connections and reciprocal relationship.

The purpose of using tweets in my content analysis is to see the common words that people use when discussing Ahok on social media. Initially, I planned to conduct a detailed content analysis of Tweets from the same periods, and with the same coding categories, as the newspaper articles. However, due to the limitation of both financial and human resources, I could only gather Twitter data from the campaign period in 2016–2017. Although my Twitter data do not provide detailed information about the ways the social media discussions portray Ahok, they can be indicators of the dynamic of political communication in social media surrounding the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election.

Although the number of Twitter users is lower than Facebook users in Indonesia, Twitter is more appropriate to be researched in this study because Twitter is the social media platform chosen by politicians to engage with their electorates (Caplan 2013). Moreover, Twitter enables its users to ‘agree with, as well as to reinforce, someone’s political opinions or thoughts’ (Stieglitz & Linh 2012: 3500) by retweeting the original messages. In addition, the limited space given in Twitter also means that tweets tend to be short-lived in comparison to Facebook messages. This is because messages move very quickly in the Twittersphere and users need several tweets to communicate their ideas. Interestingly, it also means that the kind of interaction that happens on Twitter is more of a debate than simply a conversation as users tend to argue with each other by responding to each other’s tweets (Bode & Dalrymple 2015). Due to these characteristics, political discussions are more dynamic on Twitter than in other social media. To overcome the limitations of my Twitter data, textual analysis from Ahok’s social media
accounts and social media analysis from secondary sources are included in my analysis of
the political communication strategies that Ahok employed during his campaign.

Apart from the above-mentioned reasons, investigating Twitter for my study is also
important due to the role of Twitter in disseminating news, including political news. In
2015, the Pew Research Centre reported that the number of social media users in
America who get their news from Twitter continuously increased from 52% in 2013 to
63% in 2015. Twitter is considered as a favourable news source due to the immediacy of
the coverage as events are unfolding (Pew Research Centre 2015). This medium is also
considered to be a more trustworthy source of news than traditional media, as the
information is often distributed by the primary sources that are experiencing the events
first-hand.

Although Indonesia is a nation with one of the largest number of Twitter users in the
world, Twitter users in Indonesia number only around 29 million or approximately 12%
of the nation’s population (Carley, Malik, Kowalchuk, Pfeffer & Landwehr 2015). Most of
these users are young middle-class Indonesians who live in urban areas such as Jakarta
(Carley et al. 2015). In the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, the Regional Election
Commission of Jakarta states that there were approximately 7.4 million of eligible voters
and 70% of them were between the age of 17 to 35 years old (Harmadi 2016).

4.2.3.2 Data Gathering

As mentioned above, newspaper articles that were used in the content analysis were taken
from their printed versions. Kompas articles were bought from Kompas Information
Centre, a business unit where the public can purchase old editions of the newspaper in
digital format. Meanwhile, Republika articles were downloaded from the publication’s
digital archive. This archive, which can be found on epaper.republika.co.id, requires members to subscribe to be able to read and download old editions of the newspaper. As Pos Kota does not have an online archive that is openly accessible to the public, digital copies of the printed editions were purchased directly from the Pos Kota office.

Newspaper articles were chosen from three distinct periods:

1. 24 June – 15 October 2012: the first day of Jokowi–Ahok’s gubernatorial campaign until their inauguration as the governor and deputy governor of DKI Jakarta,

2. 4 June – 19 November 2014: the first day of Jokowi’s presidential campaign until Ahok’s inauguration as the governor of DKI Jakarta,

3. 28 October 2016 – 19 April 2017: the start of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign period to the voting day in the second round of elections.

Campaign periods were chosen because this is the time when politicians regularly communicate their political messages to the public. Thus, the politicians and their programs attract extensive media coverage and stimulate political discussions in both traditional and digital media (van Aelst & de Swert 2009). At the same time, I also chose these periods as they highlight Ahok’s journey from a relatively unknown politician to arguably one of the most popular figures in Indonesia.

At the moment, there are three ways to capture Twitter data:

- Twitter Firehose API: This API (Application Programming Interface) guarantees access to all data on Twitter from the first tweet in 2006 to the present time. At the moment, the sole company that provides Twitter firehose service is Gnip, a data company that was purchased by Twitter in 2014. There are two main
reasons why I did not use this service for my data collection: the high cost of buying the data and the very large volume of data it provides.

- Twitter Search API: The search API is a free public API provided by Twitter. This API is quite simple as we can search the data by simply typing several key words and selecting a particular time frame. However, there is a limitation on how many Tweets that can be captured in a single query, reducing its reliability to present representative samples. Since 2016, Twitter has only only provided their historical data for free for up to one month back.

- Twitter Streaming API: This streaming API is similar to the Search API in terms of its operation. However, Twitter Streaming API will only capture live tweets that are currently streaming on Twitter. Like Search API, there is a limitation on how many tweets one can capture per second. Thus, trending topics will be represented less accurately than the less popular ones (Sperber 2016).

Considering these options, I used the Streaming API tool that is attached to NVivo qualitative analytic software for capturing my Twitter data. This means that I could only capture tweets during Ahok’s campaign for the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Although sample representativeness is a limitation of my study, I believe that my data set can still provide a fair estimate of how the public discussed and portrayed Ahok on social media.

In selecting appropriate samples for both newspaper articles and tweets, I implemented a constructed week sampling method proposed by Riffe, Aust, and Lacy (1993). To do this, I for instance selected one edition of the newspaper for every week within the determined sampling period. For instance, for the sampling period between 24 June and 15 October 2012, I selected the 24 June edition (Sunday) for the first week, the 25 June edition
(Monday) for the second week, the 3 July edition (Tuesday) for the third week, and so on. By doing this, I ended up with sixty eight editions for the three campaign periods.

Riffe et al. (1993: 15) argue that ‘constructed week sampling is more efficient than simple random sampling or consecutive day sampling, and a single constructed week allows reliable estimates of news content in a population of six months of newspaper editions even for highly volatile variables’. In simple terms, it means that the constructive week sampling ensures that each edition has the same probability to be sampled, thus researchers can be confident of the reliability of these samples.

4.2.3.3 Analysis Technique

In conducting the content analysis of newspaper articles, I adapted a model proposed by Tolley (2016) in her study on the representation of minority candidates in Canadian media. Based on that model, these were the coding categories that were employed:

1. Prominence: refers to the placement of the article in the newspaper. If the article appeared on the front page, it is considered to be more prominent than articles that appeared on inside pages of the newspapers.

2. Framing: refers to the framing used in the article. This coding employed ‘racialised frame’ categories as proposed by Tolley (2016), which include:

   - Socio demographic frame: news reporting that highlights candidates’ demographic characteristics such as gender, religion, race and so on,
   - Political viability frame: news reporting that highlights candidates’ qualifications and chances for winning the election, and
   - Policy issue frame: news reporting that highlights candidates’ programs and political ideologies.
3. Centrality: refers to the position of the candidate in the article, either as main subject, secondary subject, or is only mentioned in list,

4. Sources of information: refers to the source of information that the journalists use in writing the article.

5. Filtering: refers to how the candidate is referenced in the article.

6. Descriptive adjective: refers to words that are used in the article to describe the candidate.

7. Tone of the article: refers to the tendency of the article to portray the candidate positively, neutral, or negatively.

Articles from the newspapers were selected manually by searching for the keywords ‘Ahok’ or ‘Basuki Tjahaja Purnama’. Each article was then examined with the guidance of a coding sheet. Reliability testing of this coding sheet was done twice. The first one with the help of one of my supervisors who tested the coding sheet together with me on one or two articles. In addition, I also tested the coding sheet with several other Indonesian friends to make sure that the categories are read similarly by the people who understand the cultural and political contexts of Indonesia. The final coding sheet had been modified several times by considering the results of these pilot testings.

Further, analysis of data was conducted by manually tabulating the coding results and inputting them to an Excel spread sheet to be analysed with simple mathematic formulas. It should be noted that when choosing these newspaper articles, I did not separate between news articles and editorial or opinion pieces. This is because editorials represent the point of view of the publication as a whole and tend to set the agenda and tone of the publication (Rupar 2007). Moreover, although editorials and op-eds are opinionated in nature, I agree with Rupar’s argument (2007: 595) that they “assume ‘common sense’” and are “developed around the call to think what would be ‘the best for all’, a suggestion
and opinion that sells itself as a call to stick with ‘the middle road’ and ‘a down to earth’ approach to reality”.

To quantify words that people used to discuss Ahok on Twitter, I used the word frequency function available in the NVivo software. The software also allows these numbers to be presented as word clouds or percentages. The software actually has a word association function that can show how these key words are used in the captured tweets. This would actually be beneficial to estimate the sentiments surrounding these Twitter discussions about Ahok. However, this function only supports several languages and Indonesian is not one of them. As these tweets are written in Indonesian, I was not able to benefit from this function.

4.3 Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, my study employed a mixed-method design. Mixed-method design or what is also known as ‘triangulation strategy’ (Schroder, Drotner, Kline and Murray 2003: 13) or ‘eclecticism’ (Mason in Silverman, 1999: 98) can be understood as the process of contrasting different approaches to study the same phenomena (Nemmo & Swanston in Hay, Grossberg, and Wartella 1996). In contemporary research, particularly social science research, triangulation has become the common practice amongst researchers (Nemo & Swanston in Hay et al. 1996)

As social reality is multifaceted, employing one method will only provide one facet of that reality. Therefore, researchers will only be able to peel off the multidimensional and complex characteristics of social science research by implementing methodological triangulation (Schroder et al 2003). In addition, researchers will often see that the combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods will produce richer and more
satisfactory data which can answer the requirements of objectivity, reliability and validity (Deacon, Pickering, Golding & Murdock 1999).

By combining content analyses with participant observation and in-depth interviews, I aimed to investigate the Ahok phenomenon from three different points of views. These points of view follow the classic Shannon-Weaver model of communication (1948) of message sender, channel, and receiver. The observations and interviews allow me to understand the political communication messages as they are explained by the sender, Governor Ahok. Meanwhile the content analysis of newspaper articles provides understanding of how these messages are framed by the channel, in this case Indonesian newspapers that are controlled by the political elites. Finally, content analysis of tweets will see how these messages are perceived by the receivers, or the potential voters. It should be noted that the original Shannon-Weaver model does not acknowledge the potential for receivers to alter the messages and contest the discourses embedded in the messages, which is a common practice in this era of digital media. Nonetheless, this model recognises the ability of receivers to give feedback about the messages. Thus, I feel that this model can be used as a starting point to frame my data analysis.
CHAPTER 5
BASUKI TJAHAJA PURNAMA’S POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

This chapter analyses Ahok’s political communication strategies, particularly his social media strategies, to consider how much new media has contributed to the rise of political outsiders in contemporary Indonesia. More specifically, this chapter investigates how Ahok represented himself in social media and how he communicated with the constituents through his social media accounts. While this chapter also provides an overview of Ahok’s political communication strategies in 2012 and 2014, the analysis focuses on the ways in which Ahok used social media and other tools to engage his constituents and to respond to undesirable reporting about him in the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election. The analysis provided in this chapter focuses on the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election because, as mentioned earlier in chapters 1 and 3, it was the first election where Ahok competed as the main gubernatorial candidate.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of Ahok’s political communication strategies in order to highlight Ahok’s communication and leadership styles. The second section presents background on the different uses of social media by political candidates in the last three elections in Indonesia: the 2012 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election, the 2014 general election, and the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election. This second section discusses the common strategies used by Indonesian politicians in their campaigning. At the same time, this section also examines some of the pitfalls concerning social media usage in the context of Indonesia’s politics. The third section provides information on Ahok’s social media statistics on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as these three social media platforms were the platforms that Ahok used as part of his official campaign. This section aims to show how Ahok’s
prominence in the social media sphere can be seen as an indicator of how much potential these tools have to support political campaigning, particularly campaign run by political outsiders. In addition, this section also presents a textual analysis of Ahok's social media accounts for the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election to scrutinise the themes, key messages and frequency of his communication in the context of the upcoming election and the blasphemy charge. This section also discusses the implications of this practice for Ahok's performance in the election and argues that despite the strengths and weaknesses of his social media campaign in this election, the blasphemy issue had overshadowed the election and disturbed the functioning of an ideal electoral democracy. Thus, all of Ahok’s social media strategies could not compete with the discourses surrounding his blasphemy charge and could not prevent him from losing the election.

5.1 Ahok’s Communication Strategies

Many commentators have noted that Ahok was in many ways a unique individual on the Indonesian political scene. Far from the traditional image of Indonesian public officials who are usually portrayed as formal, polite, yet devious, Ahok was known for his direct and open communication style and uncompromising attitude towards different violations that usually happened in the Indonesian government, such as corruption and complex bureaucracy. As discussed earlier in Chapter 1, Ahok’s supporters saw him as fearlessly fighting corruption and improving public service in Jakarta. On the other hand, his opponents criticised his brash demeanour and used his double minority background as Chinese and Christian to foster hostility towards him.

During his five-year term in the Jakarta’s provincial government, Ahok seemed always be at the centre of a lot of controversy. News about Ahok varied from development projects that he set to fix the capital city; problems such as the relocation of people who live in
slum areas to government apartment complexes; his fight with Jakarta’s legislative members whom he accused of including fictitious projects in Jakarta’s provincial budgeting; environmental issues concerning the reclamation project of the Jakarta Bay; and forced evictions in several of Jakarta’s poor neighbourhoods. Before the start of the 2017s Jakarta gubernatorial election, Ahok was caught up in the blasphemy case that seemed to threaten the very fabric of Indonesia’s fragile democracy. This case not only damaged his reputation, but was also one of the most significant causes behind his defeat in the 2017 election.

Drawing on my field notes and transcripts of interviews conducted during my ten-week internship at the Jakarta governor’s office; textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts; and other data from secondary sources, this section provides an account of Ahok’s political communication practices both off-line and online.

5.1.1 Bringing New Style to Political Communication in Indonesia

Ahok was arguably one of the most well-known politicians in post-Suharto Indonesia. Google Trends\textsuperscript{26} data from March 2017 shows that Ahok was one of the most searched Indonesian politicians on the Internet (see Figure 5.1) and this fame was reached within a considerably short period of less than fifteen years since he started politics. Figure 5.2 shows that when Ahok started his political career in 2004, interest in him was still at 0 point. This means that at the time there was almost no search of him in the Google search engine. Interest in Ahok started to increase in 2012 when he became Jokowi’s running mate in the Jakarta’s gubernatorial election (see Figure 5.3). In March 2017, netizens’ interest in Ahok even surpassed their interest in other prominent Indonesian

\textsuperscript{26}Google Trends is a public web facility of Google Inc., which is based on Google search and shows how often a particular search-term is entered in relation to the total search-volume across various regions of the world, and in various languages.
politicians, such as SBY, Prabowo, Megawati, and even Jokowi (see Figure 5.1). While one might argue that the increased interest in Ahok naturally followed his position as a prominent political figure in Indonesia, none of previous governors of Jakarta—except for Jokowi—got as much coverage from both national and international media as Ahok.

Figure 5.1: Google Trends Data on Search Queries about Ahok in March 2017

Source: Google Trends 2017

Figure 5.2: Google Trends Data on Search Queries about Ahok in January 2004

Source: Google Trends 2017

Figure 5.3: Google Trends Data on Search Queries about Ahok in March 2012

Source: Google Trends 2017

Based on my analysis of Ahok’s political communication strategies derived from participant observation conducted during my internship at the Jakarta governor’s office, there are several factors that can explain the rapid rise of Ahok’s public profile. The first
factor contributing to Ahok’s fame was his brash demeanour. As described in Chapter 1, Ahok was known to have a short temper and often used strong words to express his discontent. These strong comments translated into colourful and often controversial sound bites, and they also fit the conflict frame that fundamentally structures news practice. The more Ahok made strong comments, the more newsworthy he became, especially when these comments were made with a high intonation and a bold hand gesture including Ahok’s distinctive pointing finger (see Figure 5.4). One example of controversial comments that Ahok made was when he accused Abraham Lunggana (better known as Haji Lulung), one of Jakarta DPRD members, of being a member of the mafia, which controlled the illegal practice of renting the sidewalks around the Tanah Abang area\(^27\) to street vendors. This conflict with Haji Lulung started when the government of Jakarta planned to relocate the street vendors to a new building as one of the solutions to reduce traffic in that area. However, many street vendors protested this policy as they felt this relocation would disadvantage them as the new building is located in an area that is further from the main road than their initial location. Ahok further accused Haji Lulung of engineering these protests. Haji Lulung denied the allegation and demanded Ahok make a public apology for defaming him. Ahok refused and since then the two politicians have been involved in many more disputes where they have publicly criticised each other.

Ahok’s team admitted that this brash character had resulted in many controversies in the media as Ahok’s head of media team, Sakti Budiono, stated “probably because he is not a communication person, he is not a politician. Thus, he just says what he thinks. Like when he said ‘I agree with prostitution’, people just reacted without understanding the

\(^{27}\) Tanah Abang is an area in Central Jakarta that hosts the biggest textile market in Southeast Asia. This area is known to be one of the most congested areas in Jakarta due to the presence of street vendors who occupy the sidewalk. In July 2013, Jokowi introduced a policy to relocate these street vendors from the sidewalk to a permanent building near the Tanah Abang market.
context of his statement” (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February). Sakti also stated that they employed a communication specialist to train Ahok before the gubernatorial campaign in 2012, but it was not successful. However, Sakti believed that this character was also one of the reasons why people loved Ahok and media liked to cover about him as he stated “for instance, he doesn’t see eye to eye with TVOne or MNC group. In my opinion, it’s ok as these media can’t fight the citizens. As long as he is on the right side, it’s ok. In fact, the news was actually better when they reported something untrue about him. The audiences united against TVOne” (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February).

Figure 5.4: Ahok’s Distinctive Pointing Finger as Portrayed by the Indonesian Media

![Ahok’s Distinctive Pointing Finger as Portrayed by the Indonesian Media](image)

Source: (Saputra 2015; Adzkla 2016)

Controversy surrounding Ahok was also caused by his propensity to structure his commentary as exposés. Ahok often portrayed himself as bersih, transparan and profesional (clean, transparent and professional), key messages that he took from the abbreviation of his full name, BTP. In early 2015, Ahok was involved in another conflict with DPRD Jakarta where he publicly disclosed that he had found several budgeting components inserted into the provincial budgeting plan without his consent. Ahok accused DPRD members of purposely inserting fictitious programs and marked-up prices into the budget plan, which reached 12 trillion IDR (approximately 230 million USD), as a method of corruption. Thus, he sent his own version of the budgeting plan to the Ministry of Home Affairs for approval. At the same time, Ahok also introduced an e-budgeting system to

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28 Ahok liked to refer to himself as BTP (an abbreviation of his full name, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama). This abbreviation was also used as one of his key messages, bersih, transparan, profesional, which he displayed on his official website, social media accounts and he often recited during his speeches.
the provincial government, which he believed would enable the public to scrutinise the government’s budget plan in the future. In retaliation, DPRD raised its right of inquiry which aimed to impeach Ahok. This case was the first instance where a provincial leader fought openly against alleged corruption within the regional government. In addition, as noted previously, Ahok was also controversial due to his minority background as a Chinese Christian. In a country where the majority of its people hail from Indigenous Muslim backgrounds, Ahok’s achievement to hold important position in Indonesia’s politics were seen as an interesting topic to be covered by the media.

Public relations scholars such as Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997) and Ledingham, Bruning, Thomlison and Lesko (1997) suggest that maintaining open and regular contacts with journalists is the key to successful media relations. Ahok, unlike many other Indonesian politicians, adopted this approach and he was always accessible to the media. After every meeting in his office at the City Hall, he met with journalists and provided summaries of the meetings, and answered questions. He was also always ready to be interviewed during his activities inside or outside the City Hall. Ahok was also a regular guest on many talk shows and television programs. This included a range of programs that showcased different elements. For instance, he appeared in the popular talk show Mata Najwa where he discussed his policies, as well as in comedy program Ini Talkshow where he discussed his private life. Like Obama, he even did stand-up comedy in some of these shows. In short, Ahok always tried to provide journalists with an open, regular and updated flow of information. This strategy was also one of the reasons behind the extensive amount of media coverage about him.

