| **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

Reversing Control Over Digital Public Sphere Through the Hashtag #BlokirKominfo

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| **ABSTRACT**

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo promotes discussions within the public sphere, particularly on Twitter, as a digital activism movement advocating for the blocking of various digital platforms, websites, and online platforms due to their failure to register with PSE. This study examines interactions among individuals from three accounts, specifically @secgron, @teamsecret, and @renjiro_Junichi, thereby shaping a digital public sphere. These individuals contribute a wide range of viewpoints and arguments to the public arena, fostering discussions and debates that align with the principles of deliberative democracy. Through virtual ethnographic methods, this research reveals that interactions take the form of public opinions, critiques, protests, and calls for an end to arbitrary actions. These interactions encourage resistance from digital activists, internet users, and even legal advocates, all seeking the revocation of the Ministry of Communication and Information Policy Number 5 of 2020. This policy is criticized for negatively impacting the economic livelihood of freelance workers, infringing upon the freedom of expression for content creators, and the E-sports community. Ironically, Kominfo has yet to block online gambling sites that are causing public disturbances. The interactions among individuals reflect communicative actions, as netizens simultaneously employ Twitter to exchange information, share their opinions, convey ideas about internet restrictions, and coordinate protests and campaigns. Social media, as a platform for digital activism, encourages more people to participate in the #BlokirKominfo hashtag movement.

| **KEYWORDS**

Public Sphere, Digital Activism , Communicative Action, Twitter

1. Introduction

Research in the realm of digital activism has predominantly focused on topics such as sexual violence, environmental issues, feminism, and matters involving racial, cultural, and political diversity. Utilizing digital activism within public arenas is a strategy aimed at influencing society's expression of opinions, promoting democratic ideals, shaping viewpoints, and mobilizing social movements. Digital activism employs a specific strategy involving the use of hashtags to create novel public sphere. According to Yang (2016), hashtag activism serves as a means to aggregate protests that propagate across social media platforms by employing hashtags in the form of words, phrases, or sentences (Wuriani, 2021). These hashtags, when introduced on Twitter, are initiated by users to categorize tags and posts into organized groups. Similar discussion topics are also used on various other social media platforms (Wonneberger et al., 2021)

Hashtags are recurrently employed, often reminiscent of slogans used in movements, and they feature prominently in both offline and online mediums, such as posters and brochures. Hashtags play a significant role in associating individuals and actions with digital activism (Kuo, 2018). On Twitter, hashtags serve as a means for real-time discussions, demonstrations, and as a tool for disseminating protests related to issues of racial justice. Their primary function is to highlight injustices, reframe discourse, and advocate for policy changes (Kuo, 2018). Activist groups use hashtags strategically to create counterpublics or alternative public sphere (Wonneberger et al., 2021).

Digital activism represents a form of advocacy that leverages digital technology, particularly the internet and social media, as a means to garner support, voice concerns, and promote social, political, or environmental change. It encompasses the efforts of individuals, groups, or organizations striving to influence public opinion, governments, or other institutions on a wide array of issues and objectives, including but not limited to human rights, equality, environmental conservation, and other social concerns (Arianto, 2022).

Other researchers define digital activism as political participation and protests organized in digital networks. Athina Karatzogianni (2015) explored four (4) waves of digital activism. The first wave began in 1994 with the Zapatista movement and anti-globalization movements, including alternative media such as Indymedia. The second wave of digital activism lasted from 2001-2007 and largely consisted of a resurgence of digital activism related to anti-Iraq war mobilization. During the third wave after 2007, digital activism spread to BRICS and other countries outside Europe and the United States, where digital activism originated. The fourth wave between 2010 and 2013 marked the mainstreaming of digital activism which was dominated (Kaun & Uldam, 2018)

Activism movement on social media is growing rapidly, using social media to express opinions, criticism, and protests via the internet. As technology advances, the government organizes digital platforms that are used by the public to protect data. The government's attention is focused on administrative matters, even though the government has not handled data leaks. One of the regulations issued by Kominfo is Permenkominfo Number 5 of 2020 which regulates the Implementation of Private Scope Electronic Systems (PSE). Electronic System Implementation (PSE) is a policy developed by the Ministry of The Permenkominfo Number 5 of 2020, in its Article 2, Paragraph 1, which stipulates the requirement for all digital service providers, operating within Indonesia, to undergo registration. This policy, aimed at Private Electronic System (PSE) operators in the private sector, has generated significant discussions, with proponents and critics expressing their perspectives on its implications for individuals utilizing digital platforms.

Kominfo or the Ministry of Communication and Informatics has become a trending topic in public discussions or conversations in mass media and social media. This discussion appeared in #BlokirKominfo 19-30 July 2022 on Twitter. Discussion of the PSE (Electronic System Implementation) regulations criticized this policy and the blocking of digital platforms used by the public (Ismail, 2022).

Private Scope Electronic System Implementation (PSE) Registration does not guarantee the safety of the platform (website) used by the public. Citizens have data on various leaks on government sites such as BPJS, Peduli Protect, Lazada, MyPertamina, Carousell, and Mobile Legend Forum, which reduces confidence in the government's ability to guarantee web security and individual information. Kominfo's blocking policy is considered ineffective in dealing with illegal or dangerous content because often this content can be accessed via private virtual networks (VPN) or proxies.

