Domesticating WhatsApp Groups: Indonesian Women's Experience with Misinformation and Hate Speech in the 2019 Election

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ABSTRACT

There are rising concerns over the spread of misinformation and hate speech on mobile instant messaging, especially during political elections. In 2019, when Indonesia held its legislative and presidential elections, WhatsApp groups had become the main source of the harmful content for Indonesians, with politically motivated content being the most received. This paper examined how Indonesian women used WhatsApp groups and addressed the harmful content on the platform during the arguably most divisive presidential election in the country's history. Their experiences were approached with the four processes of domestication: *appropriation, conversion, incorporation,* and *objectification*. This study applies qualitative approach by conducting semi-structured interviews with 30 informants selected through purposive sampling technique in five Indonesian cities namely Jakarta, Banda Aceh, Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jayapura. This study found that WhatsApp groups enabled them to gain self-actualization for professional and personal purposes, but their experience was disrupted by the political event that drove misinformation and hate speeches. Based on their gender identity, political interest and ethnicity, they responded to misinformation and hate speech differently in different WhatsApp groups, ranging from ignoring to verifying and debunking them. Their responses to misinformation and hate speech differ depending on their understanding of gender bias, political interests, as well as religious and ethnic identities, which are also influenced by the type of group and conversations on WhatsApp groups.

Keywords: *Indonesian women, WhatsApp, domestication, misinformation, hate speech.*

INTRODUCTION

The propagation of misinformation has been of a great concern in Indonesia, especially during the elections, where misinformation has frequently appeared, exploiting the country's religious and ethnic sentiments, which continue to influence Indonesian voters (Kaur et al., 2018). As a result, misinformation and religious and ethnic-based hate speeches often overlap as the former commonly have religious and ethnic elements. The harmful content is particularly disseminated on WhatsApp, the second most popular social networking site in the country after YouTube with more than two million monthly active users (Statista, 2021b).

As the government and technology companies continue to tackle the spread of misinformation on open social media platforms, and news outlets, WhatsApp with its end-to-end encryption feature has become a favoured channel for the distribution of the harmful content (Pangestika, 2018, Hui, 2019).

The spread of politically motivated misinformation on social media platforms and other digital channels such as blogs and websites were first discovered during the 2014 presidential election (Kumparan News, 2017). Over the next few years, the intertwined relationships of political interest, misinformation, and religious and ethnic issues intensified during the next two massive political events in the country: the 2017 Jakarta governor election (Agussalim, Winarni & Bagir, 2019) and the 2019 national election (Neyazi et al., 2022; Hui, 2019).

In the run-up to the 2017 governor election in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, the incumbent, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama, who was seeking another term in office and had enjoyed high approval ratings for much of his first term as governor, was accused of religious blasphemy. Purnama is a Chinese-Indonesian Christian that put him as 'double minorities' in the context of Indonesia. During one of his official visits, he warned a small group of audience not to be fooled by people who declare a verse in the Qur'an states that Muslims should not elect a non-Muslim leader. The full video of his speech was then uploaded on YouTube by the Provincial Government of Jakarta. There was no criticism whatsoever about the speech until nine days later, when a netizen named Buni Yani uploaded an edited clip with an inaccurate transcript on his Facebook account (Agussalim, Winarni, & Bagir, 2019). Subsequently, the campaign by his opponents to use his religion and race to bring down the popularity of Purnama began. Purnama apologised, saying that he has no intention of insulting Qur'anic verses with blasphemy and he simply expressed his thoughts on people who politicise the holy verses (Juniman, 2016; Sinuko, 2016). Nevertheless, the wheel of hatred had turned and fuelled religious and ethnic sentiments in Jakarta, which then had become a national issue. Purnama was eventually defeated in the election and was sentenced two years in prison for religious blasphemy (BBC News Indonesia, 2017).

