An Explorative Study on Social Media Blocking in Indonesia

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Abstract
The internet access blocking to the highly used Social Media platform was a new Indonesian government occurrence. Even though it was for a good purpose and did not block full access, it triggered many protests toward the Government. This study aims to get Indonesian's perspective toward Social Media blocking regarding the reasons, the Government's action, and their readiness if there is no Social Media blocking. Convenience survey sampling was conducted to acquire quantitative and qualitative data among Indonesians. The results indicate that Indonesian favored Social Media blocking if it has clear reasons and not ready if the Government held none of such action. They also demand the Government to provide notification, duration estimation, and guaranteed access to mainstream media. However, they object to Social Media blocking if the motives are regarding freedom of politics, religions, and sexual orientation issues.

Keywords: social media, negative content, social media blocking, internet access

Paper type: Research paper

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INTRODUCTION

Many countries have adopted internet censorship, including Indonesia (Gray 2016). Indonesia takes blacklist censorship, which means all the URLs or domains of the website remain accessible to Indonesian citizens as long as not included in the list (TrustPositif 2014). The blacklist itself is derived as the URL or domain list, which considerably contains negative content. Domain Name System (DNS) Server technology is used to implement filtering such as Nawala and TrustPositif. However, this filtering method is not very effective since, as many as blacklist added, there are also new negative content websites created (Sirait 2016). Another domain-based filtering weakness is the website-based, while now the negative content itself is not always produced by a particular website. For example, Facebook is a website that helps people to communicate and socialize, but they can also use it to share negative content.

On the one hand, a website provides benefits for the users, and on the other hand, it can be a medium for abusive purposes. Then, the Indonesian Government released aduankonten.id as the channel to report negative content based on its content (MCI 2019a; Islami 2017). The primary objective is to help Social Media platforms to moderate the content. Social media are known as user-generated content media, where the users themselves produce much content, not by the platform. The study on the Twitter platform by Tsugawa and Ohsaki (2015) mentioned that negative messages spread 1.25 times the speed of positive and neutral messages. According to Ali (2017), Along with the increasing use of Social Media, it also intensifies hoaxes' spread (fake news and disinformation) in Indonesia. Even according to ICT Watch Digital Literacy Officer Acep Syaripudin in a discussion held by Forum Ngobras (Tashandra 2019), Indonesian tend to like sharing negative content, and teenagers tend to upload negative content. Indeed, the Government cannot block/remove the content by themselves since it is on the website owned by the Social Media platform. Nevertheless, it complements the flag/report feature, especially for the fake news or hate speech, which the Social Media Platform hardly moderates.

On 22 May 2019, the Indonesian Government blocked several Social Media which highly used by citizens for the first time, i.e., Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and Telegram, during the riots after the presidential election result

announced (Netblocks 2019a). The access blocking occurred for three days and only in Jakarta Province to prevent fake news and hate speech, aggravating the situation. Even though only the video and image sharing feature blocked, and citizens could find another way to communicate, many protests were raged towards the Government. They argued that Social Media blocking had troubled commerce transactions because many sellers and buyers use it as a shopping channel in Indonesia (Masyrafina, 2019; CNN Indonesia 2019). Another issue was Social Media blocking disrupted the people who relied on Social Media as the primary communication and working related media.

In Indonesia, social media blocking was intended to counter negative contents such as pornography, fake news/rumors, hate speech, terrorism/criminal/national security/public safety concern, and LGBT, with legal grounds (Shireeva et al. 2017). It was mandated on Indonesia Act Number 19 of 2016 Article 40 regarding Information and Electronic Transactions. Indonesia Government has the authority to terminate access or the content of information and Electronic transactions to prevent the dissemination of prohibited contents. Based on the reason, the legal grounds, and the government action, it seemly helped to stop rumors of fake news and hate speech. However, the Government must reconsider the action by acknowledging the adverse effects.

Social Media blocking is one of the internet shutdown methods categorized as a Service-specific (platform) shutdown (AccessNow 2018). Fourteen countries have utilized this method, i.e., Algeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, and Yemen. AccessNow research (2018) shows that any internet shutdown method has conjunction with state repression and increases violent protests. According to Garlick and Chli (2009), restricting social communication pacifies rebellious societies, but it has the opposite effect on peaceful ones. In the Social Media case, it threatens the rights of freedom, expression, communication and gains information. It also disrupts the economic activities and hinders communities' activities, which rely on Social Media. From the perspective of journalism, if media freedom is limited or the journalists have not reached the information, Social Media helps as a source of information that can be obtained faster (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008). Shirky (2011) and Brown (2013) argue that Social media platforms can strengthen democracy as they provide a channel for citizens

to share information and create what's called a shared awareness. Besides, democracy grows best in an environment that promotes free expression (Park 2016). Nevertheless, the right to communicate and obtain information has been protected in Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution, which states that everyone has the right to communicate and obtain information and has the right to seek, obtain, possess, store, process, and convey information using all types of channels available. Nonetheless, as per the UN Human rights Council consensus in 2018, the Internet is included as one of the human rights.

Based on the Social Media Blocking in Indonesia and the Social Media Blocking facts above, it intrigues the author to probe how Indonesian respond to Social Media Blocking through the study. This study covers the research questions of (1) whether Indonesian agree to such Government action, (2) what their preference are, and (3) are they ready if there is no Social Media Blocking practice. Above all, the author expects this study can harmonize the Government's decision concerning the citizen's point of view.

Literature

Internet shutdown has occurred in the world under government justification. Most of the common official reasons to shut down the Internet were public safety, national security, and fake news/hate speech/other related violation (AccessNow 2018). AccessNow (2018) defines internet shutdown as intentional disruption of the Internet or any other mean Internet-related services so that inaccessible or effectively unusable to a specific population or location. Internet censorship has a similar definition but more to content removal due to the justification. AccessNow is an international non-profit, human rights, public policy, and advocacy group dedicated to an open and free Internet that documented the world's internet shutdown. They found that the most internet shutdown occurrence in 2018 was in India, with 67% of the total world's shutdown or 134 incidents. Based on the scope and the shutdown orders, the internet shutdown was varied from national to local and from executive Government to non-Government. Both graphs are shown below.

Figure 1.

