

CYBER-URBAN SPACE CONNECTIONS ON THE RISE OF LABOUR ACTIVISM: A CASE STUDY OF INDONESIAN METAL WORKERS' FEDERATION¹

KETERHUBUNGAN RUANG PERKOTAAN-MAYA DALAM AKTIVISME BURUH: STUDI KASUS FEDERASI SERIKAT PEKERJA METAL DI INDONESIA

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Abstract

This paper argues that both urban and cyber activism play significant roles in the labour movements in Indonesia after the reformation 1998. Exploring Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (FSPMI)-*Indonesian Metalworkers' Federation*, this paper is aimed at a better understanding of the interdependencies between the urban and cyber spaces for labour movements. More specific, how do labours engage in cyber-urban activism to establish their movements in order to gain their political leverages? Results highlight four issues: (a) the growing of militant labour movement in the recent urban space; (b) the emergence of urban industrial working class; (c) cyber-urban space is a political terrain for the state, the corporate, and the labours; and (d) one side of cyber-urban connection can generate, strengthen, weaken, or even kill the other side.

Keywords: FSPMI, labour, movement, cyber, urban, activism

Abstrak

Tulisan ini berpendapat bahwa aktivisme perkotaan maupun maya sama-sama memiliki peran penting dalam gerakan buruh di Indonesia setelah reformasi 1998. Dengan mengeksplorasi Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (FSPMI), tulisan ini bertujuan untuk lebih memahami saling ketergantungan antara ruang perkotaan dan ruang maya untuk gerakan buruh. Lebih spesifik, bagaimana buruh terlibat dalam aktivisme 'perkotaan-maya' untuk membangun gerakan mereka dalam memperjuangkan pengaruh politiknya? Hasil penelitian menggarisbawahi empat isu, yaitu: (a) tumbuhnya gerakan buruh militan di ruang kota masa kini; (b) munculnya kelas pekerja industri perkotaan; (c) ruang 'perkotaan-maya' adalah medan politik untuk negara, perusahaan, dan buruh; serta (d) satu sisi dari keterhubungan ruang 'perkotaan-maya' dapat menghasilkan, memperkuat, melemahkan, atau bahkan membunuh sisi lain.

Kata kunci: FSPMI, buruh, gerakan, maya, perkotaan, aktivisme

¹This paper is a part of research on *Social Transformation in the North Coast of Java* conducted by the Research Centre for Society and Culture. While the research mainly focuses only on urban space, the author also explores the connections between the urban-space and cyberspace on labour activism. The field researches were conducted in Mojokerto and Jakarta in the year of 2013 and 2014. The earlier version of this paper has been presented in the Conceptualizing Cyber-Urban Connections in Asia and the Middle East Conference held by Asia Research Institute-National University of Singapore (ARI-NUS), 2014.

Introduction

Reformasi era started in 1998 is one of critical juncture for development of labour movement in Indonesia. The labour movement is part of the people movement that brought about *Reformasi*. The labours involved in the political pressures that overthrown Suharto's New Order that ruled Indonesia for thirty-two years. Although they were late in joining the student movement that initiated the so-called *Reformasi* movement, they eventually cooperated with the students to take over the Parliament House in their demand for Suharto's resignation (Hadiz, 1998). Obviously *Reformasi* provided greater opportunity for the labours to organize themselves. It signified freedom, including freedom of association and protection of the right to organize, as being decreed on Presidential Decree No. 83 Year 1998. Consequently, the number of trade unions, increased considerably (Ford, 2000 and Hidajat, 2012) and labour activism has been on the rise ever since (Hadiz, 1998).

In the year of 2012-2013, there are two phenomena indicating the strengthening of labour movement in Indonesia. First, they receive a significant increase in the minimum wage of 2013, as a result of their nationwide strike. As reported in various newspapers, at the end of 2012 there was a nationwide strike demanding a rise of minimum wage that created pressures on local governments' leaderships. In response to the strike, the Governor of Jakarta, Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, approved the demand by increasing the minimum wage up to 44%. Before 2012, such a significant improvement has never happened. The increase (Rp 2.2 million) is higher than the basic cost living (Rp 1,978,789) (*The Jakarta Post.com*, November 21, 2012). Following Jakarta, the minimum wage at the other cities (regencies) has also increased significantly. Second is the declaration of May Day as a public holiday. In a speech to commemorate the International Workers Day in 2013, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, declared, starting from 2014, May 1st is a public holiday (*The Jakarta Post.com*, May 4, 2013). This recognition strengthens the labours' political position. Those achievements show the growing strength of labour movement in Indonesia.

