

IS SOCIAL MEDIA AN EFFECTIVE WHISTLEBLOWER TO CONTROL GOVERNMENT POLICY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN YOGYAKARTA CITY?

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ABSTRACT

Since it has been perceived to have positive benefits in many aspects in today's world, social media has also been becoming a hot topic of discussion on its benefits in a process of decision-making by local government in various levels. In the local level, Yogyakarta City as one of leading cities in implementing e-government and innovative governance in Indonesia has faced similar experience to take the problem of social media dynamics into account of its development process. This paper is clearly expected to give a concrete picture of social media position in decision-making process at a city government level for case of hotel development in the city of Yogyakarta, which became a hot issue in the last 5 years. Government decision to issue many permits related to the hotels construction and development has been widely opposed by the public. In the end, despite a bit late, the Yogyakarta City Government has issued a temporary moratorium on this hotels construction and development. At the same time, using various social media, efforts to proclaim and report negative impacts of the hotels construction have also been intensively conducted by the public. Employing a qualitative method research, this paper reveals how the relationship between data that reporting negative impacts of hotels construction through social media (social media as a whistleblower) with data of interviews related to the city government's responses in generating public policies in hotels construction and development control in Yogyakarta City. Although social media has not been included yet in formal decision-making system at the municipal level, it has demonstrated its effectiveness as a whistleblower to control urban development that is harmful to the society.

Keywords: social media, whistleblower, hotel development, government policy, Yogyakarta City

1. INTRODUCTION: DILEMMA OF HOTEL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY OF YOGYAKARTA

Yogyakarta city is located in the middle of southern part of Java island and has population of 412 331 inhabitants in 2015. It is a city that has an important history in the development of Indonesia. Between 1946-1949, this city was once became the capital of the country. Yogyakarta city and four other surrounding districts formed into single area called Yogyakarta Special Province. Because of its importance role before, during, and after the independence, the city is called Yogyakarta Special Province with Law merits. One of the privileges is that the King of Yogyakarta Palace automatically become the Governor of Yogyakarta Special Province. Yogyakarta city is the capital and the center of all activities in the region.

Based on its potential, problems, and strategic issues that have been developed within the existing planning documents, the city of Yogyakarta has a medium-term objectives as a city of qualified, distinct, and inclusive education, culture-based tourism, and servicing centers, that respect to environment and social economy. Obviously, education, culture, tourism, and services are the backbone of the development of Yogyakarta city. Yogyakarta has become a national education destination where as many as 139 universities and other higher education institution are located. The large number of arrivals from all over Indonesia who come to this city make the city of Yogyakarta is often referred to as the melting point of Indonesia.

In related to tourism, Yogyakarta city and its surrounding is also well known as a rich tourist destination, both cultural and natural. With the increasing development of tourism in Yogyakarta in the last decade, especially in the hinterland, the accommodation needs for tourism is also increasing. Because the location and access were deemed most convenient and profitable, a lot of accommodation especially hotels have been built in the city of Yogyakarta. Up to 2015, there were 96 five-star hotel (62 of them are located in the city of Yogyakarta) with nearly 10 thousand rooms and 1081 unclassified rooms (362) of which are located in the city of Yogyakarta). The development of five-star hotel in the last 5 years is rising rapidly. In 2011 the number of five-star hotel is 41 and rose about 135% in 2016. Meanwhile there is unclassified accommodations which tend to be the same as 1063 in 2011 and tend to be equal to 1081 in 2016 (Yogyakarta Statistical Bureau, 2016).

Inevitably, the addition of 55 hotels in the last 5 years in the city of Yogyakarta and surrounding areas have consequences on changing the urban environment, either land use, building density and intensity of increased transportation access. In one side this change positively is able to accommodate the increasing number of tourists. According to Yogyakarta Statistical Bureau

(2016) the average increase of foreign tourists in Yogyakarta is about 10%, while 15% for domestic tourists. With an increasing number of tourists, the room occupancy rate in star hotels in Yogyakarta can reach 58% in a year. Although not optimal, this number is able to move the city's economy and provide more employments.