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo emerged on Twitter when Kominfo blocked digital platforms (websites) that were not registered as Private Electronic System Operators (PSE). This action prevented platform users from conducting their usual activities, leading to financial losses. E-sports players also found themselves unable to access games from digital game distribution platforms. This situation sparked public protests from users of various platforms in both traditional and online media, all under the hashtag #BlokirKominfo (Ismail, 2022).

Data from Droneemprit shows that discussions related to Electronic System Implementation (PSE) and #BlokirKominfo on Twitter were trending topics on July 30 with 79,553 mentions. The movement has increased because it is followed by accounts with high followers such as @teamsecret, @secgron, and @renjiro_Junichi which are against Kominfo. The phenomenon that occurred with the hashtag #BlokirKominfo on Twitter triggered views on the pros and cons of the policy of blocking digital platforms.

The following is an overview of the social media map with the hashtag #BlokirKominfo and Private Scope Electronic System Operation (PSE) Registration:
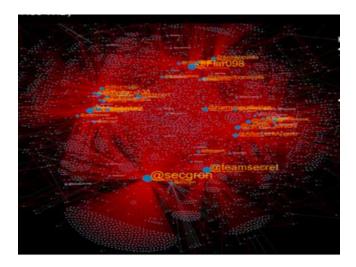
Figure 1: Social Media Map of #BlokirKominfo and PSE Registration
Source : (Ismail, **2022**)

An analysis bot that quotes tweets from public figures, social media observers, and Information Technology experts describes trending topics of opinion for and against the hashtag #BlokirKominfo. Based on the data, 29% are pro Kominfo, 6% are neutral, and 65% are against Kominfo. Pro Kominfo is dominated by stakeholders such as members of Commission I DPR RI and internal Kominfo officials. Criticism of Kominfo is dominated by Information Technology observers and experts who criticize the Electronic System Administration (PSE) registration system and the risk of data breaches and freedom of expression (Ismail, 2022)

Communication is an interaction activity carried out by individuals to send data to other individuals to achieve a specific target. Humans live in a social environment where they communicate with other people. All forms of human interaction can be considered communication. Communication ends when everyone takes action and responds. The behavior and responses carried out by individuals, groups, or organizations in the field of communication are called communication behavior. According to Habermas, communicative action refers to behavior that is guided by mutually agreed ethics based on shared expectations between subjects who interact using symbols, especially everyday language as support for these actions (Setyowati, 2016).

Public sphere holds a crucial role within the democratic process, serving as a forum where individuals can engage in dialogue to articulate their opinions, interests, and requirements. It acts as a conduit for citizens to openly convey their stances and arguments concerning the state and its government. In accordance with Habermas' 1991 definition, public sphere can be characterized as a domain where people assemble to deliberate upon matters of public concern, without delving into each other's personal affairs. Consequently, it serves as a platform for citizens to freely voice their perspectives and contentions regarding the state and its governance

2. Literature Review

Research examining the Reversal of Control Over Digital Public Sphere Through the Hashtag #BlokirKominfo is underpinned by the theories of Public Sphere and Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action. Habermas' Public Sphere Theory introduces the concept of the civil public domain, serving as a link between individual interests in social, economic, and familial contexts and the needs and interests of society and the public at large. The term "public sphere" designates a platform where individuals can freely express their viewpoints without fear of intimidation from any source. Habermas envisions public sphere as an arena for the exchange of questions without undue constraints, emphasizing that this doesn't imply absolute freedom but rather a democratic form of communication that is reciprocal, universally accepted, and devoid of dominance.

Interaction, as defined by Nuris (2016), is the activity through which individuals communicate messages to others to achieve specific objectives. Humans coexist and engage in interactions with one another. According to Habermas, communicative action refers to behavior guided by mutually agreed norms rooted in shared expectations among interacting individuals who employ signs, especially everyday language, to facilitate these actions. Communication serves as the foundational concept in both theory and practice, underscoring its central role. It's important to perceive practices not as irrational actions stemming from pure instinct, but rather as fundamental behaviors of humans as social beings endowed with rational consciousness. Relationships are established not only in the context of conquering nature through labor but also in intersubjective interactions that rely on everyday language.

3. Methodology
This research adopts a qualitative approach, thereby emphasizing the exploration of meaning and process, and regards communication needs as a process acquired from external sources. In accordance with the definition by Bogdan and Taylor, a qualitative approach can be characterized as research that acquires descriptive data through written or spoken language and observable behavior. The advantages of qualitative research lie in its capacity to investigate and elucidate prevailing conditions, relationships, ongoing processes, resulting impacts, and the development of various phenomena.

Miles and Huberman stated that qualitative research aims to gain a deep understanding of everyday life. This research is not only holistic, but is also able to produce themes and proposals in their original form, and uses unstructured elements to explain how people behave in certain situations, the use of instruments, and various interpretations expressed and analyzed in terms of text (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

This research uses virtual ethnographic methods. This qualitative method functions to discover patterns of behavior, lifestyle, and social relations in virtual life or social media. In the era of information and communication technology, social life experiences cultural development and change. Netizens are people who are active in cyberspace, creating new expressions of emotions, values, beliefs, and even rituals in social and cultural life.