The labours and their movement in Indonesian context have long been studied. At first, the studies start with portraying the labours condition in the colonial period and their roles in the Indonesian nationalist movement (e.g. Ingleson, 2013 and Sulisty, 1991). Studies about the presence and role of labours during the newly independent Indonesia and Sukarno era could be seen, among others, in the work of Suryomenggolo (2011). Meanwhile, Hadiz's study on the working-class movement (1997) indicates that a late industrialization during the New Order has created a repressive political terrain that hampers the working-class movement. Meanwhile, Ford (2000, 2001), Hadiz (1998, 2000), and Je Seong (2008) describe the development of labour movement in the era of *Reformasi*. Most of these studies suggest the enhancement of labours' bargaining position toward the state, but labour in general has not been able to compete with the capital market in the globalization context. From the very beginning, all of those studies emphasize that labours and the urban space are intertwined. Ingleson (2013) for example, highlights ways of urban space and labours shaping each other. Meanwhile, Hadiz (1997) stresses the role of urban industrial workers in the development of contemporary labour movement. These urban industrial workers have a stronger solidarity among each other compared to agricultural workers, who worked part-time as industrial workers during Suharto. While the latter alternately moves to and from rural and urban, creating a loose solidarity among themselves, the contemporary industrial workers are totally urban-based with a strong solidarity and network. It is within this group of new industrial workers, the connection between urban and cyber spaces.

This paper attempts to extend the scope of research on the labour movement in Indonesia by investigating cyber-urban space connections that support contemporary labour activism. The questions explored include: (1) How do labours engage with their urban space to perform their activism?; (2) How do labours use cyberspace for their activism?; and (3) To what extent the urban and cyber spaces are interconnected in supporting the labour activism? This article intends to understand the significance of the "expanded

space” from the actual space to the abstract space for the labours.

Conceptual Framework

Space is a standpoint to discuss the cyber-urban connections. Firstly, space is often perceived as something given that is as a place which enables the human beings to conduct their activities since they were born until they die. In fact, as indicated by Lefebvre (1991), space is a social product. It is not just a place or a container for social practices, but also includes social relations. Furthermore, as Soja pointed out (in Lim, 2006: 3), “the organization and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience,” though it may firstly be established as a physical object. Moreover, space is a complex rather than an empty and neutral object. It becomes a place, where human interacts and beings struggle for their interests. At the same time, it is worthwhile; therefore, it becomes the object of struggle. Thus, “space is inherently political” and “politics is inherently spatial” (Elden in Lim 2007: 211).

The urban area has long been a political space for the labours. Since the urban area is mostly the centre of production, it always demands labours. As Parr (2007: 388) suggested, urban can be defined as workforce city, which is “concerned with the daily movement of labours.” In the very late industrialization countries, such as Indonesia, most of its industries rely on the manufacturing sector, which impose low-wage and labour-intensive economy (Hadiz, 1997). Within this context, the labours need to fight for their own space in the relations with the state and the capital. Here, the labours construct their identity as the urban working class and has developed labour solidarity in order to perform their social movement (Hadiz, 1997).

Cyberspace as a concept has emerged since the late of 20th century. It has possibly emerged with the development of Internet, which is then followed by Web 2.0 and Web 3.0 (Castells, 2002, 2010). These technologies are communication medium that provides a new space for human beings to communicate with each other worldwide in their chosen time. The presence of the latter even made the nature of cyberspace

much more interactive and social, allowing human beings to create their own networks across the globe. As Hasan and Thomas (2006: xxvi) said, “new sources of power are beginning to find a political voice within cyberspace.” Castells (2002: 137) stresses this issue further by suggesting that “social movements and the political process will increasingly use the Internet for acting, informing, recruiting, organizing, dominating and counter-dominating”; therefore, “cyberspace becomes a contested terrain.” As such, cyberspace could become an important space for labours to perform a social and political movement.

The urban and cyber are not two independent spaces. Urban space is actually an important part of the Industrial Age. Meanwhile, cyberspace marks the presence of the Information Age. Rather than growing independently, the cyberspace is integrated with other forms of interactions (Castells, 2010). Lim (2006) has shown how cyberspace and urban space are interdependent in establishing civic space for society. However, according to Castells (2002), social movements in cyber-urban space need to consider the typical characteristics of cyberspace. He argued that social movement in the Information Age, which incorporates cyber-urban space, needs at least to be mobilized around cultural values and match the global reach of the powers with more emphasis to the local, including the concerns and identity. In the recent days, cyber-urban space is intertwined to establish civic space, including the endorsement of social movement.

This paper is a case study of *Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia* (FSPMI), Indonesian Metal Workers’ Federation. A preliminary study reveals that this is quite well-known as a very active trade union in performing its activism in cyber-urban space. Moreover, it has established its networks not only at the local and national level, but also at the international level through its affiliation with IndustriALL Global Union.

FSPMI: The Biggest And Best Organized Trade Union

Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia (FSPMI) or Indonesian Metal Workers’ Federation

is one of the very few politically active trade unions among a large number of trade unions which were established after the fall of Suharto. The Federation was first established as *Serikat Pekerja Metal Indonesia* (SPMI)–Indonesian Metal Workers Union) on February 6th, 1999 during the Extraordinary National Congress of *Serikat Pekerja Logam, Elektronik, dan Mesin Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia Reformasi* (SP LEM SPSI Reformasi) in Garut, West Java. The establishment of FSPMI was possibly motivated by the members’ dissatisfaction with SPSI Reformasi. SPSI is the largest and strongest trade union under the New Order regime. At that time, New Order government prohibited the development of trade unions that were out of the state’s control (Hadiz, 1998). Although SPSI has been transformed into SPSI Reformasi, most of its members might consider it as less independent and unable to accommodate their interests. Thus, according to Hadiz (1998), those dissatisfied with SPSI and the existing independent unions, has discussed the need to establish their own union. In 2001, SPMI was transformed into a federation, which consists of six sectorial based trade unions, including (1) electric-electronics workers union, (2) component and automotive machines workers union, (3) metal workers union, (4) shipping and maritime services workers union, (5) aerospace workers union (for now disbanding already), and (6) workers union of all kinds of industries. In the same year, it was officially accepted as a member of the International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF) turning into IndustriALL Global Union, which is based in Jenewa-Swiss. In 2014, FSPMI has been established in 50 cities (regencies), mostly in the industrial area of Indonesia.