The number of internet shutdowns by country in 2018
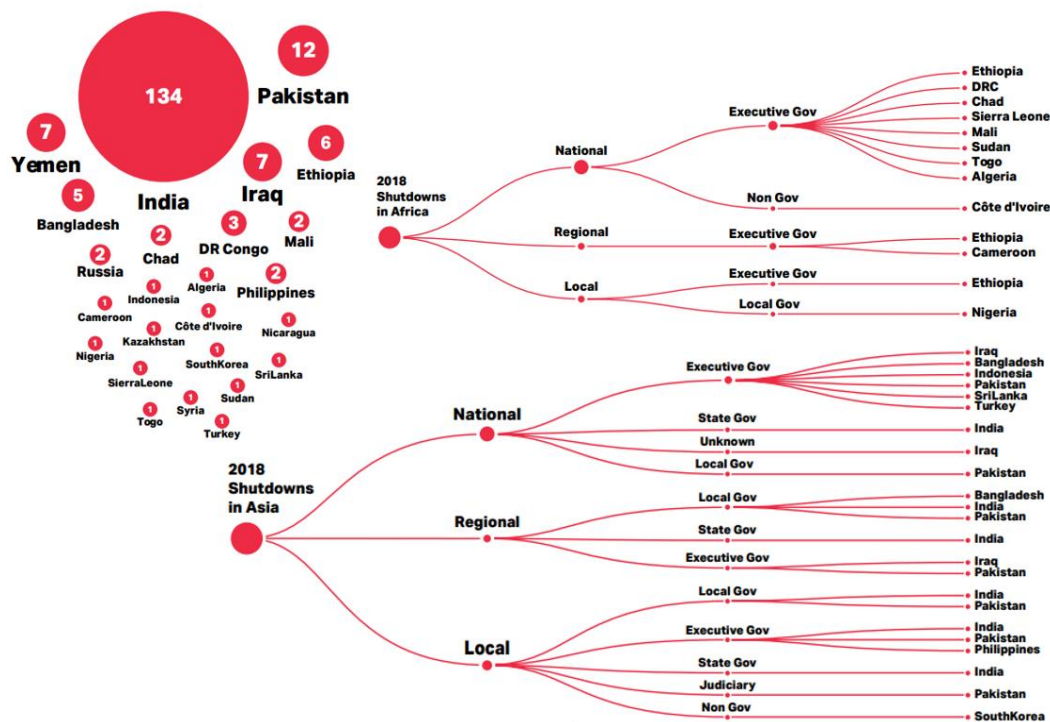
Source: AccessNow 2018

Based on Figure 1, most of the Indian internet shutdowns were restricted to the local level with 62%, while the rest was within the region or state level. It was minuscule to compare it with Indonesia. Indonesia only faced one internet shutdown in 2018. It was a temporary blocking on TikTok due to pornography content. If we see it wider since 2016, Indonesia has several internet censorships and internet shutdown occurrences either to content or access, as shown in Table 1.

Indonesia is a partly free country towards internet freedom. Several internet shutdowns by the Government were network disruption, social media blocking either access or the content, restricting anonymity, and arresting people due to their content (Freedom House 2018). There are many forms of internet shutdown, i.e., bandwidth throttling, broadband internet shutdown, mobile internet shutdown, internet blackout, and service-specific shutdown such as Social Media blocking (AccessNow 2018).

Table 1.

Internet censorship occurrence in Indonesia from 2016 until 2019

Time	Occurrence	Category
February 2016	LINE removed depicting LGBT emojis	Permanent only for the sticker
December 2016	BIGO Live was blocked due to pornography content	Temporary
July 2017	Telegram was blocked due to suspicion as a channel for the terrorist for communication and coordination	Temporary
January 2018	Google removed 14 out of 73 applications from Play Store due to LGBT theme content, which requested by theGovernment	Permanent only for Indonesian country
July 2018	Tik Tok was temporarily blocked due to pornography and other content violations	Temporary
May 2019	Facebook, Whatsapp, Instagram, Twitter, and Telegram were blocked on video and image sharing feature during the riot who protest the election due to fake news and hate-speech prevention	Temporary (3 days)
August 2019	Internet access in Papua and West Papua were stopped to curb disinformation and hate speech, which may provoke citizen	Temporary (2 weeks)

Source: Freedom House 2018; NetBlocks 2019a; Netblocks 2019b

Based on Table 1, there were only two permanent blocking for the content compares to temporary blocking. Furthermore, the issues for the blocking before 2019 were dominated by pornography and LGBT content. The blocking due to terrorism was only occurred once and not because of the content. It was due to suspicion of terrorist activity and coordination. Just in 2019, the Indonesian Government started to block access due to hate speech and fake news. The first was during the riot of the election result, categorized as Social Media blocking (See Figure 2). The second was in Papua and West Papua to curb disinformation and hate speech, categorized as Internet blackouts (See Figure 3).

Figure 2.

Report on Service disruption of Facebook, Telegram, Whatsapp, Instagram and Twitter from 22 May 2019 – 25 May 2019 (Netblocks 2019a)
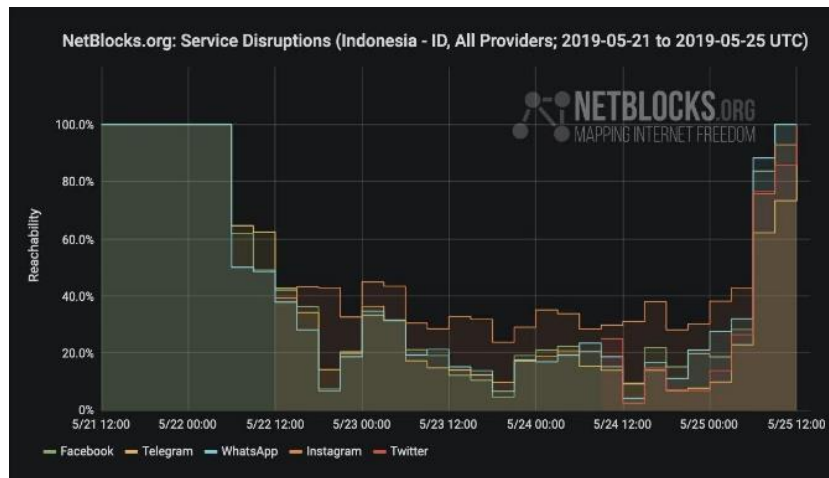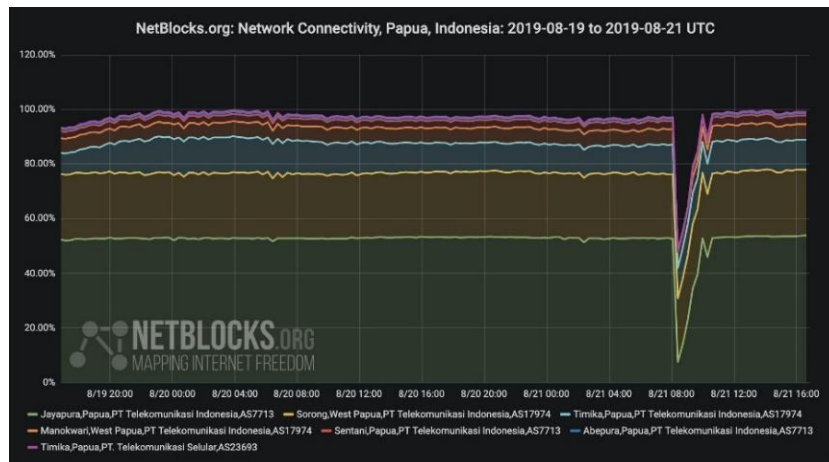

