Participatory Culture and New Imagined Community: Competing Imagination of Muslim Ummah in Islamic Online Media in Indonesia

Taufiqur Rahman, the University of Western Australia

Abstract
The participatory culture marked by the introduction of the term Web 2.0 has contributed to the potential development of the internet as a convivial and democratic medium for the dissemination of information and the construction of identities in the twenty-first century. This paper specifically asks how the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media have contributed the construction of a sense of community in Islamic online news services in Indonesia. The paper argues that the participatory culture of the internet has played an important role in the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the concept of *ummah* as a central concept in defining the idea of religious community in Islam. The paper also argues that the personalised tendency of the current internet news services and social network sites has contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. While the boundary of the nation state has been overcome, a new boundary has been created by the idea of personalised media. The users of the internet have become more and more connected with their in-group which share many similarities and at the same time become more and more isolated from other groups which have different point of view or those who do not share similar identities.

Keywords: Participatory culture, imagined community, internet, Islam, Indonesia

This paper specifically asks how the idea of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media have contributed the construction of a sense of community in Islamic online news services in Indonesia. The chapter argues that the participatory culture of the internet has played an important role in the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the concept of *ummah* (Islamic community). This participatory culture has been developed mainly through the availability of many features in the era of Web 2.0 which are easily used by the readers to contribute to the publication such as the comment section on the website and the tools to share a particular content to their friends in social network sites. Moreover, the tendency toward personalisation in current online news services and social networking sites has also contributed to the development of new imagined communities on the internet. While the boundary of the nation state has been overcome, a new boundary has been created by the idea of personalised media. The users of the internet have become more and more connected with their in-group which share many similarities and at the same time become more and more isolated from other groups which have different point of view or those who do not share similar identities.

Online news services and social network sites in Indonesia

The vast development of the use of internet in Indonesia in the last decade has facilitated a significant growth of online based news services. Many of these online news services were established as an extension of print-based newspapers or magazines such as kompas.com, republika.co.id, and tempo.co and some of them are exclusively developed as online news services such as detik.com, okezone.com or vivanews.com (Nugroho, et al, 2012). The timeline of the development of these online news services from 1995 to 2008 can be seen in table 1 below.

Table 1: The development of online news services in Indonesia (1995-2008)

Year	Development
1995	Republika developed its first internet publication
1995	Tempo established tempointeraktif.com
1998	Kompas created Kompas online under Kompas Cyber Media company
1998	Detik.com – the first news portal without a print version – is established
1999-2000	Online media become more popular; news portal, entertainment and web based business portal are mushrooming
2003	The downturn of online portal and dotcom business. A number of online media portals were closed down or experienced a very hard time surviving
2006	MNC Group launched okezone.com, an online news, entertainment, lifestyle, and sports portal
2008	Vivanews.com – an online news portal was launched by PT Visi Media Asia – holding company of ANTV and TvOne.