In addition to building a close relationship with the media, Ahok also maintained an open communication with the public. During his time as Jakarta’s governor, he met with
citizens upon his arrival at work at City Hall. Dozens of people waited on the veranda, to complain about problems they faced related to the provincial government’s services. He often made decision there and then, and responded with what needs to be done or referred them to his staff who would follow up these problems. This ‘door stopping’, highly unusual amongst Indonesian politicians, lasted for about 30 minutes before the official working hours started at 8 o’ clock. This ‘door stopping’ ritual was so popular that the mainstream media regularly covered it and netizens regularly posted about it in the social media.

Apart from meeting Ahok at the City Hall, residents of Jakarta could also contact him through other means. Every time he visited a government project or attended other official activities that attracted a large number of crowds, Ahok’s staff always distributed his name cards to the public. On these cards, the public could find Ahok’s mobile numbers, which they could use to report any issues concerning the country’s capital. These phone numbers were also listed on his website and social media accounts. During my internship, there were more than 2000 short message services (SMSs) sent to these numbers daily, and they were distributed to the relevant provincial boards through an integrated computer system. The respective heads of provincial boards were responsible for following up on these complaints within a given timeline. When complaints had been followed up, a confirmation message was sent to the complainant.

The door-stopping practice and SMS system created an image of Ahok as a highly responsive problem solver. Many Jakartans believed that their problem with bureaucracy would be solved if they took their complaints to Ahok. Ahok realised the importance of maintaining this image as a problem solver for his political traction and he made serious efforts to make sure that all residents’ complaints were addressed quickly and
appropriately. Ahok appointed a staff member to be responsible for these complaints and the response rate to these complaints was even counted as an important element for the head of provincial boards’ Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Due to the success of these initiatives, Ahok’s image as a problem solver was often used by his supporters to highlight his political viability and to distinguish him from his opponents.

5.1.2 Ahok’s Use of New Media as Political Communication Tools

Apart from the off-line strategies mentioned above, Ahok was also known to be quite innovative in using new media as his political communication tools. One of Ahok’s earliest online communication platforms was a personal website, ahok.org. By visiting this site, the public could get access to information not available elsewhere, such as progress reports of several government projects in Jakarta, news clippings about Ahok and his activities, Ahok’s working schedule as the governor, his personal opinions on different issues concerning the capital city and the country, and even a copy of his salary slip as a public official. He made this information accessible in order to change the public perception of officials as being secretive, corrupt and bureaucratic. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Ahok aimed to promote the ideals of being clean, transparent and professional, a slogan that is clearly written on this website. At the same time, this also helped to create a perception of trustworthiness, which can be used to gain public supports on his key policies and programs.

Ahok was actually one of very few politicians in Indonesia at the time who had their own official sites (Jokowi with jokowi.co.id and Prabowo with prabowosubianto.web.id are some of the other examples). However, other politicians who managed personal sites did not have as much detailed information as that on Ahok’s site. The section titled ‘Sudut BTP’ (BTP’s Corner), for instance, gave an insight into how Ahok thought about and
made his decisions. This section provided Ahok’s personal accounts on new government policies, diaries of his official visits, or simply his rant about the violations happening in the provincial government office. Unfortunately, like other politicians’ websites in Indonesia, this website was not well maintained. The only thing that was updated quite regularly was news links about Ahok taken from other media sources. Other sections rarely provided new information. Sudut BTP, for instance, was last updated on 21 October 2015. Since Ahok’s incarceration in May 2017, the website appears to be completely inactive.

Ahok did not only maintain a personal website. Ahok also revived beritajakarta.id, the official website of the Jakarta provincial government that was first developed in 2001. Although Ahok was not the initiator of this website, he was actually the first governor with strong views on how to use it effectively. During Ahok’s time, all official meetings were recorded and broadcast on this site. In addition, this website also provided official statements that the governor and his officials made regarding the policies or issues concerning the provincial government. Ahok’s vision was to make beritajakarta.id the primary source of information when the public or other media wanted to know anything about the governor, the Jakarta provincial government, and their activities (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February).

To further promote openness of communication, Ahok also developed an integrated information centre that is known as Jakarta Smart City (JSC). This centre was actually initiated by the preceding governor, Jokowi, but it was during Ahok’s time in 2014 that JSC started its operation. JSC is an integrated centre that provides information on different services and facilities available to Jakarta’s inhabitants or that may have an impact on the safety of people in the capital city. Supported by interactive media, the
system of JSC enables Jakarta’s residents to actively participate in monitoring government service delivery in the capital city. During Ahok’s time, JSC was integrated into several mobile applications such as Qlue (a short form of keluhan, complaint) and Lapor (report). These apps allowed citizens to report problems in real-time, thus enabling the governor to monitor the performance of officials in following up complaints. The Head of Staff of JSC at the time, Ellen Nio, said that Ahok dreamt of making JSC a system that supports the practice of good governance where residents are involved in providing information or feedback to improve the quality of services in Jakarta (personal communication, 10 March 2016).

As a politician who embraced new technologies, Ahok also used social media as his political communication tools. Ahmad and Popa (2014) reported that Jokowi – Ahok used social media extensively to promote themselves during the 2012 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election. Their social media campaign was very effective because of the personalisation that they offered in their social media accounts. Thus, this campaign was able to boost the pair’s popularity which led to ‘more positive news across commercial media outlets’ (Ahmad & Popa 2014: 120). This pair was supported by volunteers, JASMEV, to engage with the electorate and create conversations about the pair who was portrayed as a new hope that would bring reformation of bureaucracy to the capital city. It should be noted, however, that the social media campaign for this pair in 2012 was centred on Jokowi as he was the main candidate in this gubernatorial election. As a candidate for deputy governor, Ahok himself did not do much personal social media campaigning. His social media accounts, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama on Facebook and @basuki_btp on Twitter, were considerably passive and only repeated what had been shown on Jokowi–Ahok’s official social media accounts.
Nonetheless, soon after he became deputy governor, Ahok started to generate his own social media content that made a breakthrough in the way government releases information to the public. Less than two weeks after his inauguration, Ahok released a video on YouTube where he could be seen leading a meeting with labourers who held a demonstration in front of the City Hall. In this video, Ahok could be seen scolding one of the civil servants who did not work efficiently in taking notes of the meeting. This video played to the public’s sense of disgruntlement with the current bureaucracy and was therefore very popular, repeatedly shared by both mainstream media and users of social media. The public responded positively to this video\(^{29}\) and they requested Ahok to keep on posting his meetings on YouTube. After that, videos of Ahok’s meetings were updated regularly on this platform in two different channels, Pemprov DKI and beritajakartavideo. Ahok claimed that these videos were important to improve the transparency of information (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February). At the same time, he would like citizens to understand the reasons behind every decision he made as a public official (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February).

As mentioned above, Ahok maintained several social media accounts through his political career. Apart from an account on Facebook and another one on Twitter, Ahok also opened another account on Instagram in 2014. For the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election, Ahok and his running mate, Djarot, also introduced one account each on these three social media platforms. In addition, they also introduced a website, ahokdjarot.id, to promote their profiles and communicate with their constituents. A more detailed account

\(^{29}\) In Indonesia, there is a general perception that civil servants are lazy or incompetent. In the video, Ahok scolded the civil servant who had the responsibility of taking notes for the meeting. However, this civil servant only made handwritten notes which Ahok thought can be lost easily. He questioned the man’s decision of not using a laptop despite the fact that the Jakarta provincial government had bought top-of-the-range laptops to support the works of its staff. This video became viral as it resonated with citizens’ frustrations of the performance of their government and civil servants.
on this website and Ahok–Djarot’s social media accounts can be found in section 5.3 when I discuss Ahok’s social media strategies during the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election.

5.2 The Elections and Social Media

This section discusses several strategies that the political candidates employed in the Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election and the 2014 general election. A review of these strategies shows the changing trends of social media campaigning in Indonesia and the types of interactions that social media promoted between the candidates and the electorate. At the same time, the discussions on social media usage in political campaigning in these two elections also highlight how these media can also bring unfavourable effects to politics. In addition, this section also presents an overview of social media campaigning during the Jakarta’s 2017 gubernatorial election to provide a context of the social media and political environment surrounding this election.

5.2.1 The Use of Social Media in the 2012 Jakarta’s Gubernatorial Election

Social media started to gain popularity in Indonesia, particularly amongst the youth and urban dwellers, in 2010 and soon after politicians started to integrate them into their campaign strategies. Several scholars, such as Ufen (2010) and Saraswati (2016), also argued that this interest in social media opened an opportunity for the social media campaign industry to expand. On the one hand, politicians started to realise that social media was no longer simply another medium of content distribution but a powerful tool that could shape particular opinions that potentially could influence the election results. On the other hand, political consultants started to proliferate; offering different services from planning campaign strategies, preparing campaign materials, managing supporters, producing polls in favour of particular candidates, and even providing financial support
by linking ‘popular would-be candidates’ to business investors or party leaders (Ufen 2010: 25).

Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election in particular is considered to be the first election where candidates implemented large-scale social media campaigning (Ahmad & Popa 2014; Saraswati 2016). Although traditional media were still the major tools to communicate candidates’ campaign messages to the electorates, most candidates had also used social media to engage their supporters and encourage them to participate in political activism (Saraswati 2016). There were three main purposes for the use of social media by candidates at this time: strengthening the loyalties of supporters; influencing the undecided voters; and creating a cyber-war to heighten their profile and attack the opponent’s image (Saraswati 2016: 156-157). While traditional campaigning also serves similar goals, social media brought a new opportunity for these candidates to directly involve the electorates in their campaign. At the same time, social media are also less mediated in comparison to traditional media. For that reason, these candidates could potentially reach the constituents directly with their messages, rather than being influenced by the traditional gatekeepers of information.

Capitalising on the networking capability of social media, social media campaigners working for the candidates developed and disseminated content to previously inactive supporters, and encouraged them to circulate these messages within their networks (Saraswati 2016). According to Saraswati (2016), this strategy increased supporters’ engagement with the candidates by making them feel a part of their favourite candidate’s victory. It also increased the effectiveness of the political message as voters consider messages that they receive from their network to be more trustworthy.
Jokowi and his team were particularly successful in implementing this strategy. Early in their campaign, they started to use Twitter and Skype to personally reach hundreds of thousands of volunteers and swing voters to demand their support (Ahmad & Popa 2014). These personalised messages were able to generate massive responses for Jokowi with more than 10,000 people registered to be Jokowi–Ahok’s social media volunteers before the start of the second round of elections in September 2012 (Ahmad & Popa 2014). Jokowi and his team then managed the volunteers’ activities in a network, JASMEV. In addition, there were also 562,598 unique accounts who publicly stated their support for Jokowi and 1,365,234 unique accounts that mentioned Jokowi’s personal brand in their social media posts (Ahmad & Popa 2014).

In addition to mobilising volunteers, candidates also employed social media influencers to promote their messages. Similar to the strategy used in traditional marketing, the idea was to invite people who had a large number of social media followers to participate in the campaign. In her study, Saraswati (2016) reported that there were mainly two kinds of influencers employed by the gubernatorial candidates and their team. The first ones were celebrities who participated in the campaign without receiving any payment. These public figures usually became involved in the campaign because they believed in the candidate’s integrity or programs. The second type of influencer was those who professionally make money from social media. These influencers maintain a large number of followers on social media and post messages in accordance with a specific brief (Sadasri 2016). Unlike celebrities who tend to post positive messages about their favourite candidate, this second type of influencer is employed to generate negative content that criticises opponents or spreads rumours that could hurt the opponent’s image (Saraswati 2016). Due to their ability in reaching a large number of social media users who would subsequently pass on these messages to their own networks, this type of influencer is
known as ‘buzzers’ in Indonesian political marketing. An example of famous buzzers is the account @triomacan2000 who was employed by Fauzi Bowo to make accusations that questioned Jokowi’s Javanese and Muslim backgrounds (anonymous campaigner in Saraswati 2016: 160).

It should be noted that during the campaign period for the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, Jokowi and Ahok received a lot of criticism. Fauzi Bowo, the incumbent governor at the time, who was campaigning for his second term and was supported by major political parties such as PD, PAN and Golkar, used discourses of Ahok’s Chineseness and Christianity to influence voters to go against him. The opponents also used prominent public figures to stir negative opinions about Ahok. For example, Rhoma Irama, a famous dangdut singer and Islamic preacher, publicly attacked Ahok’s ethnicity and religious background during a speech in one of Jakarta’s mosques (Steven 2012). Rhoma told the congregation that electing a non-Muslim candidate is forbidden in Islam (Steven 2012). In his speech, Rhoma also observed the background of Jokowi and Ahok when he said ‘The second candidates, Jokowi and Ahok, Jokowi is a Muslim, but his parents are Christian, and he is Javanese. Ahok is Chinese, his religion is Christianity’.31 Despite all of these encumbrances, Jokowi and Ahok still won the election and were inaugurated as governor and deputy governor of Jakarta on 15 October 2012. This example showed that at the time the opponents’ attempt to use religion and ethnicity issues to influence election result was not successful. Jokowi, in particular, was very popular and the pair reflected the change that the electorate had long waited for.

30 This account was suspended and the owner of this account, Raden Nuh, was incarcerated in October 2014 for defamation against several ministries and public officials. Nuh was released from prison in June 2017 (Rmol 2017).
31 The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘Calon kedua, Jokowi sama Ahok. Jokowi Muslim, tapi orangtuanya Kristen, suku bangsanya Jawa. Ahok suku bangsanya Cina, agamanya Kristen’.
The incumbent governor, Fauzi Bowo, and his supporters also used social media to criticise Jokowi, and in particular to inflame feelings against Ahok as a member of the Chinese Christian minority. This kind of smear campaign was quite common, even before the arrival of social media. However, social media is able to amplify its effect by repeating, distributing and redistributing these messages within the networks and creates what Dean (2009: 58) called 'the fantasy of abundance' or 'the way facts and opinions, images and reactions circulate in a massive stream of content, losing their specificity and merging with and into the data flow' and leaving negative impressions without evidences. These opinions, images and stories that circulate in social media would soon dominate the political discourses in social media and push them to the mainstream news agenda and this is an example of how social media has become a source of news for mainstream media. While mainstream media, newspapers in particular, still set the news agenda, journalists often look into what is trending in social media to be picked up as the focus of their reporting.

While Jokowi was able to win his election despite the false accusations, this chapter shows that in the case of Ahok, social media by itself was not able to counter negative content produced by opponents that attacked the candidate’s race and religion. Instead, social media intensified these accusations and eventually switched the focus of the election from the candidates’ viability and programs to the candidates’ ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Although the Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election was arguably the first election where the candidates used social media to communicate with the electorate on a significant scale, the social media strategies that were implemented in this election period are considered successful because of the degree of interest they generated. Indeed, these
strategies became the blue print for social media campaigning efforts in subsequent elections, in both local and national levels (Ahmad and Popa 2014), including Ahok’s own re-election campaign which started in 2016.

5.2.2 The Use of Social Media in the 2014 Presidential Election

The 2014 presidential election saw the use of social media as candidates’ main campaign tool. Both candidates who competed in this election, Prabowo Subianto and Jokowi, used social media to communicate with voters and encourage their participation in the campaign. Aspinall and Mietzner (2014) and Heryanto (2014) have even argued that social media was a key feature in the proliferation of social movements that contributed to Jokowi’s victory in this election. This election saw the repetition of campaign techniques that were adapted from the 2012 gubernatorial election. Thus, smear campaigns, volunteer activism and buzzers still dominated the candidates’ social media efforts. At the same time, there were also new campaign techniques such as public fundraising, which was arguably adapted from the successful fundraising that Barack Obama implemented in both of his presidential campaigns.

During this election, political parties also became more aware of the importance of having good social media strategies to promote their candidates. Hence, parties’ representatives became more involved as parts of the campaign team; supervising the way social media messages about the candidates were formed and distributed. On one side, this involvement meant better funding for the candidates’ campaign, which included their social media efforts. Both Jokowi and Prabowo received support from business people and politicians who were part of the respective party coalitions behind their candidacy. This support was not only in form of cash donations, but also included other material donations such as access to technologies, logistics for volunteers and buzzers,
promotional materials and so on (Saraswati 2016). On another side, this involvement also meant more control over the campaign’s management. PDIP, the party behind Jokowi’s candidacy, was actively involved in choosing which campaign agencies that should be employed by Jokowi and his team (Saraswati 2016).

As mentioned above, smear campaigns were still prominent during this election. Rumours, hoaxes and fake news became common in both traditional and social media. Prabowo Subianto’s team aggressively spread misleading information that questioned Jokowi’s ethnic and religious backgrounds. The most popular rumour at that time accused Jokowi of being the son of a Chinese Singaporean man and a Christian (Mietzner 2014). Another rumour accused him of being a pro-communist and pro-Chinese leader (Mietzner 2014). Jokowi’s close relationship with his deputy governor, Ahok, was also used to attack him. Rumours were circulated that Jokowi’s presidency was part of a well-planned strategy to support the domination of the Chinese conglomerates in Indonesia’s politics and economy. At the same time, several self-proclaimed Islamic media, such as voa-islam, arrahmah and panjimas32, also reported that Ahok aimed to promote Christianisation in Indonesia, which resulted in demonstrations that requested him to be prevented from replacing Jokowi’s as Jakarta’s governor.

At first, Jokowi did not retaliate. Instead, his social media messages focused on his programs and achievements which he believed to be more important in building a positive image and convincing the electorate to vote for him (Saraswati 2016). In addition, he also

32 In March 2015, the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemkominfo) blocked these sites along with nineteen other sites that were considered as spreading radicalism. This blocking was carried out based on the recommendation from the National Agency for Combating Terrorism (Kominfo 2015).
employed buzzers to counter false accusations by providing facts about his credentials. Nonetheless, when public polling showed that Jokowi’s electability started to plummet approaching the election day, Jokowi and his team began to disseminate information about Prabowo’s human right violations, his connections with the Suharto family, and his suspect campaign donors (Saraswati 2016: 236).

Similar to Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election, volunteers still played an important part in this election. Both candidates intensively managed their volunteers with the help of political consultants. Jokowi still relied on JASMEV, an organisation that mainly consisted of university students who worked flexible hours to generate content, disseminate it in social media, and manage his official campaign accounts. Prabowo also employed university students, despite managing them in stricter shifts that ran 24/7 (Saraswati 2016). Based on her interviews with campaigners from both Jokowi’s and Prabowo’s teams, Saraswati (2016: 213) reported that Prabowo actually had better social media strategies. Not only in that his accounts appeared long before the start of the election, but that these accounts also disseminated regular messages to their followers with consistent and relevant content. Jokowi’s accounts, on the other hand, tended to be more irregular in terms of message dissemination and content. Nonetheless, Jokowi still generated more positive discussions in social media than Prabowo (Saraswati 2016).

A new trend that also characterised the 2014 election was the fundraising element of the social media campaign. Similar to the fundraising conducted by the former US President Barack Obama during the 2008 and 2012 US elections, Jokowi and his team also invited supporters to donate their money to fund their campaign and to ensure Jokowi’s victory in this election (Ihsanuddin 2014). Despite being the first time that a presidential candidate in Indonesia conducted such fundraising, Jokowi’s supporters made a historical
achievement with an accumulated donation of nearly 300 billion Rupiahs made by more than 50,000 individuals (Ihsanuddin 2014). This amount reflected Jokowi’s popularity, and showed the scale of political enthusiasm among the Indonesian citizens during this election.

Although, as shown in Chapter 3, Obama’s fundraising campaign could arguably be considered as one of the first public fundraising campaigns by a political candidate with quite a significant result, American Politician Bernie Sanders’s fundraising in 2016 is actually a better example of how a political outsider could generate massive funding support from the general public. At the time of the campaign launch in the spring 2015, Bernie clearly stood as an underdog. His electability was only around 3%, he was not supported by any established politicians, and he was competing against Hillary Clinton, a popular candidate and a seasoned Democrat politician (Revolution Messaging 2016). Relying heavily on digital advertising through social media, Sanders’ team emphasised the importance of the fundraising to uphold his moral high ground of distancing himself from the super PACs33 and mega donors. This message resonated so well with ordinary Americans that Sanders was able to collect around 140 million USD, far more than what Obama gained during his 2008 campaign. It should specifically be noted that these donations came from more than 4.7 million people who each only contributed around 27 USD (Revolution Messaging 2016).