Figure 3.

Report on Network connectivity status among Papua and West Papua province during the Internet shutdown (Netblocks 2019b)

Hate speech and fake news have long been spread among society before 2019, but the trend has increased since 2018. Therefore, in January 2019, the Government launched Miss Lambe Hoaks, a weekly report of fake news and disinformation by a social media figure to counter fake news and educate society about negative content (MCI 2019b). This program's motive is that hate speech, and fake news (including disinformation) are often combined to intensify the provocation (Fauzi et al. 2019).

There are several government programs to eradicate negative content and still running now as listed below:

1. Aduankonten.id, a website to report negative content or website through https://aduankonten.id

2. Indonesiabaik.id, a Government Public Relations Program collaboration across government institutions that educate society about negative content.

3. Negative content data crawler named Automatic Identification System (AIS) that the human moderates to help eradicate negative contents in website and social media.

4. Miss Lambe Hoaks, a weekly report of fake news and disinformation by social media figure to counter negative contents that have been identified by aduankonten.id and AIS.

5. Siberkreasi.id, the collaboration of communities, privates, academics, citizens, the Government, and media to help to develop digital literacy in Indonesia

Those programs welcomed by the community and considered quite successful since most of them are relatively new and launched between 2018 and 2019. Only aduankonten.id, which was already implemented about seven years ago. Nevertheless, in the earlier aduankonten.id was namely TrustPositif and only processed negative content reports of the website, specified by domain or URL. Even though the Indonesian Government has many programs to mitigate negative content, yet Social Media blocking was unavoidable. The spread of hate speech and fake news in Social Media was feared to worsen the riot. However, based on the discussion above (See Introduction), there were many adverse effects rather than the benefits of Social Media blocking. Therefore, the Government should reconsider, and it is necessary to acknowledge the citizen's opinion towards this issue.

METHOD

The study approach is exploratory since the access blocking towards highly used Social Media platforms was a quite new experience for Indonesian. It does not intend to provide conclusive evidence but helps to understand the problem (Saunders et al. 2012).

This study uses a survey as the primary data. Since it was an explorative study, the author used convenience sampling and did not determine the exact number of the participant. It aims for a minimum of 30 but opens for as many as participants can be obtained. Most of the data were quantitative except for the participants' opinion data that was qualitative with open questions, which will be discussed below.

The data was collected by circulating an online survey among Indonesian Social Media users via Whatsapp. The message which contains the survey link was spread among the author's Whatsapp Group and contact. Then, the author asked a favor to share it among the participants' WhatsApp Group and contact so that the survey reached broader participants. It is expected to be shared repeatedly across other groups and contact by the next hand of the participants. The online survey was opened from 7 November 2019 to 31 November 2019.

The author uses frequency distribution and cross-tabulation for quantitative data analysis (Anol 2011; Tranmer and Elliot 2008). The frequency distribution of a variable is a summary of the frequency (or percentages) of individual values or ranges of values for that variable. Cross-tabulation is a table that describes the frequency (or percentage) of all combinations of two or more nominal or categorical variables. The categorical data can be binary (0 and 1) or Likert scale (different levels to express how much they agree or disagree with a particular statement). Both frequency distribution and cross-tabulation are commonly called a descriptive analysis to provide basic qualities of data. For the qualitative data analysis, open questions are used to capture the participants' opinions on this study. The data will be analyzed using coding to categorize the information to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs 2007).

The analytical framework of the study is focused on (1) acquiring the necessary information about negative content perceived by Indonesian, (2) how they respond to Social Media Blocking by the Government, and (3) do they think that Indonesians are ready with no Social Media blocking. The detailed information of each number is explained below.

Firstly, this study aims to get the information from the participant who has Social Media Account and is limited to 15 years old and above. Most Social Media platforms restrict the minimum age of the users of at least 13 years old, such as Facebook (2019), Instagram (2019), and Youtube (2019). However, they

mention that they will follow the regulation applied in the country. Indonesians are legally adults as valid voters at 17 years old, as for marriage and land ownership at 18 years old and applicable for civil law at 21 years old (Susanti 2018). Nevertheless, the minimum age of 17 is considered less representative because there is the transition age from teenager to adult, and they already have Social Media account. Therefore, the author chose the minimum age in between. Furthermore, a 15-year-old citizen is legally approved to witness a trial (HIR 1941). Other demographic information such as Sex and Education was added to get the logical idea of the maturity, gender, and education level.

Secondly, the author tries to relate between the negative content that is familiar to the participant and the Social Media blocking. Hence, the participant will be asked about negative content according to their definition. Even though the Government has already defined the negative contents (Indonesian Act No. 11 of 2008 regarding Information and Electronic Transactions), it felt necessary to know the negative contents from the participants' perspective. For example, LGBT may not be categorized as negative content, but it is considered for some people. Actually, no Indonesian law classified LGBT as negative content, but according to Table 1, LGBT was one of the requested issues to be removed from the platform. Therefore, the author added it as one of the options for this question. After that, they will also be asked how they encounter, what platform, and how they respond to negative content to enrich the survey. It was also necessary to present them with a question regarding who is responsible for taking down negative content to relate it with Social Media blocking. So, it can be tested whether who responsible is correlated to Social Media blocking since both associated with the Government.