Source: Nugroho, et al, 2012

In order to compete with print-based and electronic news services, these online news services have to maximise the use of many participatory features available on the internet in the era of Web 2.0 to attract readers and maintain the loyalty of the active audience.
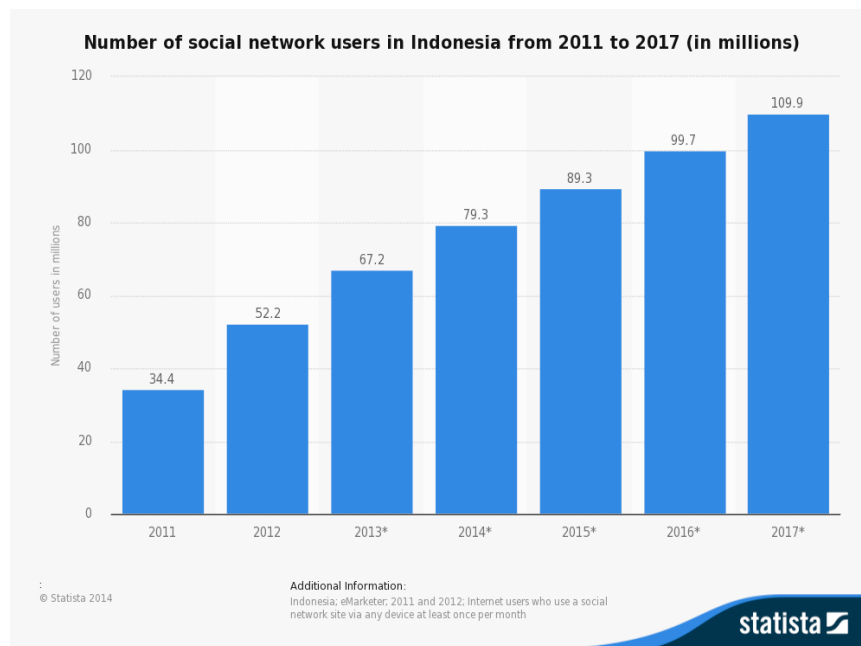
Furthermore, the massive development of user generated content in the era of Web 2.0 has become a key factor in the emergence of online participatory culture. This participatory culture has been developed mainly through the possibility of the readers contributing to the publication by submitting their opinions to the editors, writing comments in the comments section provided in the website or sharing items to their friends in social networking sites. A survey in the United States in 2010 shows that 37% of the internet users in the US contributed to the publication of online news by making comments or disseminating news items in social networking sites (Pew Research Center, 2010). There is no current data about the precise number of 'participatory news readers' in Indonesia. However, the increasing number of online news services in Indonesia which have facilitated easier ways for the readers to contribute in the creation of news arguably suggests that this number is large and growing.

The role of social networking sites is very important in the development of online participatory culture in Indonesia. In this paper, I use the definition of social networking (social network) sites offered by boyd and Ellison (2008). They define social network sites as

> web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within system (boyd and Ellison, 2008: 211).

Several social networking sites especially Facebook and Twitter have become very popular sites visited by internet users in Indonesia. For instance, in September 2014 Facebook became the second most popular website in Indonesia after google.co.id (Source: http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/ID, accessed 5 September 2014). The growth of social network users in Indonesia also shows a significant increase from 34 million users in 2011 to 52 million in 2012 and statista.com predicts it will reach approximately 109 million users in Indonesia by 2017 (see graph 1 below).

Graph 1: Number of social network users in Indonesia

Number of social network users in Indonesia from 2011 to 2017 (in millions)

Year	Number of users in millions
2011	34.4
2012	52.2
2013*	67.2
2014*	79.3
2015*	89.3
2016*	99.7
2017*	109.9

© Statista 2014

Additional Information:
Indonesia; eMarketer; 2011 and 2012: Internet users who use a social network site via any device at least once per month

statista

The growth of social network users has contributed to the development of participatory culture in the use of the internet in Indonesia and also facilitates the development of a new form of 'social connection' in the virtual world (Jenkins et al, 2009). This feeling of social connection is developed through the interaction in the so called 'networked publics' as defined by boyd (2011). In the case of Islamic online news services in Indonesia, the publishers have facilitated the development of the feeling of social connection by providing spaces for the readers' contribution and establishing the so called fan pages in social networking sites. The interaction of the readers through their accounts in social networking sites has facilitated the creation of networked publics, mainly by the use of the features such as 'profiles, friends lists, public commenting tools and stream based updates' (boyd, 2011: 43). The feeling of social connection developed through these networked publics arguably facilitates the construction of the notion of community and re-imagination of the concept of *ummah* in contemporary Muslim communities in Indonesia. Many popular social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have offered many features which can be easily used by the users to establish social connection within the boundary of new imagined communities in the virtual world as an extension of the traditional imagined community popularly introduced by Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 1983).

These new imagined communities are created unconsciously through the idea of implicit personalisation introduced by many internet companies. These new imagined communities are also commonly developed in a limited circle of friendship and followers. The limited social connection of these new imagined communities raises a fear of social alienation because of the tendency of information filtering and the creation of so called 'filter bubble' within a particular social network which eliminates the circulation of opinions which contradicts the views of the majority of the network's members (Pariser, 2011). In this paper, I specifically analyse the role of Islamic online news services in Indonesia in mediating the construction of the notion of community by looking at the combination of the use of online news services and social networking sites in three Islamic online media, namely *Republika Online*

(www.republika.co.id), *Arrahmah* (arrahmah.com) and *Voa-Islam* (www.voa-islam.com). *Republika Online* represents the voice of mainstream moderate Muslim groups in Indonesia, while *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* represent the voice of radical *Salafi Jihadi* movement in Indonesia.[1] The analysis of these three news websites and their corresponding pages in social networking sites will reveal the extent to which these online news services generate feeling of social connection and solidarity and also assess the degree to which they operate as an a expression of the idea of the 'filter bubble'.