FSPMI aims to establish democratic, free, representative, and independent trade union federation, which struggles for welfare and social justice in Indonesia. The main working program of FSPMI includes (1) the protection and advocacy for workers; (2) the empowerment of female workers; (3) organizational consolidation and revitalization; (4) economy and welfare; (5) health and safety at work; (6) financial consolidation; (7) the development of information and communication skills; (8) education, training, and regeneration; and (9) the establishment of workers’ solidarity.

To understand the ways FSPMI establish their existence as well as gaining its power, a fieldwork note from Mojokerto-East Java describes it as follows. Although FSPMI is mainly based in Jakarta representing the national level, a note of FSPMI activism in Mojokerto provides a more dynamic description at a local level. The labours in Mojokerto have just established FSPMI in their area in 2001, two years after the establishment of FSPMI’s central organization. In general, its organizational structure consists of (1) *Pimpinan Unit Kerja* (PUK), the head of a working unit; (2) *Pimpinan Cabang* (PC), the head of a working sector; (3) *Konsulat Cabang* (KC), the branch consulate; (4) *Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah* (DPW), the regional leadership council; and (5) *Dewan Pimpinan Pusat* (DPP), the national central board. At first, the membership of FSPMI Mojokerto only consisted of three heads of working unit (PUK). Thus, it requires increasing its members.

In order to attract new members and to strengthen its organizational structure and mechanism, FSPMI conducts four things (Hadi, 2013). *First* is to educate the labours by providing information about employment, including state regulations and the labour rights. As stated by a participant, “FSPMI educates us about the existing [employment] regulation. ... When there is a violation of labour rights in a factory, we could quickly realize it” (Hadi, 2013). Furthermore, FSPMI also organizes leadership training in the factories twice a year. *Second* is advocacy. FSPMI demonstrates its ways to conduct political struggles to advocate the labours how to solve their problems through either bipartite or tripartite mediation. FSPMI shows that they are not a quasi-labour organization; therefore, they truly provides advocacy for its members. *Third* is action. When mediation is failed, FSPMI performs various acts, from street demonstration to strike. They also conduct peaceful protests, such as promoting cultural values to gain public sympathy. One of the values is “Social Justice for All”. *Fourth* is affiliation. Within the area of Mojokerto, FSPMI affiliates with *Aliansi Perjuangan Buruh Mojokerto* (APBM), which includes *Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia* (SPSI), *Persatuan Pergerakan Buruh Indonesia* (PPBI), *Serikat Buruh Kerakyatan* (SBK), and *Persaudaraan*

Pekerja Muslim Indonesia (PPMI). Through all these actions, FSPMI recruits more members and partners as well as to improve the knowledge and skills of its members. Recently, its membership consists of 31 heads of working unit (PUK) with more than 6,000 labours, 60% female and 40% male (FSPMI Jakarta, 2014). The members are from various cities (regencies) in East Java, Central Java, and Sulawesi. Eventually, FSPMI Mojokerto is getting bigger and stronger.

Those four things --educating, advocating, acting, and affiliating-- imply the ways FSPMI create its social capital. According to Putnam (1995: 664-665), it is "[the] features of social life - networks, norms and trust- that facilitate people to act together more effectively to pursue shared objective." FSPMI first creates its networks, which is highly determined by its ability to form trust through advocating and educating. Afterwards, the labours voluntarily reciprocate the trust, from paying membership to performing strike. In most of the labour strikes, FSPMI has the largest mass led by their Garda Metal.² These eventually enable FSPMI to affiliate with other trade unions. The social capital has determined the ways FSPMI strengthen its organization to gain their political leverage as reflected from its motto "remain silent while being suppressed or rising to fight." This also makes FSPMI the biggest and best organized assembly factory workers union (Lane, 2014). Overall, it also influences the ways FSPMI struggle for power in the cyber-urban space that will be described and discussed in the succeeding sections.

The Movement Of Fspmi: The Forefront of Labour Mobilization

Although the labour movement in Indonesia is quite dynamic, they have perennial problems. Those are related with local politics, restriction, education, and welfare (Hadi, 2013). The local government is mostly absence in monitoring the industrial process as well as protecting the labours. Meanwhile, the capital

² Garda Metal is formed as the security guard of FSPMI, which is responsible to secure their actions. Each year, a number of 150 labours are trained like the police in Dlundung-Trawas, Mojokerto by the national central board of FSPMI.

owners or the corporates create several restrictions, including limited career opportunity, isolating dissident workers, as well as threatening for a dismissal. Most of the labours have limited knowledge about labours' rights and employment regulation; therefore, education is needed. Lastly, welfare issue is mostly about the minimum wage, which is considered inadequate with the daily basic needs. From those four issues, the minimum wage still becomes the main struggling issue for labour movement in Indonesia.