Thirdly, the participants will be asked about the possible option of Social Media blocking they prefer, what circumstances, why they agree and disagree. Whether they can think about the drawbacks of Social Media blocking, then ask contemplation question whether they ever thought about no Social media blocking at all. It is the major and important result that could be answered through this study. It eventually could resolve whether Social Media blocking is appropriate for Indonesian from the public's perspective. Also, for 'what circumstances' options were developed from AccessNow (2018) in the part of official

justification vs. actual causes of internet shutdowns in 2018. The options were added with morality concern since the negative contents are related to attitude judgment such as pornography, LGBT, gambling, violence, and hate speech.

Lastly, the participants would be presented with the question about Indonesian readiness towards no Social Media blocking. This question is asked to ponder what they think about Indonesian digital literacy. According to Jamaludin (2017), as of now, Indonesian digital literacy is still low. Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association and Indonesian Telematics Society mentioned that it is one reason why hoaxes are easily spread to the public. Several questions as the breakdown of readiness toward no Social Media blocking could indirectly assess Indonesian digital literacy. The answers could also be the justification over their judgment towards it. The participants could act as the evaluator of Indonesian Social Media users with questions such as Indonesian awareness toward negative content, whether Indonesian can differentiate the fake news and valid news, and other related questions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSSION

Throughout the online survey, the author obtained 141 responses from 7 November 2019 to 31 November 2019. There were 5 out of 141 who are not Social Media users. Most participants were in the age range 29-35 with 47.8% and followed by 22-28 with 26.5%. The gender was dominated by Male (67%) with a ratio of about twice the Female participant (33%). The education level was more on the Bachelor's Degree (61.8%) compare to High school (5.9%) and Master's degree and above (32.4%).

The Negative Contents: Definition, Social Media, and Who should Responsible

Figure 1.

The negative content according to the participant opinion
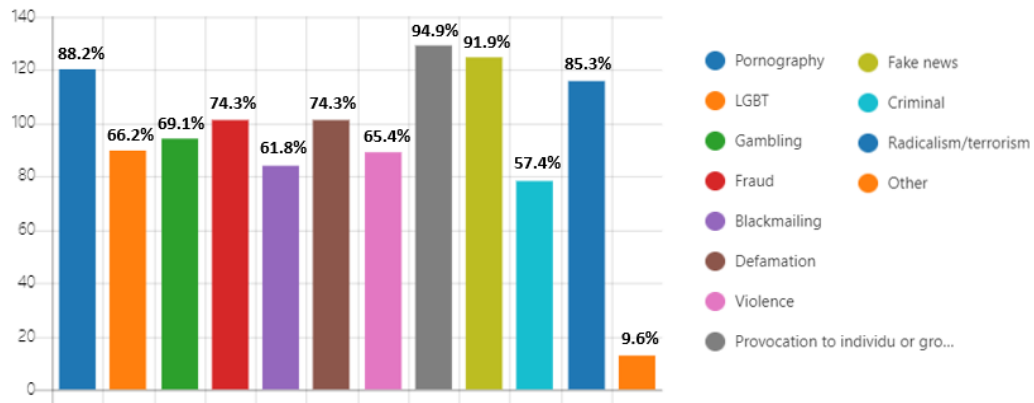
According to Figure 4, the participants tend to define negative content as pornography, the provocation to ethnicity, religion, race, and sectarian (hate speech), fake news, and radicalism/terrorism with more than 80% vote. The least percentage of negative content options is criminal (57.4%), with about half of the participants voting. The LGBT content was voted by 66.2 % of the participant, which lower than Fraud (74.3%), Defamation (74.3%), and Gambling (69.1%). The content LGBT was relatively counted as negative content but not as prominent as the other negative content. Meanwhile, only 9.6% of the other negative content of participants such as bullying, disturbing content, and child prostitution.

Facebook is the platform where most participants encountered negative content by 75%. WhatsApp, Instagram, and Youtube have a similar percentage of about 60%. Twitter has only about 16.9% negative content exposure to the participants. The result relatively corresponds to Ministry of Communication and Informatics data where the negative content report of Facebook and Instagram was increased about four times, while Twitter was sharply decreased by about 90% in 2018 compared to the previous year (MCI 2018a).

Based on how the participants usually encounter negative content, most of them were exposed while scrolling feeds or seeing friends' post/status (87.5%). The second most way, the participants get shared it from their group (61.8%),

while the third, 48.5% of the participant received negative content from someone they know. As a note, the way the participant encounter negative content in this study was counted as either active or passive action. They can either browse for it or unintentionally encounter it during Social Media activities. Besides, the participants who choose other (5.1%) mentioned that they also find negative content on the comment below the post.

Figure 2.

How the participant usually responds while encountering negative content by Education level
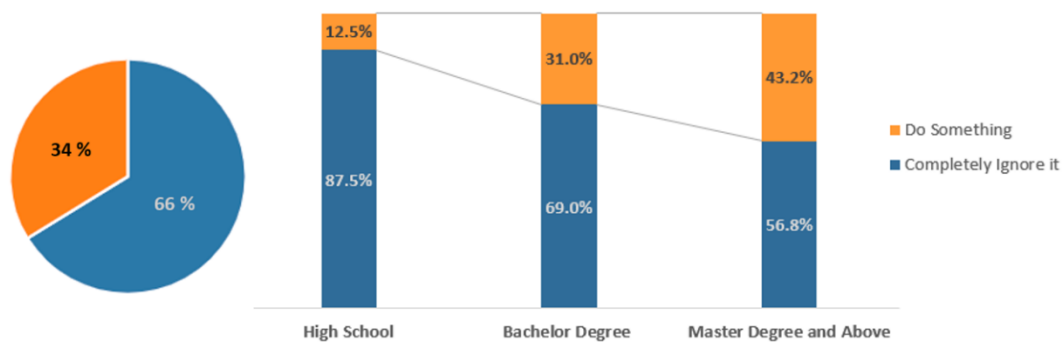
An interesting finding was discovered after the author ran the cross-tabulation of the Education and 'How the participants' response while encountering negative content' shown in Figure 5. The result shows that 66% of the participants 'completely ignore it'. However, the rest participants (34%) tend to 'do something' if the education level is higher. They tend to check the validity of information (71.7%) and report to the platform (67.4%). In contrast, only about 10% of the participants report negative content to the government authority (See Figure 6). Even though many people have reported negative content to the Government (MCI 2018a; MCI 2019c; Siber Positif 2019), people tend to report it to the Social Media platform itself rather than to the Government. It most likely that the flag or report conveys affordance and accessible in the Social Media platform, such as the clickable link below the post. For the communication media only, such as WhatsApp, the participants might prefer to report to the Government since there is no reporting mechanism in the platform. However, it is only the author's opinion and needs to be further studied.