Engagement with the active audience

Republika Online

Republika Online utilises several features to maintain its relationship with the active audience of the website. The engagement with the active audience has been achieved mainly by providing the space for the readers to express their ideas and show their solidarity in the comment section on the website and creating the sense of community by the establishment of official fan pages in social networking sites. *Republika Online* has also created an online forum to facilitate discussion related to any issue selected by the readers and also created a blog called *ngobrol* to accommodate many different types of contributions from the readers such as true or fiction stories, opinions, and poems which can not be accommodated in the main website.

The use of social networking sites has become an important feature in the construction of community by *Republika Online*. *Republika* has created official accounts on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and utilised them to maintain the relationship with the active readers of the website. *Republika* joined Twitter in February 2009 and created its Facebook account on 21 July 2009. On 28 August 2014, *Republika's* Twitter account had 518,118 followers and 223,792 internet users had 'liked' *Republika's* Facebook page. *Republika Online* explicitly identifies its participatory approach by the tagline 'one stop portal based on community' which was written in the cover photo of its Twitter and Facebook account to commemorate the 19th anniversary of *Republika Online* (see figure 1). The introduction of this tagline indicates *Republika's* intention to develop a community-based news services with a strong tendency to facilitate public engagement and participation in the content's production.

---

[1] For a detailed account on *salafism* and *salafi jihadism* in Indonesia see for instance International Crisis Group, 2004.

Figure 1: The Official Twitter account of *Republika Online*

Arrahmah and *Voice of Al-Islam*

Arrahmah and *Voa-Islam* share many similarities in the ideas presented on the websites. Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also maintains their relationship with the active audience of their websites. *Arrahmah* allows comments on the items published on the website, but *Voa-Islam* has removed the comment section which was previously available in the early years of the publication. Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* allows the readers to share the items that they read to their friends in social networking sites. In addition, *Arrahmah* created a section named 'kontribusi [contribution]' to accommodate contributions of news, articles, stories and information of events from the readers.

Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* maintain a limited connection with their active readers by creating official accounts in social networking sites especially Twitter and Facebook. *Arrahmah* joined Twitter in June 2009 and *Voa-Islam* joined Twitter in April 2010. On 28 August 2014 the followers of *Arrahmah's* twitter account reached 43.899 and *Voa-Islam* recorded 58.951 followers. Both organisations are also following each other on Twitter, which indicates a relatively strong connection between *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*. In contrast, both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* do not follow *Republika Online* on Twitter. The official Facebook accounts of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* have recorded a more significant number of followers. In a search in early July 2012, nearly 60,000 readers had clicked the 'like' sign of *Arrahmah's* Facebook page and 68,000 of the readers 'liked' *Voa-Islam's* Facebook page. By January 2014 *Arrahmah's* and *Voa-Islam's* official Facebook page had been removed by Facebook. According the owner of *Arrahmah*, the Facebook page had been removed for the third time when it had reached more than 370,000 readers who 'liked' the page (*Arrahmah*, 30 January 2014). As mentioned in the statement of rights and responsibilities, Facebook reserves the right to remove pages for any reason. However, there is speculation that both pages were removed because Facebook received reports that the

web pages contain real threats of violence.[2] In early April 2014 *Voa-Islam* created a new fan page on Facebook and *Arrahmah* created a new Facebook account in early August 2014. At the end of August 2014 *Voa-Islam* received another removal warning from Facebook because the page published the flag of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Greater Syria (ISIS). The existence of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* on Facebook despite their repeated removal by Facebook suggests a relatively strong intention of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* to keep their existence on social networking sites.