The issue of minimum wage is getting important in the era of decentralization. Within this era, the minimum wage is set locally, by the Governor or the Mayor/Regent at the end of the year. As stated by Tjandraningsih (2014), the minimum wage in Indonesia becomes a political contestation arena between the local government, the corporate, and the labours. As the marginalized group, the labour performs their movement, both in urban and cyber space, to struggle demanding minimum wage increase.

In the case of minimum wage, FSPMI becomes a leading trade union in their movement. FSPMI perform various urban and cyber activisms to seize the space and achieve their interests. Since 2007, FSPMI has expanded their space of struggle. Within this context, FSPMI sets three strategies, namely (1) 'From Factories to Public', (2) 'From Lobbying to Action', and (3) 'Go for Politics'. This strategy influences the ways FSPMI performing their cyber-urban activism in order to contest with the other actors toward minimum wage increase.

Minimum Wage as a Space of Political Contestation: Actors and Their Interests

Aforementioned, minimum wage is a space of political contestation, involving the government, the corporate, and the labour as three main actors. The government is the most powerful actor as the one, who has the authority to set up the minimum wage for the upcoming year. Within this context, minimum wage issue can be manipulated for two main interests. First is primarily for the benefit on local elections, which would like to collect labours' vote. Meanwhile, the second is receiving rewards because of favouring the corporate. However, there is also a local

government, which struggle to increase the minimum wage of labour as well as society in general.

The corporate is the second actor, who has the responsibility to pay the minimum wage. It is mostly assumed as the actor, who wants the lowest increase on minimum wage. In Indonesia, this actor is represented by Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia (APINDO), The Indonesia Employers Association. Nevertheless, the voice of employers in Indonesia toward minimum wage increase is various. As noted by Tjandraningsih (2014), while some employers refuse a significant increase on minimum wage, the others accept it.

Among the other actors, the labour is the marginalized group on minimum wage contestation. The labours certainly demand the highest increase on minimum wage. It is unfair when the minimum wage is inadequate with their daily basic needs. In fact, trade unions have various stands. Some of them tend to support the corporate as drawn in the New Order period. Meanwhile, some other struggle for labours' welfare and social justice in general, such as presented by FSPMI.

Four other actors that cannot be neglected on minimum wage contestation are the mainstream mass media, the urban middle class, the police, and the thug. The ways mainstream main media frame the labours' activisms indirectly influence the ways public, especially the urban middle class, perceive those activisms. Eventually, it determines whether the public support or reject it. While the police become 'the guard' of the government, the thug is usually the corporate's henchman. In general, all actors with interests on their mind play significant role in influencing the success of labour's cyber-urban activism toward minimum wage.

The Urban Activism of FSPMI toward Minimum Wage

After *Reformasi*, most of the urban areas in Indonesia become a common space for civic activities. The urban area becomes a political space, not only to express the civic rights, but also to organize in order to gain a political leverage, such it happens with the labour and student movements. While student movement seems to

have no clear goal of the future (Lim, 2006, 2007) the labour movement as the other driver of *Reformasi* shows a clearer vision on their immediate goals. They keep the issue of improving the labours' social welfare as their main goal. As the minimum wage in the decentralization era is set by local governments, the local government becomes the target of labour movements. Urban activism arises when it is time to decide the minimum wage of the following year. Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia is always used as a parameter for determining the minimum wage. Within this context, the labours usually insist the minimum wage in their region should be set closer to the value that has been set for Jakarta. Their insistence is reflected through the urban activism of *Federasi Serikat Pekerja Metal* (FSPMI) below.

In the year of 2012, FSPMI performed nationwide strike demanding minimum wage increase. On October 2012, there were around 2.8 million workers in 24 cities and 80 industrial estates went on strike around their factories in protest against outsourcing practices, a cheap labour policy, and the planned gradual implementation of the national health care for all programs (*The Jakarta Post.com*, October 3, 2012). Performing their solidarity, the labours of FSPMI Mojokerto also conducted a strike on that day. However, rather than just conducting strike around their factories, they also occupied the offices of local government (*SuaraSurabaya.net*, October 3, 2012).

Furthermore, FSPMI Mojokerto had to fight relentlessly ahead of minimum wage approval for 2013. With *Garda Metal* as its frontline, FSPMI Mojokerto engaged in various urban actions. Firstly, they asked for a public hearing with the Regent of Mojokerto. But, so far they could only meet his representatives, who do not have the authorities to make a decision. To attract attention, they then closed down the bypass connecting Surabaya-Mojokerto-Jombang on October 24, 2012. After that, they performed street demonstration while giving speech in front of the Mojokerto Regency Office. They also occupied the front yard of regent's house as well as the regent's mother house. Unfortunately, those actions were futile ones; they still could not meet the regent. They then changed their strategy by

trying to initiate a peaceful agreement with the corporates. They began by distributing flyers to all factories in Mojokerto. In this action, they cooperated with *Aliansi Perjuangan Buruh Mojokerto* (APBM). In the flyers, they asked each factory to write a letter of recommendation to the regent, stating their agreement to pay the minimum wage set by the District Wage Council. All factories in Ngoro Industrial Park (NIP), the biggest industrial area in Mojokerto, gave their supports. The letters of recommendation opened the door for the FSPMI to meet and convince the regent on October 29, 2012. The regent approved the labours' demands and wrote a letter of recommendation to the Governor of East Java.