Sanders’s fundraising success is an example of how social media can boost politician’s engagement with the electorate, which eventually spurred a grassroots network of individuals who were highly invested in the candidate’s success. Sanders’s main messages

33 PAC stands for Political Action Committee, an organisation in the United States and Canada that collects donations from members and distributes them to political candidates, ballot initiatives or legislation (Janda, Berry & Goldman 2008)
were packaged in the form of videos where the candidate engaged the viewers with stories on his programs and political aspirations. These videos, mainly distributed through social media, were so popular and were able to get more than seven million views (Revolution Messaging 2016).

While Jokowi’s fundraising campaign in 2014 also used social media as a tool to encourage constituents to contribute, this campaign was not built on the same narrative as Sanders. It was actually Ahok who integrated fundraising as one of his strategies in the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election that followed the same pattern as Sanders. Positioning himself as an outsider, Ahok argued that the fundraising was an important strategy to make sure that his governorship would be independent of elite politics. A more detailed account of Ahok’s social media strategies in this election is discussed in the following section.

So far, we can see that the use of social media in electoral politics in Indonesia has been characterised by the use of influencers and volunteer groups to promote candidates’ messages. At the same time, we can also see that smear campaigns that aimed to distribute unfavourable and even fake news were also used as means to attack political opponents. When these smear campaigns were employed, the main discourse being used still centred on the practice of highlighting a ‘constitutive outside’ within the metanarratives of ‘the nation’/’people’ or ‘Islam’. In the next section where I discuss the use of social media in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, the use of this discourse of ‘othering’ becomes more prominent as Ahok’s blasphemy allegations dominated the electoral process at the time.
5.2.3 The Use of Social Media in the 2017 Jakarta’s Gubernatorial Election

In the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election, integrating social media into candidates’ campaigning was an important strategic decision as 58.90% of the Jakarta’s electorates were active users of social media (Lingkaran Survei Indonesia in Laksana 2017). To prevent smear campaigns that were circulated in social media in the previous elections, KPU obliged all candidates in the 2016–2017 regional elections to register their official social media accounts at the beginning of the campaign period. Candidates number one, Agus Yudhoyono and Silviana Murni, registered three accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram respectively. Ahok and his partner, Djarot Saiful Hidayat, also registered three accounts on the same social media platforms. At the same time, they also registered an official website for this campaign, ahokdjarot.id. Candidates number three, Anies Baswedan and Sandiaga Uno, had the most social media accounts. They managed five accounts on Facebook, five accounts on Twitter, and four accounts on Instagram. Like Ahok–Djarot, this pair also managed an official website, jakartamajubersama.com (Ramdhani 2016).

5.2.3.1 Prominence

Managing more social media accounts might have been Anies–Sandi’s strategy to get better reach and frequency. In marketing terms, reach refers to the number of people who are exposed to the marketing messages, while frequency refers to the number of times these people are exposed to these messages. Considering the network characteristic of social media, having more social media accounts could potentially help Anies–Sandi to reach more constituents who would be exposed to their messages more often, and hopefully would share these messages with their larger networks. However, in this example of Anies–Sandi’s social media activities, having more accounts did not translate into domination of the political debates. An Australian media monitoring company,
Isentia, reported that between 10 February and 26 February 2017 (or during the first round of elections), there were 501,970 posts about Ahok while there were only 231,480 posts about Anies in social media (Wirakusuma 2017). This report also claimed that 89.99% of these discussions happened on Twitter. Isentia further confirmed that social media discussions clearly played an important part in the success of the candidates’ campaigns as the conventional media only contributed 4.02% towards political discussions about these candidates, while social media contributed 95.98% (Wirakusuma 2017). These statistics can bring us to a conclusion that in the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election this principle of frequency did not apply. As Ahok’s blasphemy case dominated the political discourse at the time, most discussions about the election were also related to the case. Thus, Ahok’s name automatically appeared more often than the other candidates, although this might not have been on positive terms.

My own data mining of Twitter also shows Ahok’s prominence in social media discussions. On Election Day on 15 February 2017, there were 282,000 tweets that mentioned the word ‘Ahok’ or ‘Basuki Tjahaja Purnama’. This figure approximately covered 8% of the 4.1 million tweets sent from Indonesia everyday (Simangunsong in Maulana 2016). A high-profile Indonesian political research institute, Politicawave, also stated that Ahok–Djarot was mentioned more often than the other candidates in social media conversations during the series of candidates’ public debates between January and February 2017. The survey shows that Ahok–Djarot led with 52%, followed by Anies–Sandi with 37%, and Agus–Silvi with 11% (Politicawave 2017b). When Ahok received his guilty verdict on 9 May 2017, his name became a worldwide trending topic on Twitter for several hours (Saragih 2017).
5.2.3.2 Themes

Despite the fact that Ahok’s name led the social media discussions during Jakarta’s 2017 gubernatorial election, these discussions did not necessarily focus on positive things about the incumbent candidate. As can be seen in Figure 5.5 and Table 5.1, the words ‘aksi’ (action)\textsuperscript{34}, ‘agama’ (religion), and ‘Islam’ dominated discussions about Ahok in Twitter during this 2017 election. From these findings, it was clear that discussions on Ahok in this 2017 election were mostly on his blasphemy case rather than on his programs and performance as a governor. Thus, the issue of religion dominated the discourses during this 2017 election and overshadowed the more common electoral discourses, such as policies and political viability. This pattern would also appear in the print media.

Figure 5.5: Word Clouds of 50 Most Frequent Words about Ahok on Twitter

Source: Author’s Data Analysis using NVivo (2017).

\textsuperscript{34} The word ‘aksi’ literally means action. However, in this context this word refers to a series of seven big demonstrations which took place between October 2016 and May 2017. These demonstrations were also known as ‘Aksi Bela Islam’, Actions to Defend Islam, and were organised by several Islamic organisations, such as FPI and GNPF-MUI (The National Movement to Safeguard the Indonesian Ulama Council’s Fatwa). They had one aim, which was to pressure the Indonesian government to prosecute and put Ahok in jail for the blasphemy case.
At the same time, Figure 5.5 also shows that there are many other words that carry negative connotations appearing in the discussions about Ahok, such as ‘blasphemy’, ‘hukum’ (punish), ‘demo’ (demonstration), ‘tangkap’ (arrest), ‘tuntut’ (prosecute), and #janganmaudibohongiahok (don’t let Ahok fool you). This finding is in line with the sentiments that circulated among the electorates at the time. A sentiment analysis study conducted by Buntoro (2017) shows that during the first round of the 2016–2017 campaign period, netizens’ sentiments towards Ahok–Djarot were mostly negative (57%).

Meanwhile, the other two pairs, Agus–Silvi and Anies–Sandi, both generated positive sentiments of 62% (see Table 5.2). Sentiment analysis is a type of computer analysis to extract subjective emotions and feelings from the text (Cambria, Schuller, Xia & Havasi 2013). Also known as opinion mining or emotion Artificial Intelligence, this analysis is commonly used to figure out if a text expresses negative or positive feelings (Cambria et al. 2013). Using the principle of linguistics known as Natural Language Processing (NLP), sentiment analysis relies on computer algorithms to divide the texts into positive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aksi (action)</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agama (religion)</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bisa (able)</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pendukung (supporter)</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lilin (candle)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kasus (case)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warga (citizen)</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hakim (judge)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governor</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Data Analysis using NVivo (2017).
and negative categories. In his study, Buntoro (2017) used two algorithms, Naïve Bayes Classifier (NBC) and Support Vector Machine (SVM), which are considered as having a really high accuracy rate.

Table 5.2: Sentiment Analysis of 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentiment</th>
<th>Agus-Silvi</th>
<th>Ahok-Djarot</th>
<th>Anies-Sandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


An Indonesian polling company, Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (LSI), also argued that Anies–Sandi were more popular in social media than Ahok–Djarot (in Laksana 2017). A survey conducted by LSI between 27 February and 3 March 2017 shows that 47.58% of Facebook users supported Anies–Sandi, while only 43.94% supported Ahok–Djarot. In Instagram, Anies–Sandi were also more popular with 49.99% of users stating their support for this pair, while Ahok–Djarot only received 40.73%.

Nonetheless, Table 5.1 also shows that these negative sentiments during this period of the election tended to circulate around Ahok’s blasphemy case and not around his performance as the governor. As the table shows, the word ‘bisa’ (able) also appeared in 38% of social media conversations about Ahok. At the same time, Ahok was still able to attract sympathy from some voters as the word ‘lilin’ (candle) dominated the conversations following his incarceration in May 2017. This word refers to the vigils organised around the country as a symbol of protest against Ahok’s guilty verdict.
Although the other candidates appear to have generated more support in social media discussions than Ahok–Djarot, the situation was different during the series of gubernatorial debates. A political research institute Politicawave reported that 61% of the conversations about Ahok–Djarot in social media during the third gubernatorial debate on 10 February 2017 had a positive tone (see Figure 5.6). Politicawave’s analysis also shows that those positive comments focused on Ahok’s effective leadership style and his success in the Kalijodo\textsuperscript{35} relocation. Meanwhile, the negative conversation circulated around his brash character (Politicawave 2017a). This good performance in the debates was due to Ahok’s position as an incumbent. As incumbent candidates, Ahok–Djarot were able to provide data of the Jakarta government’s programs and policies. These data backed up their arguments on what their visions and missions would be as the future governor and deputy governor. In contrast, other candidates lacked access to this data.

In terms of campaign management, candidates in this election employed similar strategies to the ones taken by candidates in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election and the 2014

\textsuperscript{35} Kalijodo was the Jakarta’s red district. In February 2016, Ahok started the relocation process of Kalijodo’s inhabitants. A year later in February 2017, Ahok opened Kalijodo as a public park as part of his Open Child-Friendly Public Space (\textit{Ruang Publik Terbuka Ramah Anak}, RPTRA) program.
presidential election. Firstly, all candidates still employed volunteers and buzzers to disseminate their social media messages. Agus–Silvi were supported by groups such as Relasi Merah Putih, Agus Fans Club, and Komite Nasional Masyarakat Indonesia (National Committee of Indonesian Society). Ahok–Djarot were backed up by volunteer groups such as JASMEV, Teman Ahok, and Muda–Mudi Ahok (Ahok’s Youth). Meanwhile, Anies–Sandi received support from groups such as INSIDER (Anies–Sandi Digital Volunteers) and Kawan untuk Anies–Sandi (Friends for Anies–Sandi). In addition, each pair also received support from celebrities who regularly posted messages about the candidates and even became the candidates’ spokespersons.

Despite this, it was apparent that the role of volunteer groups was more restricted in this election in comparison to the previous elections. Instead of being in the forefront of the social media battles, their participation was supplementary. For instance, Ahok–Djarot did not officially recognise any particular group as their supporters. Even Teman Ahok, which was able to collect more than 1 million ID cards in support for Ahok’s initial intention to run as an independent candidate, was not included as part of Ahok’s campaign team. Instead Ahok–Djarot’s campaign team was dominated by political party members rather than volunteers and this had the effect of making it appear as a contest among political elites rather than a democratic opportunity to elect a leader based on his or her merit. During the election, these teams also received assistance from high-profile political consultants: Ahok–Djarot employed Charta Politica, Saiful Mujani Research Centre and Cyrus Network, while Anies–Sandi employed PolMark, and Agus–Silvi employed Lingkaran Survei Indonesia (LSI) (Rofi 2016). After Agus–Silvi lost in the first round of elections, Anies–Sandi employed LSI to join their campaign team (Romadoni 2017).
5.3 Ahok’s Social Media Campaigning in the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

In 2017 Ahok was one of the most popular Indonesian politicians in social media. He had maintained social media accounts long before becoming the deputy governor of Jakarta in 2012 and he had personal social media accounts on Facebook (AhokBTP), Twitter (@ahok_btp), Instagram (@ahokbtp) and YouTube (Ahok Basuki T Purnama). All of these accounts were managed by Ahok’s media team led by Ahok’s head of communication and media, Sakti Budiono. Apart from these personal accounts, Ahok also maintained three accounts specifically for the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election campaign on Facebook (AhokDjarot), Twitter (@AhokDjarot) and Instagram (@ahokdjarot). In addition, the Ahok–Djarot campaign team also ran an official website AhokDjarot.id. For the purpose of this study however, I only conducted a textual analysis of the content of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram of Ahok–Djarot’s accounts. This is because they were the most popular social media platforms in Indonesia where organisations, politicians, and celebrities engage with their audiences. Textual analysis, as discussed earlier, can be understood as a method to study a text by making ‘an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text’ (McKee 2002: 1). Conducting a textual analysis of Ahok–Djarot’s official accounts enables consideration of the messages that these candidates tried to convey to the electorates, the way in which these messages might have been interpreted by the electorate, and indications of the political discourse and political situations in Indonesia at the time.

5.3.1 Ahok’s Social Media Statistics

Before presenting the textual analysis results of Ahok–Djarot’s social media accounts, this section provides a statistical overview of Ahok’s position in social media to show his prominence in the social media sphere.
5.3.1.1 Ahok’s Facebook Statistics

Ahok joined Facebook in 2011 when he was still serving as a member of DPR. In June 2017 Ahok’s Facebook fanpage, AhokBTP, had 2,489,350 fans, placing him at number six on the list of the most popular Indonesian politicians on Facebook (Socialbakers 2017). Despite this high number, the number of fans that Ahok has on Facebook is far below some other Indonesian politicians, particularly Prabowo Subianto and President Joko Widodo who are respectively placed at numbers ten and seventeen in Facebook’s political category worldwide (Socialbakers 2017).

It should be noted that Ahok was not active on social media after his conviction for blasphemy in May 2017. However, as late as November 2017 his account still had a strong growth rate with an average of 500 new fans per day from October to November 2017 (Socialbakers 2017). Nonetheless, this account has a low engagement with only 44% of the responsive rate and 1% of the engagement rate (Likealyzer 2017). This means that this account only responded to fans’ comments 44% of the time and there are only 1% of fans who interacted (comment, post, like, share and so on) with this account or its contents.

Ahok’s official campaign account, AhokDjarot, was created in February 2017 and it had 875 posts (Sociograph 2017). In June 2017, this account had 603,607 fans and the number of fans gradually decreased as soon as the Jakarta’s gubernatorial campaign period was over (Socialbakers 2017). Like Ahok’s personal account, this account also had a low engagement with 44% of the responsive rate and 0.2% of the engagement rate (Likealyzer 2017).
5.3.1.2 Ahok’s Twitter Statistics

Ahok joined Twitter in February 2010, making Twitter the first social media account that he participated in. Ahok has a strong presence in this social media. He had 7,529,949 followers, ranking him at number 443 worldwide and at number nineteen in the political organisation category in terms of followers (Twitter Counter 2017a). Another Indonesian politician who is in the top-twenty list of the political organisation category is the former president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who was placed in number thirteen. Apart from these two, there were no other Southeast Asian leaders in the top-twenty list of this category.

Unlike other celebrity politicians, Ahok was not very active on Twitter. Until May 2017, he only made 2,597 tweets and this account only had an audience attentiveness score of 2%. This means that he tweeted less than once a day and hardly responded to his followers’ comments on his posts. As a comparison, Barack Obama who was in the number one spot for the political organisation category has tweeted almost 15,451 times and had an audience attentiveness score of 50% (Twitter Counter 2017a). In terms of engagement, Ahok’s accounts actually performed rather well. Ahok’s tweets were re-tweeted or shared 50% of the time and were liked 36.5% of the time by his followers.

The statistics of Ahok–Djarot Twitter accounts is quite different from Ahok’s personal account. Interestingly, this account had been listed since March 2012, long before the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and even long before Djarot became Ahok’s deputy governor in 2014. This account did not have as many followers as Ahok’s personal account with only 125,756 followers (Twitter Counter 2017b). This account was ranked

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36 When someone opens a Twitter account, he or she can identify his or her professions. For instance, politicians are listed in the political organisation category and musicians and movie stars are listed in the artist category. These accounts are verified based on the public’s report on their genuineness.
at number 12,238 worldwide and did not make it to the political organisation list (Twitter Counter 2017b). In terms of activity, this account tweeted 9,208 times, far more than Ahok’s tweets in his personal account. Despite the low number of followers, this account had quite a good engagement with 68% of its tweets being re-tweeted and 70% of its tweets being liked by followers (Twitonomy 2017).

5.3.1.3 Ahok’s Instagram Statistics

Instagram’s features which are dominated by photos and videos enable these politicians to communicate in a more visual, personal and informal way with the public (Twiplomacy 2017). Former US President, Barack Obama, was the first globally recognised politician who joined Instagram and remained one of the most popular politicians in this social media platform even after he stepped down as President. The only Indonesian politician who is prominent in Instagram is President Joko Widodo who was listed at number five of the most popular world leaders on Instagram with 3,470,165 followers (Socialbakers 2017).

Ahok joined Instagram in September 2014, a few months before his inauguration as the Governor of Jakarta. His Instagram account was quite popular and had 2,928,186 followers. This account made 756 posts and had an engagement rate of 3.3% (Instagram 2017). This engagement rate was good considering that Instagram usually generates an engagement rate of 2-3% (Mehta 2017).

The official campaign account, AhokDjarot, was created in October 2016 just before the start of Jakarta’s gubernatorial campaign period. This account only had 266,000 followers and made 548 posts. This account has been dormant since June 2017 or a month after Ahok’s conviction for blasphemy. Despite being short-lived, this account had a better
engagement rate than Ahok’s personal account with a rate of 7.6%. This higher engagement rate might be caused by the fact that this was an official campaign account where the pair heavily promoted themselves and their programs to their constituents.

5.3.2 Ahok’s Social Media Strategies

Different social media platforms are known to target different audiences. Facebook is a platform that is strong in building the sense of community while at the same time still holding the position as the most popular social media in Indonesia. Twitter is known for its strength in generating conversations and as an effective tool for politicians to discuss their policies with the electorate. Meanwhile Instagram, is a platform that is strong in the visual element. Popular among the millennials\(^{37}\), Instagram creates engagement by allowing followers to get snippets of the celebrities or politicians’ personal lives. Looking through both Ahok’s personal accounts and Ahok–Djarot’s official campaign accounts, it seems that Ahok and his team did not have a well-structured social media plan. Rather than adapting his content according to the characteristics of the individual platform, Ahok–Djarot’s social media content tended to be repetitive. The different platforms that they used tended to overlap rather than complement each other, and most content was simply copied and pasted from one platform to another.

In addition, these accounts also lacked engagement. Ahok and his team rarely responded to the questions or comments that the followers posted in these social media accounts. Even Twitter, which has the most potential to generate conversations and engagement, was only used as a public information outlet for Ahok–Djarot’s programs and achievements. Most of the time, Ahok simply re-tweeted others’ posts or provided links to media articles about him and his campaign. This use of social media as a public

\(^{37}\) Millennial refers to the generation that was born after generation X, or those who were born between 1982 and 2004 (Strauss & Howe 1987).
information outlet did not only happen on Twitter. Ahok’s Facebook and Instagram also only focused on disseminating information about Ahok–Djarot’s achievements and programs. This information was presented in different formats such as pictures, videos, graphs and testimonies from either the governor himself or others (community members, celebrities, staff, and volunteers).

While this pattern of messages could already be seen in Ahok’s social media posts prior to the election. Some anonymous campaigners that assisted Ahok in this gubernatorial election also noted the chaos that happen within the team after the blasphemy case broke. A campaigner even said that she felt the enormous lack of direction in the team as all of Ahok’s ‘first ring’ staff were busy assisting him in the legal procedures related to the blasphemy case. I personally tried to contact one of Ahok’s ‘first ring’ staff during this time to get some clarifications from them. However, I did not receive any satisfactory responses from her. Nonetheless, I expected this behaviour as I believe, as in any other legal cases, she had to limit her communication to the outside party to avoid further legal consequences.