On the contrary, increasing a large number of five-star hotel has put pressure on the environment, both physical and non-physical in Yogyakarta. The increasing number of hotel has added distress in the city, which is already congested, especially through the façade of the hotel which is typically high-rise buildings. In some areas around the construction of the hotel, too many complaints are due to disruption of ground water, which is commonly used population. Carrying capacity of the environment which tends to decline become a reason to fear the presence of a lot new five-star hotel. Five-star hotel with all the facilities and activities is also feared to affect the surrounding environment to be increasingly crowded, thus disturbing the peaceful environment that has been felt by the people around.



Figure 1. Response expression through memes that have been uploaded on social media frequently in response to the construction of the hotel which is considered detrimental to the city (source: <https://www.facebook.com/jogjajangandijual/> accessed 20.2.2017).

This dilemma was faced by the city of Yogyakarta and its government in accelerating the development goals that must be achieved. On the one hand, the city government should be able to translate the needs of the development in tourism that is the backbone of Yogyakarta development by providing associated facilities, particularly five-star hotel accommodation. In fact, when the plan was realized, by giving permission to investors to build hotels in the city of Yogyakarta, then some of concerns, criticisms, and protests have been faced by Yogyakarta city government. Most of the "resistance" was commissioned by the public through new media, the Internet and social media. This paper aims to see how the role of social media are widely used by people to control the construction of the hotel (five-star) in the city of Yogyakarta. Furthermore, this paper also aims to look at how social media functionality and its position is seen from the perspective of the municipality, especially in decision-making processes.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY: REVIEW AND METHOD

The development of internet and communication media has increased the use of social media/network to interact with general public. There are some concerns and limitation about the use of social media especially related to the usability and reliability of the information gathered. De Waal (2014) indicated that rapid development of new media in the entire world has affected the balance among spaces in lower hierarchy, in the city and its parts of built environment. Unbalanced urban development can suddenly be transformed into another performance that consists of private, public, and other typology of spaces in a quick time. It is also transforming not just the media ecosystem to be more powerful, but also other domains of public life, a cyber culture (Pramod, 2010).

Social media represents one of strong computer-mediated tools that allow social interaction among people and to create, share or exchange information and ideas and simultaneously cooperate and participate in virtual communities and network (Severo, 2015). Social media are one of the most recent and rapidly growing phenomena (Facebook (2004), Panoramio (2005), Twitter (2006), Foursquare (2009) and Instagram (2010)) and are essential in generating bottom-up information (Arribas-Bel et al., 2015). In daily life, it can play a decisive role in motivating, empowering and engaging citizens, by creating new communication

channels and opportunities of sharing ideas and information. Moreover, it can unleash innovation on the ground. By combining data, from text to geographical information and video, it is possible to create an all-encompassing synthetic view (CIVITAS, 2015).

In the context of urban environmental management, social media monitoring can help councils to better understand their residents. By setting up keyword searches relevant to local authority priorities and through active listening, the authorities can better gauge what issues citizens have, what they are taking about and to respond accordingly (CIVITAS, 2015). Social media have a great potential in increasing a new two-sided communication based on listening and engaging people in a transparent and up-to-date way to ultimately build a loyal community that will be supportive to the overall efforts and plans of local governments. To support its implementation, local authorities are advised to actively participate in online conversation, which can be done by creating or participating in existing communities on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or other social networks. There is an important need for the local government to provide staff who responsible for the organization's social media involvement and to manage, attract, engage the member of the community and nurture participation (CIVITAS, 2015). Nevertheless the challenge is how to reach people and improve the level of interaction using social media and offer real-time communication and answer all the requests in the fastest way.

Social media is likely to change the functioning of urban spaces as a permanent flow of interactive information will change the behavior of citizens and visitors into a dynamic urban consumerism (Pentl, 2009). Digital media information shared by group members for example will affect group behavior in space and time. Its digital spatiality tends to shape the future morphology and interaction patterns in urban agglomeration (Arribas-Bel et al., 2015). Unfortunately, social media data can be varied and unstructured. Evidence drawn from social media becomes useful and far more powerful when matched with other data sources. Conversely, other data sources also enable the corroboration and verification of social media data (Leavey, 2013). It means that conducting social media as powerful informative and interactive data for an intervention of urban development needs a special unit that capable to handle them.

