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The Influence of Social Media Towards Student Political Participation During the 2014 Indonesian Presidential Election

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to examine the political participation of social media users particularly of Facebook and Twitter during the 2014 Indonesian presidential election. The data collection was performed through survey with accidental sampling methods. Samples were taken from population of undergraduate students of political and social sciences faculty at five universities in Yogyakarta namely UGM, UIN Sunan Kalijaga, UMY, UNY and UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta. Using statistic descriptive, this research conceptualizes the political participation of social media users while the relations of social media and political participation is analyzed through OLS Regression. The findings indicated that the level of political participation of the social media users during the election was categorized as good. However, the facilities offered by the two social media applications were not maximally used to supporting political participation activities. On the other hand, the result OLS regression shows that there were positive and significant correlations and influences of social media towards the political participation of its users during the election even though the percentage was small.

Keywords: Social Media, Political Participation, Presidential Election 2014

BACKGROUND

Social media is a modern product of communication and information technology that develops rapidly nowadays. Some popular social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Google+ have been accessed regularly by millions of people all over the world. Several data show the increasing number of global social media users. According to Kemp (January 2014) on his report for *We Are Social*, entitled *Social, Digital and Media Worldwide in 2014*, 35% out of 7.09 billion people (total of world's population) own internet access. Furthermore, 1.85 billion people (26% out of the total world's population) are active users of social media.

The report also mentioned that the number of social media users in Indonesia shows significant progress. As the total population of Indonesian reaches 251 million people, 29% or 73 million people have been connected online and from this 73 million people, 98% are active social media users with Facebook and Twitter as the most preferred applications used by 93% and 80% of total social media users (Kemp, January 2014). Kemp (January 2014) also suggested that Facebook has been the most popular social media application in Indonesia attracting approximately 62

million users and is equivalent to 25% of total population.

So, what is the interesting aspects beyond those numbers? The existence of social media has enabled us to create digital communities that live along with the organic physical communities. Communicative interaction among its members happens as of that in the real world by dissemination of information, creation of ideas, and public opinion making which most are related to political issues. Furthermore, social media offers some strength in term of efficiency and quick information transmission in a much wider coverage area.

Social media is considered as pro-public since big corporations or political elite may not easy in influencing the circulation of information as in the conventional media. Rahmawati (2013) argued that such strength has encouraged a significant number of Indonesians to convert from conventional media to social media for collecting information. Thus, such phenomenon also encourages conventional mass media to create accounts in social media as an information dissemination tool linked to their official portal (Permatasari, 2013). For instance, a printed mass media Kompas and television channel Metro TV are two conventional media which have popular accounts on social media named @kompascom and @Metro_TV.

Meanwhile political elites as well as parties are also using social media as their tool for political communication. Given an example, in the upcoming of presidential election in 2014, both candidates as well as they supporting political parties used social media as a tool for gathering public supports. Moreover, there were several volunteer's accounts to be made and initiated by the public in order to support their candidates. An account named @Bara_Jokowi and @JKW4P are volunteer accounts to support Joko Widodo, while two accounts, @selamatkanRI and @prabowo are volunteer's accounts of Prabowo Subianto's supporters. Those accounts implies that social media has been media hub between public and political elites that later creates communication interaction among them.

However, the easy and unlimited communication in social media brings along some risks. One of negative event visible during the 2014 presidential election was smear campaign activities. Such activities aim to divide or change opinion within society by applying rumors on some issues including religion and ethnicity, or some insignificant issues such as how the candidates dress up or their foreign language competencies. Smear campaign is performed to discredit particular individual or group in which during the 2014 Indonesian presidential election was pointed to both candidates. Unfortunately, smear campaign could happen easily on social media since its information dissemination is borderless and difficult to control.

Nevertheless, the 2014 presidential election was a milestone for Indonesian democratization as the progress of public political participation through internet was tremendous particularly from the young people. *BBG and Gallup Org*. quoted by *The Global Social Network Landscape* (2013) stated that the Indonesian internet is dominated by young users under 35 years old with 81% out of the total users. Meanwhile, the number of young voters of 17 – 30 years old in the 2014 election reached 59.6 million people or equivalent to 30% of total voters (kpu.go.id, 2014). It is quite significant number to assume that political discussion on social media is

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also dominated by the young people.

Based on the background above, we are interested in examining political participation of social media users. To examine this phenomenon we took undergraduate students of the faculty of social and political sciences in five big universities in Yogyakarta as our sample. Those students were mostly first time voters in the 2014 presidential election. Therefore, the research questions were formulated as follow:

1. How does online political participation of the undergraduate students of the faculty of political and social sciences in Yogyakarta during the 2014 presidential election?
2. How do social media influence political participation of those students during the 2014 presidential election?