The 2019 election saw the continued rivalry between the incumbent, Joko Widodo, and the challenger, Prabowo Subianto, who both competed for the Indonesian presidency in the 2014 election. It was found that the spread of misinformation and hate speech during the two elections disrupted voter access to credible information and created doubt among voters about the democratic process (Mujani & Kuipers, 2020). One example of the harmful content during both elections is an unfounded claim that Joko Widodo is Chinese by descent and Christian, labels associated with ethnic and religious minority status in Indonesia (Hui & Prakash, 2019). The claim was followed by other related misinformation in the 2019 election, for instance, allegations of President Widodo who agreed to 'import' ten million Chinese labourers to the country, fuelling the broader narrative that he had been unfavourably accommodating interests of the Chinese (Mujani & Kuipers, 2020). The gravity of misinformation attacks against the election perhaps could be best seen at its final stage, when the spread of allegations of election fraud led to mass protests and destruction of public facilities around the Election Commission building in Jakarta, prompting the government to limit access to Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp in the area (Anggraheni, Harry & Setyowati, 2021).

The modus operandi of the distribution, as stated by the Indonesian Minister of Communication, was "[...] the content was being posted on Facebook and Instagram, then it was screenshot and shared on WhatsApp", which caused its virality (Budiansyah, 2020). Interviews by Jalli and Idris (2019) with Indonesian cybertroopers, who were distributing misinformation on social platforms during the 2019 election, revealed that cybertroopers considered WhatsApp as an ideal platform for their actions due to the encrypted feature of the platform so the content was not disrupted by authorities and the origin of the content cannot be revealed. Its risk posed to the election is considered to be high as Indonesian internet users lack of media literacy which cause them to be highly likely prone to misinformation (Sukmayadi, 2019; Syam & Nurrahmi, 2020).

In addition, a survey by Kurnia et al. (2020) during the 2019 election discovered that WhatsApp had become the main source of politically motivated misinformation and hate speech for Indonesian women. The survey on 1,250 Indonesian women found that most respondents received misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp, particularly WhatsApp group, on a daily basis. In the contemporary Indonesian politics, Indonesian women were in a less advantageous position compared to Indonesian men as the internet penetration rate for the country, specifically for women was 77.36%, compared to 79.32% of their men counterparts (VOI, 2023). Indonesian women were also found to have a lower digital literacy index compared to men as shown by a survey on Indonesia's digital literacy index involving 1,670 respondents (KataData Insight Center, & Kominfo, 2020), that 26% of male respondents had a higher digital score above the national average, while the proportion of female respondents was only 22%. This made women, compared to men, more susceptible to being deceived by misinformation, as found by a survey by Gelgel, Apriani and Ginting (2020) on men and women in the Indonesian Province of Bali.

As shown above, there have been considerable previous studies on politically motivated misinformation and hate speech on social platforms in Indonesia (Neyazi et al., 2021; Anggraheni et al., 2021; Hui, 2019; Mujani & Kuipers, 2020; Jalli & Idris, 2019; Syahputra, 2019) and the relationship between Indonesian women and misinformation on WhatsApp (Ilahi, 2018; Kurnia et al., 2020). However, little attention has been paid to how Indonesian women navigate the harmful content in their daily use of WhatsApp group during an election. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap as it looks closely at how 30 Indonesian women from five cities in Indonesia responded to misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp against the backdrop of the 2019 election while domesticating the communication technology as studied by Silverstone (2006) and Matassi, Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2019). The subsequent section discusses the use of WhatsApp in Indonesia, followed by the problems of misinformation and hate speech encountered by WhatsApp users in the context of the divisive 2019 election. Next, a discussion on the relationship between WhatsApp group and the domestication process is presented, including key concepts upon which the authors will draw to evaluate the domesticating of WhatsApp groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

WhatsApp Among Indonesians

For Indonesians, economic motives are the most significant reason they prefer MIM such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and LINE over SMS (Ilahi, 2018). To send each SMS, an average Indonesian has to pay IDR 350 or 2 cents in the USD currency since Indonesian