There are three benefits of social media that more powerful than traditional media in changing personal, group, and community perspective. Social media's potential to effectively engage a larger public has been also recognised by mainstream media. First, internet becomes the convergence modes that able to elaborate all fabrics of the activities in our lives, from leisure to work, from sport to politics. Castells et. al (2007) noted that "the communicational power of internet is being distributed to all realms of social life, just as the electric grid and the electric engine distributed energy in industrial society". Second, social media has multiple choices, multiple channels for the transmission of messages, which may be addressed to one or to many people through various possible networks. Castells et. al (2007) agreed that this is a key social change brought about by the Internet. This does not mean that social media and new ITC have the best democratic potential just because allows many to many communication. However, factors such as social diversity, state control, cultural practices, inequality, and the quality of local infrastructure affect access to new technology, and online arenas, as sources of influence over the democratic status. Third, social media transforms people from consumers to producers. Through social media, the role of the audience shifted from passive to interactive, creative and autonomous (Castells et. al, 2007).

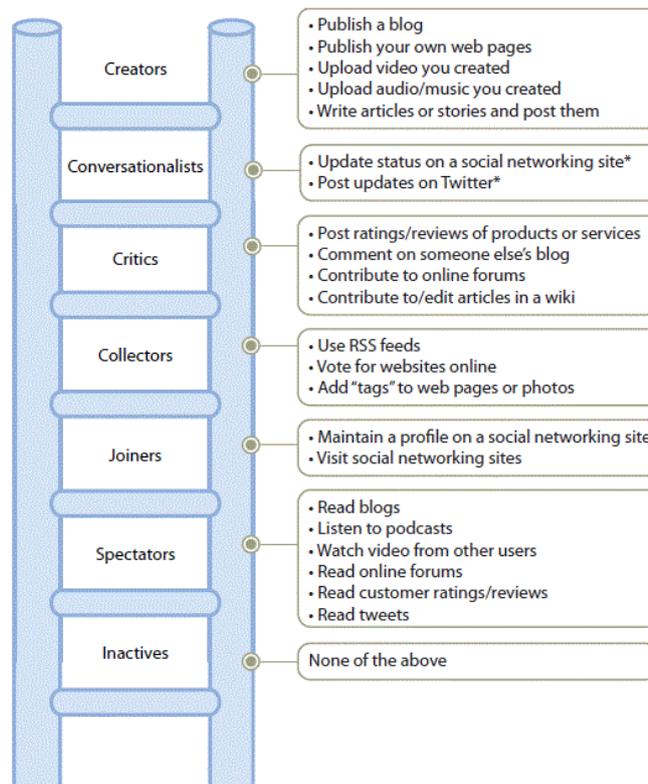


Figure 2. Social technographics ladder, 7 profiles of consumers behavior in social media (source: <http://forrester.typepad.com/groundswell/2010/01/conversationalists-get-onto-the-ladder.html> accessed 22.1.2017).

Community participation in development is also very possible to be observed, especially with the help of social media, which is currently more popular in the community. Community involvement has also experienced significant growth, with the help of information technology. Foth et al. (2011) highlighted that there is a clear sense of positioning urban informatics to play a role in the development of the public sphere and community. People can also do engagement in almost all areas and the results can be linked directly to their city. From a ladder of how community participation is seated, we recognize the 3 groups and subdivided into eight levels that have been categorized by Arnstein (1969). All three groups are class of non-participation as the basic level of citizen participation, class of tokenism as the intermediate level of citizen participation, and class of citizen power as the advance level of citizen participation. Meanwhile, in the new media, intensity of use of social media can also indicate the level of community participation in urban development through social media (see Figure 2), indicated by a ladder that explains how community participation in the system of social media that has been developed by Forrester (2010). Each step on the ladder represents a group of consumers involved in social technologies more than the previous steps. To join the category on a step, a consumer-need only participate in one of the listed activities on specific context at least monthly. The categories are not exclusive. An individual may be classified into more than one category.