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Democracy and public political participation are two interrelated issues which cannot be separated. Political participation is the core of democratic society and it is an essential part of the individual development within the society (Habermas, 1989; Moyser in Axtmann, 2003:174). Public participation enriches political process by encouraging a better policy making process by the government as it gives considerations in the policy making process and ensures accountability of the political elites (Froomokin in Shane, 2004: 3-4). In other word, democracy system would not run well without political participation of the public.

The core of political participation is rather simple if we take a look at what Parry *et al*. in Moyser in Axtmann (2003: 175) said that political participation is about "taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies". However, in reality political participation is much more complex. This complexity is related to mechanism and structures on how does the government able to filter public participation so it can contributes postive impacts in the policy making process. Furthermore, such complexity of the political participation is also taking place in the process that happens within the society itself oh how does the society come together in adjusting their perspectives.

At the beginning, political participation was defined as the involvement of society by voting their representatives through an election. However, as the society develop, Lazarsfeld *et al*. (1944) and Moyser in Axtmann (2003) argue that political participation should be defined in a wider context that it covers various and wider activities. Milbarth and Goel in Efriza (2012:175) also provide similar argumentation by identifying several types of political participation namely:

1. Spectators
   This type is interested in political stimulation, voting in an election, initiating political discussion and trying to influence others by using symbols or pictures that represent their political choices.
2. Transitional
   This type includes activities of building network or doing communicative interaction with elites such as government officials or politicians, giving financial donation for political parties as well as actively involved in the campaign.
3. Gladiators
   Gladiators are those who actively allocate time and other resources for political campaign, being active members of political party

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by attending strategic meetings, fund raising and or being candidate for a position in either political party or public office.

An important connecting line among those three types that is the communication process as Dahlgren (2002:6) argues that communication among people is the basis and an expression of political participation. It becomes an important factor because public opinion that can influence government policies can only be shaped when the communication process among the people runs well. The existence of social media has a tremendous effect on the communication process within the society. It is a one stop communication platform that provides possibilities for interpersonal communication as well as mass communication which able to spread information widely and quickly. Castells (2013: xix) argues that in the last decade there has been a change of from "*mass communication* to *mass self-communication"*:

> *"…the process of interactive communication that can potentially reach a mass audience, but in which the production of the message is self-generated, the retrieval of messages is self-directed and the reception and remixing of content from electronic communication networks is self selected" (Castells. 2013: xix).*

Social media in the political participation context should be considered as a tool. Each individual can participate and express their political opinions without any limitations of space and time. It provides possibilities for public communication process with a tremendous intensity and quantity. Opinions from each individual uploaded into social media can be forwarded, reproduced, and modified by other individual so that those information stay circulating within the network. The existence of social media indeed gives a very easy access for communication process within the society.

The development of information and communication technology, particularly the creation of social media applications, has made communication processes are no longer following linear pattern of bottom-up or top-down, but it now runs following network pattern. Social media eliminates control and monopoly of information transmission elite groups, such as the government and corporation. When such monopoly disappeared, information transmission would be more transparent and benefit the public by easy access to various and diverse information. The public will have wider opportunities to respond and or forward the circulated information, and such situation might enhance the political participation of the society.

However, such freedom may also bring along some disadvantages such as the difficulty to clarify the validity of information which circulate around in social media. The difficulty to clarify information may bring problems into the political discussion, for instance during the 2014 presidential election practices of smear campaign was clearly visible.

According to *Oxford Dictionaries*, smear campaign is defined as "a plan to discredit a public figure by making false accusations". Even though those false accusation or rumors may be denied but they can give fatal effects by reducing the credibility of the targets before the society. Smear campaign shifts the focus of its targets from discussing substantial issues to mobilizing resources in effort to clarify those accusations orrumors.

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In order to analyze deeper about the public political participation we need to understand the motivation behind each individuals. Weber in Efriza (2012: 191-193) categorized motivation for the society to engage in political activities into four categories namely:

1. Value-rational
   An Individual engages in political activities based on rational considerations related to the interest in materializing values of which they believe in.
2. Affective emotional
   An individual engages in political activities based on personal emotion such as preferences and like/dislike toward an idea, organization, political party or an individual;
3. Traditional
   An individual engages in political activities due to certain norms or traditions of which they have accepted;
4. Instrumental-rational
   An individual engages in political activities based on economic calculation considering the probability of loss and gain.

Public political participation is an important factor within a democratic system therefore quality of the participation must be measured as well. Irawan in Efriza (2012:201-202) proposes four indicators to measure the quality of public political participation as follow:

1. Initiative level
   It is an awareness level of an individual or group of people to engage in political participation without any factors from others such as influences, force or request;
2. Tolerance toward different opinion
   It is a reflection of democracy which full with differences in opinion and ideas thus ability to tolerate those differences are crucial;
3. Cooperation level
   Differences among the people may cause various problems within the society therefore cooperation is needed to solve those differences;
4. Succssful impact
   Participation process should bring impacts within the society and this impacts may be influenced by various factors including the intensity of the participation.