The use of some participatory features which are available on the internet by *Republika Online, Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* indicates the awareness of the editors of these online news services about the importance of public engagement in the era of Web 2.0. The use of user generated content applications by these online news services also indicates their intention to maintain the loyalty of the active readers to the websites and also to create the sense of community in the virtual world. However, these three online news services have demonstrated various degrees of public engagement initiatives. *Republika* shows a strong willingness to facilitate public engagement by explicitly mentioning its tagline as 'one stop portal based on community', while *Voa-Islam* offers a more limited public engagement as seen by the removal of the comment sections on the website. When I asked one of the editors about the reason behind this removal, the editor simply answered that the comments section was moved to Facebook (an email interview with Mashadi, the editor in chief of *Voa-Islam*, 24 September 2014). This restricted policy can be seen as a strategy of *Voa-Islam* to protect the website from critical voices questioning their authority to represent Islam.

Participatory culture and a sense of community

Current online news services can be differentiated from the old Web 1.0 news services by the availability of new features which can be easily used by the readers to contribute to the publication. These new features which are commonly found in the current online news services include comment sections under each item published on the website, information about the most popular or the most commented items, and features which can help the readers to easily share the items that they like to their friends in social networking sites (Postill and Pink, 2012). These participatory features have also been used by *Republika Online*, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*. *Republika Online* provides information about the latest, the most popular and the most commented items every day on the website. For instance, on Wednesday 19 March 2014, *Republika* published a news item titled 'A mosque in Italy was destroyed and the Qur'an was burned [Masjid di Italia dirusak, Alquran dibakar]'. On Monday 24 March 2014 this item was counted as the second most popular item and the most commented item in the 'Khazanah' section with 17 comments which mostly condemned the action. Many readers also actively promoted the news with 134 posted the item in their twitter account and 229 of the readers shared the item to their friends on Facebook (see figure 2).

---

[2] There is a screenshot from an unknown Facebook account circulated on the internet which contains a message from Facebook that Facebook has blocked Arrahmah's page based on the report from a Facebook user (muslimmedianews.com, 30 January 2014).

Figure 2: The most commented item in 'Khazanah'
section on Monday 24 March 2014

Arrahmah also provides information about the latest and the most popular items on the website and *Voa-Islam* provides information about the latest news items and the ten most popular items on the website. Both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* encourage the readers to spread the items that they read on the websites to other people and they consider the willingness to spread the items as a religiously motivated good deed (*amal shalih*). This encouragement is written in the bottom of every item. *Arrahmah* specifically writes 'achieve good deeds, spread this information [raih amal shalih, sebarkan informasi ini]' and *Voa-Islam* specifically writes 'spread this information may it become our good deeds! [sebarkan informasi ini, semoga menjadi amal sholeh kita!]'. In contrast to *Republika* and other more 'secular' news services, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* offers religious incentives to their readers by helping them to extend their messages to broader audiences. Many readers of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* actively promote the items from the websites by sharing the items that they like to social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter. For instance, an item which became the most popular item on *Arrahmah* on 29 August 2014 titled 'Apparently more than 1000 Israeli soldiers have died [Ternyata jumlah tentara "Israel" yang tewas melebihi 1000 orang]' was shared by 477 readers to their friends on various social network sites especially Facebook and Twitter (see figure 3). Some readers of *Arrahmah* utilise the comments section provided on the website, but the readers of *Voa-Islam* are no longer able to make comments since the removal of this section by the publisher. The readers of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* can make comments on the items which are published on their official Facebook page. It seems that the comments section on *Arrahmah's* website and the comments section on both *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam's* Facebook page are un-moderated, because several comments which oppose the editors' points of view can be found in the comments section of some items.

Figure 3: The most popular item in *Arrahmah* on 29 August 2014

The easier opportunity of the users to share and make comments in these online news services suggests the development of several forms of the idea of participatory culture especially by creating the sense that 'our contributions matter' (Jenkins, 2009: 6). In

the case of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* this sense of participation is strengthened by the promise of religious incentives for the willingness of the readers to share their messages to the broader community. This type of participation is often criticised as 'consumptive behavior by different name', but Green and Jenkins assert that 'we see consumption as participation, with the understanding that participation carries multiple and perhaps even contradicting political valances' (Green and Jenkins, 2011: 125). While the use of social networking sites by *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* are mostly limited for the purpose of spreading the messages from the websites, rather than listening opinions of the audience, this endeavour still can be seen as part of the engagement of active audience in the creation of meaning.