3. URBAN DEVELOPMENT FROM SOCIAL MEDIA PERSPECTIVE: A WHISTLEBLOWER

Practice of five-star hotels development began in early 2012, along with the change Mayor of Yogyakarta. The new mayor in the previous period held a strategic position as the deputy mayor. This new mayor is planned to lead the city of Yogyakarta on 2012-2017's period. The elected mayor is indeed very progressive towards investors who will invest and develop inside the city of Yogyakarta, especially investment for tourism facilities or five-star hotel accommodation. At the beginning of his term, a few unpopular policies, such as weakening *Segosegawe* activities (bike to work, and bike to school) that has been initiated in his previous term has also been done. Protests over unpopular policies have also spilled over into criticism that appeared in social media with the keyword *Ora Masalah Har* (its not Problem, Har!). "Har" itself is an shortened name of the word "Haryadi", the Yogyakarta City Mayor's name.



Figure 3. Overview of the construction of five-star hotels in the city of Yogyakarta that was claimed to give negative impacts to the community, since it polluted and destroyed the urban environment (source: <https://koranyogya.com/pembangunan-yogyakarta-yang-berlebihan-meresahkan-warga-sekitar/>).

Hotel development that emerged in the early months of the new mayor's administration seemed to grow simultaneously. Visually, the community of Yogyakarta will be able to mark the number of heavy equipment, land cover, and the operation of crain on hotel construction site. Residents around the city of Yogyakarta were entering the city would be able to mark the difference in this atmosphere. Several independent non-governmental environmental agency (WALHI, *Wahana Lingkungan Hidup*) has also criticized and reprimand to the Government of the city of Yogyakarta on high air pollution and disruption of the visual quality of the town due to the construction of this hotel simultaneously. Figure 3 shows how the atmosphere is dramatically changed and can be seen in the city of Yogyakarta as a result of the construction of the hotels.

The hotel construction is rampant totaling 87 new hotels (star and non-star and some of them still have not completed yet) makes some investors and developers also became interested, so at the end of 2013, for a construction permit in Yogyakarta City Development Permit Agency reached 104 applications, 87 of them were released and get permission. Until now there are other 17 construction permits have been in waiting list and cannot be accessed by the public to know the actual condition. The hotel development process has also raised concerns many citizens of their environmental conditions. They have claimed that their environments became polluted, some important access road to their location are damaged and closed, disturbing dust of construction materials, noise of machines and so on. Concerns like this may occur naturally, as it often emerges from the investor in violation of the construction rule set or not suitable with the former agreements signed when applying for a development permit to the Development Permit Agency. With the growing disruptions of the environment, both physical and non-physical, particularly visual, air, and water pollution including groundwater reduction problems, the community began to respond by taking all media that can be used, including social media. Case of reduced ground water in the areas of Gowongan District and Miliran District due to the construction of hotels, triggered the community to highlight the impact of the hotel construction with more intense. *Jogja Ora Didol* (*Jogja is not for sale*, Figure 4) and *Jogja Asat* (*The drought of Jogja*, Figure 5) are two popular

taglines of the community resistance in the period of 2013 - 2014. In addition, beside of using social media channels (facebook and twitter) to exchange information and data, they have also used them to develop relevant strategies to concrete actions in real world. They have also utilized other social media (youtube) for sharing some videos related to the action they are doing (Figure 6).



Figure 4. Jogja Ora didol (*Jogja is not for sale*). A movement that is dominantly emerged from the social media (virtual world) to the real urban world (source: <https://www.facebook.com/jogjajangandijual/> accessed 20.2.2017).

Based on the various problems faced in the hotel construction in the city of Yogyakarta, 150 respondents answered through questionnaires distribution actually stated that the construction of the hotel has been mostly about environmental issues, followed by permit issues, land suitability issues, socialization issues, and issue of land compensation. Nonetheless, there has been varying from 20% of respondents stated that the construction of the hotel has not caused any problems, both for them personally and for the city of Yogyakarta broadly (see the result completely in Figure 5). Thus, topics that have been revealed by the public through social media significantly represented what have been perceived by the majority of the people of Yogyakarta. In the reality, the major topics that emerged in social media has also been concerned about impacts on the environment, people around the hotels did not feel to give principle agreement or permits, land suitability that felt disturbing the existing dwellings, and so forth. In this case, the social media have been able to portrait the voice of the community. Meanwhile, through the same respondents, it has been noted that 32% of them was taken advantage of social media to be active through the virtual activity in response to the information related to the hotel development problems, 51% was to utilize social media passively just to get relevant information, and 17% did not use it. This percentage shows that the community is quite active in using social media to follow the development of the city.