Virtual ethnography is a way to explore information about individuals or groups who use the internet. Virtual ethnography also reflects the impact of communication via the Internet. According to Jorgen Skageby in Daniel virtual ethnography is a method for understanding events in online communities qualitatively through online observations and interviews. According to Jorgen, the virtual ethnography method describes more specific community habits in the use of communication technology (Daniel, 2011)

The focus of this research revolves around the digital activities associated with Twitter accounts such as @teamsecret, @secgron, @renjiro_Junichi, as well as the corpus of textual content stemming from their online engagements and any digital undertakings that bear relevance to their presence in the digital landscape. Notably, the Twitter accounts @teamsecret, @secgron, and @renjiro_Junichi stand out as they actively express their opposition to the Minister of Communication and Information's Policy as outlined in PP Number 5 of 2020, a policy that pertains to the Implementation of Private Scope Electronic Systems (PSE) within the Indonesian context. These accounts play a pivotal role in this research due to their candid and unwavering articulation of dissent towards the administration of Private Scope Electronic Systems (PSE). The resultant negative sentiments stemming from these three accounts have garnered substantial engagement and resonance within the digital realm, involving various other Twitter accounts, including @safenetvoice, @skullcmdr, @Agung9466, @AikHoki, @gasetuju, @Saisensei4, @Addin008, @niwseir, @abidinco, @sandatco, and numerous others, thereby further enriching the research's digital landscape.

In this research, data was collected through observation on Twitter of various conversation narratives on the accounts @teamsecret, @secgron, and @renjiro_Junichi, and then examining the virtual interactions of these activities as a virtual sphere community. This research analyzes descriptive data in the form of written language and conversations between actors from three (3) accounts, namely @teamsecret, @secgron, and @renjiro_Junichi which contain texts of rejection and negative reactions to Kominfo policies. Twitter as a public sphere is a force for building agreements and discussions through the hashtag #BlokirKominfo.

4. Results and Discussion
Public sphere research on the hashtag #BlokirKominfo emphasizes that this hashtag influences communication interactions and freedom of speech in the context of digital activism. Communication interactions with the hashtag #BlokirKominfo show an increase in conversations between netizens as a form of protest against the policy of blocking Kominfo which is implemented, namely by closing access to digital platforms and various sites and websites.

Actors hashtag #BlokirKominfo
Referring to the data documented by Droneemprit in 2022, the hashtag #BlokirKominfo, during the period spanning from July 1st to July 31st of that year, highlighted the involvement of three key actors who played a significant role in influencing the public to partake in digital activism movements. One of these influential figures is the owner of the @secgron Twitter account, Teguh Aprianto, who not only assumes the role of a Cyber Security Consultant but is also recognized as the founder of Ethical Hacker Indonesia, established in 2018. Ethical Hacker Indonesia serves as a community platform that caters to individuals with a keen interest in ethical hacking.

Teguh Aprianto actively advocates for digital security and is affiliated with TRACE (Rapid Reaction Team), an organization dedicated to this cause. Notably, Teguh Aprianto's influence extends to platforms like cekdata.com, a website designed for data leak verification, and isn't.sh, a repository of open-source intelligence tools used for information gathering and investigative purposes, all sourced from publicly available data.

Teguh Aprianto's impact was notably effective in mobilizing resistance among netizens using the #BlokirKominfo hashtag. This mobilization prompted engagement from various other accounts, including @teamsecret, @renjiro_Junichi, @Fiar098, @Helientez, @safenetvoice, @skullcmdr, and others. Through his @secgron account, Teguh Aprianto openly voiced his protest, employed satire, and critiqued the actions of Kominfo, particularly their decision to block access to the internet, social media platforms, gaming websites, and digital platforms.

An E-sports community group that is part of the @teamsecret account rejects and fights against Kominfo policies. The echo of the hashtag #BlokirKominfo posted on July 30 2022 regarding blocking Steam, PayPal, Battlenet, epic games, and websites triggered aggrieved netizens to protest via tweets on Twitter. Blocking payment applications, game sites, and websites results in economic losses for freelancers and content creators. Their work depends on smooth internet access and digital platforms.

The @renjiro_Junichi account is dedicated to the world of gaming and boasts a vibrant online gaming community with a shared passion for Japanese anime. Within this community, you'll find a group of dedicated game streamers who meticulously document their gaming activities and enthusiastically broadcast them in real-time on various streaming platforms. The game streaming industry has witnessed rapid growth, and it has cultivated a dedicated and financially capable audience willing to subscribe to live streaming services for exclusive content.

In Indonesia, game streaming has evolved into a significant form of entertainment, with game streamers effectively harnessing it as a viable source of income, particularly among freelance workers. The payment process for subscriptions typically utilizes the PayPal application and serves various transactional purposes, including settling game order fees.

However, the actions taken by Kominfo to block certain digital platforms have posed substantial challenges to the gaming community, hindering their workflow and communication. This situation has placed their economic well-being in jeopardy, underscoring the broader implications of such actions on individuals who rely on digital platforms for their livelihoods.