Republika uses its social networking sites to highlight its nationalist identity. For instance, during the commemoration of the 69th Indonesian independence, *Republika Online* changed the cover photo of its Facebook account with the Indonesian independence edition which shows the display of Indonesian flag and a *bambu runcing* (sharpened bamboo) as a symbol of the struggle against colonialist power (see figure 4). However, *Republika Online* also shows its global solidarity by keeping the text 'Pray for Gaza' in the profile picture of its Facebook account in its Indonesian independence edition. The combination of the nationalist identity and the global solidarity shown by *Republika Online* in its Facebook page is an example of the unique construction of a mixture of national and global identity of *Republika*.

Figure 4: The Indonesian independence edition of *Republika'*s Facebook page

On the other hand, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* consistently use their social networking sites to promote the description of *ummah* as a global political community by highlighting the importance of the Islamic caliphate and the need of global Muslim solidarity to the oppression experienced by Muslims in other parts of the world. For instance, *Voa-Islam* placed a picture of a newspaper headline titled 'Khalifah [caliphate] is coming' in the cover photo of *Voa-Islam's* official Facebook page in April 2014 (see figure 5).

Figure 5: An example of *Voa-Islam's* Facebook page (April 2014)

On 28 August 2014, *Voa-Islam* also posted a link to an item titled 'ISIS between London, Paris and Jakarta [ISIS antara London, Paris dan Jakarta]' which highlights that more people joined ISIS from several European countries than people who came from Indonesia. The portrayal of the oppression of Muslims can be seen in the example of the newest *Arrahmah's* fan page on Facebook which shows a picture of destroyed homes in Gaza accompanied by a text in English 'No one is free when others are oppressed' (See figure 6). The choice of these cover photos supports *Arrahmah's* and *Voa-Islam's* description of *ummah* as a single global political community.

Figure 6: The newest *Arrahmah's* fan page on Facebook
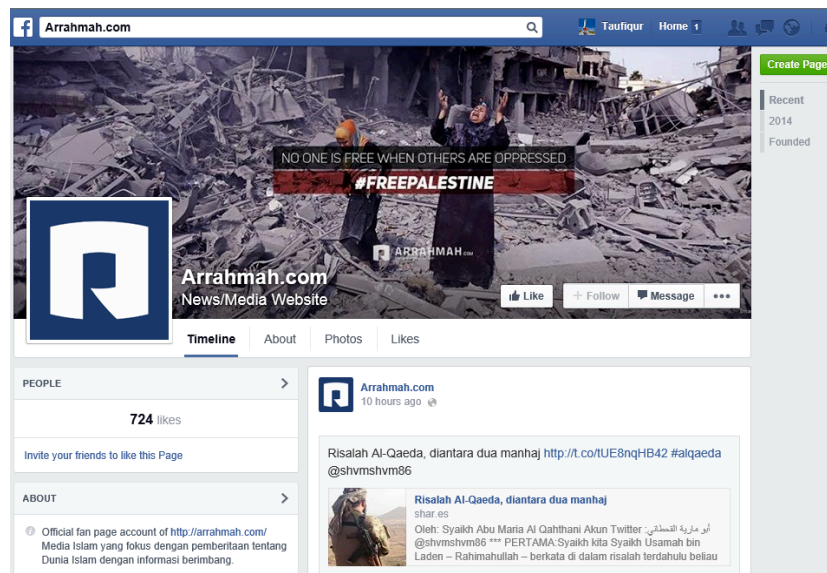
The extension of the articulation of national identity (in the case of *Republika Online*) and trans-national identity (in the case of *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*) on Facebook indicates the operation of another form of participatory culture by creating the sense of belonging and 'affiliation' (Jenkins, 2009: xii).