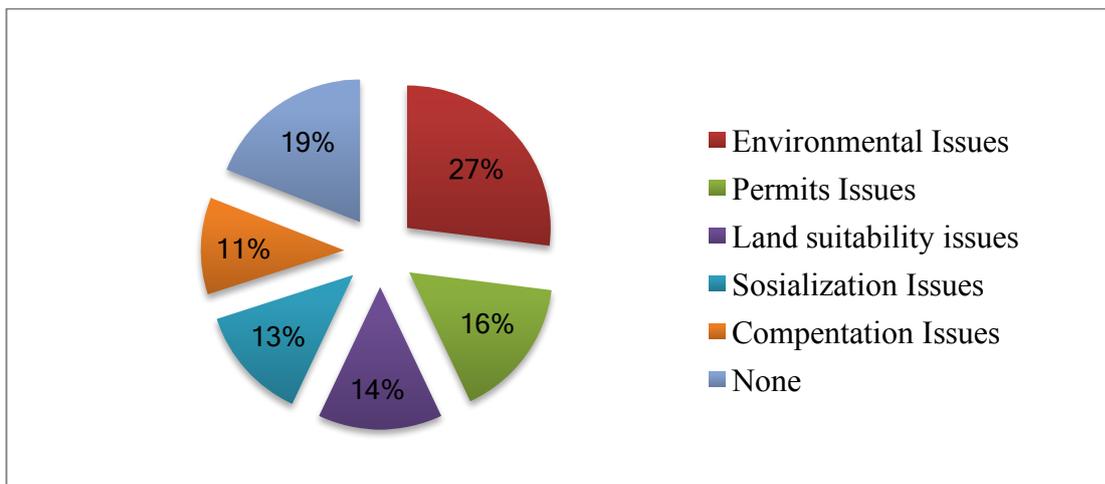


Figure 5. The issues posed by the hotel construction that is felt by the citizens of Yogyakarta City.

From the construction of the hotel within a period of approximately 3 years, social media has positioned itself as a useful media or tool to update the existing conditions in the field, urban area. The term whistleblower here is used to illustrate how in a rapid real-time, social media is able to report and control those conditions existed in the field related to the problems posed in the hotel construction and development. They make use of the facilities available in the social media effectively, ranging from conversation, sharing of information, to uploading images and videos. Social media also directly benefit the community learning associated with developmental effects that go beyond the carrying capacity of the environment and it is automatically be able to increase the environmental awareness of the public. There are three agreements that emerged in the community level through the movement in the social media. First one is that the community would boycott the hotels that create the problems. Second, the community will help to observe kampungs (urban villages) area based on the level of problems they faced related to the construction of the hotel which is very widespread. Third, the community will warn and supervise the Yogyakarta City government in providing and issuing the hotel construction permits, and if the worrisome condition is emerged, it would be an urgent need for the dismissal the development permission. Spatially, the movement of controlling development by utilizing social media extends also to the outer region of Yogyakarta City, especially in its neighboring area like Sleman Regency (north of Yogyakarta City), where there are also some construction of hotels, malls, and apartments with highrise building structure.



Figure 6. Jogja Asat (the Drought of Jogja). It is the theme of the community to show the depletion of ground water in most of the hotel construction sites in the city of Yogyakarta (source: <https://www.facebook.com/jogjajangandijual/> accessed 20.2.2017).

Through the available data shows how the relationship between the development policy by the city government of Yogyakarta City and the public response through social media. Mid-year of 2012 was the start of a new government in the city of Yogyakarta, which is immediately followed by a policy of opening the big tap to permit large investments in the construction of hospitality facilities in the city of Yogyakarta. At the beginning of the same year, it has started a lot of hotel development that carried out simultaneously by investors and developers. These simultaneous and massive developments have given direct unfavorable effects for the community, so they began to leave a comment, response, and criticism to the city government. "Jogja Ora Didol" or Jogja is not for sale tagline began to roll through social media since mid 2013. The movement was enlarged and followed by activities in the real life of the city, through a range of criticism that was written on the walls of the city, related theme songs, theatrical demonstrations and more. Despite the criticism against the government of the city, but as always, the people of Yogyakarta have been able to package it into fresh and creative ways. At the end of 2013 the Yogyakarta government finally issued a moratorium on the construction of hotels. Along with this momentum, a protest against the construction of the hotel was also still ongoing with the theme and tagline "Jogja Asat" (the Drought of Jogja). This theme was carried out by observing direct result of the construction and operation of new hotels which disrupted the society. The movement still continues to this day and is estimated to be bigger if any mistaken measures or adverse effects of the construction of the hotels.