Public sphere is the idea of Habermas, a German philosopher and sociologist, about a sphere where citizens can gather to discuss public issues rationally and freely. According to Habermas, public sphere is a place where diverse opinions and views can be expressed, discussed, and explored through rational arguments to reach a fair agreement (Habermas, 2012).

The actors in the hashtag #BlokirKominfo consist of individuals, groups, and communities who are active in the digital public sphere of Twitter. Their role is very important in expressing opinions, criticism, or support for blocking actions carried out by Kominfo. According to Habermas' theory, these actors fill the digital public space with various points of view and arguments, creating discussions and debates that reflect aspects of deliberative democracy (Del Valle et al., 2020).

Teguh Aprianto is one of the individuals who actively opposes discussions about blocking Kominfo. The participation of actors is an integral part of the public sphere, arguments and opinions clash and compete to reach consensus. Twitter, which is a digital media, is capable of providing connectivity that influences social interactions and public considerations (Mahlouly, 2014).

Through the hashtag #BlokirKominfo, communication becomes the main focus in understanding social reality. Habermas' communicative action refers to the linguistic shift, which occurred in digital media, namely Twitter. The actors involved in using the hashtag #BlokirKominfo formed a narrative through the use of language and symbols to bring the issue of blocking actions carried out by Kominfo to get the attention of the wider community (Nuris, 2016).

Habermas emphasizes the importance of rational and argumentative communication to achieve better understanding. In the hashtag activity #BlokirKominfo, actors bring arguments and evidence that support or oppose blocking actions, thereby creating a more rational discussion sphere (Hardiman, 2009).

Process of Forming the Hashtag #BlokirKominfo
The Ministry of Communications and Information threatens to block WhatsApp, Facebook, Google, and various digital platforms and sites if they do not register for Private Scope PSE. The government emphasized that the deadline for PSE registration is July 20, 2022, if it is not implemented it will be blocked. On July 30, the government implemented the blocking, triggering various pros and cons reactions from netizens using digital platforms and sites.

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo initially gained prominence on Twitter as a trending topic related to the blocking of digital platforms and websites. Hashtags serve as responses to news and are used on social media platforms to simplify the process of searching for information on specific themes or content. In response to the hashtag #BlokirKominfo emerged, representing an act of

resistance and protest during Kominfo's actions to block various digital applications. The use of the hashtag symbol in posts helps in organizing and categorizing discussions.Hashtags also function as a framing tool for collective actions and serve to educate internet users about various issues and social movements. Through the use of this hashtag, people can share information, engage in discussions, exchange experiences, and express their views regarding the arbitrary nature of Kominfo's policies, which are perceived as not being in the best interests of the community.

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo, concerning the actions of the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kominfo) related to Private Scope Electronic Systems (PSE), has emerged as a prominent and controversial topic of discussion. It has shaped a social network map and fostered extensive discourse surrounding the Registration Number 5 of 2020, specifically Article 1, Paragraph 2, which mandates that every Private Scope PSE must undergo registration. This discourse has identified distinct groups advocating both for and against this policy.

Proponents of the policy predominantly include government figures, state institutions, and officials affiliated with the Ministry of Communication and Information. This alignment is unsurprising, given their vested interest and influence in securing government policies. On the opposing side are digital activists, e-sports communities, game users, legal experts, and the Alliance of Independent Journalists (AJI). This collective has experienced various adverse effects following the implementation of Perkominfo No. 5 of 2020, including the loss of access to services, income, employment, and exposure to doxing.

Jürgen Habermas introduced the concept of the public sphere as an open arena where individuals can convene to engage in free and rational discussions about public issues. In the context of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, it serves as a vehicle for critiquing the Kominfo's policy of restricting access, which is perceived as infringing on the freedom of expression within digital public sphere. Habermas views hashtags as a mechanism employed by netizens to foster an open and inclusive digital public sphere that encourages the free exchange of diverse perspectives and information (Nasrullah, 2015).

The act of blocking by Kominfo constitutes a form of state intervention that obstructs discussion and curtails the public's right to information on a broader scale. This contradicts Habermas's foundational principles regarding public sphere, which are built upon democratic communication norms like freedom of speech, state neutrality, accountability, and inclusion.
Focusing on communicative actions, these efforts concentrate on aspects of communication that promote the development of truth and consensus. The process of shaping the #BlokirKominfo hashtag was executed transparently, grounded in the realities of parties adversely affected by Kominfo's actions. This process engaged various stakeholders, including government representatives, the general populace, and activists, to actively participate in discussions pertaining to this issue. Such an approach embodies the principles of open and honest communication, where all parties are free to express their perspectives openly.

Hashtag theme #BlokirKominfo
Acceptance and rejection of Minister of Communication and Information Regulation Number 5 of 2020 echoed on Twitter social media. The public sphere on Twitter was also filled with discussions about the pros and cons of the hashtag #BlokirKominfo. The digital activism hashtag #BlokirKominfo is grouped into two opinions, namely supporting and giving a positive image of the issue and opinions that reject it, giving a negative impression of this issue. Analysis conducted by Drone Emprit (2022) shows that tweets on Twitter tend to have negative sentiments. Tweets posted by netizens are their conscience as a form of protest, criticism, and resistance to Kominfo policies that prevent access to information, freedom of expression, and violations of human rights.