With regard to the issue of ISIS, *Republika Online* have shared links to several news items from the website on its Facebook page which delegitimise the existence of ISIS. For instance, on 15 September 2014 *Republika Online* posted a statement 'Islam is a peaceful religion. They are (the ISIS group) are not Muslims, they are monsters [Islam adalah agama yang damai. Mereka (kelompok ISIS) bukanlah Muslim, mereka adalah monster]' followed by the link to an item titled 'PM Inggris: ISIS bukan Muslim, mereka monster'. On the same day, *Republika Online* also posted another statement 'Aproximately 30 ISIS' strugglers from the United Kingdom regretted their involvement in the military training in the Middle East [Sekitar 30 pejuang ISIS asal Inggris menyesal telah bergabung dengan latihan militer di Timur Tengah]' followed by the link to an item titled 'More than 500 people from the United Kingdom have joined ISIS [Lebih dari 500 warga Inggris bergabung dengan ISIS]'. These examples indicate *Republika's* intention to highlight a message to its readers that the ISIS does not represent Islam and therefore Muslims in Indonesia should not support the ISIS.

Arrahmah and *Voa-Islam* have also used their Facebook page to highlight their views about ISIS. Although both media support the establishment of a global Islamic caliphate, they have different positions in response to the issue of ISIS. *Arrahmah* seems to have a closer connection to Al-Qaeda than other jihadi groups. *Arrahmah* echoes Al-Qaeda's statement that the ISIS is not a legitimate Islamic caliphate and consistently posts items on Facebook which delegitimise the ISIS. For instance, on 17 August 2014 *Arrahmah* posted a link to an item titled 'The slaughter of Dier Ezzour's people by the ISIS [Penyembelihan keji terhadap warga Dier Ezzour oleh ISIS]' and on 1 September 2014 *Arrahmah* posted another link titled 'A collection of photographs of mujahideen killed by the ISIS [Kumpulan foto mujahidin yang dibunuh oleh ISIS]'. In contrast, *Voa-Islam* has used its Facebook account to show the positive sides of the ISIS. For instance, on 20 September 2014 *Voa-Islam* shared a link to an item titled 'Many people joined the Islamic State (ISIS) after Obama announced the war against it [Banyak yang bergabung ke Islamic State (ISIS) setelah Obama umumkan perang melawannya]'.

The extension of the editorial position from the news websites to social networking sites indicates the tendency of these online news services to highlight their important messages to the publics. The different representations of ISIS by *Republika*, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* also reflect the operation of contemporary 'media events' in the era of global media (Couldry et al, 2010). According to Volkmer and Deffner, the nature of centralised 'media events' originally introduced by Dayan and Katz in the era of broadcasting industry has shifted into decentralisation of 'event perspectives' because

> Media events are no longer mediated within national contexts, providing a powerful national collective "mass media" experience, but are delivered in a multi-platform environment, and are renegotiated and repositioned in a transnational sphere. These new forms of events are no longer primarily selected and "scripted" as a national collective experience but are shaping "eventspheres" (Volkmer and Deffner, 2010: 224).

In the case of the establishment of the ISIS, *Republika* and *Arrahmah* consider the event as a 'disruptive media event' by portraying the ISIS as an illegitimate Islamic state. *Republika* have provided an argument that the ISIS a terrorist group in the name

of Islam and *Arrahmah* which initially had a favourable opinion toward the ISIS started to condemn the organisation following the Al-Qaeda's disapproval of the declaration of the Islamic State. In contrast, *Voa-Islam* considers the event as part of a 'ritual event' of 'conquest' by focusing on the victories and positive developments of the ISIS.[3]

The use of participatory features on the internet by *Republika Online, Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam* has started to play an important role in the construction of a sense of community and arguably has also contributed to the process of re-construction and re-imagination of the idea of Muslim *ummah*. Social networking sites play their role by creating the sense of social connection between the readers and emphasising importance messages from the editors to the readers. In the case of *Voa-Islam*, the removal of the comment sections on the website indicates a stronger focus of *Voa-Islam* on the dissemination of the perceived 'true' voices of Islam by taking advantage of the collapsed contexts provided by the internet rather than building a social connection with the 'local' community.