The situation became difficult during FSPMI's street demonstration in Surabaya, the capital city of East Java Province. The labours, marched to several official landmarks in Surabaya, including regional parliament building, state building of Grahadi, the governor office, and the regional agency of industry and trade. The tension heated when two labour activists, namely Pujianto, the leader of FSPMI East Java and Doni, the field coordinator of demonstration, were arrested. They were accused as provocateurs and creating anarchy. Rather than creating fear or forcing the labours to back down, the arrest reinforced solidarity and spirit among the labours. Finally, on November 24, 2012, the minimum wage of Mojokerto for 2013 was set in Rp 1,700,000, with 37.76% increase from that of the previous year.

In 2013, with a greater number of labours, FSPMI also held nationwide strike to demand a minimum wage increase for 2014. As requested by its national central board, all FSPMI leaders prepared the national strike held on October 28-November 1, 2013. They believed that this strike must be conducted in a peaceful way, to avoid anarchy. Affiliated in *Konfederasi Serikat Pekerja Indonesia* (KSPI), FSPMI joined the strike involving 3 million labours from 150 cities (regencies) (*Tempo.co*, October 31, 2013). A tragedy happened during the national strike of 2013, in which the strike labours and members of a mass organization clashed, and there was news of the death of some FSPMI members (*Jaringnews.com*, October 31, 2013). The news was actually a hoax, because the truth is that there were 28 injured labours. As reported by FSPMI,

there were 17 seriously injured labours because of stab and jab, while the others were minor injured. FSPMI still continue the strike in the national level by blockading the Jakarta Town Hall. Nevertheless, the strike was not so crowd anymore. While some of them defend their friends being the victims, the others might feel afraid to join the strike. Eventually, the minimum wage for 2014 has been increased for 9%.

FSPMI's Cyber Activism: From Daily Use to Supporting the Minimum Wage Increase

Besides struggling in the actual urban space, FSPMI also actively performs cyber activism. FSPMI uses two main websites, in Bahasa Indonesia (fspmi.or.id) and in English (fspmi.or.id/en/). Furthermore, several social media are actively used, including Facebook Suara FSPMI (around 8.000 likes), Twitter FSPMI KSPI (around 2.000 followers), Google Plus FSPMI KSPI (around 200 followers and 12.000 views), and Youtube Media Perdjoengan. Those channels are simultaneously connected and used by FSPMI to perform their cyber activism. These are designed and managed by Media Team of FSPMI's National Central Board. Moreover, there are a number of Facebook group and page created by the regional or sectorial FSPMI. Just like the urban space; therefore, cyberspace also becomes a crucial political space for labour movement.

The world of cyber is a space for communicating. Resembling the mass media, it is a means of communication. In the daily basis, it distributes information, such as the latest employment policies and the development of FSPMI. More than just informing, it is also used for educating the labours, such as improving their knowledge about employment regulations and political awareness of their civic rights. Moreover, cyberspace also provides opportunity for FSPMI to play surveillance role as well as entertaining their members, such as information about football leagues. Cyber activism is increasing heading the minimum wage increase. It is even set as the agenda for cyber activism. The website informs the agenda, time, and location of strike demanding minimum wage increase. There was news about bloody violence during the strike in Bekasi in 2013. Here, FSPMI highlighted the marginalized position of labours that has been discussed in

several articles, including a book review of *Dekolonisasi Buruh Kota dan Pembentukan Bangsa* to increase labours' awareness toward their civic rights.³ Cyberspace also plays a surveillance function to observe the ways government would handle labour clashes during the strike.

The cyberspace enables FSPMI to expand its networks and to grow internal solidarity. The presence of Internet, especially the social media, has eased connection among the members of FSPMI and public in general. Here, readers or users can imagine the condition of other labours. Pictures and news about the national strike made the labours can imagine the situation of their co-workers. It eventually strengthens solidarity among them. Towards the minimum wage increase arrangement, the leaders and the members of FSPMI use various social media for coordinating the strike. As it also covers global networks, FSPMI gains international attention and solidarity as illustrated in the case of bloody violence strike demanding wage minimum increase for 2014 in Bekasi. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) sent a letter to the President of Indonesia, urging him to conduct an independent investigation, to provide security, and to dismiss the chief of Bekasi District Police. Thus, cyberspace adds force to the labour bargaining position through networking and solidarity.

Lastly, cyberspace allows discourse production as part of the activism. FSPMI is able to report what is happening in the organization from their point of view. It indicates that cyberspace does not only relay news or information from mainstream media, but also produce discourses. By constructing a discourse, FSPMI has the opportunity to disseminate its ideology. It is exemplified in an article titled "*Anti Kekerasan, Oke. Menghalang-halangi Buruh Menjadi Militan, Jangan!*" (Anti-Violence, Okay!