Netizens' tweet posts on Twitter from the accounts @secgron, @teamscreat, and @renjiro_Junichi are expressions of opposition to Kominfo policies and actions. The interaction of netizens' conversations on Twitter illustrates various themes, namely: mobilization of movements to protest online by raising hashtags and offline coming to the Ministry of Communication and Information offices, a sense of solidarity with victims of blocking, opposing acts of doxxing and spam, violations of the right to obtain information, transparency, and accountability of the government, government cleanliness, public deceit, arbitrariness, demanding the President's promises, insinuating Kominfo services, killing the economy of freelancers, freedom of expression, internet neutrality, data security and privacy, unequal access to information, even swearing posted on Twitter. The theme of posts on Twitter included rejection of the obligation to register private PSEs and even calls for canceling the Minister of Communication and Information Regulation because it was deemed to have failed to protect the security of people's digital data.

A tweet posted by @secgron on July 17, 2022, sheds light on the awareness within the digital user community regarding the ramifications of implementing Kominfo policies. The tweet reads, "Just consider why Twitter, Google, and Meta (FB, IG, WA) have yet to register their platforms with PSE @kemkominfo? If these platforms do register, they may compromise their privacy policies, and our privacy as users may also be at risk." (@secgron, Twitter post, July 17, 2022) This message underscores concerns related to privacy and policy implications that have resonated among digital users.

In this quote, public sphere is a place where people can discuss freely and express opinions without any intervention from the authorities (Habermas, 1991). There is a lot of discussion on Twitter regarding the hashtag #BlokirKominfo about censorship practices carried out by the government which limit freedom of expression and obtaining information. Netizens complained about the impact of blocking digital platforms and various sites. Of course, these restrictions affect the existence of healthy public sphere without intervention from other parties.

Online activism and social movements are topics in the hashtag #BlokirKominfo, Twitter as a social media can organize protests and voice their opinions. @secgron's tweet posted on July 22 played a role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing netizens' support: "Because @kemkominfo has been very disturbing, today it is our turn to #BlockKominfo directly at the @kemkominfo office. Letters from 11 thousands netizens who have participated in the #NetizenProtest have also been given & attached with padlocks right in front of their offices. I hope you can read it." (@secgron, Twitter post, July 22, 2022).

According to Habermas, the public sphere must safeguard individual privacy and refrain from unwarranted surveillance (Supriadi, 2017). In the context of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, the government's unilateral actions to block digital platforms, which serve as a vital economic lifeline for freelance workers, appear to contradict the objective of protecting its citizens. Rather than ensuring their well-being, Kominfo's actions seem to obstruct them. A pivotal point in this discourse materialized on July 30, 2022, with a tweet stating, "Buying games on Steam has been taxed by this country for 2 years. Now I can't play the games I bought and paid for because Steam has been blocked by @kemkominfo. Then what's the point of paying taxes?" (@secgron, Twitter post, July 30, 2022). This tweet encapsulates the frustration and disillusionment experienced by digital users.

Communication serves as the bedrock of all social interactions. Habermas posits that communicative action is the primary underpinning of social relations, encompassing three crucial elements: understanding, consensus, and truth. In the context of the digital activism movement epitomized by the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, Kominfo's actions to block internet access without broad public involvement arguably infringe upon principles of rational and democratic communication. Habermas underscores the significance of reaching consensus through a rational and equitable exchange of arguments (Nuris, 2016).

In its policy implementation, Kominfo seemingly failed to heed input from digital activists, LBH Jakarta, platform-using netizens, and others. Consequently, the decision-making process appeared less than democratic and lacked a foundation of rational and equitable arguments. This, in turn, eroded public trust in government institutions. The act of blocking by Kominfo, alongside the rationale behind it, left numerous questions unanswered, thus eliciting criticism from netizens.

Habermas's theory of communicative action underscores that Kominfo's internet site blocking, symbolized by the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, does not align with the principles of rational and democratic communication. In a democratic context, public engagement should be encouraged, and decisions should be founded on rational and fair argumentation. By actively involving the wider public, Kominfo can reach more transparent decisions, fostering more dialogue between the government and the community. In Habermas's theory of communicative action, rational and democratic communication stands as the core of healthy social relations. Within the framework of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, this communicative action serves as a potent tool for critiquing Kominfo's blocking decisions (Muttaqien, 2023).

Context of the hashtag #BlokirKominfo

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo gained significant traction on the social media platform Twitter due to the platform's unique capacity to facilitate discussions, enabling individuals to engage in forms of network activism that exert tangible influence both in the digital realm and the physical world. Twitter, as a public sphere in the digital domain, transcends geographic boundaries and diverse interests, thereby fostering interactions and conversations among individuals who share a common motivation and perception regarding the consequences of Kominfo's blocking measures.

