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Repositioning Actor Network Theory in Digital Communication Studies: An Explication through Digital Activim in Indonesia

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Abstract

The advancement of digital communication technology has revolutionised how individuals and groups engage in activism via various social media platforms. However, most studies of digital activism are still dominated by a human-centered perspective, often positioning technology as a passive medium. The purpose of this paper is to re-examine and reposition Actor Network Theory (ANT) in digital communication studies by investigating its relevance to understanding digital activism. This research applies a conceptual explication approach by examining the relationship between important ANT concepts, including actors, networks, and translation, and then corroborate them by looking into digital activism practices in Indonesia. The findings of the study suggest that digital activism is influenced by a variety of non-human actors, including social media platforms, algorithms, hashtags, and digital devices, in addition to human actors like activists and audiences. These actors have a substantial effect on the process of mobilisation, information dissemination, and public participation. This article contributes to the reinforcement of ANT's importance as a pertinent analytical framework for elucidating the distribution of agency in modern digital communication practices.

Keywords : Actor Network Theory, digital activism, digital communication, explication.

INTRODUCTION

The assumption of technological determinism, particularly in relation to the internet, is typically accompanied by two contradictory statements. Firstly, the internet is regarded as a catalyst for democratisation (technological utopia); Secondly, the internet's position shifts, with the claim that it is actually antithetical to democratisation (technological dystopia). The statements are not entirely accurate, as they only depict a simplistic relationship between technology and society and leave out all the diverse experiences and human nature. Furthermore, assertions that the internet is problematic and unsupportive of democratisation are rooted in a failure to recognise the genuine changes that are taking place at the grassroots level, which in turn detracts from the daily experiences of millions of individuals and their interactions with the internet (Yang, 2009). Materially, the notion that the internet has the potential to be a substantial force in democratisation has been confirmed by the use of terms such as digital activism, digital mobilisation, social movements, and digital civic engagement. An online survey conducted by the One World Foundation (2011) among civil society activists showed that all respondents used the internet in their work (Ambardi et al., 2014). However, there are problematic issues with the study of digital activism. McCaughey & Ayers (2004), editors of the journal Cyberactivism: Online Activism in Theory and Practice, argue that defining cyberactivism is as difficult as defining activism before the internet, therefore they chose not to provide a definition.

There are several relevant case studies that substantiate the notion that technology can facilitate the democratisation. In 2009, the digital movement of internet users in Indonesia experienced a surge in popularity, as evidenced by the success of two significant online

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movements: the Coin Movement for Prita, which was established as a means of solidarity for Prita Mulyasari, who was sued by Omni International Hospital for her email complaint. Along with that, the 1 million Facebookers Movement, which supported Candra Hamzah and Bibit Riyanto, was successful in mobilising the support of 1.3 million individuals for the "*cicak vs buaya*" case. This event led to the release of the two KPK commissioners who were detained by the police for their efforts to uncover a bribery case within the institution. The Malaysian Minister of Sports was also became the subject matter of a surge of digital community protests in November 2019, which culminated in an apology from the Malaysian Minister of Youth and Sports for the incident of beating Indonesian supporters in Malaysia. These three case examples demonstrate how great the influence of society in policy-making at the national and even international levels.

The popularity of social media, the growing number of users, and the trend of using social media to publicize products have contributed to the increased circulation of news in Indonesia. People are taking advantage of new media to increase and mobilize political support related to individual political interests. This makes sense in light of the research conducted by Cathy Cohen and Joseph Kahne in Yang (2016), which demonstrated that social media in particular is a useful instrument for encouraging youth involvement in politics. It is paramount to keep in mind that the infrastructure of daily life is inextricably linked with digital technology and media, as well as the activities that individuals can engage in with them (Pink et al., 2016). This implies that a person's offline infrastructure will impact their online behavior, which will have an impact on media practices associated with those infrastructure. Therefore, it is necessary to comprehend the media practices and media performativity carried out by the individuals behind the online movements themselves in order to grasp the essence of digital media in online social movements. The ongoing multi-narrative character of civil society and digital activism, as well as the fact that it helps Indonesia achieve a democratic digital society, make this study essential for research. Consequently, this paper will investigate the potential explanations for this phenomenon that can be derived from Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which was developed by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law. The explication method will be employed in the research procedure for exploring ANT.