telecommunication providers do not provide various bundling packages of the internet quota and unlimited text and call per month like their counterparts in the United States and other countries. They only offer multiple packages of the internet quota, excluding text and call services, so it is more economical for their customers to do texting and calling on MIM platforms such as WhatsApp. It is argued that this free and the nature of MIM encourage its users to send more messages since WhatsApp is seen as more conversational in nature, more fluid and more natural when compared to SMS (Church & Oliviera, 2013). Additionally, the authors argued that in the Indonesian collective culture where people are very fond of interpersonal communication (Hofstede, 2001; Mulder, 1996), MIM serves the culture and enforces it through the group chat feature, thus it became trendy and inseparable among Indonesians both personally and professionally. This is closely associated with one of the factors that motivate users to choose WhatsApp as WhatsApp facilitates group chats and a sense of connectedness, so it is commonly used in communities with close relationships (Church & Oliviera, 2013). Studies have also shown that MIM users pay attention to incoming messages in a continuous way (Kaufmann & Peil, 2020) and regularly slot "brief bursts of usage" into their everyday activities (Ferreira, Goncalves, Kostakos, Barkhuus, & Dey, 2014).

It should be noted that BlackBerry Messenger was the first popular MIM among Indonesians until the BlackBerry device was replaced by Android and its touch screen feature in 2011 to 2012 (Evandio, 2020). The presence of Android, which offered more features than the BlackBerry gadget, has also brought a more user-friendly chat service called WhatsApp to Indonesians (Lestari, 2018; CNN Indonesia, 2021). Around 2011 to 2012, WhatsApp's first rival in Indonesia was LINE, but WhatsApp was considered to be gaining more popularity due to its interface simplicity (Kartini & Zujic, 2020), ad-free approach (Julija, 2023), and it doesn't need as much space on the mobile phone as its rival LINE (Kurnia et al., 2020).

In the last decade, studies of text messaging have increased in the literature, with numerous studies being carried out to understand the use of messaging as a regular communication activity (Elareshi et al., 2021). However, studies about text messaging on WhatsApp are limited. Research on the use of WhatsApp for different purposes such as health services (Mars, 2016), learning (Awada, 2016), journalism, including in the subject of misinformation during a political election (Arun, 2019; Machado et al. 2019) and gendered hate speech (Binder et al., 2020) has also been growing.

Misinformation and Hate Speech in Non-western Countries
Many scientists have discussed the various factors that influence the spread of misinformation. Tandoc Jr and Lee (2022) mention several factors, including: first, research that looks at the cognitive role of individual biases. This condition occurs when individuals seek, select, and believe information confirming their beliefs. Second, researchers that focus on the role of cognitive abilities see that individuals with cognitive abilities tend to believe and spread misinformation.

Regarding studies on misinformation in non-western countries, Tandoc Jr and Lee (2022) state that misinformation has real-life consequences. Various general elections from Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Philippines were marked by the spread of fake news and misinformation (Avelar, 2019; Mokhtar, 2019). The spread of the harmful content is believed to cause serious harm to Indonesia's tolerance and multiculturalism, resulting in divisions that lasted beyond the election's duration (Kusman, 2017).

Before discussing the issue further, it is important to discuss the term misinformation first. Some scholars have distinguished misinformation from disinformation, the first refers to misleading information created or disseminated without malicious intent, and the latter is used to refer to intentional attempts to confuse or manipulate people through delivering dishonest information to them (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). The difficulty in making this difference is separating people's reasons for conveying verifiably inaccurate information. In this study, the authors use the term misinformation to refer to the phenomenon of intentionally or unintentionally sharing false information (Rossini et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, misinformation was considered to be the first widely spread on various types of media nationally during the 2014 presidential election (Kumparan News, 2017). As the government, tech companies, and other stakeholders have been tackling the spread on open social platforms, websites, and print media, misinformation is mostly encountered on MIM, especially WhatsApp. With its end-to-end encryption feature and two million monthly active users with a strong dominance over its MIM competitors (Statista, 2021a), WhatsApp has now become the number one medium for misinformation in the country (Wendratama, 2020; Liputan6, 2020). When there were significant political interests at stake, the concern only became more extensive as it is observed that misinformation in the country especially spiked in political events such as the 2019 general election (Tahir et al., 2020).

During significant election cycles, misinformation often arises together with hate speech and produces the so-called "information disorder" that potentially corrupts the integrity of the democratic process (Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Hate speech is defined as any expression of discriminatory hate towards an individual or group defined by a protected characteristic such as race or ethnic origin, religion, gender identity and sexual orientation, and it can be disseminated through any media (Article 19, 2015) and the hate speech threat among the Indonesian public is believed to be as big as the misinformation one (Mustika, 2019).