Another thing to note is that in the official campaign accounts, the social media posts were rather heavy on ‘Ahok’ content and not so much on ‘Djarot’ content. It was only towards the end of the campaign that Djarot appeared more often, especially in situations where many Islamic leaders or religious groups congregated. Djarot’s calm demeanour in handling these difficult situations actually received positive responses from netizens. For instance, the hostility that Djarot received when attending Suharto’s commemoration on 11 March 2017. The service was arranged by the Suharto family and invited several figures who are known as supporters of Ahok’s opponents. These public figures included the leader of Gerindra party Prabowo Subianto, the leader of FPI Habib Rizieq Shihab, and an Islamic cleric Arifin Ilham. The last two were known to organise the series of demonstration that demanded Ahok’s conviction for blasphemy.

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became a trending topic and sparked heated discussions in social media regarding the issue of pluralism in Indonesia.

As mentioned above, Ahok’s blasphemy case dominated the discourse surrounding the gubernatorial election. To counter this, Ahok prompted discussions on diversity and pluralism. This strategy could be seen in the campaign slogan, ‘Jakarta Punya Semua’, which can be either interpreted as ‘Jakarta is everyone’s’ or ‘Jakarta has it all’. This slogan was used as a key message with the hashtag #JakartaPunyaSemua in his social media posts, which depicted people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds and their contributions to Jakarta and Indonesia. At the same time, this slogan was also used as their official website address, jakartapunyasevua.id. To express his belongingness to the country, Ahok shared his personal story as a Chinese descendant living in Indonesia. A story that he often shared was about his dilemma following the 1998 riots when many Chinese Indonesians became victims of violence. At that time, Ahok said that he had the opportunity to move overseas as many Chinese Indonesians did to escape the chaos and violence. However, he chose to stay in Indonesia as he felt that Indonesia was his homeland. This story can be seen as a strategy to counter negative sentiment among Indonesians who were suspicious that he may have special loyalties to the Chinese Indonesians. At the same time, this story also carried a certain element of underdogness that showed Ahok’s struggle to reach such an important position in Indonesia’s elite-dominated politics. Ahok mobilised his story as a counter to the apprehension amongst Indonesia’s native population that the Chinese were opportunists who simply made money in Indonesia and left whenever life got difficult. Ahok’s telling of his own story
was an attempt to provide evidence of his enduring commitment to the land of his birth, despite his ancestry.

This key message fitted with the political situation in Indonesia at that time, but most importantly it was congruent with the metanarratives of Indonesia’s political discourse. As discussed in Chapter 2, Lim (2013) and Duile and Bens (2015) argued that any political message in Indonesia has to be presented within the narrative of ‘the nation’/‘people’ or ‘Islam’. This is because Indonesia’s long-established political discourse has been built upon a ‘constitutive outside’ or a common external threat towards the unity of the nation.

In the 2017 campaign the application of this key message about Ahok’s personal commitment to living in and being part of Indonesia was not consistently delivered. Instead of using the hashtag #Jakartapunyasemua in all of his messages, Ahok also introduced many other hashtags throughout the campaign. Some of the most popular ones included #SalamDuaJari (the two-finger salutation\(^{39}\)), #KamiAhokDjarot (We are Ahok–Djarot), and #BadjaUntukSemua (Badja\(^{40}\) for Everyone). From these hashtags, it is clear that Ahok tried to build a sense of community, which is one of key factors for the success of any social media campaign. These hashtags aimed to create a shared identity among his supporters that, in ideal situation, could potentially expand to these supporters’ larger networks. However, as Ahok’s blasphemy allegations overshadowed other discourses commonly found during campaign period, his inconsistent messages

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\(^{39}\) This refers to a peace sign that Ahok–Djarot’s supporters used to show their supports for the candidates who were assigned the registration number two in the election. The use of the slogan ‘salam dua jari’ was a repetition of what Jokowi had done during the 2014’s presidential election. At that time, Jokowi–Jusuf Kalla also used this slogan to encourage voters to choose them.

\(^{40}\) Badja is an abbreviation for Basuki-Djarot. Sometimes during the campaign, Ahok tried to change its image from the ‘brash Ahok’ to the ‘polite Basuki’. He mentioned several times during media interviews that he was no longer Ahok but he was Basuki who was calm, polite and careful with what he said in front of the public.
made him incapable to build the momentum that would have enabled him to live down the charges of blasphemy. It was only when the issues of pluralism and religion intensified in the second round of the election that Ahok returned to consistently using the hashtag #Jakartapunyasemua in his social media postings.

Hashtag is an effective way to highlight the importance of a particular issue in social media as it can encourage followers to use it and share their stories that fit this key message. When many followers respond to this and share it with their networks, this movement will usually result in the hashtag becoming a trending topic or the most popular issue that circulates in social media. Due to the interdependency between social media and traditional media, this issue will subsequently appear in traditional media and spread out to an even bigger public. However, this strategy was not apparent in Ahok’s accounts. There was not any message that asked his followers to spread the hashtag #Jakartapunyasemua by sharing their stories about pluralism in Indonesia.

Ahok and team tried to highlight this issue of pluralism in other media when they released a video with a ‘Bhinneka Tunggal Ika’^41 theme. Similar to their printed promotions, the two-minute video also showed people from different ethnic and religious groups and their contributions to Indonesia. The video showed ethnic Chinese badminton athletes, dancers who appeared to come from the eastern part of Indonesia, and religious leaders representing the different religions existing in Indonesia. Viewers could also hear Djarot’s voice in the background sending the message that no matter what your religion or ethnicity, you should unite together to build Jakarta. The opening scene of the video, however, showed a mother and daughter in a car trapped in the middle of a demonstration. They appeared terrified looking at a mob of people who violently shake

^41 Bhinneka Tunggal Ika translates to unity in diversity. It is the official motto of Indonesia that recognises that the country consists of different ethnic groups and religions that unite together.
their car, burn things and attack the police. Some of these demonstrators were depicted wearing Muslim attire and carrying the sign ‘ganyang Cina’ (kill the Chinese). This video may have been reminiscent of the 1998 riots where Chinese Indonesians became victims of violence in the immediate aftermath of Suharto’s resignation. The video quickly went viral and received polarised reviews from netizens. A group of lawyers formally complained about this video to the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) on the grounds that it could spark hatred in the already heated Indonesian political atmosphere. Within 24 hours of the video release, the hashtag #iklanahokjahat (Ahok’s ad is evil) was trending on Twitter, and PDIP, which sponsored the ad, requested the video to be immediately removed from all Ahok–Djarot’s social media accounts (Tapsell 2017).

The many social media accounts that Ahok and his team managed also reduced the effectiveness of the message delivery. For instance, when Ahok introduced the Ahok Show as part of his campaign, followers could only access this weekly talk show from Ahok’s personal accounts rather than from his official campaign accounts. It was only towards the end of the campaign period that Ahok’s team added access to this show through Ahok–Djarot’s official Facebook account. Ahok explained that this show was introduced as a strategy to communicate with the millennials who while interested in politics, do not want to spend much time reading and learning about Indonesian political history (Aziza 2017). Soon after this show was launched, Ahok launched another online

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92 The Ahok Show was a weekly talk show hosted by Ahok. This show started to air after the first round of election or exactly on 17 March 2017. During the one-hour show Ahok, accompanied by celebrities, answered questions with regards to his programs and policies. At the same time, the show also invited Ahok’s family and relatives who talked about a private and personal side of the governor. The show’s style was clearly aimed at attracting young voters as Ahok wore casual clothes, and talked in colloquial language and slang normally used by young people. On some occasions, he even did several challenges that were popular in social media such as the ‘flip the bottle’ challenge and the ‘chubby bunny’ challenge. At first, the Ahok Show could only be accessed through Ahok’s personal accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. However, towards the end of the campaign, fans of Ahok–Djarot’s Facebook could also access this show through this platform.
radio program titled ‘Kepoin Pelayan Jakarta’ (literally meaning being nosy on the Jakarta’s civil servants). This program encouraged listeners to get to know and be curious about what Ahok and Djarot did as Jakarta’s governor and deputy governor. During the one-hour live show Ahok, this time accompanied by Djarot, answered questions that their Instagram and Facebook followers posed through these accounts. While both the Ahok Show and Kepoin Pelayan Jakarta seemed to be very similar, Ahok claimed that these two shows were launched at the same time to ‘test the water’ on which format that the social media users preferred (Aziza 2017).

Looking through Ahok–Djarot’s social media strategies described above, it was clear that this pair of candidates replicated much of what Jokowi had done in the 2014 presidential election. Ahok–Djarot even wore chequered shirts as their campaign uniform, a fashion choice that became Jokowi’s trademark in both Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election and the 2014 general election. Even the ‘salam dua jari’ (two-finger salutation) symbol is the same symbol that Jokowi used in his presidential campaign.

Another strategy that seemed to be adapted from Jokowi was the integration of fundraising in the campaign. With slogans such as ‘kampanye rakyat’ (the people’s campaign) and ‘patungan rakyat’ (the people’s crowdfunding), Ahok–Djarot invited their supporters to donate money as little as 10,000 IDR (approximately 0.7 USD) to their campaign. The fundraising started after the first round of elections or exactly on 7 March 2017. Within the one-month timeline that Ahok’s team had set up for fundraising, they were able to collect 26.9 billion IDR (approximately 2 million USD), which was donated by 3,613 donors. Looking at this figure, it was apparent that despite Ahok’s intention to encourage common Jakartans to support him and become donors, the donations mostly came from upper-middle class Jakartans who have always been his key supporters.
Unlike Jokowi who donated all the money collected through his fundraising effort to the free Palestine movement\textsuperscript{13}, Ahok proudly claimed that most of his campaign’s expenditures were covered by these donations. By doing this, Ahok argued, he would be bound to serve the people and not the political parties or conglomerates that usually fund political campaign in return for favourable policies or treatments (Taufiqurrohman 2017). It should be noted that by accepting donations from the middle class, Ahok could potentially compromise the underdog identity that he had built throughout his political career. This fundraising initiative can be an indicator of his lack of awareness about the importance of remaining consistent to this political identity across aspects of his political campaign.

5.4 Discussion and Conclusion

While social media has the potential to be a sphere for alternative voices, it also has some limitations. In the case of Ahok, these limitations were related to his lack of understanding of the social media characteristics and the political discourses that dominated the sphere at the time or the chaotic situation within Ahok’s team in the face of the blasphemy crisis.

On several occasions, social media has successfully supported minority politicians or activists to institute changes that challenge the status quo. Indonesia has also seen the power of social media to help mobilise pro-democracy movements that became one of the supporting forces behind Jokowi’s victory in the 2014 presidential election (Aspinall & Mietzner 2014; Heryanto 2014). Even after his conviction for blasphemy Ahok has remained relatively prominent in social media. His accounts attracted many followers and

\textsuperscript{13}In her study, Saraswati (2016) argued that this donation could be seen as Jokowi’s effort to win the heart of Muslim voters. While the fundraising received extensive media coverage, the donation was only reported by some media outlets. Nonetheless, one of the media that reported the donation was Republika which is the biggest Muslim publication in Indonesia.
his name dominated the discussions in social media during the gubernatorial election. Nonetheless, it was also clear that Ahok and his team did not have a solid social media plan or, if they did, they did not fully utilise the capacity of social media to engage with citizens and it is engagement that deepens and strengthens loyalty. As mentioned above, there was a possibility that this lack of planning might have been caused by the volume of energy that Ahok and his team used to respond to the blasphemy accusation. Nonetheless, investing more in the social media campaign planning would have allowed him to deliver a better result.

The power of social media is in its ability to involve users in conversations with a variety of opinions, and Ahok wasted this opportunity that social media offers. As Zittel (2009) and Ferdinand (2000) argued, one of the key strategies politicians should adapt in their social media efforts is personalised campaigning. It means that politicians should engage their constituents in two-way communication to determine the issues that concern them the most, and involve them in finding solutions to these issues, which will potentially lead to the formation of loyal networks of supporters. The lack of interactivity in Ahok’s social media messages means that he did not use the social media to prompt conversations and to elicit feedback from constituents. Looking at his posts, we can see that Ahok did not use social media as an interactive platform. Instead, this medium was only used to distribute information related to the policies or activities undertaken by himself as a public official, or by Jakarta’s government. The several millions of followers that Ahok had in his social media might have been one of his strongest assets. But in the end the format of his communications within and outside the social media were focused upon young voters and they were a relatively small section of the electorate.
Further evidence of Ahok’s lack of planning could also be seen in his ‘trial and error’ approach to developing the campaign’s key message. The ongoing changes of hashtags not only reduced the impact of these messages on potential voters, but they also showed confusion about the campaign direction within Ahok’s team. One of Ahok’s campaigners who would like to remain anonymous reported that the blasphemy case really distracted Ahok and his team at a crucial time in the campaign. At this time, Ahok’s focus seemed to be divided between the campaign preparation and the blasphemy trials. As it was a natural reaction considering the magnitude of the case, it reduced their effectiveness in running the campaign and managing volunteers (personal communication 10 November 2017). The results could have been different had the campaign stayed focused on their initial plan to promote pluralism. The message of pluralism resonated with the sentiments felt by many potential voters attracted to Ahok’s policy platform. The issue of religious and racial difference is a constant part of Indonesia’s socio-political discourse. Addressing these in ways that neither offends against legal constraints nor the beliefs of the majority of Indonesians is very difficult. Ahok’s capacity to continue talking about the value of plurality was further restricted once he was deemed by some sections of the majority Muslim population to have committed blasphemy. He did not make many public comments regarding the charges of blasphemy other than what he said in court. While this approach was necessary to minimise unwanted consequences in the prosecution process, this also minimised the impact of his social media campaign around the limits of pluralism and democracy as practised in Indonesia.

Ahok’s *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* video actually had the potential to disseminate positive public messages and remind the electorates of the country’s foundation, Unity in Diversity. However, the choice of introducing Islamic symbols which highlighted the conflict between native Indonesians and ethnic Chinese meant that the video could not
have been produced at a worse time. Not only did it open the wounds of the 1998 riots, but it also gave the opportunity for Ahok’s opponents to portray him, once again, as an enemy of Islam.⁴⁴

At the same time, although Ahok successfully generated significant financial support from individual donors, this actually shows the lack of activism among his supporters. Joice Triatnan, vice treasurer in Ahok’s campaign team, stated that the majority of donors donated 100,000 IDR (approximately 7 USD) in Patungan Rakyat³⁵ (Aziza 2017). Considering that 82% of Indonesians still live with less than 4 USD a day (Sharpe 2014), this means that most of these donors came from middle class Jakartans. Generally speaking, this middle class are not interested in political activism. Their involvement in Ahok’s campaign was to maintain the advantages they had received through the governor’s policies and programs. In his book on social media activism during the 2017’s Jakarta gubernatorial election, Tapsell (2017) argued that many of Ahok’s supporters were wary to openly show their disagreement against the Islamist campaigners. Instead, they chose to focus on distributing information about Ahok’s achievements within their own networks. When Jokowi became the victim of a smear campaign in the 2014’s presidential election, his social media volunteers actively countered the false accusations and fought back with facts on Prabowo’s dark past. As mentioned earlier, Ahok seemed to detach himself from volunteer groups such as Teman Ahok in this election. Unlike Jokowi who formally acknowledged JASMEV’s support in his campaign and even integrated them into his campaign team, Ahok seemed to be reluctant to acknowledge

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³⁴ A political analyst Philips J Vermonte from the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Ray Rangkuti from Lingkar Madani also argued that identity politics played an important role in Ahok’s defeat in this gubernatorial election (Siregar 2017).

³⁵ It should be noted that the total amount of donations of 26.9 billion IDR did not only come from donors who donated a small amount of money. While Ahok’s team claimed that most donors donated around 100,000 rupiahs, Ahok also received a large amount of money from mega donors. Ahok’s campaign treasurer, Joice Triatman, stated that there were 2,736 donors who donated through Ahok’s official site, ahokdjarot.id, with a total amount of 2.8 billion IDR. In addition, other donors also made direct transfers to the team’s bank account with a total amount of 24.1 billion IDR (Aziza 2017).
any support he received from volunteers. Even Teman Ahok, which had fought for his eligibility to run as an independent candidate, was not included as part of the campaign team. Following Ahok’s declaration of his candidacy in the election, it was clear that Teman Ahok was no longer heavily involved in his campaign. In her formal statement Amalia Ayunigtyas, Teman Ahok’s spokesperson, stated that despite not being a part of the campaign team they would continue to support Ahok by organising fundraising activities for the candidate. The absence of volunteer groups in Ahok’s campaign team could have also caused him to miss the opportunity of having them mobilise the mass, which is such a potential asset for social media campaigning and could have helped him in combatting the allegations.

Finally, this election also showed how the elites tried to exercise their domination in social media. The significant control that they exerted in all candidates’ campaign teams changed the democratic discourse that started to change with the arrival of political outsiders such as Jokowi and Ahok. Although Jokowi–Ahok received support from political parties during Jakarta’s 2012 gubernatorial election, their image as non-elite candidates sparked enthusiasm among the electorate who welcomed the emergence of alternative leaders who challenge the established elite power in the country even though both candidates were drawn from the wealthy elites themselves. This reformist spirit seemed to decline in this election. Ahok’s decision to exclude the volunteers in his campaign team and to select those who are known as seasoned politicians as his key campaigners portrayed this election as another political contestation among Indonesian elite politics.

Despite his controversial character, Ahok still had a popular appeal as a politician of the people, an outsider or reformer. Ahok’s programs and policies and his proven track record
in managing the many problems that Jakarta faces seemed to give hope to sections of the electorate and encouraged them to participate more actively in the political process. The blasphemy case, however, overshadowed the whole election process and made him an easy target for his opponents. The unexpected outcome of Ahok’s slip of tongue caught his team off guard. As could be seen from the badly planned social media campaigning that Ahok and his team employed, his social media efforts could not overcome the domination of identity politics in this last election. While social media provided Ahok with an increased range of communication channels that raised his visibility, he failed to understand how the complex media ecology had changed political communication. Ahok’s social media messages were more complex, relying on facts and expecting users to engage with ideas. These kinds of messages might have resonated well with the middle-class Indonesians as proven by the demographics of his supporters. However, the bulk of the electorate clearly could not be engaged.

This analysis of Ahok’s social media strategies in the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election also shows that regardless of the effectiveness of Ahok’s social media performance, his efforts were disrupted by the populism that followed his blasphemy accusation and which disturbed the functioning of ideal electoral democracy. The next chapter further shows that despite the popularity of his policies, he was also unable to gain support of the mainstream media, particularly in the crucial period of the second round of gubernatorial elections in 2017.
CHAPTER 6

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ABOUT BASUKI TJAHAJA PURNAMA

This chapter presents the content analysis results of newspaper articles about Ahok. These results enable an exploration of the ways the mainstream media, which as I argued in Chapter 1 are still under the control of the Indonesian political elites, represented Ahok. By focusing on race differentiation in the reporting of minority candidates, the analysis is divided into four main categories which are prominence, framing, filtering and description. These categories were developed by following a model proposed by Tolley (2016), which she used to study media representation of minority candidates in Canadian politics.

By looking into these categories, I aim to do the following: 1) analyse how newspapers in Indonesia set the political agenda for other media, including social media; 2) confirm the argument made by Lim (2013) and Duile and Bens (2016) that political discourse in Indonesia is usually presented within the metanarrative of ‘nation’/’people’ and ‘Islam’; 3) highlight how identity politics dominated the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election in the context of rising populism in Indonesia; and 4) demonstrate that while Tolley’s model applied in certain Indonesian contexts; there were also some anomalies to that model, especially when the functioning of electoral democracy was disturbed by a populist outbreak that was evident in the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election.