The result above does not imply that theGovernment fails to run this program, but as mentioned before, theGovernment complements the Social Media flagging feature. It is more of a choice rather than a trust competition, disregarding the outcome. The programs could help the public validate the information that the state knows more than Social Media about it, such as fraud, fake news, and hate speech.

Figure 3.

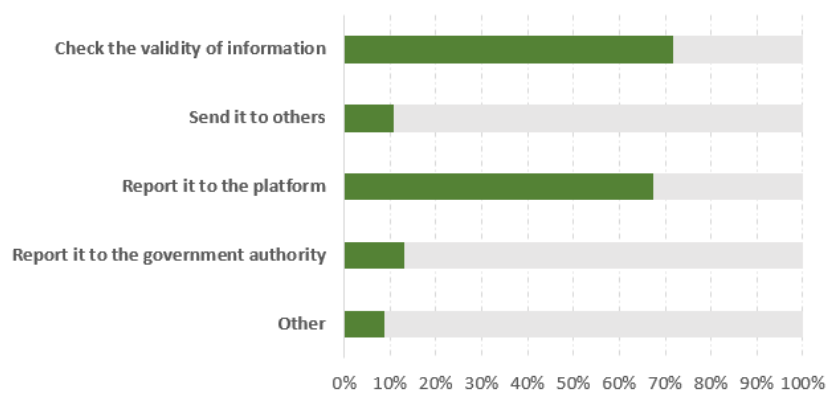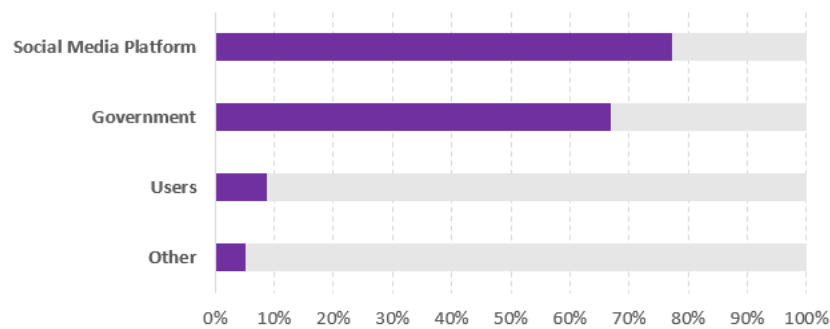**What the participants do if not ignoring negative content**

Figure 4.

Who responsible for the taking down of the negative content


Another interesting finding was also discovered by comparing the participants' responses toward negative content (Figure 5) and the participants' perspective toward who is responsible for taking down negative content (Figure 7). Previously revealed that about one-third (34%) of the participants would do something to the negative content. Meanwhile, if according to who responsible for the taking down of the negative content, then the participants view both Social Media Platform (77.2%) and the Government (66.9) are equally responsible with a

slightly different value (See Figure 7). There is a gap of about 30% where the participants believe either Social Media platforms or the Government should take down the negative content without them ever reporting it. It could be interpreted that they imply both Social Media platforms and the Government must search for the negative content by themselves and take them down. That idea is hardly possible since the total number of Social Media users is huge worldwide with various languages, typography, culture, and context. The Social Media platform themselves could not possibly accommodate the moderation team as such diversity with accurate judgment. The Government could only reach the open accounts and could not fully impose the Social Media platform decision. Both Social Media platforms and the Government alone would not be able to reach it. Besides, both might often have a different perspective towards the boundary of the freedom of speech and expression. Therefore, they need users to contribute and decide for the users' 'free of negative content' as a community. The users should also be responsible for taking down the negative content because they are citizens of their cyberspace apart from Social Media platforms and the Government. The voting mechanism as the users' perspective about the content could help decide whether it should be taken down or not.

Social Media Blocking by the Government

Figure 5.

**Participants' perspective about Social Media Blocking by the Government**
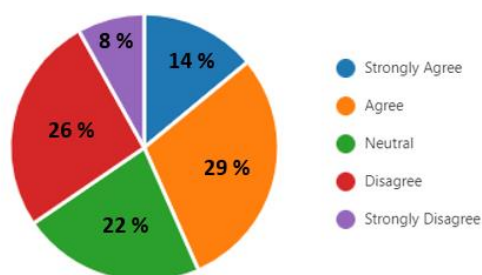
Participants' perspective toward Social Media blocking tends to spread among the options (See Figure 8). 22% of the participants are neutral, but it does not show a significant difference in the value of who Agree and strongly Agree (total of 43%) and who Disagree and Strongly Disagree (total of 34%). The result can be inferred that the participants tend to agree to Social Media blocking by the Government with slightly different values. However, we need to notice that the

value is not very significant since almost one-quarter of the participants are neutral.

The participants who selected Strongly Agree, Agree and Neutral must answer what reasons that could justify the Government to block Social Media Access (See Figure 9). It shows that the top three answers are National security concern (74.2%), Stopping rumors and dissemination of negative content (70.8%), and Maintain peace, law, and order (64%). Even though 'Stopping rumors and dissemination of negative content' is not in the first position, we can infer that Indonesian agree toward Social Media blocking for negative content suppressions.