METHODS

The purpose of this conceptual review paper is to provide an overview, analysis, and elaboration of Actor-Network Theory for application in the study of digital activism. The method used in this research is explication, as proposed by Chaffe (1991). He conceived the concept of explication in order to improve the connections between theory, observation, and research. The term "explication" refers to the practice of using suitable methodologies to the methodical linking of abstract notions to multiple real-world situations. As we work to strengthen our conceptualisation abilities through study, this explanation process takes into account both the conceptual and real worlds.

Explication is crucial in the communication discipline since many theoretical ideas are frequently applied but not always comprehended. Despite having different epistemological presuppositions and analytical implications, concepts like networks, actors, agencies, platforms, and digital activism are frequently applied intuitively. This article's explanation is carried out in four stages. The First, the article identifies the empirical basis or the primitive terms, meaning that every study must be based on evidence that we observed in real life and later explicates the theory in its derived terms, meaning that even though there are derived terms that we simply accept as inherited from our predecessors, due to changes in the paradigm in the

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scientific approach, these derived terms will often be rejected and replaced with a new set of terms thus linking it to communication studies. Second, the paper examines important ANT ideas, including actors/actants, networks, translation, intermediaries, mediators, dispersed agency, and black-boxing. Third, the essay relates these ideas to digital action and communication. Fourth, the article outlines the contributions and limitations of ANT as a framework for comprehending modern digital communication behaviours. The literature sources that were utilised include important works on Actor Network Theory written by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law (1987); literature on communication theory that places ANT within the context of the study of human-object communication; and digital activism studies that investigate the connection between the internet, political participation, social movements, social media, and digital platforms. In order to objectively measure, map, or test trends in the literature, this study does not use a systematic review approach. Rather, it uses an argumentative synthesis to create a clear theoretical stance regarding the feasibility of ANT to the study of digital communication.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Theory is considered the most fundamental and objective aspect of observing any phenomenon in academia. When scientists try to comprehend how the world functions, theory acts as both a guide and an objective. We can learn more about the phenomena we are trying to comprehend by using theory. New discoveries in human existence, or in this case, in all tangible communication processes, follow from this insight. Therefore, this discussion section will start from the process of explicating the theory in general followed by the communication theory.

Explication of Theory

Primitive Terms: The author defines a theory as a statement or conclusion that is the result of a specific intellectual process that is applied to a collection of ideas, thoughts, and perceptions regarding a specific phenomenon.

Derived Terms: Sutherland (1979) defines theory as an ordered set of assertions about a generic behavior or structure assumed to hold throughout a significantly broad range of specific instances. While Bacharach (1989) defines theory as a statement of relationships between observed or approximated units in the empirical world. Approximated units mean constructs, which by their very nature cannot be observed directly... A theory may be viewed as a system of constructs and variables in which the constructs are related to each other by hypotheses (Wacker, 1998).

These two definitions of theory lead to the conclusion that a theory is a collection of claims regarding a system of constructs or a broad structure in the empirical world. A theory should also meet the criteria for being a good theory: it must possess uniqueness, simplicity, conservatism, generalizability, productive value, internal consistency, risk, and abstraction applicable to all research methods. A proper theory development research is guided by the concept of theory, which includes defining variables, defining domains, establishing relationships that are internally consistent, and formulating precise predictions. It can be concluded that communication science already has a well-established theory and qualifies as a good theory since it satisfies the previously stated requirements for a good theory if this understanding is applied to the analysis of theories in the area. The evolution of communication science has been greatly influenced by a few early notions. According to the preceding description, when creating a theory, at least the essential requirements that define a theory must be taken into account. To accomplish the goals of writing scientific papers, in particular, the

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theories covered in this section still require development. More knowledge is required because the theoretical study is still relatively vast, particularly with relation to communication theories.

Explication of Communication Theory

Primitive Terms: For the author, communication theory is a collection of ideas and/or propositions whose truth has been tested and accepted as fact when viewed through the perspective of communication science.

Derived Terms: The theoretical development of Communication Studies is discussed more comprehensively in Rogers' (1997) History of Communication Study – A Biographical Approach. In this book, Rogers recounts the long history of communication science, as well as developments in communication theory. Rogers explains the origins of the development of communication science and theory, which began with three great European thinkers in the 19th century: Charles Darwin (Evolutionary Theory), Sigmund Freud (Psychoanalytic Theory), and Karl Marx (Critical Theory). The three theories put forward by these three figures not only fulfill the criteria for a theory, but also provide a fundamental foundation for the development of science not only in the field of communication science, but also in many other fields. These three thinkers based their ideas from a scientific perspective, having received training from leading European universities of their time. These three thinkers were also not treated well during their lives, even being forced to move out of Europe to America. This move also influenced the development of communication science in America.