6.1 Modern Racism and Media Coverage

Tolley (2016) argues that even where multiculturalism is the putative norm, people merely tolerate others from different races and do not accept these people as equal to the majority. This ‘modern’ racism no longer takes a form of active discrimination or
prejudice institutionally propagated to ‘shaping citizens’ behaviour and views of one race as superior to others’ (Fleras in Tolley 2016: 5). Instead it affects people’s thinking and manifests in feelings of ‘antipathy towards the minorities’ (Fleras and Kunz in Tolley 2016: 5) and this feeling causes persistent low-grade disgruntlement towards other races in the body politic. In her book, *Framed: Media and the Coverage of Race in Canadian Politics*, Tolley (2016) refers to this subtle and often unconscious racism as ‘new racism’ or ‘race differentiation’. The antecedents of this term can be found in the work of Martin Barker who used the term new racism to describe Margaret Thatcher’s public discourse which portrayed immigrants as threats. This ‘othering’ of different races contributed to her rise in the UK (Cole 1997; Chin, Fehrenbach, Eley & Grossman 2009). Unlike traditional forms of racism, such as slavery and apartheid, new racism is ‘more indirect, more subtle, more procedural, more ostensibly non-racial’ (Pettigrew 1979: 114). Van Dijk (2000: 34) argued that the views associated with this new type of racism are often expressed in discourses, such as in ‘everyday conversations, board meetings, job interviews, policies, laws, parliamentary debates, political propaganda, textbooks, scholarly articles, movies, TV programs and news reports in the press, among hundreds of other genres’. Despite the lack of physical violence, new racism is still powerful in reproducing racist ideologies and normalising racial discrimination against minorities as it forms racialised thinking that some groups are superior to others and vice versa (van Dijk 2000).

Although new racism appears in different parts of life; this analysis focuses on how it appears in the media, particularly in news reporting of minority political candidates. The discursive power of the media to shape responses to politicians and other public entities means that the media’s portrayal of political candidates can substantially affect the outcome of elections. Several researchers, such as van Dijk (2000), Fleras and Kunz
(2001), and Tolley (2016), found that media often use racial framing or highlight the candidates’ socio-demographic backgrounds when reporting about minority candidates. As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, hatred against the Chinese minorities in Indonesia is actually not something new. However, as the case study of Ahok shows, the ways it is communicated has changed. Instead of using derogatory terms to name-call these candidates, today’s media use certain identifiers to create a sense of ‘otherness’ and distance these candidates from the majority of electorates. Thus, it can potentially lower their chances in winning the election (Tolley 2016).

Based on this argument, my content analysis aims to show how Ahok, a politician who has a double minority status in Indonesia46, was reported on or covered in the Indonesian mainstream media. I was particularly interested to see if media coverage of Ahok followed similar patterns to the western media in reporting about minority candidates; and in the case of Ahok whether these patterns of reportage amplified the controversy that dominated the discourse surrounding the 2017 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election. At the same time, discussion in this chapter reflects on the role of mass media in shaping the Indonesian version of democracy, a version that is still highly influenced by the dominant discourse set and controlled by the power elites as owners of mass media in Indonesia.

6.2 Content Analysis of Kompas, Republika and Pos Kota

For the purpose of this content analysis, I selected articles from three leading newspapers in Indonesia that represent different demographic groups of the Indonesian electorates. Kompas represents the middle-class educated Indonesians, Republika represents the Muslim Indonesians, and Pos Kota represents the lower class Indonesians.

46 Ahok is a Chinese Christian; thus he is often said to have a double minority status in Indonesia where the majority of its inhabitants are indigenous Muslims.
I chose newspaper articles to highlight mass media’s coverage of Ahok as newspapers are arguably still the most dominant media that determine the everyday news agenda (Greenslade 2011). While – like in other parts of the world - printed newspapers’ circulation has been declining in Indonesia47, it does not mean that newspapers have lost their agenda-setting role. Due to the quality of their news production and their ability to present complex information, newspapers’ headlines are still the main references used by other media as their news focus (Hastjarjo 2017).

For the content analysis, articles of these three publications were sampled from three specific periods. The first period is 24 June – 15 October 2012, the time between the first day of the Jakarta gubernatorial campaign until the inauguration of Jokowi and Ahok as Governor and Deputy Governor of Jakarta. The second period is 4 June – 19 November 2014, the period between the first day of Jokowi’s presidential campaign48 until Ahok’s inauguration as the Governor of Jakarta. Finally, the third period is 28 October 2016 – 19 April 2017. This period includes the first day of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign49 until voting day in the second round of election.

As discussed in detail in Chapter 1, the environment surrounding this last election in 2017 was significantly different than the other two elections. On 27 September 2017, approximately two months before the start of the official campaign period, Ahok made a comment during one of his official visits that was later distorted by one netizen and this distortion sparked outrage in the Muslim community. Ahok accused his political

47 Nielsen’s survey in 2015 reported that the number of print publications in Indonesia decreased from 117 to 101.
48 Jokowi’s decision to join the 2017 presidential election signified his possibility to step down from the gubernatorial position, allowing Ahok to become governor.
49 This was the first election that Ahok participated in as a gubernatorial candidate. He was running with his vice governor, Djarot Sjaifil Hidayat, who is a PDIP cadre. Ahok-Djarot went to the second round of elections facing Anies Baswedan-Sandiaga Uno and lost this second round with a margin of more than 10%. Ahok was put into jail on 9 May 2017, four days after the Regional Election Committee (KPUD) officially announced the result of the Jakarta gubernatorial election 2017.
opponents of using a Qur’an verse to discourage constituents from voting for a non-Muslim candidate like himself. The comment was filmed and an academic uploaded the segment to his Facebook page and added the label ‘blasphemy’. A hardline Islamic group, FPI, and several Islamic religious leaders subsequently reported Ahok to the police complaining that Ahok had committed a blasphemy by mocking Islam and the Holy book. The case also inspired several mass demonstrations in Jakarta and some other cities where protesters pressured the government to bring Ahok to trial. On 16 November 2016, or two weeks after the start of the gubernatorial campaign, Ahok was officially charged with blasphemy. Based on this condition, the blasphemy case actually overshadowed the gubernatorial campaign. Discourses during the election tended to focus on this case rather than other common discourses that usually dominate electoral campaigns, such as political viability and the candidates’ programs.

Newspaper editions from the three above-mentioned publications were selected by using the constructive week sampling technique which resulted in 18 editions of each newspaper title in 2012, 25 editions of each newspaper title in 2014 and 25 editions of each newspaper title in 2016-2017. I then manually selected articles from these editions by searching for the key words ‘Ahok’ or ‘Basuki Tjahaja Purnama’. As already mentioned in chapter 4, I purposely did not exclude editorials and opinion pieces in my selection of articles as these types of articles are actually good indicators of the agenda that the publications try to convey to their audiences (Rupar 2007). In total, there were 349 articles sampled for this content analysis. Detailed descriptions of each publication’s history, ownership, and political influence are discussed in Chapter 3.
6.2.1 Content Analysis Results

The results of my content analysis are presented by dividing them into four main categories, which are prominence, framing, filtering, and description. These categories have been adapted from Tolley’s (2016) work on the media representation of minority politicians in Canada. While Tolley’s study was conducted in Canada, which has different political and cultural contexts than Indonesia, this theory is still useful to be used as a framework because this is one of very few contemporary theories that discuss the representation of minority politicians in mainstream media through content analysis. In addition, the coding categories proposed by Tolley are also not culturally specific and can be used across nations. However, my analysis that is presented in the following section also shows that while there are similarities between my results and those of Tolley’s, there are also some anomalies to Tolley’s theories due to the differences mentioned above.

6.2.2.1 Prominence

The first category in my content analysis is prominence. Content analysis results in this category potentially show how Ahok was portrayed in the media in terms of his position in Indonesia’s politics. Although generally speaking someone with an important political position will automatically have high news value, it does not mean that he or she will get the most coverage. Tolley (2016) argues that at times the media also apply other forms of selection on which candidate they should cover more often. For instance, Jokowi was covered more often during the 2014 presidential election in comparison to Prabowo, who was arguably a better known politician than Jokowi. Despite being a relatively new face in Jakarta’s political scene, the media often reported Jokowi’s positive track record and portrayed him as bringing a new approach to Indonesia’s politics. This preference in giving more coverage to a certain candidate than others can influence his or her political viability as the general public will perceive this candidate as having a more central or
more favourable position in comparison to other candidates (Tolley 2016). Furthermore, this favourable position can potentially translate into the candidate’s popularity, which will help him or her to garner more votes during the election. In addition, Tolley’s study also shows that in the instance where a minority candidate competes against a mainstream candidate, the later often receives more coverage than the former (2015). The only exception may happen when this minority candidate is also the incumbent. In this situation, Tolley suggests that ‘once minority candidates have, in effect, proven themselves with an electoral win; they receive coverage that is equivalent – and sometimes even more favourable – than their white competitors’ (2016: 963).

To analyse the prominence of Ahok in these articles, content analysis in this category is derived from three sub-categories in my coding, which are number of articles, placement of coverage, and subject centrality.

a. Number of Articles

Table 6.1 presents the number of articles about Ahok throughout the three selected periods. As mentioned above, this sub-category was included based on the argument that the frequencies of newspaper articles about a politician can determine his or her importance in the public agenda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republika</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos Kota</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.1 shows that there is an increasing interest in Ahok, especially from 2012 to 2014. Looking at the data from 2014, it can be seen that Ahok had gained significant political traction since 2012. As Table 6.1 shows, the number of articles in Kompas doubled from 23 in 2012 to 48 in 2014. The same can be said about Pos Kota where the number of articles increased from 17 in 2012 to 28 in 2014. The number is even more significant in Republika where articles multiplied by more than three times from 18 in 2012 to 60 in 2014.

The low coverage of Ahok in 2012 is not surprising as the discussions on the election at that time concentrated more on the then incumbent, Fauzi Bowo. In any political context, incumbents usually tend to dominate media reporting (Gans 2003) because the incumbent is seen as the voice of authority, thus he or she is considered to carry more news value than political opponents (Hopmann, de Vreese & Albaek 2011). When covering the incumbent, journalists are able to present more material as this incumbent can provide the most substantive information in relation to the policies undertaken by the government (Hopmann et al. 2011). At the same time, the incumbent is usually well known; this celebrity status will make him or her have the ability to attract many readers (Gans 2003).

The low coverage about Ahok in 2012 may also have been caused by Ahok’s position as a relatively new and less well-known politician in comparison to his running mate, Jokowi. Tapsell (2015) stated that Jokowi had the status of a ‘media darling’ in Indonesia. Jokowi’s engaging personality and unique campaign style, which is known as blusukan, became the main focus of media reporting about the pair. When Ahok’s name appears in the articles, mostly it is only as a secondary subject alongside Jokowi.
The preference of media to give less coverage to the secondary nominee on an electoral ticket is not exclusive to Indonesia. In their report on the US presidential elections, The Pew Research Centre (2008; 2012) found that vice-presidential candidates only received a fraction of media coverage that the presidential candidates received. Biden, for instance, only received 9% of media coverage in 2008; it is a very small number in comparison to Obama who received 69% of coverage in that same year (Pew Research Centre 2008).

The increase in coverage about Ahok between 2012 and 2014 came after he became deputy governor. In addition, his rather brash character and open communication style also contributed to his fame. Ahok’s head of communication and media staff, Sakti Budiono, stated in an interview with me that many journalists liked to cover Ahok as his communication style was brutally frank and thus, he would also generate interesting news stories. As mentioned earlier in chapters 1 and 5, soon after his inauguration Ahok started releasing YouTube videos of his official meetings in the City Hall. These videos quickly went viral not only because – for the first time – Indonesians could get access to what was happening behind the government’s closed doors, but they could also see how Ahok scolded the city’s officials who did not do their job properly or how he became angry after finding alleged corruption cases within the provincial government. What were presented in these videos resonated well with Indonesians who have always been suspicious about their corrupt government officials. Following these videos, Ahok’s name became famous and the public started to show strong support towards his ways of handling things in the Indonesian capital. This unusual mode of communicating with the public gained so much popularity that other local leaders, such as Ridwan Kamil the Mayor of Bandung, and Tri Rismaharini the Mayor of Surabaya, also released similar videos in their social media accounts (Kwok 2014).
From the 2014 to 2016-2017 campaign periods, my data show that there was not a significant increase in the number of articles on Ahok in Kompas: from 48 to 52. The number of articles in Republika decreased slightly from 60 to 53. However, the number of articles in Pos Kota actually almost doubled from 28 in 2014 to 50 in 2016-2017. At this time Ahok became a household name in Indonesian politics, especially since his candidacy in the 2017 election attracted many criticisms following his blasphemy case. However, as distinct from the other two publications, Pos Kota’s increase might have been caused more by Ahok’s position as the incumbent governor. As a publication that specifically targets Jakarta’s residents, Pos Kota has a section that is called ‘Warta Ibukota’ (Capital City News). ‘Warta Ibukota’ provides news about policies and programs run by the Jakarta government. Thus, as the governor, Ahok was the most authoritative source often quoted in these articles.

In tables 6.2 and 6.3 I provide data on the number of articles that covered Ahok during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election in comparison to the number of articles that covered the other two gubernatorial candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Ahok-Djarot</th>
<th>Anies-Sandi</th>
<th>Agus-Silvi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republika</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos Kota</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.3: Number of Articles about Ahok–Djarot vs Anies–Sandi during the Second Round of the 2017 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Ahok-Djarot</th>
<th>Anies-Sandi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kompas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republika</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pos Kota</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>47</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As these two tables show, Ahok received the most coverage compared to the other two candidates, Anies and Agus. Even when there were only two candidates that continued to the second round of the election, there were more newspaper articles about Ahok than articles about Anies. Nonetheless, the tables also show that the difference between the number of articles about Ahok and Anies was relatively small in comparison to the period of the first round. Throughout the whole gubernatorial campaign, Ahok was covered in 43 more articles than Anies (see Table 6.2). During the second round of the campaign, the gap became narrower as Ahok was only covered in 11 more articles than Anies (see Table 6.3). The difference is more significant when the number of articles about Ahok is compared to the number of articles about Agus. The number of articles about Ahok in the 2017 campaign period was more than double the number of articles about Agus.

This result can be an indicator that confirms Gans (2003) and Hopmann et al.’s (2011) argument that generally mass media cover the incumbent more often than the other candidates. As Tolley (2016) also mentioned in her study, candidates’ incumbency bonus usually overcome their status as minorities. In this case we can see that Ahok’s position as the incumbent governor carries more news value than his’ ethnic and racial backgrounds. However, there was also a possibility that Ahok’s name appeared more often due to the newsworthiness of his blasphemy case, rather than his popularity as a
gubernatorial candidate. Moreover, the insignificant difference in the number of articles that covered Ahok in comparison to the number of articles that covered Anies could also serve as an indicator that the media portrayed Anies as Ahok's strongest contender. Indeed, the greater coverage of Anies compared to Agus suggests that the media showed the former as having better political viability in this election than the latter.

It should be noted that my content analysis only presents comparisons between Ahok and his competitors in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. This is because Ahok was not competing directly in the other two elections. Instead, he was only accompanying Jokowi as candidate for deputy governor in 2012 and stepped up to replace Jokowi, who became president, in 2014.

b. Placement of Articles

The next sub-category under prominence is placement of articles. This sub-category aims to see where news about Ahok is placed in the newspapers. It is based on a general rule in journalism that news that has more importance is placed in the front pages while news that is less important is placed in the inside pages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement of Articles</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 1</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
<td>2.83%</td>
<td>16.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 2-3</td>
<td>22.41%</td>
<td>16.98%</td>
<td>21.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside Page</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>80.19%</td>
<td>61.22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In comparison to the number of articles, placement of articles shows a different trend. While the number of articles about Ahok increased significantly from 2012 to 2014, the percentage of articles about Ahok appearing on the first page of the publications dropped
significantly from 27.59% in 2012 to 2.83% in 2014. The percentage rose again in the 2016-2017 campaign period to 16.84%.

The steep decline in 2014 does not necessarily mean that Ahok’s news value decreased that year. Instead, several other reasons may have contributed to this decline. It should be noted that 2012 and 2016-2017 were official gubernatorial campaign periods, while 2014 was not. In 2014 Ahok, who was Jokowi’s deputy governor at that time, was automatically assigned as governor to replace Jokowi who won the 2014 presidential election. Most political news which appeared on the front pages during this period was about the presidential election and Jokowi’s victory. News about Ahok regained prominence in the 2016-2017 period when he competed in the Jakarta gubernatorial election. Apart from his gubernatorial candidacy, this rise was also due to the blasphemy case, which overshadowed the process of this election.

c. Centrality of Ahok in the Article

Table 6.5 provides data on Ahok’s centrality in these articles. Centrality refers to the subject’s position in an article either as the main subject (the article focuses on the subject and his/her activities), secondary subject (the article focuses on another person or issue while the subject remains an important element of the article), or only in list (the subject’s name is only mentioned in a list alongside other names).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ahok’s Centrality</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main subject</td>
<td>18.97%</td>
<td>21.70%</td>
<td>18.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>18.97%</td>
<td>42.45%</td>
<td>45.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only in list</td>
<td>62.07%</td>
<td>35.83%</td>
<td>35.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 6.5 shows, although there was not an increase in the number of articles that placed Ahok as a main subject, the number of articles that mentioned him as a secondary subject doubled from 18.97% in 2012 to 42.45% in 2014. This strengthens my previous argument that Ahok had gained prominence between 2012 and 2014, thus he was seen as politically viable. Although his name mostly appeared as a secondary subject, the media started to quote him more often. The pair Jokowi–Ahok was known to have separate roles and different leadership styles. Jokowi, known for his down-to-earth character, preferred to go on the streets and conducted impromptu visits to listen to citizens’ aspirations. Ahok, known for his direct approach and impatience to get things done, often stayed in the office, handling meetings with the city officials (Dewi 2014). Therefore, Ahok was often used as a source to comment on the Jakarta government’s programs or policies.

At the same time, it is also important to note that although in 2012 Ahok’s name was more often quoted as a primary subject; his name rarely appeared alone in these articles. Instead it appeared in tandem as ‘Jokowi–Ahok’. In 2014 Ahok’s name mostly appeared by itself in these articles. The percentage did not change much between 2014 and 2016-2017. Despite the position of Ahok as the governor of Jakarta, the proportion of Ahok’s position remained more or less the same. This may have been due to the fact that Ahok had already been covered extensively since 2014, or this might be a reflection of his stagnant popularity. Another possible explanation is this number remained stagnant since Ahok purposely restrained himself from making public comments following the blasphemy accusation.
6.2.1.2 Framing

One of the approaches to study the way media set public agendas is to consider framing theory. It is commonly known that mass media have the power to extensively cover certain issues to promote their significance (McCombs & Shaw 1972). This agenda-setting role of mass media guides the public to think about these issues and put them in the forefront of the public agenda. At the same time, mass media also have the power to make the public think of an issue from a particular perspective, and this is what is known as media framing (Gamson in Gastil 2008: 58).

Social media has enabled a diversity of news from different sources yet the mainstream media still retains the ability to influence the way the public think about issues. Tuchman (1978) argued that news is presented in such a way that it limits our perception of reality. By emphasising certain aspects of this reality, the media directs audiences into a particular interpretive framework to understand that news (Tuchman 1978). So, while agenda setting theory refers to the power of the media to tell audiences what to think about, framing theory refers to the power of the media to tell the audiences how to think about these issues (Gastil 2008). For that reason, framing is often referred to as second-level agenda setting (Gastil 2008).

Framing theory, as it is used today in communication studies, was proposed by Erving Goffman (1974). Goffman expanded the concept of framing from an individual perception to ‘shared social discourse’ (in Ardèvol-Abreu 2015: 428). For Goffman, the importance of framing is not necessarily in its ability to influence audiences in decoding the news content, but more in its ability to let audiences share and maintain this interpretation of reality (in Ardèvol-Abreu 2015: 428). During elections, media tend to fit stories into the ‘game frame’ (Tolley 2016: 18) that focuses on candidates’ strategies and tactics to beat
their opponents. In their study of American and European presidential elections, O’Malley, Brandenburg, Flynn, McMenamin and Rafter (2012) also argue that candidates’ electability is the most common frame used during these elections. This framing is considered as the most interesting as it is in line with one of the media newsworthiness’ criteria, which is competition or conflict.