Figure 6.
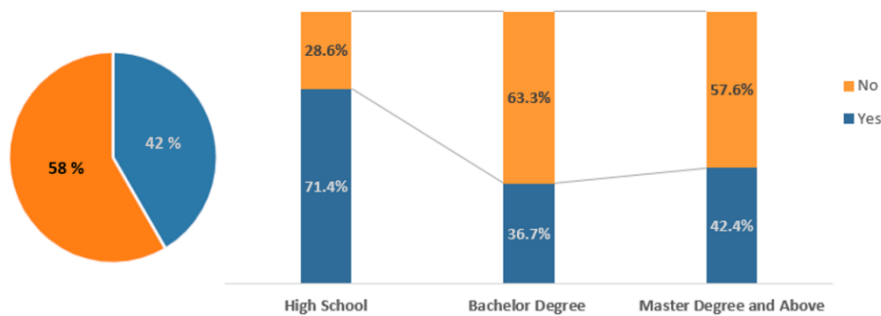**Participants' perspective about Social Media Blocking by the**
Government
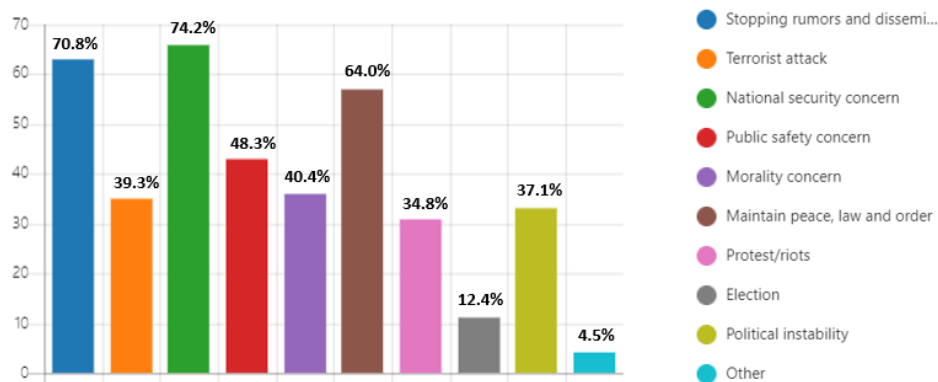
The least voted option of the result is the election with only 12.4%. It is noteworthy to add that the protests/riots option (34.8%) is the second least reason for the participants to agree. Based on the result, to look at the Social Media blocking occurrence during the riot of the election result from 22 to 25 May 2019 did not seem to be preferred by the public. It is because the event was concerning the election result in the form of public protest. Hence, it is understandable that concerning election and protest/riots have the least voted by the participants. However, in contrast, the reason for the occurrence was to prevent fake news and hate speech, which is preferable. It seems there is no best answer for that event, whether the Government should block or not block Social Media.

It is interesting to find whether the participants ever thought if the Government should not block Social Media. The question is presented after the participants have answered the drawbacks of Social Media blocking (discuss in

the next section) to ponder their understanding and contemplate it. The author assumes that the answer could indicate reconsideration or have second thought whether Social Media should or should not be blocked. The result found that among the Strongly Agree, Agree, and Neutral participants, 58% of them have never thought of the Government should not block Social Media (See Figure 10). The result is also processed with the cross-tabulation to the education level. It shows that the higher education level tends not to reconsider their idea about Social Media blocking for those who Strongly Agree, Agree, and Neutral. There are also possibilities that either they tend to believe their judgment is already fit, Social Media blocking is fine for them, or it is only of unthinkable matter. It needs to be further studied for a specific finding regarding this issue.

Figure 7.

Did participants ever thought that Government should not block Social Media

The Drawbacks of Social Media Blocking and Why Should not Block Social Media

The drawbacks of Social Media blocking have been already discussed above (See Introduction Section), and the actual participants' perspectives from this study have similar notions. The author asked this question to participants who Strongly Agree, Agree, and Neutral. The participants who chose Disagree and Strongly Disagree should explain why Social Media should not be blocked. Both information complements and can be analyzed jointly. Based on the codified data, it can be described that the participants mostly concern about the hamper of economic and work-related activities, information and communication rights, and declining trust of the Government.

The participants understand that economic activities would be hampered, especially for Micro and Small Medium Enterprise. MSMEs struggle with their business and Social Media helps them connect with their customers because almost 85% of Indonesian internet users are Social Media users (MCI, 2018b). The participants also realize that work-related activities that rely on Social Media would be disrupted, such as Social Media marketing, communication, and coordination among workers and colleagues. One of the participants gives a good explanation for this issue, i.e., *'The losses must be quite big because most of the people and companies use social media (WA) for marketing, communication, and coordination to many parties more efficiently, economically, and more communicatively when compared to text messages and telephone calls'* (P53).

Information and communication rights are also concerned by the participants. They realize that Social media blocking disrupts the rights of individuals to communicate. The community cannot contact and socialize with their family, friends, and distant relatives. Some people may argue that they can use traditional calls and SMS. Nevertheless, for the community that already relies on the Internet due to the cheap offer and free Social Media availability, they may have only subscribed for data only. It is a choice that the community chooses, and it is not easy to suddenly change this behavior.

Regarding the information rights, the public who relied on Social Media for information updates such as family, knowledge, and news would not be reachable. Imagine for a worse case such as emergency of accident, ill, demise, and others. Social Media also provides alternative media other than mainstream media, which may cover different perspectives. One of the participants argues, *'The public only gets information updates from the mainstream media, details of events that have minor impacts often not made into the news, (Social Media helps it)'* (P88). As many people rely on Social Media information, we must understand that it is common to encounter negative content as same as finding positive content. How Social Media leverage is up to the users. While we discuss negative content, we forget that many positive contents are also in Social Media. Social Media is just another form of website with high visitors. According to this perspective, the Government could entrust Social Media content solely to the platforms themselves since it belongs to them and commonly have the flagging feature to

moderate the content. Social Media can run as it is and let the owner works for themselves. The user can freely define which is wrong and right with the report or flag feature.

The participants also concern about the declining trust of the government issue. They believe that Social Media blocking may assert the government image, which tends to ban access straightforwardly without consideration. Since it is also related to the deprivation of the rights discussed above, it can be perceived as an authoritarian government, anti-criticism, and unfair against political opponents. The negative image can also come from how the Social Media blocking decision proves the Government's inability to cope with the problem. One of the participants mentioned that the declining trust towards the Government might have negative impacts on foreign investment in the country. The investor could doubt political stability, and then they pull out their share. The Indonesian stock market price might decline because of it. It is based on the answer' *Foreign investors distrust, because they doubt the stability of (the country) security and politics, the falling in stock prices because it discourages them to keep investing, and eventually revoke their shares'* (P17).

Moreover, the notion of distrust towards the Government was also expressed in the survey. Some participants believe that the Government may have their agenda, cover the truth, and control the information, so the public does not get the big picture of the event. One of the participants argues that the decision of Social Media blocking was one-sided without adequate process. It should be with hearing an opinion about whether the stakeholders agree or disagree with the action. It is based on the answer, *"Blocking can be done if through a legal process and adequate procedures, so far what has been done by the government was a unilateral decision without consultation with relevant stakeholders"* (P23).