Rogers (1997) also recounts the long history of the beginnings of communication science as a study program initiated by Wilburr Schramm. However, the development of communication science in America also includes contributions from other scientists, such as Lasswell with Propaganda Analysis, Lazarsfeld with Mass Communication Effects, Kurt Lewin with Group Dynamics, Hovland with Persuasion Research, Wiener with Cybernetics, and Shannon with Information Theory. The diverse ideas and contributions of these communication thinkers also served as a fundamental foundation for the development of communication science in America. From a mass communication perspective, Schramm (1972) recounts the historical changes in communication theory, particularly in the realm of mass communication. Schramm argues that during this period, communication science had developed, with numerous published papers and research. New, dynamic models of communication effects emerged, such as consistency theory, which has since become widely adopted. Furthermore, there was a wealth of diverse input from communication scientists, including those on economics, social development, the effects of television on children, and so on, which proved invaluable and contributed to the development of communication theory and methods. However, in his paper, "*The Nature of Communication between Humans*," Scramm elaborated on the differences between interpersonal and mass communication, as well as the relevant mass communication theories of the time.

The Foundation of Actor Network Theory and Its Position in Communication Studies

Actor Network Theory (ANT) is a theory that falls within the realm of communication studies between humans and objects. This area of study challenges the traditional notion that communication requires all participants to respond directly to each other in the communication process. ANT considers the role of objects as communication agents in their network of interactions with humans. ANT actually began to emerge in the 1980s, although it was pioneered in the 1960s. However, ANT only began to be well-known in the 1990s, and is often used as an analytical tool in various fields, for example, organizational analysis, informatics,

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health studies, geography, sociology, anthropology, feminist studies and economics, and so on. ANT itself was developed by science and technology scholars, including Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law and initially focused on efforts to examine not only what scientists do but also what non-human objects contribute to scientific endeavors. Before becoming ANT, the studies of Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, John Law, and several other scholars focused on research that, in the late 1970s, was transforming into the study of social science and technology. Latour and Steve Woolgar conducted an examination of the fact-making process at the Salk Institute in California. This became one of the earliest materials to discuss this tradition. They demonstrated that conventional categories of sociological explanation and their contextualizations failed to meet the requirements: the richness, situatedness, and technical texture exhibited by scientific action. ANT then developed from the results of observing scholars at work, whether sitting at their desks, writing scientific papers, debating the meaning of their experimental results, or even when scientists quarreled over budgets. This shook the social science community and led them to a radical reconceptualization of the nature of scientific objectivity. ANT emerged from this point as one of the most extensive and successful interpretations of the entanglement of technical practices and scientific knowledge-making. Latour called it the world of technoscience (Latour, 1987).

The journey of ANT Theory has been long and extensive, but according to Latour (1997) ANT needs to continue to be developed in such a way as to continue developing its potential because in fact ANT began as an effort to dissolve the idea of social, because if society/social is considered non-existent, then we need to equip ourselves with the means to realize it (Lezaun, 2017). ANT was developed according to the versions of each scientific group, therefore, precision is needed in understanding this theory. In communication science, ANT was first used by organizational communication scholars, particularly James Taylor, Elizabeth Van Every, and Francis Coreen, who viewed organizations not as origins but as products of communication activities. Rather than treating organizations, systems, or networks as fixed and relatively stable entities, ANT scholars are more interested in how entities emerge in the concrete mechanisms and interactions that shape them. Societies, organizations, communities, and ideologies then emerge in conversation. ANT is interested in the ways the world is literally made through interaction, by analyzing and accounting for all elements that give rise to communication products, including both human and non-human components (Littlejohn, 2017).

ANT scholars believe that humans and non-humans should be integrated into the same conceptual framework and given equal agency—a position that privileges interaction over the actors themselves and challenges the traditional distortion of subject and object. Therefore, the concepts of networks, actors, translations, and intermediaries do not only focus on the social relations between actors and humans, but also include non-human actors—that is, a heterogeneous (diverse) network. ANT does not explain why a network exists but is more interested in its infrastructure. How it is formed and broken down, and so on. Meanwhile, actors are defined as something that participates in action, which is not only humans, but also technical objects (Harman, 2009). In parallel with its work on the role of the hard sciences and technology in collective development, ANT also analyzes the contribution of the social sciences to the creation of society. It notes that the social sciences are no more content with simply offering analyses of what society should be than the natural sciences are content only with describing its supposed nature. This approach, which was later extended to other social sciences such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, and even communication science, should facilitate a better understanding of the processes by which society tends to perceive itself

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as distinct from its environment, and that of its internal differentiation. By refusing, at the methodological level, to accept the profound differences postulated by the sciences (both natural and social), ANT is in a position to explain, at the theoretical level, the role of science in their construction and evolution.