In order to achieve its objectives, political participation should be aimed to create public opinion which can be done through open communication among individuals within the society (Habermas, 1989). To guarantee that such communication can run well, Habermas (1989) emphasized the needs to create a "public sphere that connects private realm with state authority and it functions as supporting space which provides opportunities for individuals to communicate public issues without being influenced by the state or corporation". Furthermore, Habermas (1989: 227) explained some pre-conditions for public sphere to exist which are a guarantee for freedom of speech, freedom to unite and gather, and freedom of press to publish public opinions which had been formed in the public sphere.

Habermas' idea on public sphere is an ideal description that is unlikely to be completely implemented. Nevertheless, the existence of social media gives a wider opportunity to transform public sphere into a new form. Castell (2009), though is not limited to social media, has introduced a concept of network society where the society and

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its social structure exist and develop within the microelectronic-based technology with all communication and circulation of information are processed digitally. According to Castells's definition (2013:2), we might conclude that network society is an online public sphere where the government almost has no control and corporations are likely unable to monopolize the communication processes within. Therefore, network society may fulfill some important principles of public sphere particularly in accommodating freedom and equal chances to speak; establishment of interest-based groups, and facilities for freedom of publication. Such freedom provides opportunities to create mass self-communication that enables many-to-many communication with multiplied producers and receivers of information. Moreover, information that have been uploaded in to social media will stay alive and circulate following the digital network that is unlimited and borderless.

In relation to public political engagement, many researches and publications have shown that there is positive correlation between the internet usages and political activities. Carlisle and Patton (2013), Luengo (2006), and Vaccari et al. (2013) have demonstrated that the existence of the internet has influenced the political activities of the society. They argue that the internet and social media provide easiness for the society to get involved in political discussion.

Carlisle and Patton (2013) observed that "during the 2008 American presidential election, Facebook became a popular platform for the American public to participate in political discussion and debates". Meanwhile Luengo (2006) stated that "there was positive and significant correlation between the internet usage and political activism in 20 European countries where the public took different part in political process other than just giving vote in general elections". Furthermore, Vaccari et al. (2013) mentioned that "the connection between online and offline political activities may happen as the society do not necessarily separate their political involvement in both realm which make the information flows swiftly between the two areas". Other characteristic of this information flow is that it follows an interrelated network which enable the information roll over like a snowball. Hence, the online political discussion and demands that happens in social media such as Twitter will be difficult to ignore which then influences the offline discussion within the society. Such influence of social media toward the society was also visible in Indonesian political landscape. Rahmawati (2013) mentioned that "behaviors of news consumption in Indonesia have significantly changed". The society has started to move from conventional media into social media to search for information including political issues. However, Carlisle and Patton (2013) emphasized that "the influence of social media to the political participation of its users is still limited because, finally, social media is only a tool while political participation is driven by the individual will and interest".

If Carlisle and Patton (2013), Luengo (2006), Vaccari et al. (2013) and Rahmawati (2013) demonstrated the usage of the internet and social media by the people to engage in political activism, Puspitasari (2012) and Maliki and Satria (2013) analyzed the usage of social media by political elites for campaign and gathering public political support. Puspitasari (2012) analyzed political communication strategies that is employed by political elites for political campaign. She observed the role of

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social media in the 2012 Governor election of Jakarta and described that social media had played an important role for political communication of the candidate even though it was not yet maximally used as the "communication style was still static".

Meanwhile Maliki and Satria (2013) analyzed the issue of social media's influences toward political campaign in the 2012 Governor election of Jakarta. The research findings indicated a growing trend of using social media as political campaign tool. The findings, in particular, identified several types of campaigns including black campaign, clean campaign, and negative campaign were performed by governor candidates and their campaign teams and supporters. There were assumptions of candidates that campaign through social media may influence the public choices. However, the observation yielded a contradiction that popularity of the candidates in social media was not always equivalent to the voting results.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed accidental survey methods for data collection which was conducted in September – August 2014. The population of this research was undergraduate students of Social and Political Science Faculty from five big universities in Yogyakarta namely: UGM (Universitas Gadjahmada), UIN (Islamic State University) Sunan Kalijaga, UMY (Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta), UNY (Yogyakarta State University), and UPN "Veteran" (Veteran University). To define the sample, we used margin of error of 5% and confidence level of 95%. According to the sample calculation, the number of respondent was 317 students from total population of 13,286 students (PDPT Dikti, 2013). However, inreality, the number of sample who participated in this survey was slightly more than the expected number that was 379 students. The respondents from each university were calculated proportionally based on the overall number of students in the faculty of each designated university. Meanwhile the social media applications that were chosen as the focus of this study were Facebook and Twitter.