³It is a recent published book discussing the labours in Indonesia, including their movements, during the period of colonization, Soekarno, as well as the early regime of Suharto. For further description, read Erman, E. & Saptari, R. (eds.). (2013). *Dekolonisasi Buruh Kota dan Pembentukan Bangsa*. Jakarta: KITLV Jakarta & Yayasan Obor Indonesia.

Impeding Labour Militancy, No Way!). It is written as a reaction toward the tragedy occurred during the national strike in 2013. This article invites the readers to distinguish violence and militancy. Moreover, it emphasizes that militancy is a form of struggle against the state and the corporate that tend to dominate the labours. Thus, through the production of discourse in cyberspace, FSPMI is able to counterattack the mainstream discourse.

Interconnecting Cyber-urban Space as Minimum Wage Contestation Arena: Interaction among Actors

The urban activism as well as cyber activism of FSPMI described above shows the need of interlinking the urban and cyber space on labour activism. The interconnection between cyber-urban spaces for labour activism is dynamic from time to time reaching the peak during the arrangement of minimum wage. This is understandable since the minimum wage is a contestation arena. Labours' activism toward minimum wage in cyber-urban space, therefore, means a struggle to seize the space as well as the political power. Within this context, the labours have to face the other actors, both in the urban and cyber space described as follows.

In everyday life, most of the actors show the ways cyber-urban spaces have more embedded to their lives. While in the last decade the availability of Internet was still limited to certain social class, namely those 'the highly educated' and 'the have', who own telephone and computer as well as being able to pay telephone pulse or internet subscription fees (Lim, 2004), now the Internet is available for most of the urban dwellers, particularly the workers. Shifting from *warnet* (Internet café) has encouraged a wider social engagement (Lim, 2004, 2006), they now could easily subscribe to the Internet through their mobile gadgets, such as smartphones and tablets, which are more personal and private. It has facilitated them to be online anywhere and anytime. It is possible because of technological integration, which has lowered the cost of Internet access (Abbott, 2013). As noted by Lim (2013: 637), the Internet "characterised by convergence, low cost, broad availability and reasonable resistance to control and censorship," is a

“convivial medium”, which provides “a greater scope for freedom, autonomy, creativity, and collaboration than previous media” (Lim 2003: 274). The number of Internet users in Indonesia has reached 63 million, in which 65.7% accesses Internet from smartphones (*The Jakarta Post.com*, February 17, 2013). Thus, the omnipresent of Internet among working class has increased the interconnectivity of cyber-urban spaces. The interconnection between urban and cyberspaces has eased the labours to communicate, including informing, educating, entertaining as well as for surveillance. It also enables the labours to expand their networks across borders. Through collective imagination about their position as marginalized people who are dominated by the state and the capital, the labours tried to strengthen their solidarity. Similar to the working class, the employers mostly interconnect the urban and cyber space for the flow of goods and information. Meanwhile, the government establishes policies and regulations about the ways urban space are developed and used as well as building cyberspace’s infrastructure. Although cyber-space is connected and embedded to most actors, the use is limited for individual and group purpose, including creating networks and building strength.

The atmosphere of urban-cyber space is heated during the period of setting the minimum wage up. Cyber-urban spaces are interconnected and used interchangeably from time to time by all actors. After spreading information, coordinating the movement, as well as building internal strength in cyber space, the labours seize the urban space. Most of the urban space, such as Hotel Indonesia roundabout and State Court in Jakarta, as well as the local parliament house and government offices in the other cities suddenly transformed to be civic space during the strike. To some extent the action is getting militant, in which the labours close down the public facilities, such as the toll road. Seizing the urban space, the labours have to face barricade of police as well as thug. Sometime they experience violence, such as the bloody one during nationwide strike in Bekasi demanding wage increase for 2014. Here, the labours document their actions and publish them through cyberspace to magnify the effects toward public at large.

The mainstream mass media have their own stand regarding the minimum wage increase.

They provided less coverage toward the labour nationwide strike demanding the minimum wage increase. Most of the news reported that the minimum wage increase will only force the employers to relocate their factories or even move their investment to other countries. For example was *Ical Bicara Demo Buruh yang Tuntut Kenaikan Upah Rp3.7 Juta* (*detikNews*, November 3, 2013). Statement of Ical, who is a minister, a leader of political party, as well as employer in that news underestimated the labours as demanding too high irrational minimum wage increase. Besides, most of the news emphasizes the harmful effect of nationwide strike to public, including increasing traffic jam and destroying public facilities. In general, the mainstream mass media produce the dominant narratives.