Both misinformation and hate speech leverage fabrications and mistruths for political gain and those harmful contents created a level of polarisation in the 2019 presidential election that was unprecedented in the history of political elections in Indonesia, given that there were only two presidential candidates since the start of the campaign and both continued their bitter rivalry since the 2014 election (Afrimadona, 2021). In the 2019 election, there were national and regional legislative elections held on the same day as the presidential election, but the presidential contest created much fiercer competition and polarisation among citizens than the legislative one (Arifianto, 2019; Habibi & Sunjana, 2019). It was also the first time Indonesians elected their president/vice president, members of the senate, and members of parliament on the same day. This major political event drove enthusiasm among public members to be involved in the conversation about the issue, particularly concerning the presidential election. At the same time, it also fuelled misinformation and hate speech among the public (Adiputra et al., 2019).

WhatsApp and Domestication
This study used a domestication approach to see how individual behaviour is in using WhatsApp (Silverstone, 2006). The domestication approach is appropriate for this study because it can link cultural and social aspects of technology with the interaction behaviour between individuals (Campbell et al., 2014, p. 185). There are four distinct stages in the

domestication process: appropriation, conversion, incorporation, and objectification (Haddon, 2011; Matassi, Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2019).

Haddon (2011, p. 313) states that *appropriation* "captures the types of negotiations and considerations" that can lead to mastery of technology. Appropriation is related to how individuals or society choose and use certain technological devices. This stage looks at the motives and reasons for using internet technology.

Conversion relates to how individuals and society use technology as part of individual identity and how we talk about and demonstrate this technology. After the appropriation stage, devices become routine and familiar. In the conversion stage, devices are increasingly integrated with individuals. Berker (2005) mentions that domestication at this stage shapes ways of using and values influenced by technology. *Incorporation* deals with how technology is placed spatially in the community. At this stage, the individual begins to use technology regularly. Berker (2005) emphasizes that technology has then influenced how individuals interact with one another.

Meanwhile, *objectification* deals with how people use technology in their daily schedules and routines (Haddon, 2011). Chambers (2016) calls objectification a focus on the expression of an individual's style and values. Domestication, more briefly, relates to efforts to link technology and how individuals think due to their relationship with these technological devices (Silverstone, 2006). In other words, domestication, with the four distinct stages mentioned above, is a way for individuals and society to adapt and negotiate with the use and development of technology. In the context of WhatsApp, domestication helps to understand "a passage point for the management of friendship, family, and work routines" in WhatsApp (Matassi, Boczkowski, & Mitchelstein, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative approach that aims to figure out and to interpret "the meaning of individuals to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014). Through qualitative research, misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp group faced by Indonesian women during the 2019 election can be described in-depth. Semi-structured interviews that took place in May 2019, this study combines open and closed-theory-driven questions in asking informants (Galleta, 2013). This approach enables researchers to ask critical questions to the informants and they could openly share their experiences and opinions on navigating misinformation and hate speech in various WhatsApp groups. Therefore, how Indonesian women addressed misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp group during the 2019 election and its relation to the domestication process could be elaborated.

There were 30 informants selected through a purposive sampling technique based on several criteria. First, women aged between 23 and 56 years old which is the common productive age for Indonesians after graduating from college and before retirement. Secondly, they are actively involved in various WhatsApp groups. Thirdly, they would have had experience in encountering political misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp groups. These informants were selected from five prominent Indonesian cities, namely Jakarta, Banda Aceh, Yogyakarta, Makassar, and Jayapura. Jakarta is chosen because it is the centre of Indonesia's economy and politics that serves as the headquarters of various public, private, and multinational companies. The 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election reflected political conflict as what had happened in the 2014 election and consecutively gave a foundation for the divisive 2019 election (Afrimadona, 2021). Banda Aceh was also selected

because it is the capital of Aceh Province, the only province in the country that applies Islamic sharia law, which is governed as a special territory. Aceh Province is one of the Indonesia provinces where its people tend to be susceptible to misinformation according to Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia (Budilaksono, 2019).