This research employed a dependent variable and an independent variable of which each of them has several sub-variables or dimensions. Dependent variable of this research is the political participation of social media users, consists of four dimensions namely: intensity of political participation, motivation of political participation, types of political participation, and level of success of political participation. These four dimensions are built by 24 items of questions. Meanwhile, independent variable represents the existence of social media which consists of three dimensions namely openness and transparency of information, unlimited communication, and risk of smear campaign. These three dimensions are built on 10 items of questions. To analyze the collected data, we apply two methods of statistic descriptive and OLS Regression.

To gain data from respondents, we used a set of questionnaire which employed Likert scale. Therefore, we need to have reliability test of cronbach's alpha to examine the internal consistency of each variable. The alpha value for dependent variable of the political participation of social media users was .86 so this variable is considered as reliable. However, there were five items from this dependent variable which would not give much influence to the alpha value if they were dropped. Nevertheless,

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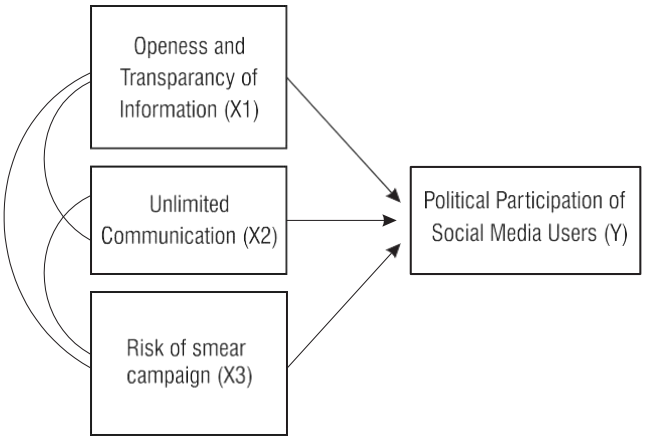
FUGURE 1. PATH ANALYSIS OF OLS REGRESSION



we decided to keep those items for the OLS regression analysis as they represented dimension that was essential in this analysis.

Meanwhile, the alpha value for independent variable was .792 thus this variable was still acceptable and considered as reliable. However, there were three items which have weak internal consistency and if each of those items were eliminated, they would significantly add up the alpha value of independent variable. One of those items which would add the alpha value up if omitted was the item of "It is easy to grab information that I need on social media". Once this item was dropped, it would add the alpha value up onto .808 and it would make the independent variable categorized as good. Nevertheless, we decided to keep those items as they all represented essential dimension within the independent variable. Those items represented the adoption of main principal of a public sphere as described by Habermas.

Even though plenty of research about the public political participation has been done, somehow research focusing on social media usage as a supporting tool of political participation is relatively new topic in Indonesia. Social media usage study in Indonesia's political realm so far tends to be top down by researching social media usage by political elites as a campaign strategy. However, a research about social media usage by public to involve in political process is still limited. Hence, this research is aimed to contribute reference for further research.

Dependent variable used in this research, for instance: the aims of participation, participation's type and value, are variables that have been used by previous researches. However, the usage of independent variable about social media's function as a tool for public in political participation is an additional that is relatively new in Indonesia. Independent variable about social media usage is then elaborated into three dimensions, as follows: open and information transparency, unlimited communication ability, and smear campaign's risk which can be done easily on social media. Smear campaign's risk dimension through social media is also still limited to be analyzed in a research. The decision to employ three sub-variables is to test whether unlimited freedom can really motivate people to engage in political activities. As Habermas has mentioned that public sphere can function well when freedom of speech, freedom to unite and gather, and freedom of press to publish public opinions are guaranteed. The single independent variable of social media usage may bring some disadvantages as the research result can only show how big the influence of social media toward political participation without providing a comparative to other factors. Instead the result may lead to another hypothesis of what factors other than social media which may influence

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public political participation.

Limitation on this research was the accidental sample of the population that was limited only for Social and Political Science Faculty's undergraduate students from five big universities in Yogyakarta. This limitation leads to the uncertainty of respondents' diversity background representatives, for instance: origin and ethnics. Even though limitation for population and sample is common in a research, it also leads to the limited possibility to generalize the research result. Another limitation was the data of population number which was not yet updated. Data collection of population number was taken from PDPT Dirjen DIKTI's website which was only available from the first semester of 2013.

Overall, the number of men and women's respondents has equal percentage. There were 183 men's' respondents (48.3%) and 196 women's respondents (51.7%). Equitable number between men and women respondents was aimed to avoid gender bias on its research questionnaire.

Respondent characteristic was then described relying on social media application has been used. Seen from this characteristic, most of the respondents (73%) used both social media application that was offered through questionnaire, Facebook and Twitter. In analyzing research through only an application, the respondents were applying Facebook only (16%) and this was much more than 5% the number of respondents who merely used Twitter. Since that most of respondents were applying two social media application, it was considered that the respondents have been well connected to network society through online network. The usage of both applications would give bigger opportunities to the respondents for accessing internet and communicating largely instead of applying only an application.