Personalised media and the filter bubble effect

The combination of the use of online news services and social networking sites has posed another challenge in the construction of border in the development of new imagined communities. This challenge can be seen in the stronger tendency of personalisation and the creation of the so called 'filter bubble'. The current trend toward the combination of news websites and social networking sites has created a new boundary of imagined communities especially by the limited circulation of information among 'friends' in social networking sites and also among the followers of a particular online news services. Thurman and Schifferes (2012: 786) identify this trend as 'social collaborative filtering', which is defined as 'a form of passive personalization in which content recommendations are made based on the behaviour of a user's social network'.

In the case of *Republika Online*, *Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*, Facebook has played an important role in the dissemination of items which have been published on the websites. The connection between the news sites and social networking sites can be seen in the record of the unique online visiting behaviour of the readers of *Republika Online, Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*. The data from Alexa shows that many readers of these news sites visited Facebook immediately before and after visiting these online news services (see table 2 and 3). Facebook has become the most popular 'upstream site' (the sites visited immediately before visiting a particular website) and 'downstream site' (the sites visited immediately after visiting a particular website) visited by the readers of these online news services. Although the data only shows less than 30% of the unique 'upstream' and 'downstream' visits, the data indicates a significant connection between the access to these online news services and access to Facebook. As the number of the users of social networking sites in Indonesia increases, it is likely that the connection between online news services and social network sites will become stronger in the future.

---

[3] The categories of media events are based on the extended categories of media events outlined by Agnieszka Stepinska (2010: 207).

Table 2: Upstream sites of *Republika Online, Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*

No	Republika Online		Arrahmah		Voa-Islam	
	Site	% of unique visits	Site	% of unique visits	Site	% of unique visits
1	facebook.com	19.7%	facebook.com	15.6%	facebook.com	23.5%
2	google.co.id	14.3%	google.co.id	13.5%	google.co.id	14.4%
3	google.com	6.5%	google.com	6.8%	google.com	6.3%
4	detik.com	3.1%	outbrain.com	6.6%	detik.com	2.2%
5	kompas.com	2.9%	detik.com	3.0%	yahoo.com	1.8%
6	twitter.com	2.2%	youtube.com	2.2%	youtube.com	1.7%
7	viva.co.id	1.7%	voa-islam.com	2.2%	republika.co.id	1.7%
8	yahoo.com	1.7%	yahoo.com	2.2%	twitter.com	1.6%
9	youtube.com	1.7%	blogger.com	1.8%	viva.co.id	1.3%
10	tribunnews.com	1.5%	hidayatullah.com	1.7%	blogger.com	1.2%

Source: Alexa.com, 29 August 2014

Table 3: Downstream sites of *Republika Online, Arrahmah* and *Voa-Islam*

No	Republika		Arrahmah		Voa-Islam	
	Site	% of unique visits	Site	% of unique visits	Site	% of unique visits
1	facebook.com	16.5%	facebook.com	13.5%	facebook.com	19.8%
2	google.co.id	12.7%	google.co.id	10.9%	google.co.id	12.1%
3	google.com	6.5%	outbrain.com	6.6%	google.com	6.5%
4	detik.com	3.2%	google.com	6.3%	youtube.com	2.6%
5	kompas.com	2.8%	youtube.com	4.0%	detik.com	2.3%
6	youtube.com	2.5%	yahoo.com	2.5%	twitter.com	2.0%
7	twitter.com	2.3%	voa-islam.com	2.5%	yahoo.com	2.0%
8	viva.co.id	2.0%	detik.com	2.3%	republika.co.id	1.7%
9	yahoo.com	2.0%	twitter.com	2.1%	kompas.com	1.4%
10	tribunnews.com	1.5%	blogger.com	2.0%	blogger.com	1.3%

Source: Alexa.com, 29 August 2014

More specifically, the operation of the idea of the 'filter bubble' can be observed in the personalised tendency of the 'news feed' on any individual Facebook page. When the readers click the like button of particular news websites, they will receive regular updates of the news items published on the websites directly to the news feed on their Facebook page. This augments the content which appears in their news feed based on the recommendation from their friends on Facebook. This recommendation works when a reader clicks the like button or makes a comment on a particular content on the websites which have been linked to Facebook or deliberately shares a specific content to their friends on Facebook. In my own experience, after I clicked the like button of *Voa-Islam's* Facebook page, I regularly receive links to the items published by *Voa-Islam* on the news feed of my Facebook account (see figure 7). Pariser identifies this phenomenon as an example of the operation of 'the filter bubble'. As he illustrates

You click on a link, which signals an interest in something, which means you're more likely to see articles about that topic in the future, which in turn prime the topic for you. You become trapped in a 'you loop', and if your identity is misrepresented, strange patterns begin to emerge, like reverb from an amplifier (Pariser, 2011: 125).