Next, Yogyakarta is a student and cultural city in Indonesia and its province has a special autonomy due to the political role of the Yogyakarta monarchy. Yogyakarta is found by a survey by *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia* (Budilaksono, 2019) to be one of few cities in the country with a low level of misinformation acceptance.

Meanwhile, Makassar is the capital of South Sulawesi Province and the largest city in the Eastern part of Indonesia. The diversity of ethnic and religious groups has also led to the use of identity politics in the local election in the city since 2013 (Syaf, 2017), which was then exacerbated by the spread of political misinformation regarding voting rules in Makassar during the 2019 election (Padmasari, 2019).

Lastly, Jayapura is the capital city in the eastern point of Indonesia, Papua Province, where issues of women are prominent such as domestic violence (Adjie, 2020) and gender discrimination (Wayap, 2021). Jayapura is often considered underdeveloped in comparison to other cities in the country because it is located away from the centre of government in Jakarta and has a two-hour time difference. In terms of politics, Jayapura is one of the regions in Indonesia with relatively high political sensitivity as there are separatist groups throughout Papua wanting to gain independence from Indonesia.

There are local partners in each city who helped reach six informants in each city by considering the diversity in age, occupation, education, and the number of WhatsApp groups. This diversity of informants is needed to elaborate the richness of Indonesian women's experience as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Informants profile

Informant Number	Age	Number of WhatsApp Group	Educational Background	Occupation	City of residence
1.	27	31-40	Undergraduate	NGO worker	Banda Aceh
2.	48	1-10	Undergraduate	Teacher	Banda Aceh
3.	28	11-20	Master	Lecturer	Banda Aceh
4.	40	1-10	High school graduate	Entrepreneur	Banda Aceh
5.	23	1-10	High school graduate	Shop attendant	Banda Aceh
6.	41	21-30	Undergraduate	Public servant	Banda Aceh
7.	41	<10	diploma	Freelancer	Jakarta
8.	24	<10	Undergraduate	Florist	Jakarta
9.	37	<10	High school graduate	Housewive	Jakarta
10.	56	15	Diploma	Housewive	Jakarta
11.	42	11-20	Undergraduate	Private employee	Jakarta
12.	37	<10	Undergraduate	Make-up artist	Jakarta
13.	44	11-20	Undergraduate	Radio announcer	Yogyakarta
14.	26	1-10	Master	Veterinarian	Yogyakarta
15.	26	1-10	Undergraduate	Private employee	Yogyakarta
16.	28	>20	Undergraduate	Private employee and online shop owner	Yogyakarta
17.	49	10	Master	Judge	Yogyakarta
18.	41	41	Master	Lecturer	Yogyakarta
19.	43	82	Doctor	Lecturer	Makassar
20.	43	21-30	Master	Teacher	Makassar
21.	54	<10	Doctor	Lecturer	Makassar

22.	47	<10	Undergraduate	Book shop owner	Makassar
23.	30	<10	Master	Entrepreneur	Makassar
24.	23	38	Undergraduate	Private employee	Makassar
25.	50	21-30	Master	Teacher	Jayapura
26.	32	21-30	Master	Lecturer	Jayapura
27.	23	11-20	Undergraduate	Private employee	Jayapura
28.	39	1-10	Diploma	Housewive	Jayapura
29.	29	>41	Undergraduate	Public servant	Jayapura
30.	28	31-40	Diploma	Lecturer	Jayapura

All interviews were recorded based on the informants' consent. These recordings were transcript verbatim and then categorized into several topics (Freeman, 2017) based on the interview guide. These topics include the use of WhatsApp group, experiences and feelings when finding misinformation and hate speech, and responses to misinformation and hate speech on WhatsApp group.

This data analysis was conducted in two main steps. Firstly, the data was analysed with the four processes of domestication: *appropriation, conversion, incorporation,* and *objectification*. Secondly, the data was analysed in relation to political misinformation and hate speech during the 2019 election.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents research findings approached with the domestication process initially offered by Silverstone (2006) and later developed for the use of WhatsApp by Matassi, Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2019). This study found that Indonesian women as WhatsApp group users experienced four distinct stages which resulted in a paradoxical condition. On the one hand, they benefited from the presence of WhatsApp group which enabled them to enter public spaces professionally and personally. On the other hand, they had to consume and respond to political misinformation and hate speech as the dominant harmful content on WhatsApp groups during the 2019 election.