The study also considered how long the respondents accessed social media application. Respondents' frequency for accessing social media application was categorized into three: heavy users, medium users, and light users. Relied on data collection, more than 50% of respondents accessed social media application less than three hours per a day. In other words, the most respondents were categorized as light users. For those respondents accessed social media more than six hours for each day (heavy users) was only 12% and the rest of them (32%) were considered as medium users by accessing social media approximately three to five hours in a day. Even though most of respondents were light users, it was inevitable that social media has been a part of daily life as a tool for communicating and accessing information.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The overall index of political participation of social media users during the 2014 presidential election is 3.37 and categorized as good. This overall index was measured from four dimensions as seen on table 1.

Dimension of intensity of political participation was measured from the preferences of respondents in using several facilities offered by Facebook and Twitter. Both social media applications offer four similar facilities which have the same functions for publication. But in this research those four facilities are considered to have different values based on efforts taken by its users in using them. From the lowest to the highest values, those activities are marking, sharing, commenting and uploading news or status. The most preferred facility used by

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TABLE 1.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

Dependent Variable: Political Participation Dimension:		Index
Intensity		3.01
Motivation		3.74
Type		2.94
Level of Success		3.78
N=379	Mean	3.37
Min=1		
Max=5		

Source: Primary Data (2014)

respondent for political purposes during the 2014 election was marking news or status which has the lowest value. Such preferences indicate that respondents had tendency to participate safely with minimum efforts by avoiding possibilities of creating controversies. Other activities that led to an open debate or discussion such as commenting and updating political news and status tend to be avoided by respondents.

Such limited participation as shown by most respondents is also explained by Vaccari *et al* (2013:21) who emphasized that intensive circulation of political information in social media does not necessarily lead to the creation of direct and open discussion. Carlisle and Patton (2013:891) also argue with similar findings that "...despite the enthusiasm surrounding Facebook, individuals in general engaged in limited political activity via Facebook". Therefore, it was not unexpected that most respondents of this research had shown limited intensity in their participation via social media during the 2014 election.

The next dimension is motivation of political participation which was used to measure the reason why an individual did online participation during the election process. There are four types of motivation within this dimension namely value rational, affective emotional, traditional and instrumental rational. Overall index of this dimension is 3.74 which indicates that most respondents had strong motivation to participate during the election process via social media. Most respondents indicated that they used rational considerations when they decided to go online and involve actively in the election process. Their main consideration was to vote for government who would likely be able in carrying out a better development for Indonesia.

Afterward, dimension of types of political participation consists of three indicators of participation types which are spectator, transitional, and gladiator. Even though each type is valid but they have different value. The most ideal type would be gladiators who provide certain resources to actively participate during the election process such as actively getting involved in political campaign or in making public opinion. Table 1 shows that overall index for participation type is 2.94 and considered as fair. The biggest tendency in this dimension which was shown by respondents was type of spectator. This type is defined to have limited activities only to searching for information and forwarding that information to others who are in their friendship circle. Such tendency was in accordance to the previous data of the tendency in participation intensity which was minimum as well.

The last dimension for the dependent variable is the level of success of the online participation of social media user which consists of three indicators: level of initiative, tolerance towards differences and ability to transform into real action offline. In general respondents gave positive feedbacks in this dimension which is represented by a quite high

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overal index of 3.78. Most respondents admitted that their online participation during the election process was based on self-awareness toward the importance of the election. Meanwhile, they were also aware that differences in term of opinion and preferences in such event were likely to emerge thus they believed that such diversity should be accepted and responded in a rational way. As an example, most respondents said that they took control of themselves when they interacted online debating political issues and they responded differences and disagreement with appropriate words. Afterwards, most respondents were able to transfer their online into real actions by using their votes in the election day and encouraging people around them to do the same.

The ability of respondents in transferring their online participation into real actions is explained by Pateman (1970:42); Mill (1972:217); and Moyser in Axtmann (2003:175) as level of political participation that consists of two phases. The first phase is personal changes within each participant. When such changes take place, it will lead them onto the next phase when those participants encourage people around them to get involved because they believe that political participation will produce a knowledgeable society who has responsibility and empathy towards opinion and interest of their fellow citizens. Such phenomenon of social media users who are able to transfer their online participation into real actions was also identified by Vaccari et al. (2013) who argued that in general "online political participation (i.e. discussion via Twitter) would affect offline participation of internet users".

The existence of social media may correlate to the implementation of democratic principles namely free access to information, freedom of expression and freedom to unite. Despite some benefits of social media which may support the implementation of democratic principles, there are risks which may expose the society to negative events as information can circulate without control. The most visible risk during the 2014 election process was smear campaign where both candidates fell into victims. Even though all issues can be turned into smear campaign but the 2014 election was heated by some sensitive issues such as religion, ethnicity and political ideology as such issues had been easily used to influence public opinion in Indonesia.