Numerous activist groups and netizens contend that Kominfo's actions have been overly aggressive, bordering on stifling freedom of expression. Social mobilization driven by digital technology has effectively established itself as representative of the digital public sphere, shaping social interactions and influencing public deliberations in the formation of opinions. The utilization of social media platforms and interactive communication tools significantly enhances an individual's influence within their social milieu.

Digital activism has evolved into a democratic forum for society, providing a channel through which individuals can communicate their concerns, particularly in response to Kominfo's blockades of various digital platforms such as Steam, PayPal, Epic Games, Battle.net, and other websites. The public has expressed frustration at what appears to be rash and arbitrary government policies, resulting in a plethora of comments and reactions through Twitter posts. Netizens argue that these policies and blockades infringe upon freedom of expression and impede access to information. The act of blocking digital platforms and websites represents a form of censorship and an attempt to silence dissenting opinions enacted by the government.

In this digital age, characterized by the rapid development of internet technology, individuals have unprecedented opportunities to actively engage in discourse, articulating their opinions, interests, and needs. The emergence of digital media signifies a structural transformation in public communication, ushering in a participatory, interactive, decentralized, and transparent mode of communication.

The blocking carried out by Kominfo threatens the community's economic resources, hampering public access to the internet network which is the cornerstone of community life. Protests, criticism, and resistance to Kominfo policies are caused by the absence of consensus reached with the community through dialogue, discourse, or communication actions in public sphere. According to Habermas, it is necessary to dismantle the power relations between the authorities (state) who manage the government system and the lives of citizens. As citizens, people have human rights related to freedom to convey and obtain information, and freedom of expression through communication means such as social media. Twitter social media is a public sphere used to share views and thoughts regarding platform and site-blocking policy issues. Twitter strengthens opinion and pressure on parties responsible for blocking various digital platforms and gaming sites.

The hashtag campaign #BlokirKominfo represents a form of protest and resistance against Kominfo's internet blocking measures. In the current socio-political climate, it serves as a platform for individuals with critical views and ideologies concerning these actions. The blockade of internet access, digital platforms, and gaming sites is intertwined with ideology and the state's ideological apparatus. Some groups view this action as a hindrance to the fundamental values of a democratic country, namely freedom of speech and expression. The use of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag is associated with critical perspectives on the government, often voiced by opposition groups or human rights advocates. They perceive Kominfo's policy as an attempt by the government to monitor and control information, thereby limiting freedom of expression.

Louis Althusser (1918 – 1990) was a prominent French Marxist philosopher whose ideas left a lasting impact on various strands of contemporary leftist thought. Althusser made a critical distinction between two key components of the state apparatus. On one hand, there is the repressive state apparatus (RSA), a monolithic institutional entity, and on the other, we encounter the ideological state apparatus (ISA), characterized by its diversity and multifaceted functions (Althusser, 2015). The primary role of the ideological state apparatus involves the dissemination of prevailing ideologies, while its secondary function operates in a more concealed, symbolic manner.

When contextualized within the framework of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, Louis Althusser's theory of the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) bears significant relevance. It pertains to the realm of resistance and criticism against government policies, particularly those governing the internet and information control. The netizen resistance movement firmly believes that the blocking of specific applications, gaming platforms, and websites is fundamentally driven by ideological motives, primarily aimed at stifling platforms critical of or opposed to the government. This sentiment is eloquently expressed through statements like, "Because he was quite vocal in the #NetizenProtest and #BlokirKominfo, last night until now @resir014 became a victim of doxxing. WhatsApp has been spammed by an unknown group of people who are trying to take over Telegram accounts. But tonight he will still be there." (@secgron, Twitter post, July 20, 2022). These actions have tangible, real-world consequences, underscoring the palpable ideological tensions within this digital discourse.

Ideological state apparatus refers to a situation where government institutions and security forces are controlled or directed by a particular ideology, which is contrary to the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, and human rights (Xi & Ng, 2021) . In this context, the hashtag #BlokirKominfo becomes a symbol or concrete example of how ideology can influence government policy regarding information control. The resistance movement that uses the hashtag #BlokirKominfo seeks to dismantle or criticize the ideology underlying Kominfo policies, thereby influencing decisions to block certain digital platforms, sites and websites.

The #BlokirKominfo hashtag is emblematic of a social media campaign aimed at protesting the blocking policy enforced by the Ministry of Communication and Information (Kemenkominfo) in Indonesia. Blocking involves measures taken by the Ministry to either monitor or restrict access to specific websites and social media platforms. Jürgen Habermas, a renowned German philosopher, introduced the concept of the public sphere, underscoring its role as a forum for the unfettered exchange of ideas and opinions, a pivotal force in fostering democracy and community engagement (Habermas, 2012).

In the context of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, this movement can be viewed as a concerted effort to secure people's freedom to access social networks, championing cognitive liberty, and scrutinizing government policies that are perceived as inhibiting access to information and the freedom to express one's viewpoints. This movement seeks to preserve the democratic nature of the digital public sphere, fostering a rich tapestry of dialogues.