Appropriation: Their Motivations to Use WhatsApp Group
Appropriation, as mentioned by Silverstone (2006), emphasizes the importance of the initial introduction phase between individuals and technology. In this phase, individuals adapt to acquire or not acquire the technology. Appropriation helps explain the motivations of the informants in joining WhatsApp groups, where on average each informant was a member of 25 groups.

Most respondents said that their main motivations to use WhatsApp groups were to strengthen their family relationships, to get connected with their social life, and to support their work-related activities. This tendency was seen evenly among 30 informants who lived in the five cities.

A respondent said that WhatsApp groups helped her a lot because she could connect with families from different regions who had been challenging to meet. "You can bring your family closer through video calls," said Informant 28. A similar reason was also conveyed by Informant 25, who noted that the most crucial role of WhatsApp groups was to unite the family and the community.

Apart from strengthening relationships within the family, another reason informants used WhatsApp groups was to support their social life. This could be seen in the groups they were in, especially groups based on specific hobbies or interests.

As an example, Informant 30 spent more than 7 hours on average every day using WhatsApp. Of the total hours, she spent more time in WhatsApp groups, especially religious-based community groups. In this religion-based group, she said that WhatsApp helped her and her friends to be more active in carrying out religious activities or reciting the Koran.

Meanwhile, Informant 29 said she joined a number of WhatsApp groups where all members were women because they could strengthen one another's morale and be in solidarity. "In groups specifically for women, early in the morning, we encourage each other," said Informant 29.

In addition, most of the informants mentioned that WhatsApp groups supported their work-related activities. Sometimes, colleagues create small groups with limited members and close relationships where members can communicate informally. For example, Informant 20, a businessman who operated an online business, said that her WhatsApp groups immensely helped him as he could arrange a meeting with customers more quickly and sell goods more effectively.

It is shown that women used WhatsApp groups in both public and domestic spaces which enabled them to actualize themselves for professional and personal purposes. Although these women come from various backgrounds, they tended to easily adapt to WhatsApp group to interact with their members of immediate and extended family, members of communities, colleagues, and customers.

Conversion: Political Misinformation and Hate Speech on WhatsApp Group
Conversion focuses on how individuals mobilize technology as a "part of their identities and how they present themselves to others" (Haddon, 2016, p. 20). From Haddon's explanation (2016), at the conversion stage, individuals use various ways to interact and present themselves in responding to technology. In this research, conversion shows the circulation of misinformation and hate speech in informants' WhatsApp groups. At the time of the election, this study found that women could not escape from the distribution of political misinformation and hate speech. These types of harmful content were massively distributed in various professional and personal WhatsApp groups.

It can be said that although WhatsApp groups provided many benefits for the informants, they often found the groups distressing when group's members began sharing misinformation, mostly political.

The interviews with 30 informants showed that political misinformation was most often circulated on school alumni groups and extended family groups, especially regarding the two presidential candidates Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto. This could be related to the fact that alumni groups and extended family groups were very informal, so the discussion topics were virtually beyond limitations. This fact led the informants to perceive that informal WhatsApp groups were more vulnerable to misinformation because everyone felt free to share messages on any topic. This characteristic differed from professional groups and children's school groups which had specific subjects and shared interests. Informants also shared the same sentiment that most political misinformation was distributed by men.

Informant 21, for example, was agitated by political information she received repeatedly from various alumni groups. She said, "These alumni WhatsApp group becomes boring and uninteresting so now I do not want to be involved in the conversation". She explained that she no longer felt the important function of alumni groups which initially was to "*melepas kangen*" (to reconnect with each other).

Informant 12 felt similar. She felt irritated when she found political misinformation related to the 2019 election, mostly from her high school alumni group. She even said that when there was no election, she did not receive any misinformation on WhatsApp.