TABLE 2. THE EXISTENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: THE EXISTENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Independent Variable: The Existence of Social Media	Index
Openess and Transparancy of Information	3.64
Unlimited Communication	3.63
Risk of Smear Campaign	2.41
N=379	
Min=1	
Max=5	

Source: Primary Data (2014)

In general, the perception of respondents towards social media as a platform for political participation during the 2014 election was quite good of which most respondents considered that social media provides an open and easy access to information. Overall index for this indicator is 3.64 and categorized as good as seen on table 2. However, there was an indication that respondents considered that such open and easy access to information was not balanced by certainty of validity and transparency of the circulated information because it was quite difficult to do cross check-

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ing of news and separating between facts and opinion.

The next indicator for the existence of social media is unlimited communication which represents facilities provided by social media. Those facilities offer almost no boundaries that may help its user to easily communicate with each other whether among individual or groups and to establish virtual groups as in real life. Based on answers gathered from respondents, overall index for unlimited communication is 3.63 and categorized as good (Table 2). This overall index shows that respondent acknowledged the potential benefit of social media as tools to enhance their political participation during the 2014 election as communication was an important factor in forming public opinion.

The overall index for dimension of openness and transparency of information as well as dimension of unlimited communication which are quite high indicate that most respondents acknowledged the potential benefit provided by social media in relation to the implementation of democracy principles. The tendency shown by most respondents indicates that there was an understanding of social media as a public platform that might function as Habermas' public sphere as social media could very well function as a platform that accommodate their wish for easy access to information, freedom of expression and freedom to unite. Furthermore, most respondent also acknowledge that social media has a tremendous function as a self-publishing platform for their various opinions and perspectives.

The existence of social media is not without any risk. Smear campaign was one of the most visible risk during the 2014 election which could be done very easily through social media. Therefor smear campaign was used as an indicator that shows a side effect which come along with the easiness offered by social media. This indicator was built on five parameters which were closely related to the perception of respondents on negative news or status aimed to both presidential candidates. Table 2 shows that the overall index of risk of smear campaign is relatively small of 2.41 and categorized as less risky. It indicates that even though the risk of smear campaign was less significant but there were possibilities of respondent to get trapped by such activities. The small overall index of risk of smear campaign indicated by respondent is something that was not unexpected because respondents were a group of people who supposed to have better understanding in politics and able to think rationally and critically.

Nevertheless, the fact that smear campaign became an important topic during the 2014 election did not seriously affect the level of success of social media users' political participation which still have a high overall index as shown in table 1. Data shows that most respondents were able to respect and see differences in a rational way and most of them also used their votes and had self-initiative to encourage people around them to do the same.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

OLS regression was performed to analyze how big social media influenced the political participation of its users. The OLS analysis was performed as seen on table 3.

The F value of the OLS analysis is 26.09 with the significance value of .000 thus F is significant.

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TABLE 3.

MATRIX OF OLS REGRESSION TOWARD DEPENDENT VARIABLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Independent Variabel	Unstandardized Coefficients B	S. Error	T	Sig.
Constant	51.940	3.541	14.666	.000
Openess and Iransparancy of Information	2.212	.403	5.267	.000
Unlimited Communication	.539	.264	2.045	.042
Risk of Smear Campaign	.626	.130	4.811	.000

R Square = .173
Standard Error = 10.143
F = 26.09
Sig. = .000

Source: Primary Data (2014)

This value indicates that variation of values of independent variable could explain the variation of values of dependent variable. The significance of F value is more visible by seeing the value of each controlling variable. In general, all controlling variables in this model show significant influence to the dependent variable with all Sig. < .050.

R-square statistic shows the "proportion of explained variant in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variable" (Lewis-Beck in Bush, 2009:91). R-square statistic in this model is accounted for .173 which means that the existence of social media which consist of three dimensions (Openness and Transparency of Information, Unlimited Communication, Risk of Smear Campaign) was contributing of 17.3% to the dynamic of political participation of its users during the 2014 election. While the remaining 82.7% were contribution of other factors which were not included in this model.

The value of unstandardized coefficients indicates the average changes of dependent variable if one point added up in the dependent variable. The coefficient of openness and transparency of information towards political participation of social media users is 2.212. This coefficient indicates that every single point added up in variable of openness and transparency of information would cause an additional of 2.212 point in the average value of variable of political participation of social media users. This calculation follows the following formula Y=a+bX where Y is dependent variable, a is constant value, b is coefficient of the regression and X is independent variable. Therefore, this formula explains that the improvement of the openness and transparency of information will improve the political participation of social media users as well.