Understanding ANT is similar to looking at a surface; rather than perceiving it as two or three dimensions, we are required to consider and perceive as many dimensions as we can. ANT claims that modern societies cannot be described without recognizing that they have a fibrous, threadlike, thin, stringy, lined, capillary character that can never be captured by the notions of levels, layers, regions, spheres, categories, structures, systems. It aims to explain the effects accounted for by those traditional words without having to buy into the ontology, topology, and politics that accompany them. ANT has been developed by students of science and technology and their claim is that it is simply impossible to understand what holds society together without re-incorporating in its fabric the facts produced by the natural and social sciences and the artifacts designed by engineers. In ANT, what appear to be macro structures (organizations, knowledge, social institutions, etc.), are actually interactions that can stabilize and reproduce themselves. Stable or fixed moral order or conflict, is actually the effect of the formation of various types of matter, human and non-human entities, through communication. Social life has traditionally not had to be limited to human-to-human interactions, but also to non-human material - from objects to places, machines, texts, etc. - should also be considered as actors in a communication network. There is no separation between the social and the material; they are always continuous with each other (Cole & Littlejohn, 2018).

In viewing the social as performative, ANT does not locate action—the ability to act—in autonomous (human) actors. Instead, ANT argues that the notion of action emerges within networks of actors. Therefore, in relation to the practice of digital activism, we must seek to more fully understand networks of human actors, rather than humans alone, which means broadening our understanding of what counts as an actor in digital activism. For ANT, anything can be an actor because everything has the potential to act, even outside of direct human intervention. Humans can assign functions and characteristics to objects in interactions, but in doing so, those objects become actors; they are productive and essential to the context of the interaction. It is not simply that humans rely on objects for interaction, or vice versa, but that objects and people actively contribute to and construct various moments and contexts of (inter)action and shared agency. Agency, defined as a complex process of unpredictable change, is created within networks; it is more productive and collective than possessed and specifically anthropocentric. This is not to say that an individual cannot act, but that an individual is also always a network of actors. Action is never, as we imagine, individually (or autonomously) enacted.

In communication studies, ANT is often associated with the cybernetic tradition because they both focus on the relationships, networks, and interconnectedness between elements within a communication system. The cybernetic tradition views communication as a process that occurs through the interaction of various components that influence each other, so that changes in one element will have consequences for other elements within a broader network. From this perspective, a system is understood as a whole formed by relationships between parts that cannot be explained solely through the characteristics of each component separately. However, ANT goes beyond the basic assumptions of the classical cybernetic tradition. While systems theory and cybernetics generally depart from the separation of humans as agents of communication and technology as a medium or channel, ANT rejects this dichotomy. ANT argues that social action is not solely produced by human actors, but rather emerges from the

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relationships formed between human and non-human actors within a heterogeneous network. Thus, technology, algorithms, digital platforms, documents, communication devices, and even technical infrastructure are no longer positioned as passive objects, but as actors with the capacity to influence the communication process.

ANT's fundamental contribution to communication science lies in its effort to expand the unit of communication analysis from mere human interactions to relational networks involving various human and non-human entities. This perspective offers an important conceptual foundation for understanding contemporary digital communication phenomena, where information distribution, public opinion formation, political participation, and activism practices are no longer solely determined by human actions, but also by the operation of algorithms, platform logics, and digital infrastructures that shape communication spaces. In this context, ANT not only provides a new way to map the relationships between actors but also reorients communication studies from a human-centered paradigm to an understanding of the distribution of agency in an increasingly digitalized communication ecosystem.