Their responses to political misinformation varied, ranging from ignoring to verifying it, depending on the content of the misinformation and the context of the group such as the tone of the conversation. In general, informants said that they mostly just ignored political misinformation they received. Ignoring here means that they did not comment, share, or verify the correctness of the information. This was because mainly the informants did not want to trigger arguments among group members and "the senders of the hoax only believe what they want to believe" (Informant 3). Even though they mostly did not directly comment on political misinformation, they still cared about the course of the group's conversation regarding political misinformation and at times shared comments so that the atmosphere in the group remains tolerable.

When they chose to verify it, the platform that they mostly used was the Google search engine which would provide links to a news page or fact-check page stating that the information was true or false.

> Usually, I search by typing keywords from that message. Like yesterday there was an issue about religion. I typed and then some articles offered by Google. From there I can conclude it is a hoax or not (Informant 15).

In addition, informants used social platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to verify the message by typing the keywords on the platforms' search bars. At times, they looked for relevant posts on social media accounts they trusted, such as those owned by mainstream news media, fact-checkers, and government agencies.

Besides political misinformation, hate speech motivated by political interest was also frequently found in WhatsApp groups. Informants said the hate speech expressions were mostly related to religion and ethnicity.

> Religious and ethnic sentiments were used to discredit candidates in the election, whether they were presidential candidates or legislative candidates (Informant 20).

Expressions demeaning women related to the election also made some informants felt annoyed, angry and offended.

Informant 20 said, "I feel very angry when a member of WhatsApp group sent a picture of a naked woman in a cardboard box written by *"belum dicoblos"* (not yet voted but using a word that in the Indonesian language means entered by penis)". She said that this hate speech degraded women.

Informants also often encounter religion-based hate speech and according to them it was almost always politically motivated which is often found during election time. This led to heated discussions among group members and sometimes made them decide to leave the WhatsApp group. It was common for hate speech to appear along with misinformation.

Hate speech is often intertwined with misinformation. After the misinformation is sent to the group, the hate speech immediately comes out (Informant 1).

Meanwhile, ethnic-based hate speech was common to be encountered by informants as well. Although the hate speech expressions were not directly related to the 2019 election, they believed the sentiment was driven by the heated debate over the 2017 Jakarta governor election where some people felt they were entitled to express their dislike of other ethnicities.

They usually ignored the hate speech as they were reluctant to argue with other group members. However, when it was related directly to them, they usually responded, as shown in the experience of Informant 12, who responded rather harshly to group members who conveyed hate speech about Indonesians of Chinese descent. This was because she is an Indonesian citizen whose family background is multi-racial.

If someone says we can't live in diversity, it's just their mindset that's wrong. If someone in the group says, 'Chinese is like this, I don't like it,' my response is, 'What made you say that? Have you ever had a bad experience with people of Chinese descent? If it's based on your trauma, then only you can heal it. But you have to find out, is it true that all of them are like that (Informant 12).

In this conversion process, informants interacted with other members of WhatsApp groups by navigating their multiple identities rooted in their understanding of gender bias, political interests, as well as religious and ethnic identities. Therefore, they responded to misinformation and hate speech differently in different WhatsApp groups, ranging from ignoring to verifying and debunking them.

Objectification: The Physical and Symbolic Space of WhatsApp Group
As Silverstone (2006) explains objectification focuses on technology's position in the "material, social, and cultural spaces of the home". However, with the development of technology, space must be understood differently because of its mobile character, which changes space in terms of geography. This study confirms the previous study by Matassi, Boczkowski and Mitchelstein (2019) that WhatsApp has become a place in itself both physically (space of the screen) and symbolically (space of relations).

If there were no elections, almost half of the informants stated that they did not receive misinformation on WhatsApp groups at all, which made their screen space and social relations space enjoyable and useful. As an example, Informant 10, whose WhatsApp daily experience was centred around her family and school alumni WhatsApp groups, informed that the alumni group had become a place for her and her friends to share nostalgic stories when they were in college and stories about their current daily activities. However, when the 2019 election campaign started, misinformation and hate speech began to appear, which disturbed the comfortable space offered by the WhatsApp group.