The coefficient of variable of unlimited communication towards variable of political participation of social media users is .539 which means that an additional point in variable of unlimited communication will add the average value of variable political participation of social media user of .539. However, this particular OLS analysis is almost insignificant with significance value of Sig.=.042. This value indicates that the influence of possibility of unlimited communication offered by social media was relatively small and almost insignificant

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toward the political participation of its users. This finding is in accordance to the partial data of some items. For example, when respondents were asked if they tried to communicate directly with political elites to express their opinion, most respondents indicated that such opportunities were left unused. The contradiction was that social media provides wide opportunities for respondent to contact political elites without following formal procedures or bureaucracy as if they want to meet them in person.

Meanwhile, coefficient of variable risk of smear campaign is .626, thus every single additional point to this variable will add up to the average value of the variable of political participation of social media user of .626. This coefficient indicates that even though smear campaign is considered as a negative activity but it is a factor that positively encourage social media users to politically participate during the 2014 election. Therefore, based on this coefficient there was an indication that if the risk of smear campaign increased the political participation would increase too. Another explanation is that smear campaign was an integral part of the political participation of social media users. This phenomenon might be explained as Key in Kahn and Kenney (1999:877) argued that:

> *"A campaign ... that presents the electorate with dramatic issues, that commands the attention of the media of communication will stir far more interest than a campaign whose outcome seems to the voter to be of slight immediate importance. The clashes of candidates whose personalities engage the emotions of masses of people will pull more voters to the polls than will a contest between nonentities."*

During the 2014 presidential election, sensitive issues used as smear campaign such as religion, ethnicity or other political issues such as human right violation and corruption scandal had successfully created controversy within the society. These controversial issues had encouraged a polarization within the society and divided the people into several groups which led to the creation of heated discussion and debates among them in social media. Some people were involved in the debates because carried away by emotional feelings and fear. For example some people were afraid if their religion will be discriminated if one particular candidate wins the election. On the other side, some people considered that religion issues has no relevancy anymore in the presidential election and thought that human right was more crucial issues to consider. Finkel and Geer in Kahn and Kenney (1999:877-888) mentioned that a smear campaign may encourage participation of voters by "circulating political information that causing fear and worry about the result of the election, nevertheless, the end result of smear campaign may not be the same because each campaign has different tones and contents, and voters respond to those variations". Some smear campaigns are considered as "useful and still tolerable but there are also some that are inappropriate and crossing the limits" (Kahn and Kenney, 1999:887).

Based on the above OLS regression and correlation analysis, it can be concluded that social media gives significant and positive influences to political participation of its users during the 2014 presidential election in Indonesia. In a more detailed analysis, the biggest contribution that influence the political participation of social media users came from the openness and transparency of information offered by social media both Facebook and Twitter.

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The second biggest influence came from the risk of smear campaign and the smallest contribution came from the dimension of unlimited communication. Such finding on the positive influences of social media toward political participation was also analyzed by Luengo (2006) who stated that there was "a positive and significant relations between the use of internet and the level of political activism in 20 European countries".

Nevertheless, the enthusiasm surrounding public participation in social media during the 2014 election seemed big but the finding in this research shows that the existence of social media only gave small influence to the political participation of its user by 17.3%. Moreover, it is important to know that after the cronbach's alpha test both items that represent openness and transparency of information and one item that represent the easiness to unite in social media did not have strong internal consistency. Statistically, those items decreased the reliability value of independent variable if not omitted, although the decreased value is still tolerable. However those items represented important indicators, thus we decided to keep them.

Easy access to information and unlimited communication which only give small influence to the political participation of social media users is rather contradicting to the analysis of Castell (2012) who argued that easy access to transparent information and freedom to communicate are factors that maximize the society to participate in political process. Habermas (1989:227) also argued that free information, freedom of speech, freedom to communicate and to unite is important factors to accommodate political participation. However, the findings of this research indicate that openness of information, unlimited possibilities of communication and easiness to unite in social media do not automatically maximize the political participation of its users because these factors are only facilities or framework that can be used or ignored. This is proven when most respondents acknowledged that social media provide easy access to information and communication but in reality such facilities did not necessarily encourage them to get involved during the 2014 election process maximally. Based on this finding we can assume that those facilities offered by social media which accommodate freedom of expression and information were rather ignored by its users.

Therefore, it is not surprising if then the findings of this research indicate that the influence of social media was relatively small to the political participation of its users. This shows that beside easy access to information and open communication, there were other factors which more influential toward the political participation of social media users. One of the most influential factors which encourage an individual to participate is the self-willingness and self-interest. Such observation was conducted by Carlisle and Patton (2013:861) upon the political participation of Facebook users during the American presidential election in 2008:

> *"Finally, we find that one's political interests play a significant role in determining whether an individual is more or less engaged in Facebook during both the primary and general elections. The significance and strength of the effect of political interest is in line with previous research both in the area of traditional offline political activity and online behavior, in general. While many have considered whether the Internet can equalize access to information and politics, we find, as have others, that interest propels action. Those who are more interested are those who*

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are more likely to be engaged and politically active."