The results discussed above show that blocking access to Social Media would not always solve the problem. It may worsen the problem or even creates a new problem. Social Media is only a channel, and many companies develop it. It means if specific Social Media platforms are blocked, then people can find another one. If all Social Media would eventually be contained with negative content, it is worth reflecting that should all the Social Media platforms be blocked. If the Government wants to regulate, then it could be better to punish the negative content creators and remove the contents, but do not block Social Media

access. One of the participants gives a parable example, i.e., *"...Like having a disease in the leg, just heal or eliminate the disease instead of amputating the leg"* (P38). However, it is not that easy to punish the content creators with an anonymous account or second account. Besides, it is troublesome to remove the negative content which already viral across different Social Media. In specific cases such as fake news and hate speech, the Government should deftly create counter information with valid reference, traceable, and broadcasted from the government channel so that the public would believe. Based on the literature, the Government has already shown a significant effort to alleviate negative content. However, it is never enough without massive moderation from the Government and collective effort from the public through reporting and flagging either to the Government or the Social Media Platform.

Social Media Blocking by the Government is relatively needed

The participants' acceptance of Social Media blocking has been validated, and they also acknowledged its drawbacks. However, the author needs to verify whether Indonesia is ready without Social Media blocking by the Government. The question is asked to all participants, and the result is shown in Figure 11.

Figure 8.

Do Indonesian ready if there is no Social Media Blocking by the Government
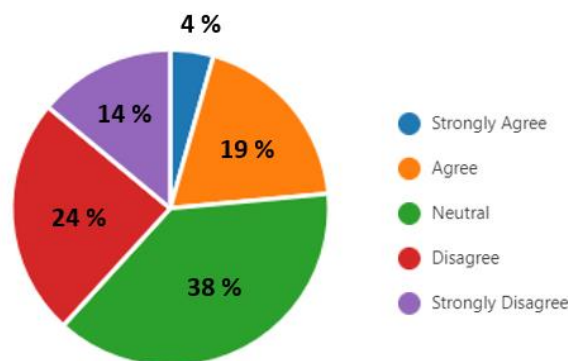
The result shows that most of the participants are neutral (38%). It is quite a large percentage for a neutral option. If it excludes neutral options, then the higher selected response is "Disagree and Strongly Disagree" with a total of 38%, compared to "Agree and Strongly Agree" with a total of 23%. Meanwhile, several questions as justifications toward their judgment are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 9.
Participants' Perception about Indonesian Social Media users
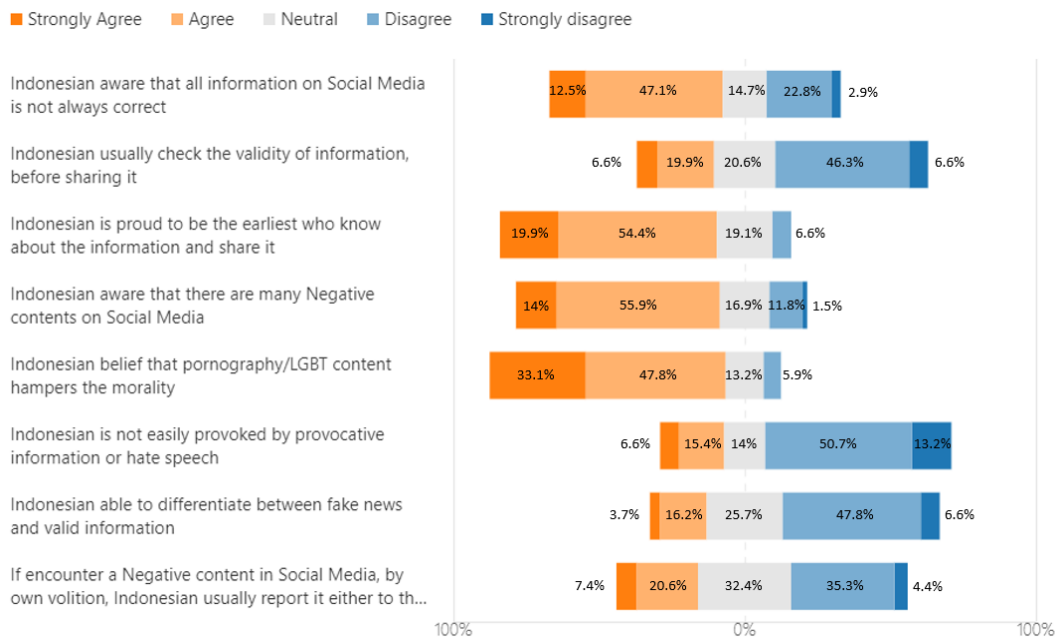

Figure 12 shows that the participants believe that Indonesian Social Media users have positive characteristics, such as:

1. Aware that all information on Social Media is not always correct

2. Aware that there are many Negative contents on Social Media

Both answers indicate that Indonesian already realize the fact about sharing information through Social Media. They may get the wrong information or negative information. However, they still have a lack of several characteristics, such as:

1. Unable to differentiate between fake news and valid information

2. Tend not to check the validity before sharing information

3. Proud to be the earliest who know about the information and share it

4. Easily provoked by provocative information or hate speech

5. Tend to not report negative content either to the Platform or the Government

Indonesian Social Media users are still considered that they cannot differentiate between fake news and valid information. Moreover, it is coupled with the behavior of not checking information validity before they share. Proud to be the earliest who knows about information is only fine, but what if it is combined with easily provoked with new information. Both might stimulate people to hasty share information. Because they tend to not check before share,

then false information or hoax such as fake news or disinformation would spread quickly. In addition, Indonesian also tends not to report negative content (See Figure 5), making hoaxes massively dispersed without sufficient control. This result also indirectly justifies that Indonesian digital literacy remains low since 2017 (Jamaludin 2017).

Lastly, the participants mostly agree that Indonesian think pornography/LGBT content would hamper morality. It does not seem to relate to any other question, but the idea was to see the relevance of Indonesian thinking toward content with morality issues. It is in coherence with the MCI report, which mentioned that pornography is the most reported negative content until 2018 (MCI 2019c). Pornography is one of the highest percentages for the negative content defined by the participants, even though the LGBT percentage is not as high as pornography (See Figure 4). Both convey moral concern for Social Media blocking.