Similar experiences were also shared by other informants who asserted that the pleasant and affectionate space offered by their family and friend WhatsApp groups was disturbed by divisive political messages, whether they were accurate or not.

There was a time when political misinformation made them afraid to leave the house so that their physical space was limited. This was experienced by informants in Jakarta ahead of the election announcement by the Election Commission on 22 May 2019. At that moment, there were many messages on WhatsApp groups stating that, due to election fraud, there would be large-scale protests like the 1998 riots, which were related to anti-Chinese sentiment. In the end, the 22 May rioting did happen, but it only took place around the Election Commission building. However, the messages made the atmosphere tense so they preferred not to take the risk and chose to stay at home.

> This made me and my friends who were going to meet up afraid to go out of the house, even though we had made an appointment a week ago. We don't know which messages are true and which are not, because they circulate so much, in almost all WhatsApp groups that I'm in (Informant 10).

Another experience was shared by Informant 14, who said that misinformation and hate speech related to the election disturbed her, and she gained a sense of calm by doing WhatsApp video calls with her husband who lived in a different city as required by his job.

> We do this WhatsApp video call every day to maintain our relationship. This makes our long physical distance feel close. During the heated political climate of the election, our video calls helped to calm me down, I felt my husband near me (Informant 14).

It is found that the amount of misinformation and hate speech was detrimental to the informants' abstract and physical spaces, limiting their access to the spaces they normally used. Nevertheless, some of them said that they were able to find other spaces provided by the WhatsApp group in order to balance their WhatsApp experience.

Incorporation: The Daily Use of WhatsApp Group
Incorporation concerns the rhythms and routines of technology use (Matassi, Boczkowski & Mitchelstein, 2019). This study deals with the informants' daily experience with WhatsApp groups, both in their domestic and public domains.

All informants stated that they always open the WhatsApp group every day. Some of them even mentioned that WhatsApp had been dominating their phone's screen compared to other applications, and it was almost always the app they opened first in the morning after waking up.

> After waking up in the morning, I usually open my phone to check important messages on WhatsApp, whether related to work, family, or my child's school matters (Informant 11).

The tendency to use WhatsApp continuously was also conveyed by other informants, both for personal and work matters. For example, Informant 6 from Banda Aceh said WhatsApp has an important role in coordinating work activities in her office.

In my work, important information or announcements are shared on the WhatsApp group. When there is a report, it is shared with the group. So it's important for me to always monitor the WhatsApp group (Informant 6).

However, when political misinformation, followed by political arguments, took place in a number of WhatsApp groups, informants stated that they became reluctant to open those groups. Their reason was accessing the groups created stressful feelings that could make their day worse.

The arguments about who is right and wrong in the group are actually only to support their own candidates, and this makes the group annoying. So I haven't opened the alumni group for a week (Informant 12).

It is found all informants accessed WhatsApp group every day to support their daily activities. However, when political debate arose due to misinformation and hate speech, some of the informants chose not to access those groups. This shows that even if they were harmed by those messages, they could choose not to encounter those messages anymore and sometimes even leave certain WhatsApp groups.

CONCLUSION

Although Indonesian women received meaningful benefits from WhatsApp group, they had a disruptive experience during the 2019 election in the form of misinformation and hate speech, most of which were politically motivated. Their responses to political misinformation and hate speech varied, ranging from ignoring to verifying it, depending on the context of the group and their own stance on the issue at hand.

It is also found that the amount of misinformation and hate speech was detrimental to the informants' abstract and physical spaces, limiting their access to the spaces they normally used. Nevertheless, some of them said that they were able to find other spaces provided by the WhatsApp group in order to balance their WhatsApp experience.

In investigating the issue, the limitation of this study is acknowledged. This study did not differentiate between text-based and visual misinformation (Garimella & Eckles, 2017) and was carried out under a severe time frame. Similarly, this study also did not differentiate between text-based and visual hate speech. There is a scope for conducting a longitudinal study on the basis of the existing results in order to provide more insight into how women address misinformation and hate speech in other contexts such as women's empowerment and digital literacy. Therefore, further studies are needed to improve the area of elaborating on women's experience in dealing with various types of misinformation and hate speech that are not only political but also related to health, crime, and other social issues.

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