Within the realm of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, communicative actions encompass endeavors to cultivate mutual understanding among all stakeholders. Habermas advocates open dialogue and democracy, wherein all netizens have the opportunity to freely express their perspectives. He underscores the importance of rational discourse and normative validity in public debates, while urging government bodies and responsible institutions to provide clear, transparent justifications to counteract the spread of misinformation. Furthermore, the movement strives to promote community engagement, forging a network of solidarity among individuals and groups advocating for the freedom of opinion and unobstructed access to information.

Habermas emphasized the importance of social media freedom and independence in providing objective information. Urge the government to support the existence of the media without interference from political or commercial interests that could influence the objectives of the complaint. The public is invited to use social networks as a tool to share information, create ideas, and organize movements. Therefore, it is necessary to involve community members in participating in public debate and decision-making (Prasetyo, 2012).

Digital Activism Through Hashtags
The rapid development of social media is intricately tied to the increasing accessibility of information, bolstered by advancements in communication technology. Social media, falling within the purview of new media, possesses a malleable character (Priadji & Rusadi, 2023). New media, with its digitalization, convergence, interactive capabilities, and networking, redefines the landscape of message creation. Its hallmark lies in fostering interactive relationships, affording new media users the agency to choose the information they consume while retaining control over the information they generate in alignment with their preferences.

Digital activism is a type of activity that uses digital technology, especially the internet and social media, to express, mobilize, and encourage social, political, or environmental change. This includes individuals, groups, or organizations that seek to influence public opinion, governments, or other institutions on issues such as human rights, the environment, equality, and inequality (Joyce, 2010). Online digital activism is able to influence social and political change collectively, which is an important element of activism in the real world.

One of the studies on digital activism and hashtags is the Ferguson incident where the widely publicized murder of an unarmed black man sparked protests and encouraged various forms of activism. The incident was widely circulated in various reports and quickly went viral on social media. More than 3.6 million posts appeared on Twitter documenting and reflecting on the death of Michael Brown with the hashtag #Ferguson which by the end of the month had appeared eight million times on the Twitter platform (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

In Indonesia, the civil society movement that uses Twitter social media to support social and political change is the hashtag #GejayanMemanggil. The hashtag #GejayanMemanggi became a trending topic on social media the day before the protest regarding several problematic draft laws (RUU) that were to be passed. Activists spread this issue via the social media Twitter and encouraged other people to join the protest (Ariza, 2020).

Social media stands as the primary tool supporting activism and pivotal social movements, offering a platform for individuals, including citizens, organizations, companies, and even government institutions. Indonesian society witnessed a remarkable instance of digital activism in the form of the #savePrita hashtag in 2008, which served as a trailblazer in the activism movement against corporate entities (Ariza, 2020).

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo has become an important means of digital activism in socio-political change. The role of digital activism is to bring together people with the same views to participate in visual protests, online petitions, and other actions, thereby helping to gather mass support and put social pressure on the government. As individuals and groups, it makes it easier to voice concerns or protests against government actions or policies.

Hashtag symbols are familiar to users on the Twitter platform hashtag symbols are often used as a way of tagging conversations on this platform. Hashtags serve as a quick search system for someone looking for the latest news about ongoing events. In addition, Twitter provides a filing system marked with hashtags so that users can indicate meanings that may not be visible (Bonilla & Rosa, 2015).

In the context of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, Twitter users offer assistance to individuals who have endured losses stemming from Kominfo's policies. Additionally, it serves as a conduit for the dissemination of information pertinent to the actions taken by Kominfo in blocking certain digital platforms. Digital activism is instrumental in conveying factual information and narratives that bolster the perspectives of activists, thereby encouraging like-minded individuals to voluntarily engage in the movement. Within

the context of the #BlokirKominfo hashtag, Twitter users continue their commitment to providing support to those impacted by Kominfo's policies.

Digital activism wields the potential to sway public opinion, including that of the government. By exerting pressure on public sentiment through hashtags, activists can compel authorities to reconsider or revise contentious policies. Furthermore, digital activism thrives on inventive technology utilization, encompassing the creation of impactful video campaigns, engaging memes, striking imagery, and innovative communication methods (Ismahani et al., 2023).

The impact of digital activism in the hashtag #BlokirKominfo is a strong tool in gathering support, increasing awareness, and changing people's views and public opinion regarding the blocking of digital platforms and sites due to Kominfo policies regarding PSE registration.

The hashtag movement #BlokirKominfo uses the social media Twitter to massively and structuredly mobilize netizens who use digital platforms to post their opinions and aspirations about blocking Kominfo. The state does not pay attention to the social conditions of people who use the internet and digital platforms for economic activities to meet their daily needs.

Tweet posts reposted from accounts with clears or anonymous identities show their power to mobilize the masses and are followed by netizens: "Come on, join the discussion #netizen protests, we will discuss why we should be interested in the Minister of Communication and Information Regulation 5/2020 which is disturbing the public, being revoked #BlokirKominfo @secgron @kemudi @elsamnews." (@safenetvoice, Twitter post, July 20, 2022).

Netizens post opposing views and opinions towards Kominfo policies as a counter public via the social media Twitter. Criticism and aspirations voiced by counterpublics aim to influence government policy. Therefore, netizens intensively posted tweets showing their rejection of Kominfo's policy of blocking digital platforms.