Repositioning Actor Network Theory through Digital Activism

Digital activism is a productive context for repositioning ANT because it concretely demonstrates how collective action is formed through heterogeneous networks. In digital activism, activists produce narratives, audiences spread support, platforms provide space, algorithms regulate visibility, hashtags connect conversations, digital tools enable content production, and engagement data feeds back into movement strategies. All of these elements do not operate in isolation but in association and influence each other. From an ANT perspective, the central question in digital activism is not simply who the actors are or what their messages are, but how activism networks are formed. The development of digital activism has yielded diverse perspectives on understanding the relationship between technology, political participation, and social change. Some studies position digital technology as an instrument that expands the space for citizen participation, while others see technology as merely a medium that facilitates pre-existing forms of participation. This debate demonstrates that digital activism cannot be understood solely through approaches that focus on individual or organizational behavior, but rather requires attention to how the relationship between humans, technology, and the social environment shapes the practice of activism itself.

In this context, ANT offers a different perspective than conventional approaches to the study of communication and social movements. ANT, developed by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law, starts from the assumption that social phenomena result from relationships formed between various actors within a network. Unlike common social theories that separate humans as subjects and technology as objects, ANT views both humans and non-humans as having the capacity to influence the course of social action. Therefore, technology is no longer understood as a passive tool, but rather as part of a network that contributes to shaping social action, meaning, and consequences. This perspective is relevant for explaining previous research findings that indicate that digital activism is simultaneously influenced by social, cultural, political, and technological factors (Barassi & Treré, 2017; Nitschke et al., 2014; Oser et al., 2013; Schmitz et al., 2020; von Bülow et al., 2019). While traditional approaches tend to separate these factors into distinct categories, ANT instead views them as part of a heterogeneous, interconnected network that cannot be understood in isolation. Thus, changes in digital activism practices are driven not only by technological innovation, but also

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by transformations in social relations, shifts in political culture, and network configurations formed within the digital environment.

Furthermore, ANT also provides a platform for understanding everyday political practices, as explained in the concept of subactivism (Bakardijeva, 2016). Seemingly simple activities, such as sharing information, using a specific hashtag, posting a comment, or following a social movement account, can be understood as part of a broader network of activism. Through an ANT perspective, these actions are not viewed as isolated individual activities, but rather as contributions to the network-building process that enables certain issues to gain public visibility and support. In the context of contemporary digital communication, ANT's relevance is further strengthened by the increasing role of platforms and algorithms in determining the flow of information. The visibility of an issue depends not only on the intensity of activist communication but is also determined by the algorithmic logic that governs content distribution, information recommendations, and message reach on social media. Therefore, ANT allows researchers to move beyond the human-centered approach that has dominated studies of digital activism and focus on the distribution of agency that occurs among humans, technology, and the various digital infrastructures involved in the communication process. Through this perspective, digital activism can be understood as the result of continuously negotiated relationships between human and non-human actors within a complex communication network. ANT not only helps explain how social movements develop in digital spaces, but also provides an analytical framework for understanding how technology plays an active role in shaping communication practices, public participation, and social change in the era of connected media.

From an ANT perspective, digital activism should not be understood solely as the actions of activists using digital media to pursue social or political goals. Rather, it emerges through the interactions of diverse actors that collectively shape the production, circulation, interpretation, and regulation of information within digital environments. ANT directs attention away from individual actors and toward the networks through which action becomes possible. In the context of digital activism, these networks may involve a wide range of human and nonhuman actors, including activists, civil society organizations, audiences, journalists, influencers, policymakers, social media platforms, algorithms, digital devices, messaging applications, hashtags, online petitions, images, videos, engagement metrics, platform regulations, state policies, and broader social institutions. ANT does not assume that any of these actors are inherently more important than others. Instead, their significance depends on how they become connected and how they contribute to the stabilization or transformation of a particular network. These actors are linked through processes of translation in which interests, meanings, and actions are continuously negotiated and transformed. Social issues are translated into digital narratives, narratives are adapted into platform-specific formats, platform formats generate visibility and engagement, and these outcomes subsequently influence activist strategies, public responses, and policy debates. Consequently, digital activism can be understood not as a linear process driven exclusively by human agency, but as an evolving network in which both human and nonhuman actors participate in shaping the trajectory and outcomes of collective action.

Insight from Digital Activism in Indonesia

The recent rise of digital activism in Indonesia makes a compelling argument for revisiting the applicability of Actor-Network Theory (ANT) to the field of digital communication studies. The series of digitally mediated collective actions, including

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#PeringatanDarurat, #IndonesiaGelap, and the 17+8 Demands Movement, illustrates the increasing extent to which contemporary activism is mediated through complex networks that extend beyond the human self. Through interactions between activists, journalists, social media users, influencers, digital platforms, algorithms, visual symbols, hashtags, and institutional players, these movements expanded and gathered momentum. As a result, it is becoming more and more inadequate to frame digital activism only in terms of personal drive, organizational resources, or political prospects. The following table analyzes the manifestation of digital activism networks in Indonesia from the three case examples mentioned above.