If it was the case, instead of the mere existence of the social media, the activities among users within the social media are probably more significant to encourage public participation. For instance, smear campaign may motivate individuals to engage in political discussion within or without social media as it suggests fear and worries to the people. Such fears and worries then becomes fuel for self-willingness and self-interest to engage in the political discussion and activities.

Beside individual factors, there are also external factors. Users are living an offline life as well by socializing and interacting with other individuals and are exposed to other media such as TV, radio and newspaper which may give more influence. Interpersonal interactions whether online or offline, such as at home with family, in classrooms with classmates and teachers, might as well give certain influences to their political participation. As Vaccari et al. (2013:23) argued that "In the age of ubiquitous communication, voters are constantly targeted by avalanches of political messages, especially during campaigns, but research has shown that interpersonal communication among citizens still plays an important role in filtering mass media content and influencing vote choices."

Another factor that may cause small percentage of influence of social media toward political participation of its users during the 2014 election was the possibility that the use of social media as an instrument for political participation was still quite new in Indonesia, thus this effort still need time to develop. The 2014 election was the first presidential election in Indonesia which got a massive attention via social media as the number of social media users particularly Facebook and Twitter has been growing rapidly in the last few years.

Even though the findings of this research show that the influence of social media toward political participation is relatively small, but we believe that further research on this issue is necessary. Social media is indeed a mere platform but a powerful one, particularly in term of supporting political participation, thus the public should be able to benefit from it. The number of internet users in Indonesia has reached 72 million people by 2014 of which 62 million of them are active users of social media. This is a huge number and thus online political activism should be considered in Indonesian political landscape because political demands articulated via social media will be difficult to ignore and likely to transform into real life as Vaccari et al. (2013:24) mentioned "what happens online does not stay online, but rather moves offline and affects citizens' face-to-face conversations."

CONCLUSION

In term of voting usage, the quantity of political participation during the 2014 presidential election decreased to that of the previous elections. However, in term of quality we could see a significant progress on the public's involvement and enthusiasm during the presidential election. The overwhelming noises and activities in social media social had heated up the discussion around the election which was involving a lot of social media users, both through chatting individually or collectively by creating supporters' groups. These groups were created to support the campaign while other groups were created to control the 2014 presidential election process.

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The findings of this research indicate that the level of political participation of the social media users was categorized as good. The result is not surprising as the respondents were students of Social and Political Science Faculty of whom considered to participate in politics is familiar activities. However, most respondents did not maximally use the facilities offered by social media such as easy access to information and communication to support their political participation activities. The findings also indicate that most respondents tend to participate as spectator which is defined as the lowest category in term of types of participation. Furthermore, there was an indication that the respondents were quite susceptible to get affected by smear campaign. Nevertheless, the level of success of political participation shown by the respondents was good. This level of success was identified from the voting usage during the Election Day and their initiatives to encourage other people around them to do the same.

The OLS regression analysis also indicates that social media had positive correlation and significant influences towards the political participation of its users during the election even though the percentage was quite small (17.3%). Such small number of percentage may show that 1) the easy access to information and communication are merely a platform that can be used or ignored and not as the main factor that encourage an individual to participate in politics; therefore, 2) social media is not the only instrument to encourage public political activities as well as to influence public perception. However, we believe that social media has been one of many factors that should be considered as an instrument to support public participation and public opinion making process.

On the other side, our findings have also indicated that smear campaign were actually delivering some positive and significant contribution toward political participation of social media users. Even though smear campaign is considered as a negative activity, but in principal, it had played a positive role as a supporting factor and as a part of political participation of the social media users during the 2014 presidential election. However, there are some issues that we have to take into consideration as smear campaign is a multidimension activity which consist of at least two categorizes: 1) a category that is still considered as proper and useful by public so it encourages the public to participate actively; and 2) a category that is considered improper and crossing the limit that cause apathetic of the public toward the political process that has been running.

IMPLICATION

Technology will always develop with a never ending change of trends. Social media is one of technology trend that is recently favored by the public. The use of social media has been for multi purposes beyond private communication tool. It has been an efficient tool for the public to deliver their political aspiration. Hence, both government and political elites should adjust themselves toward the continuous development of technology.

Therefore, nowadays, social media should be part of government and political elites' strategies in gathering public aspiration. Through all the facilities offered, social media can be used as a tool to provide political education for the public. Therefore, it is essential for the government and elites should to have an official account that functions as media for publication and communica-

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tion and it is also very important to manage it professionally. For example, by updating relevant news based on the facts in regular manner; keeping the two ways communication with the public alive and sustainable; promoting critical discussions by throwing public issues through social media to achieve responds from the public.

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