There is a big difference on public response toward minimum wage increase for 2013 and 2014. In 2012, the public has never witnessed such significant increase of minimum wage. Bloggers as well as social media users, including the urban middle class, support the labour’s activism. However, a fierce debate took place in the cyberspace during the national strike demanding minimum wage increases for 2014, a year after a significant increase of minimum wage. Arguments presented by the labours (FSPMI) could not convince the public in general. In fact, most of the public comments were quite sardonic. It seems that the public has been influenced by social media users claiming forced to join every strike as well as by large media who perceive labour movement as militant, radical, and high-risk. As a matter of fact, the labours failed to counter the popular discourse. As observed at FSPMI’s website, they did not distinguish the ways information should be presented. All messages were disseminated in a long text form, even though Lim (2013: 636) has suggested that social media activism should be “simple or simplified”, including “light package, headline appetite, and trailer vision”. She argued that “simple or simplified” means low-risk activism and consistent with ideological meta-narratives, such as nationalism. Labour movement that inclined toward socialism is not compatible with meta-narratives of nationalism.

During the strike demanding minimum wage increase, the interconnection of urban and cyber

space is increasing. It expands the actual urban space into the abstract space, blurring the boundaries of urban and cyber spaces. Not only the labour' activism exists simultaneously in urban and cyber spaces, those two increasingly intertwined. The cyberspace eases the labours to seize the urban space as seen in the organization of strike. In the other side, what is happening in the urban space influences the fierce narratives construction as well as the direction of labour movement in the cyberspace.

In sum, this section describes the ways the urban and the cyber spaces are interconnected for

labour activism. In a small scale, it has been shown from labour activism demanding minimum wage increase in 2012 and 2013. As presented in Table 1, the contestation among actors takes place in the interconnected cyber-urban space. The short-term outcome is certainly the approval or disapproval of minimum wage increase. Meanwhile, for the long term, the interconnection of cyber-urban space on labour activism is expected to increase public's awareness about their space as well as their position as working class in Indonesia.

Table 1. Cyber-urban Activism on Minimum Wage Contestation

Actors	Interests	Activism (2012)		Activism (2013)	
		Urban-Space	Cyberspace	Urban-Space	Cyberspace
FSPMI	<p>Economical:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing the minimum wage Increasing labours' welfare <p>Socio-Political:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening labour class Strengthening labour movement Changing the social and political structure Achieving social justice for all 	<p>Jakarta & Mojokerto:</p> <p>Nationwide strike (Oct, 3)</p> <p>Location: Around Factories and Industrial Estate</p> <p>Mojokerto:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asking for a public hearing with the Regent of Mojokerto Closing down the Bypass (Oct, 24) Performing street demonstration Occupying the front yard of regent's office, regent's house and the regent's mother house Distributing flyers to all factories asking them to write a letter of recommendation to the regent Meeting and convincing the regent, who approved the labours' demands (Oct, 29) Marching to several official landmarks in Surabaya, the capital city of East Java Province, including regional parliament building, state building of Grahadi, the governor office, and the regional agency of industry and trade, in which two labour activists were arrested (Nov, 24) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information about the national strike on website: The time, location, and goal Informing the condition of strike demanding minimum wage increase all around Indonesia Educating the labours, such as improving their knowledge about their civic rights Playing surveillance role heading to the process of minimum wage increase Producing information from the labours' point of view: Framing the news about strike as the ways of struggle for a higher minimum wage Social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, are used personally by the members for coordinating the strike as well as growing solidarity among members. FSPMI as the organization has not created their account in social media 	<p>Jakarta:</p> <p>Nationwide Strike (Oct, 28 – Nov, 1)</p> <p>Location: Around Factories and Industrial Estate, peaking to Jakarta for those labours in Jabodetabek and the surrounding urban areas</p> <p>Bekasi (The Peri-urban of Jabodetabek Mega-urban Region) & Jakarta:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staying away from the workplaces and warming-up for nationwide strike (Oct, 28-30) Rallying in industrial estate (Oct, 28-30) During a rally in EJP Industrial Estate, Cikarang, Bekasi, the labours and members of a mass organization clashed, in which 17 labours were seriously injured because of stab and jab. Meanwhile, 11 labours were minor injured (Oct, 31) Continuing the strike in the national level by blockading the Jakarta Town Hall and staying overnight there (Nov, 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing information about the national strike on website: The time, location, and goal Informing the condition of strike demanding minimum wage increase all around Indonesia Informing a bloody violence during the strike in Bekasi in 2013 Playing surveillance role heading to the process of minimum wage increase as well as the ways government would handle labour clashes during the strike. Getting supports from international networks, such as The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), to add force to the government in order to respond the bloody violence in Bekasi Producing news from the labours' point of view: The news "<i>Anti Kekerasan, Oke. Menghalang-halangi Buruh Menjadi Militan, Jangan!</i>" (Anti-Violence, Okay! Impeding Labour Militancy, No Way!) as a reaction toward the tragedy during the 2013