5. Conclusion

This research analyzes the discussion of the hashtag #BlokirKominfo on Twitter so that mobilization can reverse control of the public sphere. This aspect of the reversal of control over the public sphere is because netizens' influence shapes public opinion on government policies related to PSE. In the traditional public sphere, as stated by Habermas, power is often held by certain parties such as the government or the mass media. However, digital activism through hashtags helps shape and strengthen public opinion regarding the problems of implementing Kominfo policies. Netizens can share information, analysis, and their views as private citizens influencing the views of society as a whole. The hashtag #BlokirKominfo is a response to the government's efforts to control information through PSE policies. Netizens use digital platforms to fight information control and ensure that their voices are not suppressed or censored by the government. The reversal of control of public space includes solidarity and mobilization of netizens. Digital activism provides a space for individuals who have the same concerns to gather, collaborate, and unite in collective action against policies that are considered detrimental. The digital activism movement demands transparency and accountability from the government regarding PSE policies. Netizens can monitor government actions and publicize non-transparency in decision-making.

This study also demonstrates that interactions occurring among individuals in the digital public sphere on Twitter can lead to a growing public sentiment, resulting in increased conformity when it comes to resisting, protesting, and criticizing the private sector's PSE registration policy. Internet users perceive themselves as being disadvantaged due to the loss of their livelihoods, constraints on creativity, blocked access to information, and even bullying from certain parties when they openly oppose Kominfo's policies.

Kominfo's actions have incited the anger of internet users, who rallied around the hashtag movement #BlokirKominfo in the digital public sphere to present an opposing discourse to Kominfo. Instead of safeguarding people's privacy data, the government's actions appeared arbitrary. Consequently, netizens turned to online platforms, particularly Twitter, to express their concerns, mobilize virtual protests, and even call on the government to revoke the implemented blockades. With the assistance of legal activists, such as LBH Jakarta, the community managed to bring about changes to this policy. The hashtag #BlokirKominfo has established a digital public sphere where diverse perspectives and voices can be heard, thus creating an important platform for democracy and citizen involvement in decision-making.

Exists as digital activism that uses technology and social media to carry out social or political change. Digital online platforms are used as public sphere for discussion because they provide easy, fast, cheap, and convenient access to more information so people are willing to participate. The internet and technology are interrelated and have succeeded in creating a new public sphere to discuss rejecting the PSE registration policy.

The hashtag #BlokirKominfo sparks communicative efforts on Twitter, utilizing various symbols extensively to create awareness and shape public opinion concerning internet access restrictions, the blocking of digital platforms, websites, and online content. Effective communication encompasses two primary actions: truth-claim actions and normative-claim actions. In truth-claim activities, netizens share narratives on Twitter supported by logical reasoning and arguments. In normative-claim activities, the community strives to achieve a collective consensus to ensure that Kominfo's policies do not have adverse effects on digital users.

The reversal of control of public sphere in the context of the hashtag #BlokirKominfo refers to changes in the dynamics of power and influence in digital public sphere. The use of hashtags by netizens is a form of online activism that provides sphere for netizens to take over or reverse control over narratives and decision-makers in digital public spaces. This shows that power and influence in the digital public sphere are no longer concentrated in those who have control over the media. Netizens use digital platforms to voice their views, shape public opinion, and influence the policy-making process, thereby reflecting new dynamics in modern democracies that are more open and inclusive.

The research into the reversal of control over digital public sphere through the hashtag #BlokirKominfo does have certain limitations that need to be considered for future research endeavors. Firstly, relying on accounts that oppose PSE registration requirements may introduce bias into the analysis as it primarily represents one side of the issue, potentially overlooking a balanced perspective. Secondly, the constraints of the method, such as sentiment and content analysis, restrict the understanding of the context and social dynamics that underlie the tweets, offering only a superficial view. Moreover, the research findings may have limited generalizability to a broader population as they concentrate on the #BlokirKominfo hashtag and specific digital activism groups, omitting the wider digital landscape. Twitter, as a platform, represents just a fraction of the comprehensive digital public sphere. Additionally, the dynamic nature of the social media environment, Twitter included, means that trends, hashtags, and user behaviors can evolve rapidly, making the data gathered potentially outdated. Lastly, resource limitations, particularly in terms of time and access to specific data, impact the diversity of data available for this research.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proposes several avenues for future research. Firstly, in addition to Twitter data, it is recommended to gather data from various social media sources and other platforms. Each platform possesses its unique dynamics, offering a more comprehensive understanding of digital activism. Secondly, employing a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods could be valuable. Understanding the motivations and perspectives of activists through interviews or surveys can provide deeper insights.

Furthermore, there is a need to investigate how the use of hashtags and digital activism evolves. Monitoring trends and government responses to such activities can be insightful. Future research should also consider comparative analyses between the current situation and similar circumstances in other countries or regions. This can help identify variations and commonalities in digital activism practices.

Additionally, employing network analysis techniques can shed light on the connections and influence of key activists within the digital public sphere. Understanding the network structure can provide valuable insights into how information and influence flow within the digital space. Lastly, delving deeper into the issues of internet surveillance and its connection to digital activism would align with global debates and trends in the digital realm.

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