Table 1. Manifestations of Digital Activism Networks in Contemporary Social Movements in Indonesia

Digital Movement	Period	Digital Indicators	Actors Involved	Nonhuman Artifacts
#PeringatanDarurat	August 2024	The Blue Garuda symbol went viral and was shared more than 231,000 times across social media platforms	Activists, netizens, journalists, members of parliament, Constitutional Court	Hashtags, Blue Garuda visual symbol, trending-topic algorithms, X and Instagram platforms
#IndonesiaGelap	February 2025	More than 81,900 posts on X, involving approximately 104,000 accounts in online discussions	Students, BEM SI, civil society groups, influencers, government officials, mass media	Hashtag #IndonesiaGelap, X platform, recommendation algorithms, visual content, engagement data
#Tuntutan Rakyat17plus8	March 2025	More than 67,000 posts on X and Instagram, involving approximately 89,000 accounts in online discussions	Activists, students, civil society organizations, influencers, digital audiences	Hashtag #TuntutanRakyat17Plus8, digital demand documents, websites, social media platforms, engagement metrics

#PeringatanDarurat shows how nonhuman actors in a network can swiftly spread a digital movement. The Garuda Biru image and #PeringatanDarurat hashtag made regional election regulations' legal and constitutional difficulties a prominent digital narrative. Beyond transmitting information, the visual sign united various players across channels, promoted participation, and mobilized offline demonstrations. In ANT terms, the movement's effect came from visual artefacts, platform infrastructures, algorithms, media organizations, and political institutions. Similar trends are seen in #IndonesiaGelap. The movement was initially fueled by public displeasure with government policies, but hashtags, recommendation algorithms, student organizations, digital audiences, and mainstream media coverage boosted its visibility and influence. The hashtag became a hub for dispersed frustrations to form a narrative. While The #TuntutanRakyat17plus8 emphasizes nonhuman actors' influence on collective action. Digital documents, social media posts, websites, and visuals helped organize varied social and political concerns. ANT encourages scholars to study how artefacts stabilize networks, coordinate players, and maintain public attention. Thus, the movement shows how agency is diffused across a network rather than in individuals or organizations.

These Indonesian experiences demonstrate that digital activism is a relational achievement resulting from various human-nonhuman actor relationships. This perspective challenges current communication studies that value human intentions and treat technologies as neutral channels. ANT offers a more complete framework for understanding how platforms, algorithms, digital artefacts, and institutional arrangements create visibility, involvement, and

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mobilization in digital contexts. Furthermore, this article demonstrates that digital activism is not simply a communication activity using the internet, but rather a network-building process involving distributed agency. Agency is not solely owned by activists or organizations, but is dispersed in the relationships between people, technology, symbols, and institutions. Therefore, analysis of digital activism requires attention to how messages are produced, how platforms mediate messages, how audiences participate, how algorithms regulate visibility, and how socio-political contexts give meaning to digital actions.

CONCLUSION

This article argues that Actor Network Theory remains relevant for understanding contemporary digital communication, as it elucidates the manner in which digital activism practices are influenced by the interactions between human and non-human actors within heterogeneous networks. Through an explication of key ANT concepts and an analysis of the three massive digital movement in Indonesia, this article demonstrates that the success of digital activism cannot be explained solely by the mobilizing capacity of human actors. Rather, collective action is formed through heterogeneous networks involving activists, audiences, mass media, social media platforms, algorithms, hashtags, visual symbols, digital documents, and political institutions, which collectively shape issue visibility, public participation, and social mobilization. These findings strengthen the argument that digital activism does not simply occur through digital networks but is produced by these networks.

The main contribution of this article lies in repositioning ANT within digital communication studies as a theoretical framework capable of explaining the distribution of agency within platform-based communication ecosystems. However, this study is still limited to theoretical explication and the use of case illustrations, thus failing to fully explain the variations in relationships between actors within each digital movement. Therefore, further research needs to empirically test the processes of translation, network formation, and distribution of agency in various forms of digital activism by considering the role of algorithms, platform governance, artificial intelligence, and power relations that increasingly determine the dynamics of communication and public participation in the digital era.

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