While the ‘game frame’ is the most common frame media used during elections, several other frames are also dominant when minority candidates are involved in this political competition. In her study of minority candidates in Canadian politics, Tolley (2016) argues that there are three framing categories that are more dominant when minority candidates participate in elections, and these are:

- Socio-demography frame: framing that highlights candidates’ demographic characteristics such as race, gender, religion and so on. For instance, an Asian candidate may be portrayed as a third-generation Chinese immigrant who has been able to break the tradition for Chinese women who usually function as stay-at-home mothers. Tolley (2016) also noted that the reporting of minority candidates is often accompanied by photos of the candidates which provide stronger indications of their race, gender or, in some cases, religion. Tolley (2016) argued that socio-demography framing is more prominent in the reporting of minority candidates and tends to connect these candidates’ success with their socio-demographic backgrounds, rather than with their own merits.

- Political viability frame: framing that highlights the candidates’ qualifications and chances for winning the election. In this framing, candidates may be portrayed by mentioning their relationship to the established political elites, their experience in politics, or their positions in the political polls (Zilber and Niven in Tolley 2016: 40). Zilber and Niven (in Tolley 2016: 41) argued that minority candidates are
often portrayed as outsiders due to either their under-represented socio-demographic backgrounds or their ‘novelty, trail-blazing, or famous “firsts” which can leave voters with the impression that these candidates are political anomalies who do not necessarily belong in electoral institutions’

- Policy issues frame: framing that highlights candidates’ programs and political ideologies. Tolley (2016) argued that the media often only focus on minority-related issues, such as immigration, discrimination and multiculturalism, when reporting about minority candidates. Most of the time this is not a fair representation as minority candidates, like other candidates, are also concerned about other issues that have an impact on the larger society. Consequently, this reporting might portray these candidates as disinterested in, or incompetent to overcome, other problems that do not concern their own community.

I applied these three frames in my content analysis of newspaper articles about Ahok. As Ahok has two distinct minority characteristics – Chinese and Christian – I analyse these articles to identify the practice of race differentiation or ‘othering’ as found by Tolley (2016) in the Canadian context. The following table shows the percentages of each framing category by campaign periods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing category</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demography</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
<td>10.29%</td>
<td>56.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political viability</td>
<td>58.62%</td>
<td>61.03%</td>
<td>38.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy/issue</td>
<td>13.79%</td>
<td>26.68%</td>
<td>5.16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data presented in Table 6.6 provide an overview of the dominant frame used by the newspapers to report Ahok. Generally, we can see that in the normal political situation,
the political viability frame was the most common frame used in these articles with 58.6% in 2012 and 61.03% in 2014. These findings confirm what O’Malley et al. (2012) and Tolley (2016) argue previously, that political viability or political race has a high news value during elections. Nonetheless, the table also shows that in the 2016-2017 campaign period the socio-demography frame suddenly rose to 56.77%, almost double its usage in the 2012 gubernatorial election. As I have explained in previous chapters, the blasphemy accusation that Ahok faced at the same time as the 2017 gubernatorial campaign period significantly dominated the discourse surrounding this election. This finding shows that newspapers, as the media that set the news agenda, also focused on this framing in their reporting of Ahok.

The previous chapter has shown that words associated with the case, such as ‘blasphemy’, ‘infidele’ and ‘demo’ dominated the social media discussions about Ahok and the same can be said about these newspaper articles. In the next sub-section, I provide further in-depth analysis on how each frame was used in the articles and what they show about political discourse in Indonesia.

a. Socio-demography Framing

Table 6.7: Socio-demography Framing by Campaign Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-demography Framing</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>12.07%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
<td>6.62%</td>
<td>45.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both ethnicity and religion</td>
<td>8.62%</td>
<td>3.68%</td>
<td>6.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.59%</strong></td>
<td><strong>10.29%</strong></td>
<td><strong>56.77%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7 shows that socio-demography framing was apparent, but was not very prominent in 2012 and 2014 despite attempts by Ahok’s electoral opponents to focus on
Ahok’s ethnicity and religion as a device to weaken him electorally. In 2012, opponents used these issues to attack Jokowi who chose Ahok as his partner in the gubernatorial election. Supporters of the then incumbent, Fauzi Bowo, actively encouraged Muslims to not vote for Jokowi–Ahok as, according to their interpretation, it is forbidden for Muslims to choose a Non-Muslim as their leader. Fauzi Bowo himself also made implicit comment about the superiority of a Muslim leader than non-Muslim leader when he said ‘If the leader cannot read the Qur’an, how can he lead in accordance to religious teachings?’50 This comment was made during one of Foke’s public speeches on 15 September 2012 and can be interpreted as being directed to Ahok as he was the only non-Muslim candidate and obviously could not read the Muslim holy book.

Despite these attempts, my data show that these issues were not the main focus of these newspapers’ articles. One possible explanation of this low percentage is the emergence of another discourse that also circulated at the time. This discourse portrayed Jokowi–Ahok as a new hope, the messiahs who would bring significant changes to Indonesia’s politics.

An article in Kompas on 22 September 2012 titled ‘Cari Calon Alternatif 2014’ (Finding Alternative Candidates for 2014) even reported how political parties admitted that the 2012 gubernatorial election in Jakarta significantly affected their strategies for the upcoming 2014 presidential election. PDIP for instance was quoted as expressing the needs to change its selection policy so that it can support ‘party’s figure who is capable and down-to-earth’51. From the content of newspaper articles, it was clear that Jokowi’s was a rising star in that election (Hamid 2014) and this discourse of change that characterised the pair was more dominant than the socio-demographic issues explained above.

50 The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘Kalau yang memimpin tidak bisa baca Alquran, bagaimana memerintah sesuai pedoman agama?’.
51 The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘figur partai yang kapabel dan membumi.’
Opponents tried to bring back similar issues in 2014, when Ahok was nominated to replace Jokowi as the governor. Despite the fact that there were several big demonstrations in 2014 that centred on religious and race issues against Ahok, these issues did not dominate the media framing. As Table 6.6 shows, this framing was even less apparent than the result in 2012. In 2014, the socio-demography framing only reached 10.29%. One explanation for this low percentage is the significance of the campaign period. As mentioned above, 2014 was not a campaign period for Ahok. That year he just took the governorship from Jokowi, who was elected as president. Constitutionally, as Jokowi’s deputy governor, Ahok had the right and responsibility to step up as the governor of Jakarta. If we scrutinise these articles further, there were only 12 articles from 136 articles that were sampled in 2012 that mentioned about the demonstrations that aimed to stop Ahok from becoming governor. Thus, the media might not see the issues of race and religion as an important frame to be used in their coverage of Ahok in this period. Based on these findings, I argue that during these two periods there was a gap between a disaffected Islamic minority demonstrating against Ahok and the mainstream news media’s representation of the politician.

In the 2016–2017 campaign period, however, the use of socio-demography framing increased considerably to 56.77%. Investigating the data further, I argue that this increase was significantly influenced by Ahok’s blasphemy case. Due to this case, many articles framed the election stories as the battle between Islam and the ‘other’. Tables 6.8 to 6.10 that provide data on framing categories by publication titles show that the results are quite similar across publications. Even Pos Kota, which did not use socio-demography framing at all in 2014, used it more than 50% in their 2016–2017 articles.
Looking into the data of socio-demography framing across these publications, it is evident that in 2012, issue of ethnicity dominated the socio-demography framing more than the issue of religion. This year, articles that used socio-demography framing tend to discuss the election from the pluralism angle by focusing on the diversity of ethnicities in Indonesia. This theme can be found across all publications with articles such as ‘Berkampanye dengan Damai’ (Campaigning in Peace) in Kompas on 24 June 2012 and ‘Memprediksi Kepemimpinan Jakarta’ (Predicting Jakarta’s Leadership) in Republika on 6 September 2012. The first article quoted several high-rank officers such as the Head of
the Indonesian Police Force and President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono who reminded the citizens that Indonesia consists of people from different ethnic backgrounds and thus they should use their conscience to vote for the right candidate. The second article was an opinion piece that provided a historical account on Jakarta’s leadership. The author, who was a law professor at the University of Indonesia and a well-known lawyer, argued that historically Jakarta has not always had a Betawi governor. He even said, ‘For Jakartans, the era of Governor Ali Sadikin who came from Sumedang, West Java, was the best memory that they have…’52. This statement shows that the issue of ethnicity was quite apparent in political discussions surrounding this election.

However, this changed in 2014 when issue of religion started to be more apparent than the issue of ethnicity, especially when Islamic groups such as FPI tried to prevent Ahok from becoming governor by spreading rumours that Muslims are not allowed to choose a Non-Muslim as their leader. In 2017, as Ahok faced the blasphemy accusation, the issue of religion automatically dominated this framing. Tables 6.8 to 6.10 show that in the 2016–2017 period Kompas, Republika and Pos Kota covered the issue of religion much more often than the issue of ethnicity when using socio-demography framing.

Nonetheless, it is interesting to note that while religion was the most dominant issue found within this framing, it is rare to find Ahok portrayed as a Christian. Instead he was often described by using attributes that portrayed him as a ‘constitutive outside’ in relation to the Muslim majority. Some examples of these attributes included ‘bukan Muslim’ (non-Muslim), ‘pembenci Islam’ (hater of Islam), or ‘penista agama’ (blasphemous).

52 The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘Bagi warga Jakarta, era Gubernur Ali Sadikin yang dari Sumedang, Jawa Barat, merupakan kenangan yang paling berkesan baik…’
An article in *Republika* on 28 October 2016 for instance described how much Ahok hated Islam and was a threat to Indonesia’s stability. This article titled ‘Bung Jokowi, Selesaikan Skandal Ahok!’ (Jokowi, End the Ahok Scandal Mate!) was an opinion piece written by an influential Islamic leader in Indonesia, Amien Rais. In this article Rais warned the Muslim majority about the danger beyond the blasphemy case. Rais argued that this case was just the tip of an iceberg of a bigger problem, which is the intention of ‘kekuatan asing dan aseng’ (foreign and Chinese power) to dominate the Indonesian political, social and economic spheres.

Another way the media, particularly *Republika* and *Pos Kota*, practised ‘othering’ in their coverage of Ahok was by reporting Ahok’s electoral rivals, who were Muslims, doing some Islamic rituals or being supported by some Islamic groups. Characteristically, an article in *Pos Kota* on 9 January 2017 titled ‘AHY Sambangi Warga Cilandak, Anies Pilih Hadiri Zikir Akbar’ (AHY Visited the Cilandak Electorate, Anies Chose to Attend the Mass Islamic Congregation) covered the activities of Ahok’s opponent, Anies Baswedan, who attended a mass congregation organised by Ustadz Arifin Ilham, one of the leaders behind the ‘Aksi Bela Islam’53. Despite the lack of direct reference to Ahok’s religious background, it is clear that these articles were dominated by a religious framing against Ahok. Articles such as these condemned Ahok by implication. In a context where Ahok was already framed as ‘anti-Islamic’, the signs of piety in others underscored Ahok’s minority ‘non-Islamic’ and therefore marginal status in Indonesia.

---

53 ‘Aksi Bela Islam’ (literally meaning actions to defend Islam) refers to a series of seven big demonstrations which took place between October 2016 and May 2017. These demonstrations were organised by several Islamic organisations, such as FPI and GNPF-MUI (The National Movement to Safeguard the Indonesian Ulama Council’s Fatwa). These demonstrations had one aim which was to pressure the Indonesian government to prosecute and put Ahok in jail for the blasphemy case.
Diversely, *Kompas* stuck to its nationalist pluralist ideology with articles that concentrated more on discussing the implications of the blasphemy case for the unity of the nation. Some headlines found in *Kompas* were ‘Unjuk Rasa Berlangsung Damai: Warga ingin Persatuan dan Kedamaian Bangsa’ (Demonstration Went Peacefully: Citizens Hope for the Nation’s Peace and Unity) and ‘Sidang Penodaan Agama: Ma’aruf Amin Meminta Maafkan Basuki’ (Blasphemy Trial: Ma’aruf Amin Forgives Basuki).

As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the characteristics of political discourse in Indonesia is the presence of a ‘constitutive outside’, which refers to an enemy, a person or group who does not belong to ‘the people’/'nation’ (Duile and Bens 2017). The way these articles frame the issue of religion surrounding Ahok’s blasphemy case confirms that argument. My data shows that in this context ‘othering’ is not done by directly emphasising Ahok’s ethnicity and religion, but sometimes by exclusion and sometimes by the deployment of words, which are merely descriptive, but mark his difference from the Muslim community. The lack of direct reference to Ahok’s ethnicity and religion may have also been caused by the deliberate editorial decision of the newspapers to avoid mentioning SARA issues which, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2, are considered as taboos in Indonesia. This indirect approach to highlight Ahok’s otherness confirms Tolley’s argument that mass media are still embedded in the practices of racism but racist discourse is packaged in new non-confrontational ways, which she refers to as ‘race differentiation’ (Tolley 2016) rather than older forms of race discrimination. Unlike *Pos Kota* and *Republika*, *Kompas* did not emphasise Ahok’s ‘otherness’, rather, it focused on the idea of a unified nation, while acknowledging the apparent divisions. In *Kompas*, both Ahok and the demonstrators for and against him were projected through the fundamental idea of the Indonesian nation as encapsulated in the national motto ‘Unity in Diversity’.
b. Political Viability Framing

The second framing category is political viability. As mentioned above, this framing category focuses on the ways media present the candidates by looking into their chances of winning the election. This can be done by direct references to their viability, such as by providing the polling results, or by indirect references, such as by describing him/her as either a seasoned politician with extensive experiences or as an amateur politician who is not capable of taking the official post. Gans (2003) argued that media’s viability framing can influence the outcome of the election. The candidate that is reported as having a higher chance of winning an election usually receives a favourable result at the end of the election.

As shown in Table 6.6 presented earlier, political viability framing was very dominant in 2012 and 2014. These results are typical since most election stories are packaged as a race between candidates (O’Malley et al. 2012; Tolley 2016). However, due to the massive reactions surrounding Ahok’s blasphemy case, this framing fell below the socio-demography framing in the 2016-2017 period. At the same time, the fact that Ahok was charged for blasphemy can also indicate that by this time he was by definition non-viable. As such, the media decided not to concentrate on this framing altogether.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framing category in Kompas</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Socio-demo</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
<td>63.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political viability</td>
<td>57.67%</td>
<td>50.99%</td>
<td>33.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy/issue</td>
<td>18.53%</td>
<td>40.68%</td>
<td>2.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tables 6.11 to 6.13 present the percentages of framing categories of each publication. These data show that, contradictory to the other publications, *Kompas* continuously decreased its use of political viability framing from 57.67% in 2012 to 50.99% in 2014. It decreased even further to 33.97% in the 2016-2017 campaign period. As mentioned several times throughout the thesis, *Kompas* is known to have a close relationship with PDIP, the party behind the Jokowi–Ahok candidacy in 2012 and the Ahok–Djarot candidacy in 2017. As Ahok’s electability decreased during the 2016-2017 campaign period, *Kompas* might choose not to concentrate on this framing in their reporting, which could highlight Ahok’s potential defeat in the election. When *Kompas* wrote about Ahok’s falling electability, it also highlighted that this was mainly caused by intolerance that increased in the society. For instance, an article in *Kompas* on 30 November 2016 wrote that ‘the survey results also show that the most contributing factors that cause a decrease in Ahok’s electability are his potty mouth (17.1 per cent), followed by religion (15.9 per
cent) and the blasphemy accusation (6 per cent). Yunarto argued that this shows that primordialism still plays an important factor in the election.'

Despite the increase in the Muslim candidates’ popularity during the election, Republika did not use this viability framing extensively. Instead, many of Republika’s articles focused on the blasphemy case. As argued earlier, Republika’s choice in focusing on the blasphemy issue was in line with its self-claimed responsibility to its Muslim readers. As an Islamic publication, Republika surely felt the importance of defending the Qur’an, which Ahok had allegedly insulted.

In comparison to the other two publications, Pos Kota was the only one that still allocated quite a high percentage to the political viability framing with 41.19%. Although the socio-demography framing was still higher at 54%, the difference is considerably small. At the same time, Pos Kota was also the only publication that tried to avoid any inclination in its reporting of candidates’ viability. For instance, an article appeared in Pos Kota on 14 November 2016 titled ‘Anis-Sandi Pede Menang’ (Anis-Sandi are Confident to Win) shows recent poll results where candidates Anis-Sandi were predicted to win the election. While this article seems to support Anis-Sandi, but it appeared next to another article titled ‘Aktivis Muda Muhammadiyah Deklarasi Dukung Ahok-Djarot’ (Young Activists of Muhammadiyah Declare their Support for Ahok-Djarot) that reported the extensive supports that Ahok-Djarot received from different organisations as they believe in the viability of this pair.

54 The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘Hasil survey juga menunjukkan factor tertinggi penyebab penurunan elektabilitas Basuki adalah cara bicaranya yang kasar (17,1 persen), disusul perbedaan agama (15,9 persen) dan tuduhan penistaan agama (6 persen). Menurut Yunarto hal ini menunjukkan faktor primordialisme masih berperan dalam pilkada.’
c. Policy Issues Framing

The last framing that I analysed in the content analysis is policy issues framing, which focuses on the policies or programs proposed by the candidates. This framing can have a significant influence towards candidates’ viability as the electorates can be informed which candidate proposes the programs that meet their needs and expectations. At the same time, this framing can also reflect the candidates’ capability in running the office. Although this framing provides an opportunity for the candidates to promote their programs, it can also bring some disadvantages to minority candidates. As discussed above, Tolley (2016) argued that the media tend to portray the minority candidates as being concerned only with minority issues rather than the larger issues that have an impact on the society.

Table 6.6 shows that there was a significant increase in the number of articles that used policy issues framing from 13.79% in 2012 to 26.68% in 2014. Following his inauguration as deputy governor, Ahok regularly communicated Jakarta government policies and programs to the public. Thess had always been his key messages as he believed electorates should be well informed about government’s decisions in order to take part actively as members of the civil society (S Budiono 2016, personal communication, 17 February). It is not surprising then that much news about Ahok, in 2014 in particular, was dominated by this frame.

In the 2016–2017 campaign period, however, the policy issues framing dropped to 5.16%. The main cause behind this drop is the domination of religious issues throughout the election. Ray Rangkuti, an Indonesian political observer, also claimed that the issue of religion was the most dominant discourse surrounding this election (in Siregar 2017). In a multicultural nation such as Indonesia, the issues of religion and ethnicity have always
been used to attack political opponents and to attract potential voters. Nevertheless, Ahok’s blasphemy case that coincided with the 2017 gubernatorial election made the case the dominant discourse at this time. The attention given to this case even overshadowed other political discussions surrounding the election. Many articles from each publication for instance gave more coverage on the opinions of Ahok’s opponents regarding his blasphemy accusation rather than their opinions on his programs. This case, according to Marcus Mietzner, a scholar specialising in Indonesia’s politics, is also one of the key factors behind Ahok’s defeat in this election (Hidayat 2017).

The headlines of articles written on the first pages of these publications also provide some insights into the agendas set by each publication. In 2012, *Kompas* tended to focus on Jokowi as a symbol of change for Jakarta and Indonesia. ‘Cari Calon Alternatif 2014’ (Finding an Alternative Candidate for 2014) or ‘Joko Widodo, Harapan Baru’ (Joko Widodo, a New Hope) were some headlines of articles about Jokowi–Ahok that appeared on the first pages of this publication. On the other hand, *Republika* focused on the SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group relations) issues with titles such as ‘Foke-Jokowi Korban Isu SARA’ (Foke-Jokowi are Victims of SARA issues) and ‘Isu SARA Tak Cocok di DKI’ (SARA Issues is not Appropriate in Jakarta). Staying true to its purpose, *Pos Kota* concentrated on the election process and the strengths of the incumbent governor, Fauzi Bowo. Some of the titles appearing on the front pages of *Pos Kota* included ‘Cagub/Cawagub Memulai Kampanye’ (Gubernatorial/Vice Gubernatorial Candidates Start the Campaign) and ‘Visi-Misi Fauzi Bowo Paling Jelas’ (Fauzi Bowo’s Visions and Missions are the Clearest).