Social Media Blocking Preferences

As Social Media blocking is approved based on the discussion above, the requirements must also be accounted for. It is to clarify the underlying basis and the operational procedures. Based on Figure 9, the reasons for Social Media blocking are considerably justified either due to national security concerns, stop negative content, or maintain peace, law, and order. However, based on the Social Media blocking occurrence, the operational procedures were impressed abruptly and without transparent consideration information. This issue is important to address because if the next Social Media blocking is necessarily needed, then the public would understand the technical practices and could anticipate with specific manners.

The preference opinions were obtained from all participants either who Agree or Disagree with Social Media blocking. Based on the codified data, it can be analyzed that the participants mostly concern about the notification, duration estimation, clear reason, and guaranteed access to mainstream media. Also, they do not favor Social Media blocking if it is regarding politics, religions, and sexual orientation issues.

The participants demand the Government to inform Social Media blocking in advance. Some of the participants mention that the Government should inform the public within 24 hours prior. The answers are *'Advance notice of 24 hours prior' (P10)* and *'... the Government must send notification of 24 hours before Social Media blocking and immediately send a notification if it already pulls out..'* (P89). The form may vary from the press release, through mass media or Social Media, or SMS broadcast to the public. Prior notice is important for the public to prepare alternative media for communication or other activities. For example, commerce activities through Social Media could be channeled into a different platform, so the deal progress is not disrupted.

The Government should also provide information about duration estimation enactment. The duration estimation information could help the e-Commerce players calculate risks, costs, and necessary actions within the available time amount. Some participants suggest from a minimum of 1 hour, 1 to 3 days, seven days, one month to a maximum of 3 months. However, most of them prefer from 1 to 3 days of Social Media blocking. Then if necessary, the blocking duration can be extended according to the circumstances.

As the participants mentioned, the clear justification over the Social Media blocking should put into consideration. It should require examination upon cost, benefit, and social-economic impact analysis. The Government might not have to fully transparent to the public. Nevertheless, they must disclose the least information to help minimize the fear of uncertain market sentiments. It also helps the public understand why such action is taken without any conjecture and reduces the public protest trigger. In addition, it also prevents fake information from spreading due to given reliable information by the Government. The Government must also guarantee mainstream media coverage during the blocking so the public does not blind to information. Imagine if any information channel is shut down, then the public would have their own judgment of the obscure information or even rumors. If it is in chaotic situations or conflict areas, it would potentially escalate into riots. Therefore, mainstream media should not be taken down along with Social Media since it is also part of information rights.

Nevertheless, Social Media blocking consideration should not take politics into account. Most participants do not agree with Social Media blocking if the reason is a political issue, including the election. Political rights should be upheld

for democracy. One of the participants argues that any media, including Social Media, is legitimate for any political action, including a negative campaign. It is based on the answer *'Politics. Because the political sphere is a place for people to express their opinions. If there is a negative campaign, according to academics, it still follows political ethics...'* (P33). Apart from political matters, another participant also focuses on the rights of religion and sexual orientation because of its part of the human freedom of expression, speech, and choice. It is based on the answer *'Issues of belief (religion), issues of sexual orientation, political issues because these issues reflect the freedom of opinion and determining attitudes'* (P37). The participant means it as the intention to share information or perspective only, but not to provoke. The provocation towards anything, especially ethnicity, religion, race, and sectarian, could be categorized as hate speech, and it should be prohibited in any media, including Social Media.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Social Media blocking by the Government is considered necessary. The advantages, disadvantages, and preferences of such action have been discussed. Through the study, the author realized that Social Media blocking is the further action after the negative content alleviation is no longer effective, or the particular negative content is too massive and uncontrollable. Alternatively, in other words, Social Media blocking is rooted in negative content. To prove it, we can trace all the announced reasons why the Government block Social Media. Stopping rumors and dissemination of negative content is the obvious one. Terrorist attacks, National Security, Public safety, Morality, Maintain peace, law and order, Protest/riots, Election, and Political instability are not correlated with Social Media blocking. Social Media blocking is enacted none other than because of the content itself, which is negative content. For example, a terrorist attack through Social Media. There is no possible way the terrorists would attack as such action because the Social Media platform belongs to the foreign country owner. The possible way to attack is by sharing radicalism content as propaganda, which for instance, disfigures the Government. Then, the concern should be on the content. If the spread of radicalism content has been stopped successfully, the fear of propaganda should have stopped as well.

Reflecting on the study result, the author believes that Social Media blocking is mostly relevant for stopping rumors and negative content dissemination. National security concerns and maintain peace, law, and order are the effects that may emerge if the negative content is not adequately controlled. However, not all of the negative content can equally be justified as the reason for Social Media blocking. The negative content which relevant for Social Media blocking reasons are hate speech (provocation to ethnicity, religion, race, and sectarian) and fake news. Pornography content is also highly voted by the participants with 88.2% but not included because it should closely relate with morality concern, which lowly voted by the participants. Also, pornography content is inadequate to threaten national security or interfere with peace, law, and order. Another content, Radicalism/terrorism, is also relevant for Social Media blocking. However still, the radicalism/terrorism content can also be categorized as hate speech toward the Government.

The idea of no Social Media blocking in Indonesia seems to be far from the realization. Nearly one-quarter of the participants are neutral to Social Media blocking, while only about one-third agree to it. Even though the public has not yet firmly into one side, most of the participants agree with Social Media blocking. Then, the notion of hampering economic and work-related activities, freedom of information and communication access, and the declining trust of the Government have not reached most of the participants' perspectives. Furthermore, the Government seems fine and believes in their image towards the public. Moreover, the result shows that Indonesians are still not ready without Social Media blocking. Based on that, the Government should intensify digital literacy toward negative content, especially hate speech and fake news. Hate speech easily provokes Indonesian and fake news is one of the negative contents that Indonesian still struggle to differentiate with valid information.

Finally, the author recommends that Social Media blocking in Indonesia can still be enacted for the following circumstances with consideration on the issue of democracy. Pondering the 22 May 2019 event, the riot was because of the election result, which contested the public rights of democracy and politics. According to the study result, it is less favorable for the reason of Social Media blocking. At that time, the Government was also less responsive to handle the riot. The Government Public Relations mechanism should deftly work hard to counter

the combination of fake news and hate speech, so the Social Media blocking was not necessarily taken as the decision. And the Government should also emphasize digital literacy programs for the community as the basis of common knowledge in cyberspace nowadays. If the public is digitally literate enough, then the riot might not have been that severe.

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