Figure 7: Links of items from *Voa-Islam* on the
news feed of the researcher's Facebook page

The creation of this 'you loop' is also influenced by individual friendship networks on Facebook. The information about my friends on Facebook shows an interesting fact. There are 56 out of 724 friends in my friend list who like the Facebook page of *Republika Online*, while only 4 of them like *Voa-Islam*'s Facebook page and none of them like *Arrahmah's* Facebook page. The higher number of my friends on Facebook who like *Republika Online's* Facebook page is arguably influenced by my friendship network which is mainly constituted by people who identify with mainstream Muslim groups in Indonesia. This friendship network also suggests that it is more likely that I will receive more links to the items which are published in *Republika Online* rather than the items which are published on *Arrahmah* or *Voa-Islam*. This personal experience supports Pariser's opinion that 'the average person's Facebook friends will be much more like that person than a general interest news source' and 'it's ever less likely that we'll come to close with people very different from us, online or off—and thus it's less likely we'll come into contact with different points of view (Pariser, 2011: 66). The examples mentioned above suggest that social network sites have played an important role in the dissemination of information published in the online news services analysed in this research.

Conclusion

The development of participatory culture and the operation of personalised media can be seen in the combination of the use of news websites and social networking sites by Islamic online news services in Indonesia. The participatory culture encouraged by such sites has facilitated a more interactive connection between the readers and the publishers and created a notion of social connection between the readers especially by

the easier possibility of the readers in contributing to the publication. In contrast, the operation of personalisation has posed an issue of the filter bubble effect by the tendency of information filtering within a limited network of the fans of a particular online news service. This development of participatory culture and personalised media is still in a very early stage. However, it suggests the important role of social networking sites in the construction of new imagined communities and the process of re-imagination of *ummah* in Indonesia in the near future.

Bibliography

Anderson, B.R.O'G. (1983). *Imagined communities: reflection on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso.

boyd, danah m. & Ellison, Nicole B. (2008). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*,13 p 210-230.

boyd, danah (2011). Social network sites as networked publics: Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In Zizi Papacharissi (ed) *Networked self: identity, community, and culture on social network sites,* New York: Routledge, pp 39 – 58.

Clark, Jessica and Aufderheide, Pat (2009). *Public media 2.0: Dynamic, Engaged Publics,* Center for Social Media, American University Washington DC. Retrieved 11 October 2014 from
http://cmsimpact.org/sites/default/files/documents/pages/publicmedia2.0.pdf.

Couldry, Nick, Hepp, Andreas and Krotz, Friedrich (2010). *Media events in a global age.* London: Routledge.

International Crisis Group (2004). Indonesia backgrounder: why salafism and terrorism mostly don't mix, *ICG Asia Report*, No. 83
Jenkins, H., R. Purushotma, M. Weigel, K. Clinton, and A. Robinson (2009). *Confronting the challenges of participatory culture: Media education for the 21st century,* Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Nugroho, Y., Putri D. A., Laksmi, S. (2012). *Mapping the landscape of the media industry in contemporary Indonesia.* Retrieved 28 March 2013 from
https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:168565&datastreamId=FULL-TEXT.PDF

Pariser, Eli (2011). *The filter bubble: What the internet is hiding from you,* London: Penguin Books.

Postill, John & Pink, Sarah (2012) Social media ethnography: The digital researcher in a messy web, *Media International Australia.* 145.

Stepinska, Agnieszka (2010). 9/11 and the transformation of globalized media events. In Nick Couldry et al (Eds) *Media events in a global age,* London: Routlegde.

Volkmer, Ingrid and Deffner, Florian (2010). Eventspheres as discursive forms: (re-) negotiating the "mediated center" in new network cultures. In Nick Couldry et al (Eds) *Media events in a global age,* London: Routlegde.

Contact email: taufiqur.rahman@research.uwa.edu.au