In 2014 all three publications uniformly focused on the Jakarta government’s programs. Some of the headlines include ‘Hati-Hati dengan Asian Games’ (Be Cautious about Asian
Games) in *Kompas* on 22 July 2014, ‘Menanti 60 Persen Truk Sampah’ (Waiting for 60 Per Cent of the Garbage Trucks) in *Republika* on 19 October 2014, and ‘MRT Bakal Rambah Botabek’ (Mass Rapid Transport Will Reach Bogor-Tangerang-Bekasi Area) in *Pos Kota* on 25 September 2014. At the same time, *Kompas* also highlighted the positive outcomes following Ahok’s inauguration as governor in an article on 20 November 2017 titled ‘Era Baru Masa Depan Jakarta: DKI-Pusat Makin Mudah Selesaikan Masalah’ (A New Era for the Future of Jakarta: DKI-Central Government will Solve Problems More Easily). On the other hand, *Republika* wrote several articles that highlighted Ahok’s conflict with the Islamic Defender Front (FPI) in articles such as ‘Kapolri Tidak Bisa Bubarkan FPI’ (The Head of the Indonesian National Police Cannot Disband FPI) on 11 October 2014 and ‘Mendagri: Saya Berhati-Hati Soal Pembubaran FPI’ (The Minister of Home Affairs: I am Cautious about the Banning of FPI) on 13 November 2014.

While the discourse in 2012 and 2014 was more values-driven, the discourse surrounding the 2017 election was more issues-driven as the blasphemy case overwhelmed the whole electoral campaign. *Kompas* looked into this issue through a pluralist lens with articles such as: ‘Unjuk Rasa di Daerah Berjalan Damai: Warga Inginkan Persatuan dan Kedamaian Bangsa’ (Demonstration in Other Provinces Ran Peacefully: Citizens Hope for the Nation’s Unity and Peace) on 5 November 2016 and ‘Kebersamaan Jadi Anugerah’ (Unity Becomes a Blessing) on 13 November 2016. *Republika* was more critical towards the governor with articles such as ‘Aksi 212 Gerus Elektabilitas Ahok’ (The 212 Action Harmed Ahok’s Electability) on 8 December 2016 and ‘Prabowo Ajak Pilih Pemimpin Baik’ (Prabowo Asked People to Vote for a Good Leader) on 8 January 2017. *Pos Kota* tried to be neutral with articles that concentrated more on the governor’s program or the process of the blasphemy trial. Some articles that appeared in *Pos Kota* include: ‘Ahok: PNS Jangan Leha-Leha’ (Ahok: Civil Servants Should Not Procrastinate) on 28 October
2016 and ‘Karena Alasan Keamanan Sidang Ahok Dipindah ke Ragunan’ (Ahok’s Trial Moved to Ragunan due to Safety Reason) on 24 December 2016. At the same time, Pos Kota was also the only publication that has more articles written about the candidates and their race to become governor with articles such as ‘Tiga Cagub Atur Strategi’ (Three Gubernatorial Candidates Strategise) on 24 December 2016 and ‘AHY Sambangi Warga Cilandak, Anies Pilih Hadiri Zikir Akbar’ (AHY Visited the Cilandak Electorate, Anies Chose to Attend the Mass Congregation) on 9 January 2017.

These headlines show that to some extent the three publications adhered to their respective ideology and political association. As a publication that is known to have a strong connection with PDIP, Kompas clearly used its news to promote Jokowi and Ahok. At the same time, Kompas also maintained its careful and nationalistic reporting style, upon which its reputation was built. As a publication that claims to promote moderate Islamic ideas, Republika focused on reporting against SARA discrimination which is considered as a very sensitive and problematic subject in Indonesia. It is interesting though that Republika slightly shifted this moderate standpoint in the 2017 campaign period. At this time, Republika focused on the blasphemy case more than the other two publications. This shift might have been caused by Republika’s consideration of their target audience, which is the Indonesian Muslim community. As the blasphemy case became such a concern and caused resentment within the Muslim community, Republika might have seen the need to capitalise on this issue. While Pos Kota tried to stay true to its unofficial position as a publication that supports the status quo by focusing on the incumbent candidate and reporting about the Jakarta government’s programs, data presented in this chapter also show that, on occasions, its reportage was also influenced by the sentiments surrounding Ahok’s blasphemy allegations.
6.2.1.3 Filtering

The next category in my content analysis is filtering, which means the way media include or exclude others’ voices rather the subject’s own voice in their reporting. There are two sub-categories within filtering, which are quotation and source of information. Quotation here refers to the way the newspapers quoted Ahok in their articles. Some scholars such as Gidengil and Everitt (2000) and van Dijk (1991) argue that minority candidates are less likely to be directly quoted and their words are more highly filtered in paraphrases in comparison to non-minority candidates (in Tolley 2016: 57). This means that minority candidates’ comments are more often presented within the interpretation of the media, rather than being presented in their original form.

Source of information refers to the people or institutions quoted in these articles about Ahok. For instance, religious leaders were more often quoted in articles on Ahok’s blasphemy case. Thus, audiences would interpret the case through these leaders’ interpretation rather than through Ahok’s explanation despite the fact that he was the sender of the message. By looking into these patterns, I seek to identify who was quoted in the media when talking about Ahok and whether or not the media really considered him as their primary source of information.

a. Quotation

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, quotation refers to the way the newspapers include Ahok’s comments in their articles. There are four categories within quotation: the first one is ‘only direct quote’, which means that the articles only included Ahok’s comments as direct quotes. The second one is ‘only paraphrase’, which means that the articles only included Ahok’s comments as paraphrases. The third one is ‘both direct quote and paraphrase’, which means that Ahok’s comments in the articles appeared as both direct
quotes and paraphrases. Finally, the last category is 'none', which means that Ahok's comments could not be found in the articles.

Table 6.14: Quotation by Campaign Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Quotation</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only Direct Quote</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only Paraphrase</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>13.21%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both Direct Quote and Paraphrase</td>
<td>8.62%</td>
<td>63.21%</td>
<td>14.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>84.48%</td>
<td>23.58%</td>
<td>80.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.14 provides some insight into Ahok’s political traction. As seen in the 2012 data, it seems that the media did not consider Ahok as an important figure at the time. He was referred in only 15.52% of the total number of articles, which consisted of 3.45% direct quotes, 3.45% paraphrases, and 8.62% both paraphrases and directs quotes. Ahok’s running mate, Jokowi, had much more traction because he was running for the position of governor of Jakarta. Thus, when the pair was referred to in these articles, it was usually Jokowi that was quoted or paraphrased.

In 2014 however this figure increased significantly. In this year Ahok was referred to in 76.42% of the articles, with 13.21% consisting of paraphrases and 63.21% consisting of both paraphrases and direct quotations. In addition, in this year Ahok was often referred to alone rather than alongside Jokowi. This increase reflects two things: the fact that media started to consider him as the primary source of information and the success of his media relations strategy designed to promote his profile. As the voice of authority, Ahok’s comments clearly had a high news value. However, his bold character and openness to the media made him even more newsworthy.
During my internship at the Jakarta governor’s office, I could see firsthand how much Ahok valued his media contacts. Throughout the day he met the media several times. It usually started with door stop interviews as soon as he arrived at the City Hall in the morning. As Ahok received citizens who complained about different aspects of Jakarta government’s services, he purposely took the time to explain issues surrounding these services to the media. Throughout the day, Ahok received several important guests, which included other public officials, potential investors, public figures, representatives from other countries and so on. These meetings were usually conducted in different rooms surrounding the main hall in the main building where Ahok’s office was located. Journalists usually roamed the main hall to wait for Ahok coming out from one meeting room and going to another. This was when Ahok always stopped to talk to the journalists regarding the issues discussed in these meetings. On some occasions, Ahok also organised media conferences to provide more lengthy information on his programs and policies.

In the 2016-2017 campaign periods however, the number of articles that referred to Ahok, either by direct quotations or paraphrases, dropped to 19.90%. There were several possible reasons behind this decrease. First of all, this drop can be explained by Ahok’s blasphemy case. Following his comments that had been declared as blasphemous (see Chapter 1 for a detailed account of this case), polling results showed that Ahok’s electability decreased. High-profile political survey institutions such as SSI (Script Survei Indonesia), SMRC, LSI and Median reported that Ahok’s electability only reached 30% to 35% after Ahok’s blasphemy accusation. This number was significantly reduced from the surveys that they conducted in July 2016 when Ahok’s electability still reached more than 50% (Fazli 2016).
While political polls have never been free from biases and inaccuracies (see for instance Anuta et al. 2017; Shirani-Mehr et al. 2016), electorates consider these poll results when deciding which candidate they should vote for in the election. For instance, as these polling results indicated the possibility of Ahok losing the election, the media might have chosen to quote other candidates that they perceived as having more chance to win the election. At the same time, Ahok might have consciously restrained himself from making extensive comments following the blasphemy case; this was reflected in the number of articles that quoted him directly.

Another possible reason behind the decrease in the number of articles that quoted Ahok might have been due to Ahok’s lack of understanding of the main discourses that dominated this election. His key campaign messages were heavy on his policies and programs while, as can be seen in Table 6.6, the media were more inclined to focus on the socio-demography framing. Although policies and programs are usually common key messages used by candidates during election, this strategy might not have been appropriate for this last gubernatorial election in Indonesia when the main narrative circulating at the time was on religion. As mentioned several times throughout the thesis, several anonymous campaigners from Ahok’s team claimed that the gravity of the blasphemy case means that all of their energy was used to handle the case rather than to prepare themselves for the election campaign.

b. Source of Information

The next sub-category within filtering is source of information which refers to the people or institutions quoted in articles about Ahok. Analysing this category helps us understand whom the media chose as sources of information when talking about Ahok.
Understanding this choice can provide some insights into those who have more power in presenting their version of ‘reality’ (Tolley 2016).

Table 6.15: Source of Information by Campaign Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Himself</td>
<td>13.79%</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
<td>16.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His team</td>
<td>15.52%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opponents</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
<td>4.41%</td>
<td>14.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>13.79%</td>
<td>11.03%</td>
<td>17.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>1.47%</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other media</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other authority</td>
<td>55.17%</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>48.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>32.76%</td>
<td>33.83%</td>
<td>46.94%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same trend can be seen in source of information. Similar to other categories, there was a significant increase in the number of articles that referred to Ahok as the source of information from 13.79% in 2012 to 70.59% in 2014. This result strengthens the argument I made earlier that Ahok’s political traction increased considerably between these periods due to his position as deputy governor and his open communication with the media. Moreover, they also show that in 2014 these media really saw him not only as an important figure, but also as a primary source of information, allowing him to voice himself directly. However, data in this table also show that ‘other authorities’, mostly other government officials, were also used frequently as a source of information. They were even the most dominant sources in 2012 and 2017. These results can be an indicator that in 2012 and 2017, these media defined Ahok and what happened to him by using other people’s accounts of the events, rather than the subject’s own accounts.

At the same time, the low percentage of articles that referred to Ahok as a source of information during the 2016–2017 campaign period might have also been caused by other
reasons. As mentioned above, Ahok seemed to be more careful in making comments during his blasphemy trial which happened at around the same time as the gubernatorial campaign. For instance, in the month before the blasphemy trial, Ahok was included as the source of information three times in *Kompas*, six times in *Republika*, and twice in *Pos Kota*. In the month after the trial started, he was included as the source of information once in *Kompas*, not at all in *Republika*, and once in *Pos Kota*. Moreover, as Ahok had to take an official leave\(^{35}\) during this election campaign, the media could not quote him as a source of information when reporting about the activities conducted by the government of Jakarta. Instead they quoted the acting governor, Sumarsono, to comment in these articles.

As an additional note, the percentages allocated to each source of information will be more than 100% when added together. However, these results are valid as one article can refer to more than one source of information.

6.2.1.4 Description

The final category in my content analysis is description, which refers to the ways these articles describe Ahok. There are two sub-categories that make up description: tone of article and descriptive adjectives. Tone of article refers to the way the journalists express his or her attitude towards Ahok in these articles and it can be divided into mostly positive, mostly negative and neutral (Tolley 2016: 55). An article was only coded as negative when a great portion of its content consisted of negative comments, such as criticism, accusation, possible defeats and so on (Tolley 2016: 55). On the other hand, an

\(^{35}\) Article 70 (3a) Regulation Number 10/2016 states that ‘Governor and Vice Governor, Regent and Vice Regent, Mayor and Vice Mayor, who are running in the same electoral area, should abide by the following rules during the campaign period: a. taking official unpaid leave; and b. restraining from using any facilities related to his/her position’. This Regulation was enacted shortly before the Jakarta gubernatorial campaign, which started in October 2016. Ahok objected to this Article as it forced him to take a long leave of four months during a crucial time when Jakarta’s government was preparing the budgeting document for the next financial year. He brought his objection to the Constitutional Court, but he lost this case.
article was coded as positive when a great portion of its content provides a favourable report on Ahok’s policies, program success, and so on. Tolley (2016) also suggests that the neutral tone should be considered as the default while positive or negative tone was only chosen ‘when such coverage was readily apparent’ (Tolley 2016: 55). I provide examples of these articles in the following few sections to clarify these coding decisions further. Moreover, descriptive adjectives mean all the adjectives and words used in the articles to describe Ahok.

a. Tone of Article

Table 6.16: Tone of Articles by Campaign Periods (All Publications)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone of Article</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>15.52%</td>
<td>3.77%</td>
<td>2.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>4.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>67.24%</td>
<td>93.23%</td>
<td>93.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.17: Tone of Articles in Kompas by Campaign Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone of Article in Kompas</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>21.74%</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>4.33%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>1.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>73.91%</td>
<td>95.83%</td>
<td>98.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.18: Tone of Articles in Republika by Campaign Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone of Article in Republika</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>8.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>93.33%</td>
<td>89.83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As ‘balance in reporting’ is one of journalism’s main principles, most articles generally fall into the neutral category. Nonetheless, it is also interesting to see that articles from the 2012 editions had more tone variations than articles from 2014 or 2016–2017. Although 17.24% of articles used a negative tone in 2012, there were also 15.52% of articles that used a positive tone. In 2014 and in 2016–2017, there were only less than 5% of articles that used either a positive or a negative tone (see Table 6.16).

One of the possible explanations for the higher percentage of tone variations in 2012 was Jokowi’s popularity. During this election, Jokowi and Ahok marketed themselves as agents of change in Indonesia’s politics. While the positive articles usually circulated around this idea of ‘change’, the negative ones reported resistance among Jakartans to accept ‘inexperienced newcomers’ as governor and deputy governor. An example of an article with positive tone is an article in Kompas on 22 September 2012 titled ‘Cari Calon Alternatif 2014’ (Searching for Alternative Candidates for 2014) that describes Jokowi–Ahok as ‘kader potential’ (potential candidates) who have opened the door for candidates who had previously been prevented by the elites to participate in elections. An example of a negative article is an article in Pos Kota on 14 September 2012 titled ‘Foke-Nara Diarak Pendukung’ (Foke-Nara Paraded by Supporters). This article focused on the ‘peace declaration’\(^{56}\) that the gubernatorial candidates attended before the start of the election.

\(^{56}\) Peace declaration (deklarasi damai) is a common ritual in Indonesia before the start of the campaign period where candidates sign a declaration that they will compete fairly and will ensure that the campaign runs peacefully.
Ahok attended this declaration by himself as Jokowi was absent. The article criticised Jokowi’s lack of commitment and quoted Jokowi’s opponent, Fauzi Bowo saying ‘it is a pity that not all candidates are present, in fact it is a very valuable opportunity to learn from important guests, such as the Head of DPR and the Minister of Home Affairs…’\(^\text{57}\). The Head of DPR, Marzuki Alie, was also quoted in this article expressing his disappointment as he felt Jokowi–Ahok had underestimated the importance of the declaration.

As expected, tables 6.17 to 6.19 show that in 2012 *Kompas* had the most positive coverage about Ahok with 21.74%. *Pos Kota* had the most negative coverage with 31.25% and *Republika* also had a relatively high negative coverage with 22.22%. As mentioned above, *Kompas* has a close relationship with PDIP. As this party was a major supporter of Jokowi–Ahok, *Kompas* would be expected to write positive news about this pair to help them gain votes in this election. *Republika*, on the other hand, specifically targets Muslim communities in Indonesia and, therefore, is most likely to perceive Ahok’s non-Muslim background as an issue that should be critically reported to its readers. *Pos Kota* is always loyal to the status quo. In 2012, *Pos Kota* covered the then incumbent, Fauzi Bowo, positively while being critical to opponents.

In 2014, both positive and negative coverage decreased significantly, as did total coverage of Ahok. This might be caused by the fact that a more high-profile political event, the presidential election, took place at the same time. However, the results shown in tables 6.17 to 6.19 confirm my arguments above regarding the link between publications’ political allegiances and the tone of their articles. These tables show how *Kompas* and *Pos

\(^{57}\) The original text in Indonesian is as follows, ‘Sangat disayangkan pasangan calon tidak lengkap padahal ini kesempatan berharga untuk mendapatkan masukan dari tokoh-tokoh sperti Ketua DPR RI juga Menteri Dalam Negeri…’
*Kota* did not have any negative coverage about Ahok. Both newspapers mostly portrayed Ahok as a capable official who gave citizens some hope for a better government. An example of such article can be found in *Kompas* on 20 October 2014. An article titled ‘Optimisme Jakarta Baru Berlanjut di Pemerintahan Basuki’ (The Optimism of a New Jakarta Continues in Basuki’s Governorship) elaborated on the achievements of Jokowi–Ahok since they took over the office. The article listed many positive things such as simpler bureaucracy, faster service, and a cleaner city that citizens had enjoyed under Jokowi–Ahok’s government. The article also provided an optimistic outlook that these improvements would continue when Ahok replaced Jokowi as the governor. This positive outlook seems to be in line with Jakartans’ satisfaction level of Ahok’s performance during this time. Approximately six months after Ahok had been inaugurated as governor, the research and development team of *BeritaSatu*, a news organisation, conducted polling to measure this satisfaction (Rahman 2015). The polling showed that 70.8% of Jakartans were satisfied with Ahok’s performance despite his brash and temperamental character (Rahman 2015).

*Republika*, on the other hand did not have any positive coverage about Ahok and had 6.67% of articles with a negative tone. This negative coverage usually focused on either Ahok’s policies which are considered as discriminatory against the marginalised members of society or Ahok’s conflict with the FPI. An example of such an article can be found in the 28 October 2014 edition. An article titled ‘GWS Dinilai Berujung Bencana’ (Giant Sea Wall is Predicted to Be Disastrous) criticised the Jakarta government’s plan to build a giant sea wall which Ahok believed would be an effective solution for the ongoing flooding problem in Jakarta. The article argued that this decision was partial and would disadvantage the poor fishermen as the wall would damage the ocean biodiversity surrounding that area. Another article on 13 November 2016 reported on the conflict
that Ahok had with FPI. In this article Ahok was described as ‘perusak’ (wrecker), ‘sombong’ (arrogant) and ‘anti-Islam’.

During the 2016–2017 period, there was not much difference in the tone of articles about Ahok. However, tables 6.17 to 6.19 also show that *Kompas* had some negative coverage of Ahok (1.64%), although the percentage was very small. *Republika*, on the other hand, had the most negative coverage with 8.47% while *Pas Kota* had the most positive coverage with 5.26%.

Most of the negative coverage about Ahok during this period was related to Ahok’s blasphemy case. As a newspaper whose primary audience is Indonesian Muslims, it was not surprising that *Republika* was more critical of Ahok. For example, an article on 13 November 2016 titled ‘Aksi Damai dalam Bingkai Akidah dan Akhlak’ (Peace Action through the lens of Aqidah and Akhlaq58) reviewed the ‘Peace Action’ on 4 November 2016. This article, written by an Islamic scholar Professor Didin Hafidhuddin, criticised the government which seemed to protect Ahok in the blasphemy case and to portray the Muslims who participated in the action as violent and provocative. Instead, Professor Hafidhuddin argued that the action should have been seen as Muslims’ reaction against Ahok who had offended their aqidah. Another issue that was brought up in these articles was related to Ahok’s policies. For instance, an article on 16 December 2016 titled ‘Mengenang Tangisan Warga Korban Penggusuran’ (Remembering the Suffering of the Victims of Forced Evictions) follows the lives of some of Jakarta’s inhabitants a few months after their forced eviction from some slum areas in Bukit Duri and Kampung Aquarium. The article shows the suffering that these people endured as a consequence of

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58 *Aqidah* is an Arabic word which translates into ‘religious creed’. For Muslims, Aqidah is the confirmation that our heart accepts Allah SWT through his revelations to Muhammad SAW. *Akhlq* means our conducts as Muslims as taught by Muhammad SAW.
Ahok’s arbitrary decision. These people described how they faced difficulties in maintaining their jobs as the flats they were relocated to by the government were some distance from where they worked. In this article, they described Ahok as ignorant, inhumane, and fake. The article did not provide any comments from Ahok or Jakarta’s government.