4. RESPONDING SOCIAL MEDIA'S CONTROL AND ITS FOLLOW UP

Finally, in late November 2013, the Mayor of Yogyakarta City issued Mayor Regulation (Perwal) No. 77 Year 2013 regarding the control of hotel developments. Content of this regulation is that there is a hotel moratorium in the city of Yogyakarta until a predetermined time limit. The mayor regulation mentioned that it is valid until the beginning of December 2016, but last year when the period was ended, again it has been extended until 2019. The similar regulation also issued by the regent of Sleman

Regency on 21 November 2015 by the decree No. 63 Year 2015 on temporary termination of hotels, apartments, and condotels (condominium hotel) in Sleman Regency until 2021. These moratorium regulations have also been supported by the Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI) Yogyakarta, because until 2014 the occupancy rate of star-rated hotels in Yogyakarta was still below standard, which was about 57.48% and jasmine-class hotel at 26.77%. Although the moratorium has been done, but the construction permit for the dozens of hotels that have already been issued previously remain continued. It means that although there is a moratorium, several hotel developments can be seen still ongoing. Citizen's control through social media is also still underway, although the scale and intensity of the operations has diminished.



Figure 7. Social media that has been used to inform the citizen movement in the city of Yogyakarta. Left, youtube, social media with type of content sharing, while the right, Facebook with type of social networks and collecting materials (source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxXer_winvo and <https://www.facebook.com/jogjajangandijual/> accessed 20.2.2017).

Momentum of the moratorium issued by the City Government of Yogyakarta is in the right time with the enlargement society movement in criticizing hotel development. Many criticisms are done through various types of social media, as shown in Figure 5 above. Social media really has become a fit channel for the community to freely pour what they have known about the adverse effects of the environment near location of the hotel developments. This event directly multiply number of whistleblower that becomes increasing. The social media has also support related news to be stronger and sharper on how the effects of the construction of the hotels has damaged conditions of the city. Nevertheless, whether it is true that social media has been a main cause of the city government's action for issuing the moratorium, surely the City Government will reject this idea.

Several interviews were conducted as confirmation to the staffs of municipal government who stated that information from the social media has been too exaggerated, and actually the moratorium is more influenced by urging of the Governor of Yogyakarta Special Region Province.

The moratorium was due to the insistence of the Governor of DIY Province (Yogyakarta Special Region Province). Problems of development hotel's benchmarks are basically rare groundwater and high congestion, so this is a technical requirement problem of how a hotel is supposed to be built. Jogja Asat (the drought of Jogja) movement is actually too exaggerated, so people may see that the moratorium that has been decided by the city government is due to this movement (AFR, R & D Dept., Yogyakarta City Planning Bureau).

From above description, indirectly social media has been denied as direct cause of the issuance of the moratorium. But it is clear that the effects of social media movement, especially activities that actualized in the field may have attracted the attention of the Governor of Yogyakarta Special District Province, so he as the governor who covers 5 districts in the province, prompted the city government of Yogyakarta to respond them. From other interview, it has added a statement that the channel information from any source will always be a source of useful information for the City of Yogyakarta.

Regional or urban is decided certainly and surely by the way to look at dynamics in the region arena, common technical provisions, as well as input from various stakeholders. Information from the social media is just one type of aspiration, nothing more. This means that language in social media will be understood by the city government as a common language like other language from different media. Just because social media is now a trend in the society, it is as if information from social media dominates the entire information. (WHD, Development Control Dept., Yogyakarta City Planning Bureau).



Figure 8. The decision (development policy) making process that puts the data/information from social media as indirect data, to be filtered and perceived by involved stakeholders.

