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Digital Affective Citizenship: @The nexus of on-line and off-line anti-corruption activism in Banten, Indonesia

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Summary of the Dissertation

Digital Affective Citizenship explores the nexus of online and offline anti-corruption activism in Banten, Indonesia. These explorations include the historical background of anti-corruption activism in Indonesia, the comparison between (anti)corruption discourse framed by national CSO and Banten's local activists, online activism practices' reflection on the characteristics of citizenship in Banten, and its potential transformation into strong or weak offline mobilization.

This dissertation is based on one year fieldwork at three 'ethnographic places' ; First are social media 'places' where 'citizens' (*warga*) intensely engage in anti-corruptions campaigns in Banten: "Forum Warga Banten Facebook Group", "Wong Banten Facebook Group", "Fesbuk Banten News Page". Secondly, the province of Banten where political dynasty and corruptions are intertwined and have received public attention, particularly on social media. Thirdly, as a place of comparison, Malang Raya where a local anti-corruption non-governmental organization; Malang Corruption Watch (MCW), is actively working and relatively successful in combating corruption. The main method

used in this study is ‘social media ethnography’ (Postill and Pink, 2012). Through interviews and participation, it examines the materiality of being online (postings, comments, images, online interviews) in relation to the issues of corruption and anti-corruption campaigns as well as offline contacts with actors (administrators, members, followers).-participation in anti-corruption movements’ offline actions (meetings, protests, and marches).

Results of this research are presented in 4 chapters. I start with a chapter that give some historical context I traced the evolution of Indonesia’s anti-corruption organizing strategies from the New Order through reformasi and the second *reformasi* decade. There are three important modes of organizing that I identified include social media activism, programmatic initiatives of CSOs, and student movements. These three anti-corruptions organizing strategies may all be seen as successful in pressuring the government to establish anti-corruption laws and policies, as well as institutions, and in defending the new institution (KPK) against the assaults of rapacious elites. But as evidenced by Indonesia’s persistently high or even worse levels of corruption, they were unable to reduce corruption per se.

In the following chapter, I explored online discourse of corruption framed by national civil society organizations (CSOs) in comparison with social media discourse of corruption in provincial level (Banten). At the national level, corruption is mostly built as a legal discourse in social media anti-corruption campaigns, which are primarily run by formal and programmatic CSOs. On the other hand, in Banten, morality and religious discourse are mostly used to create corruption in social media anti-corruption efforts, along with the notion of what a “good leader” ought to accomplish.

I dedicate the next chapter to answered the questions of how anti-corruption activism in Banten is being practiced online. I argue that online anti-corruption activism in Banten is practiced through digital acts of reporting and sharing news on corruption and digital acts of flaming to resist the Banten political dynasty that is deemed to be corrupt. Banten’s activist-citizens, through these digital acts, are engaging in what I have called as “online indirect activism”, through which citizens emotionally activate others to initiate their own resistance. This approach has led to the development of a political subjectivity called ‘digital affective citizenship’, in which citizens of Banten expressing anger, hate, passion, and disgust towards corrupt leaders.

In the last chapter of this dissertation, I discussed the characteristic of citizenship in Banten that reflects “powerless angry citizens.” These citizens

desire to influence political outcomes through corruption but feel powerless and lack the necessary capacities to do so. This powerlessness can be attributed to the mismatch between their desire to reign in corrupt leaders and the limitations of participatory channels and organizations. The moral-emotional discourse of corruption, inspired by local Islamic values, frames corrupt leaders as sinners who can only be brought down by God's punishment. However, in Banten, the moral-emotional discourse of corruption only mobilizes and aligns with other subjects in digital or online contexts, resulting in weak and powerless political mobilizations.

Toward the end of this chapter, I broaden my argument that digital affective citizenship extends the concept of digital citizenship beyond rational, ethical, and normative online participation. It includes 'deviant' or 'aberrant' participation, involving passionate, aggressive, and vitriolic expression of sentiments. This concept facilitates citizens' emotional engagement in an 'affective public', which is networked public formations mobilized through sentiment expression. This dissertation contributes to recognizing an online alternative public sphere to the idealized Habermasian public sphere, where passions, emotions, and hostilities are not eradicated but become important and shaping elements.