Actors	Interests	Activism (2012)		Activism (2013)	
		Urban-Space	Cyberspace	Urban-Space	Cyberspace
					national strike • Social media, especially Facebook and Twitter, have been used by FSPMI as a trade union and most of their members for coordinating the strike as well as growing solidarity among members
Actors	Interests	Activism (2012)		Activism (2013)	
		Urban-Space	Cyberspace	Urban-Space	Cyberspace
APINDO	Economical: Achieving the highest profit for the employers Political: Dominating the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating with both the government and the labour Constructing narratives through mainstream media 	Relying news from mainstream media, which provide positive framing toward the employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating with both the government and the labour Constructing narratives through mainstream media 	Relying news from mainstream media, which provide positive framing toward the employer
Thug	Economical: Obtaining dime Political: Proving their existence			Doing violence against the labours participating in the strike in Bekasi	
Local Government	Political: Controlling the space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating with both the labour and the employer Deciding the increase of minimum wage 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating with both the labour and the employer Deciding the increase of minimum wage 	
Police	Political: Securing and controlling the space	Providing security during the strike Protecting the labours		Providing security during the strike Neglecting labours' safety during bloody violence in Bekasi	
Mass Media	Political: Supporting the owner of media	Constructing dominant narratives	Constructing dominant narratives	Constructing dominant narratives	Constructing dominant narratives
Urban Middle Class	Economical: Increasing Welfare		Supporting labour activism		Conducting a fierce debate contesting labour' narratives
Outcome	Short Term Long term	Approval of minimum wage increase around 40% Increasing public's awareness about their space Increasing public's awareness about their position, both labour and employee, as working class in Indonesia		Approval of minimum wage increase around 10% Increasing public's awareness about their space Increasing public's awareness about their position, both labour and employee, as working class in Indonesia	

Discussion and Conclusion

From the above description, four issues can be highlighted. *First*, a militant labour movement is growing in the recent urban space. Nowadays, the labour movement shows a great willingness to use strong and extreme methods to achieve their goal. In the case of FSPMI, it firstly provides physical training for its members to be part of Garda Metal, the safeguard of its urban action. Moreover, they conduct various radical urban actions from street demonstration to closing down traffics. This militancy grows as a result of

stringent controls over labours, which are often followed with a set of violence (Hadiz, 1998).

Second is the emergence of urban industrial working class. As noted by Hadiz (1998, 2000), the current generation of industrial working class, which is younger and better educated, is not like their predecessors, in which they have no longer option to permanently return to their home-village; therefore, they much depend on the success of urban-based life struggles. While the members of FSPMI Mojokerto include labours from various cities (regencies) in East Java,

Central Java, and Sulawesi, the members of FSPMI in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (Jabodetabek) are even more diverse, because they come from different islands in Indonesia. Struggle to live in the urban bleak conditions has strengthened solidarity among them as illustrated in the above stories. While their co-workers are imprisoned and injured, they keep struggling to improve the social welfare of labours. Here, the use of social media among the urban industrial working class is also increasing, from personally (in 2012) to organizationally (2013). Thus, cyber-urban space has embedded to the urban industrial working class.

Third, cyber-urban space is a political terrain for the state, the corporate, and the labours. The political tension in cyber-urban space is increasing on the issue of minimum wage increase. Not only for informing, educating, entertaining, as well as surveillance mechanism, cyberspace allows the labour to construct its own discourse in order to disseminate its ideology. As noted by Lim (2013), it is no longer being produced by centralized media producers. While cyberspace eases the labour for organization of the strike as well as expanding national and international networks, the urban space provides an opportunity to show their “mass” or “power”. In the context of *Reformasi*, the labours have greater opportunity to struggle for power. Although their interests have not always been achieved, they can increase their bargaining position toward the state and the corporate. In line with the study of Hadiz (1997), the recent labour movement indicates the model of populist accommodation, in which the power of state and corporatism are counterbalanced with relatively strong trade union.

Fourth, in line with Lim (2006), this paper has revealed that one side of cyber-urban connection can generate, strengthen, weaken, or even kill the other side. In 2012 the cyber and urban space supported and strengthened each other, therefore, labour activism achieved public’s supports as well as significant increase of minimum wage. Meanwhile, in 2013 the cyberspace weakened the urban one, in which the cyber labour activism failed to debate with the public’s narrative influenced by the dominant media. Cyberspace, social media especially, to

some extent is still dependent upon large media (Lim, 2013). Furthermore, labour’s cyber activism in Indonesia still does not meet the requirements proposed by Castells (2002), in which a labour movement should be mobilized around the meaning of social values, such as social justice for all and rooted in the local context but aiming at global impact. However, because of Internet, we could say that “the world may have never been freer, but it has also never been so interdependent and interconnected” (Mulgan in Van Dijk, 2012: 2). This certainly provides a greater opportunity for labour movement.

In general, the presence of cyberspace at the end of 20th century has had a vast influence on social movement. In the context of Indonesia, Internet was crucial in supporting *Reformasi* and to overthrow Suharto’s authoritarian Regime. Recently, the social media played a significant role in the case of Arab Spring. The world of cyber provides a new political space for the production of power. While previous studies mostly explain the interdependent of cyber-urban spaces for social movement in general, this paper has described the significance of cyber-urban connections for labour activism. It shows that cyber-urban spaces are interconnected within the labour activism. However, a question remains: can the urban industrial working class, use and seize the cyber-urban space to realize their position as the working class in Indonesia?; and How to translate active participation in cyberspace for a real action in urban space so the labours could achieve a better social welfare or even social justice for all? These are challenges that should be answered not only by urban industrial working class, but also by Indonesians in general.

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