Broadly speaking, it has been recognized by the city government that social media is not a source of official information, which is then used by the government as a decision-making process. The data from social media has still being used as a reference by the involved stakeholders. Of course, how filtering process and perceived level of the data by involved stakeholders will affect the objectivity of social media as a data. Nevertheless, the dynamics of social media very rapidly appear to have affected the dynamics of the city, so it can be read or captured by stakeholders, including the governor. Escalation of the dynamics of the social media puts it to has been able to be utilized by the grassroots community to voice what is perceived, associated with the development of their city, as depicted in Figure 8.

5. SOCIAL MEDIA AS EFFECTIVE WHISTLEBLOWER, IMPORTANT INDIRECT SOURCE FOR DSS

From the data in the field that is related how social media is used to figure out the construction of five-star hotels in Yogyakarta and the government's response through a moratorium policy, clearly shows that there is a close linkage between the both. Social media has successfully positioned itself as an effective channel for public participation in the city that gives detailed controls over the existing development of the city. Social media has successfully acted as a whistleblower to show urban development that causes problems in people's daily life. Thus, in the city of Yogyakarta the ladder of citizen behavior in social media has been optimally can be applied by a community very well. Social media has also effectively been able to actualize the community participation in urban development.

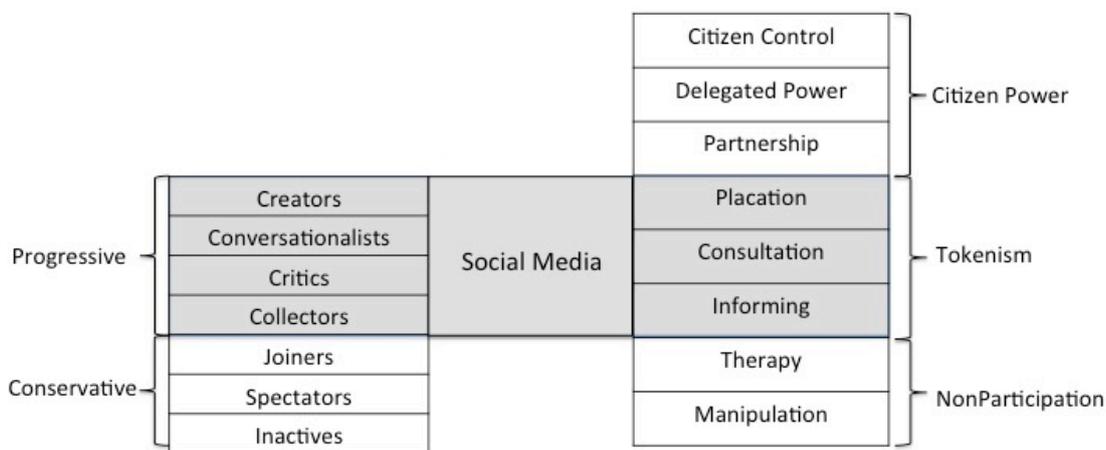


Figure 9. The position of social media in the case of hotels development in the city of Yogyakarta. In the citizen behavior in the use of social media has been classified at progressive type, but in citizen participation by using social media is still in the category of tokenism.

Associated with the decision-making process, it became clear that social media has not been directly recognized as an official source of data that is procedurally referred by the city government. Although the aggregate has a large number and have a homogenous tendency, data from social media still can not occupy a strategic position and cannot be used directly in the decision making process. Only social media data that later became formal source of news in the conventional media or reference used by the involved stakeholders involved, will be accommodated in the decision making process. Related to this fact, actually the data from social media has indirectly been as important instrument in the decision-making process. There is a tendency, that the data of social media that can be used as a reference needs specific requirements in term of the amount of content characteristics and the duration of content characteristics in the social media, such as the case of the development of rated-star hotels in the city of Yogyakarta where already took almost 1.5 years. Tokenism system of decision-making system at the local government level has been clearly become evident in treating social media. In Tokenism, the government creates an image that they no longer hinder the public participation. But actually in the reality, public participation is allowed, but they still ignore it in the formal decision indeed. The government keeps executing the original plan, regardless of the participation of the community. Going forward, at the local level, social media should be an essential and authorized reference to be elaborated as important data in the decision-making process in various scope of development in the city. Of course, to reach this direction, the city government requires a systematic and reliable data screening process. The city governments also need to open up the opportunities and to empower the potentials of social media for public participation to the citizen power level optimally.

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