*Pos Kota’s* positive coverage of Ahok is also related to the nature of the publication. As mentioned above, *Pos Kota* has a section that is called ‘Warta Ibukota’ that presents news about the programs and policies of Jakarta’s government. As Ahok’s programs were generally well received by the public, it is not surprising that this section contained several positive articles about Ahok. An example of this positive coverage is an article on 14 November 2016 titled ‘Aktivis Muda Muhammadiyah Deklarasi Dukung Ahok–Djarot’ (Young Muhammadiyah Activists Declare Their Support for Ahok–Djarot) which reports the support that Ahok–Djarot received from the young activists of Muhammadiyah, which is one of the largest Islamic organisations in Indonesia. In this article, a representative from this organisation provided reasons behind their support for the pair whom they felt had done a good job in managing the capital city.

Nonetheless, unlike in 2014 where *Pos Kota* did not have any articles with negative tone about Ahok, this publication also published several articles with negative tone about the governor during the 2016-2017 campaign period. An example of such articles appeared on 2 February 2017. This article, titled ‘Ahok Sampaikan Permohonan Maaf’ (Ahok Apologises), criticised Ahok’s treatment to Ma’aruf Amin – the leader of NU and the chairman of MUI – who came as a witness in the blasphemy trial. This article described how Ahok accused Amin as one of the actors behind his blasphemy accusation. Although
the article also reported that Ahok made a public apology to Amin, the article focused more on the anger felt by the NU community about Ahok’s mistreatment of their leader.

b. Words Used to Describe Ahok

The last sub-category in this section is descriptive adjectives to describe Ahok. The purpose of this coding is to see what words the newspapers selected to portray Ahok in their articles. Tolley (2016) found that the media tend to describe minority political candidates by using stereotypical adjectives. For example, female politicians might be described as ‘unassertive’ or ‘less intelligent’ or Asian politicians might be described as ‘passive’ and ‘quiet’; all of these can influence the way the public perceive them. At the same time, I was also interested to know whether the media emphasised Ahok’s otherness by highlighting his socio-demographics backgrounds in their description.
Looking into the content analysis results, there is not any significant percentage of adjectives that can be seen in Table 6.20. Most articles did not use adjectives when talking about Ahok. Instead they focused on his actions. Even when these articles talked about the blasphemy case, they only re-narrated the chronology of the case and presented the public reactions towards the case.
Interestingly, there were more positive adjectives than negative adjectives used to describe Ahok and none of these adjectives actually refer to Ahok’s socio-demographic background; instead they refer to his personal character. Another point worth noting is that none of these articles contain the words ‘Chinese’, ‘Christian’ or ‘minority’. References to Ahok’s non-Muslim background could only be found in the words ‘non-Muslim’, ‘blasphemous’ or ‘hater of Islam’. In addition, Table 6.20 also shows that while the word ‘non-Muslim’ has been used to describe Ahok since the 2012 Jakarta’s gubernatorial election, the words ‘hater of Islam’ and ‘blasphemous’ only appeared after the blasphemy case broke in 2016. While findings presented in this table are not in line with Tolley’s study (2016) where she found that in the Canadian context most minority candidates were reported by using stereotyping adjectives, this finding is in line with van Dijk’s argument that although today’s media do not explicitly use racist words to talk about minorities, they still promote ‘new racism’ by highlighting the minorities’ otherness in their coverage (van Dijk 2000).

At the same time, the content analysis result also shows that Jokowi–Ahok’s key message in the 2012 campaign was successful. As Table 6.20 shows there were 14.29% of articles in 2012 which describe them as ‘symbol of change’. This pair was also seen as ‘honest’ (9.52%), ‘pro people’ (9.52%), and ‘new’ (9.52%). In 2014, the most dominant adjective to describe Ahok was ‘assertive’ (34.29%) and ‘hardworking’ (8.57%). These numbers show that Ahok’s leadership style was seen as favourable by the media. However, in 2014 the media also described him as ‘brash’ (11.43%), a characteristic that Ahok had been criticised with. Finally, in the 2016-2017 period, we could see an increase in the negative adjectives used to describe Ahok. Although he was still seen as ‘competent’ (22.5%), ‘honest’ (10%), and ‘approachable’ (7.5%), the media also described him as ‘brash’ (15%), ‘authoritarian’ (10%), and ‘blasphemous’ (7.5%). This result could potentially reflect the
reasons behind Ahok’s defeat in the election. While many citizens admitted Ahok’s ability in governing the capital city, many others were also disappointed with what they perceived as his partial policies or were offended by his comments which they deemed as blasphemous.

6.3 Conclusion

Examining the content analysis result of the newspaper articles, it is clear that media representation of Ahok are influenced considerably by their editorial ideology or political inclination. At the same time, the differences in coverage about Ahok found in these publications are also consistent with what the publications believe as carrying more news values for their target audiences. Data presented in this chapter show that these publications framed politicians in ways that further their own political views, which are potentially shared by their readers. For instance, Kompas preferred to cover Ahok’s achievements as the governor since their audience base are middle-class educated Indonesians who value Kompas ‘balanced’ style of reporting. One could equally argue that given its historical roots in the Indonesian Catholic community, they have more interest in defending the position of minorities in Indonesia, and as such have a clear interest in Ahok as a minority figure in national politics.

On the other hand, as an Islamic publication, Republika tends to focus on issues that concern the Muslim community. So when in 2017 Ahok faced the blasphemy accusation, this issue dominated Republika’s reporting as it had an emotional appeal for Republika’s target audience. Pos Kota changed their support based on the preferences of the senior officials in Jakarta’s government. As this publication mainly targets people in the capital city, their main focus is to report about the government and its activities. Therefore, it
can be argued that the media can be seen as the barometer of community attention on a particular candidate and a conduit for drawing attention to the candidate.

Despite the fact that the data, particularly data from the 2012 and 2014 electoral periods confirm my argument that newspapers in Indonesia still work within a particular ideology, which is influenced by the political and business associations of the owners, data from 2017 show some anomalies. During this time newspapers did not behave in accordance to their usual editorial principles Even Pos Kota, which normally maintain their support to the status quo, chose to cover certain aspects of the blasphemy case that could portray Ahok in a negative light in 2017. This example supports my argument that the blasphemy case was so massive that it became a disturbance for the functioning of ideal electoral democracy. At the same time, it also shows that the populist movement during this election was so strong that it was able to pressure the publications to adapt their reporting to the discourses pushed forward by this movement.

The content analysis result also provides evidence that, like those of the mainstream media in many parts of the multicultural western world, the Indonesian media practise subtle forms of racism, which is different from the overt racism of earlier periods of history. Unlike the US election where the media clearly made or promoted racist remarks against Barack Obama, the Indonesian media practised more subtle forms of racism by highlighting the candidate’s otherness in relation to the majority of the Indonesian population. The publications did not spell out Ahok’s Chinese or Christian backgrounds. Instead, they use words such as ‘non-Muslim’ or ‘hater of Islam’ to distance him from the majority. ‘Hater of Islam’ in particular was a very convenient label to reflect his ‘otherness’ as it says we do not mind who he is, we are focused on what he does – he hates Islam. This practice of ‘othering’ is not something new; instead it reflects the long-
established Indonesia’s political discourse that uses the metanarrative of ‘Islam’ and ‘the
nation’/’people’ and has been built upon the existence of a ‘constitutive outside’.

At the same time, it appears that in 2012 there was a real debate about Ahok’s (as a
deputy to Jokowi) personal good and bad characteristics. At the time, he was new and
everyone wanted to know who he was. But the time 2014 came around, the media began
to increasingly see him through his office as the incumbent governor and after the
blasphemy incident he becomes in fact a non-person defined more by exclusion than
anything else.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the interplay between social media, political outsiders, and political communication in post-Suharto Indonesia. Many scholars argue that new media, such as social media, has democratic potential as it enables more diverse voices and representations to be presented in the public sphere without the mediation imposed by the gatekeepers found in traditional media. Alternatively, other scholars also suggest that the use of social media in political communication is not free from dominant influences. Instead, it is part of an established political campaign industry, which is carefully controlled by the power elite. This thesis demonstrates that these positions are not binary and that there are nuances within the complexity of interplay between media and politics. In a broader sense, this thesis has shown that political communication is shaped by intricate interactions between political institutions, media and citizens. While arguing that social media has expanded the conceptual public sphere and made politics more diverse and inclusive, this thesis has also shown that the interests of traditional institutional and political arrangements can be replicated in social media.

By focusing on Ahok and his political journey from the time he was elected as Jokowi’s deputy governor in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election until his defeat in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, this thesis has considered how social media has disrupted traditional political engagement in Indonesia and contributed to the rise of political outsiders in a country where politics is still very much dominated by elite politicians. At the same time, this thesis has also sought to investigate what the Ahok phenomenon illustrates about the ability of social media to influence the process of democratisation in post-Suharto Indonesia.
I chose Ahok as the focus for this study for several reasons. First, Ahok had very strong outsider characteristics. Not only was he considered a new face in Indonesia’s national politics, he was also able to reach a significant position in the government despite his double minority backgrounds. Ahok’s status as a Christian and Chinese were often used by opponents to highlight his ‘otherness’ in Indonesia’s political sphere where most of its politicians are indigenous Muslims. At the same time, Ahok’s political messages also had some populist appeal as he positioned himself as fighting against the corrupt Indonesian government. Ahok exemplified through his comments and behaviour a different kind of leadership style that promoted transparency and accountability.

The findings presented in this thesis show that social media in Indonesia has enabled the rise of Ahok by providing him with opportunities to communicate directly with his constituents and to involve them more actively in his political campaigning. My data also shows that social media supported unfavourable discourses about Ahok’s blasphemy allegation, which amplified the case, affected the result of the election, and finally led to Ahok’s incarceration in May 2017. Considering this, this thesis argues that by itself, social media is insufficient to disrupt the dominance of mass media in shaping political opinions, attitudes and setting political agendas. The case of Ahok demonstrates that when the function of electoral democracy is distorted by political populism as shown in the 2017 election, social media actually reinforces the discourse of the existing power elite.

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provided a detailed overview of Ahok’s short and controversial political career, which spanned a period of thirteen years between 2004 and 2017. In this chapter I introduce the concept of ‘political outsiders’, which is defined as politicians who are arguably not linked to the elite politics that is the
product of Suharto’s government. In my definition of political outsiders, I also suggest that often these political outsiders exploit and promote their underdog characteristics and difference from traditional politicians because it increases their popular appeal to electorates frustrated with corrupt governments.

Following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 discusses the political system in Indonesia. This chapter provides the context of the study by detailing the reformation of Indonesia’s politics driven by new laws. These laws have fostered the liberalisation of political parties by enabling the formation of new parties, and expanding the autonomy of regional governments which has reduced the dominance of the central government in the regions. The introduction of these laws was an important milestone in Indonesia’s politics as they were keys to the rise of political outsiders in Indonesia.

In Chapter 2, I also discuss ‘arche-politics’ which has characterised Indonesia’s political discourse. Central to this idea of arche-politics is the existence of a ‘constitutive outside’, a common enemy that is seen as a threat to the unity of Indonesia as a nation. Consistent with the conclusions reached by Lim (2013) and Duile and Bens (2017), I argue that this idea of a ‘constitutive outside’ shapes political communication efforts in Indonesia, and is manifested in form of metanarratives of ‘the nation/people’ and ‘Islam’ that surround political discourses in this country.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the changes that the Internet and social media have brought to political communication. These changes can be seen from two different points of view. On the one hand, the conviviality introduced by these new technologies enables changes in the dynamic between information producers and consumers. Consequently, these changes drive politicians and other political institutions to make their communication with the
electorate more inclusive, interactive and engaging. On the other hand, I also argue that these new media can still replicate the interests of formal and institutionalised power by amplifying and sensationalising content that furthers particular agendas and polarises debates. The ‘filter bubble’ that leads people to select content that reinforces their biases strengthens their predispositions, and this can make themselves emotive, rather than deliberative, when dealing with political issues.

In Chapter 4, I elaborate on my mixed-method design of participant observation, textual analysis of social media, and content analysis of newspaper articles from Kompas, Republika and Pos Kota. These three publications were selected as they arguably represent three different groups within the Indonesian electorate: the middle class, the Muslims, and the lower class. Employing a triangulation of methods allowed me to unfold the Ahok phenomenon from different perspectives, which resulted in a more comprehensive understanding of political communication in contemporary Indonesia. In this chapter, I also discuss the challenges I faced in obtaining the social media data and identify the way in which the expense and difficulties in accessing social media data shaped my research. These challenges limited my thesis, however my textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts and other data gathered from my time as an intern with Ahok provided previously undocumented insights into his political communication approaches.

Chapter 5 discusses Ahok’s political communication strategies that were derived from my participant observation in the Jakarta governor’s office and my textual analysis of Ahok’s social media accounts. Data presented in this chapter show that transparency and anti-corruption were Ahok’s key messages in his political communication. These messages had some appeal as they helped to portray Ahok as a new kind of politician, one that challenged the corrupt system and sought to make government more accountable to the
electorate. Nonetheless, data also shows that despite Ahok’s use of social media he did not use it to effectively engage with constituents. Instead of generating interactivity and conviviality with his constituents, which fosters loyalty, Ahok only used the social media platform as a one-way public information and announcement tool.

By not engaging with his constituents Ahok failed to mobilise his supporters to help him fight the blasphemy allegations and he might not be aware of the full extent of the threat posed to him in an increasingly populist election. Data presented in this chapter also shows that at the same time the gravity of the blasphemy case has impacted not only the political discussions about Ahok that appeared in social media, but also to the inability of his team to counter this negative discourse. Content analysis of Twitter discussions and data from secondary sources confirms that the blasphemy issue overshadowed the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election and so it is possible to conclude that no matter what Ahok did with his social media strategies in 2017, he would not be able to overcome the populist outbreak that surrounded the case and disturbed the electoral process during this election.

Finally in Chapter 6, I present data from my content analysis of newspaper articles. Content analysis of these articles shows how the traditional media, which are arguably still controlled by the political elite, represented Ahok. Content analysis of these articles was employed by following the model proposed by Tolley (2016) in her study of minority candidates in Canadian politics. My content analysis data shows that the political aspirations or political ideology of the publications’ publishers have significant influence to the ways these publications report on an issue. At the same time, all three publications also show their loyalty to the niche publics that are considered as their primary readers.
Therefore, the framings of articles tend to reflect the sentiments that are expressed by these target audiences.

In addition, this chapter also argues that while Tolley’s model worked in Indonesia within certain contexts as demonstrated by data from 2012 and 2014, the same cannot be said about data from 2017. As the discourse of Ahok’s blasphemy case was very dominant at this time, newspapers, even those that had previously reported in a balanced manner on Ahok, began to circulate reportings on Ahok’s blasphemy allegations. Moreover, as the electorate also succumbed to populist forces in 2017, they might have also indirectly pressured the publications to focus on this issue.

While many researchers have studied the roles of social media in contemporary Indonesia’s politics (see for instance Lim 2013; 2017; Tapsell 2017) there are very few who empirically conduct a textual analysis of social media content or make comparisons between social media and traditional media. Thus, my research aims to fill this gap and to provide different insights into the contemporary discourses existing in political communication in Indonesia. At the same time, data from my participant observation can also provide an insider’s overview of Ahok and his political communication practice, which might not be accessible elsewhere. By presenting data from three publications this thesis highlights the ways in which newspapers still set the public news agenda in Indonesia, and influence the circulation of certain discourses in the society.

Theoretically, this thesis has also contributed more nuances to the debate surrounding social media and its role in political communication. While acknowledging the potential of social media in creating a more democratic public sphere, this thesis has also shown that alternative discourses in social media still cannot challenge the dominant discourses
in the society, especially those discourses that are congruent with the metanarrative that have been embedded in that society for a long time. By drawing upon Tolley’s model on minority candidates’ representation in the mainstream media, this thesis has also shown that in certain conditions, such as the blasphemy case that Ahok faced during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, mass media do not operate in the same way as what Tolley hypotheses.

As I have mentioned above, one of the challenges that I faced in preparing this thesis was the lack of resources to obtain and process data from social media. Despite this difficulty, the data collected for this research provides useful insights into the operation of the social media environment and its role in political communications during an important period of political transition in Indonesia. Further research that examines in greater depth the comparisons between social media and traditional media reportage of political entities would further develop our understanding of the ways in which media influences our understanding of politics. In addition, as many political candidates in Indonesia also spend a large proportion of their campaign funds on television advertisements, these media might also be the ideal choice for further research.

In Indonesia, not many politicians originate from minority groups. The fact that a Chinese Indonesian politician, Ahok, could have political traction in Indonesia reflected an important milestone in the progress of Indonesia’s democracy. As Ahok could occupy the position as Jakarta’s governor through a direct election and constitutional process, his rise (though short-lived) showed how the domination of the elites that constitute the oligarch has started to be challenged.
Nonetheless, the success of the religious-based campaign that ended Ahok’s governorship can be an indicator that similar discourses will be used in next elections as a means to gain support and influence public opinion. The case of Ahok shows us that identity politics is an effective strategy that can be used by politicians in Indonesia to polarise the public and bring down political opponents, particularly those considered as the outsiders. Mainly, this is because the metanarratives that have been integrated in Indonesia’s politics are circulated around this discourse of ‘othering’. And with the popularity of social media in the country, this medium can actually contribute to the reproduction of the conditions that perpetuate this inequality and dominance.

Scholars believe that this kind of contestation will continue to be central for political communication research. Studies in this area tend to generate more questions and debates than offering specific answers. At best, a new study can contribute by adding more nuances that will ‘clarify issues, pinpoint falsehoods, and offer insights about the quality of contemporary democracy’ (Perloff 2014: 72).
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APPENDIX

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODING SHEET

Q1. Name and date of publication:
- Kompas (1)
- Republika (2)
- Pos Kota (3)

Q2. Title of article: 

Article No.: (of the respective edition)

Q3. Prominence/ placement of coverage (only for newspapers):
- page 1 (1)
- page 2 – 3 (2)
- Inside page (3)

Q4. Framing
- Q4.1 Socio-demographic
  - yes (1)
  - no (2)

  Q4.1.1 Race:
  - yes (1)
  - no (2)

  Q4.1.2 Religion:
  - yes (1)
  - no (2)

  Q4.1.3 Supporters:
  - minority (1)
  - mainstream (2)
  - none (3)

Q4.2 Political Viability:
- yes (1)
- no (2)
Q4.2.1 Status:
- insider (1)
- outsider (2)
- none (3)

Q4.2.2 Quality:
- yes (1)
- no (2)

Q4.2.2.1 Experience
- amateur (1)
- experienced (2)
- none (3)

Q4.2.2.2 Integrity
- low (1)
- high (2)
- none (3)

Q4.2.2.3 Personality
- negative (1)
- positive (2)
- none (3)

Q4.2.3 Novelty:
- novel (1)
- old player (2)
- none (3)

Q4.2.4 Chance of winning:
- Face defeat (1)
- Likely to win (2)
- None (3)

Q4.3 Policy/Issue:
- community specific (1)
- general appeal (2)
- none (3)
Q5. Centrality
- main subject (1)
- secondary subject (2)
- only in list (3)

Q6. Sources of information:
- Himself (1)
- His team (2)
- Opponents (3)
- Public (4)
- Polling (5)
- Other Media (6)
- Other authority (7)
- Others (8)

Q7. Filtering:
- Quotes (1)
- Paraphrase (2)
- Both (3)
- None (4)

Q8. Descriptive adjectives used to describe Ahok:

Q9. Tone of coverage
- Positive (1)
- Negative (2)
- Neutral (3)