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EFFORTS OF THE MILK TEA ALLIANCE MOVEMENT IN RESPONDING TO AUTHORITARIANISM IN INDONESIA AND THAILAND 2020

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of democratic backsliding and the resurgence of authoritarianism has become a major concern in Southeast Asia, including in Indonesia and Thailand. This study aims to analyze how transnational civil society movements, particularly the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA), respond to and resist authoritarianism in these two countries. Using the theory of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) by Keck and Sikkink, this study identifies the strategies of information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics employed by the MTA. The research adopts a qualitative-descriptive approach with literature study as the main method. The findings indicate that the MTA has succeeded in building cross-national solidarity that strengthens local advocacy, despite facing challenges such as state repression and nationalist resistance. These findings contribute to the understanding of the role of global civil networks in supporting democratization and civil liberties amidst the current wave of authoritarianism.

Keywords: Authoritarianism, Milk Tea Alliance, Society, Transnational Network, Democratic Backsliding.

1. Introduction

In recent decades, the world has witnessed the dynamics of global politics marked by the fluctuating practice of democracy and the resurgence of authoritarianism in its various forms (Hadi, 2019). Authoritarianism does not only emerge in countries traditionally known as non-democratic but also regarded as developing democracies. This phenomenon is characterized by the weakening of democratic institutions, the reduction of civil liberties, and the increasing concentration of power in the hands of certain political elites (Farchan, 2022). In this context, civil society plays a crucial role as ounterbalance to power, especially in promoting transparency, accountability, and public participation. However, civil society's role is often met with pushback from authoritarian regimes seeking to silence criticism (Artha, et al.). Therefore, a deeper understanding of the interaction between authoritarianism and civil society movements becomes essential

to strengthen democratic governance.\

Indonesia and Thailand are two Southeast Asian countries with long histories of navigating the tensions between democracy and authoritarianism. Both countries have experienced strong military rule and have since undergone democratic transitions fraught with challenges (Lubis and Zamharir, 2024). Although they may outwardly appear to function under democratic systems, new forms of authoritarianism continue to develop, manifested through repressive actions and systemic restrictions on civil space. This raises concerns about the sustainability of democracy in the region. Civil society in both countries plays a key role in responding to democratic backsliding, albeit with different capacities and strategies. Therefore, it is important to examine how global civil society movements support or collaborate with local actors in responding to such authoritarian practices (Fakih, 1996).

Global civil society movements refer to networks of organizations, activists, and transnational institutions that aim to promote democracy, human rights, and social justice across national boundaries (Rohma, 2020). In the context of Indonesia and Thailand, the involvement of global actors becomes significant when the operating space for national civil society is constrained by repressive government policies. Through various forms of support such as international advocacy, funding, human rights education, and digital campaigns, these global movements contribute to the continuity of local civil struggles (Brillyanto, 2021). Such global responses often provide legitimacy and protection for groups that are silenced or forcibly disbanded. Nevertheless, the involvement of global actors is not without challenges, such as resistance fueled by political nationalism and accusations of foreign interference. Hence, the relationship between global and local civil society must be understood as dynamic and complex.

The emergence of the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) in 2020 marks a new wave of digital transnational activism in Asia, uniting pro-democracy actors across borders to challenge authoritarian practices. While existing studies have explored the MTA's origins and regional influence, few have examined how its strategies manifest differently across national contexts with varying degrees of authoritarianism. This research specifically discusses how global civil society networks, particularly the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA), have become a space for democratic solidarity in responding to authoritarianism in Indonesia and Thailand. Building upon this focus, the study seeks to answer the following research question: *How does the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) respond to authoritarianism in Indonesia and Thailand, and how effective are its strategies in promoting democratic resistance through digital activism?*

The study focuses on strategies, forms of collaboration, and tangible outcomes of global civil society engagement in the local contexts of both countries. It will also highlight the differences and similarities in approaches between Thailand and Indonesia, given their distinct political, legal, and social backgrounds. Furthermore, this study evaluates the extent to which global

responses help strengthen democratic resilience at the domestic level. By emphasizing the transnational dimension, the study also aims to answer whether transnational solidarity can serve as a long-term solution to democratic erosion. The selection of Indonesia and Thailand as case studies offers a relevant overview of regional challenges in confronting the current wave of authoritarianism.

The dynamics of protests in Indonesia and Thailand reflect a shift in paradigms of political resistance. While earlier protest movements such as the "Red Shirts" in Thailand in 2010 focused on supporting former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and opposing military dominance in politics, the protests in 2020 introduced a new dimension by directly challenging the power structure of the monarchy and state authoritarianism. These demonstrations signify a shift from elite-based political conflicts to broader civic movements led by youth demanding systemic change—uniting issues of democracy, gender equality, and environmental justice (Sombatpoonsiri, 2021). However, the regime responded with escalated repression: in Thailand alone, more than 1,800 criminal cases were filed against activists, including the use of cyber laws to silence online criticism (Wibowo & Prawira, 2024). Ironically, these actions expanded transnational solidarity through the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA), a grassroots coalition of activists from Thailand, Hong Kong, and Taiwan united in resisting authoritarianism (Firdausi, 2023).

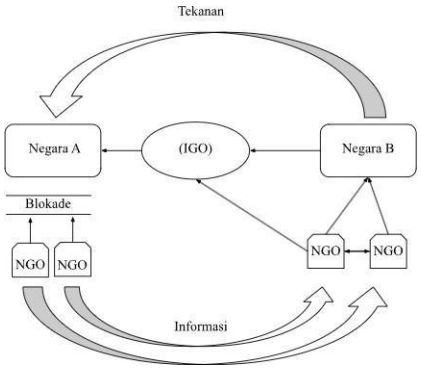
Methodologically, this study will adopt a descriptive-qualitative approach using a comparative case study analysis. Data sources consist of secondary literature, international organization reports, and policy documents. The study will also consider the historical and political contexts of each country in analyzing the Milk Tea Alliance as a civil movement responding to authoritarianism. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of social movements and democratization, as well as provide practical insights for policymakers and activists. The emphasis on the global-local dimension is expected to enrich the discourse on transnational solidarity in the struggle for democracy. Therefore, the results of this study will serve as a critical foundation in understanding and strengthening resistance strategies against authoritarianism in Southeast Asia.

2. Literature Review

In her book tittled *Transnationalism: The Role of Non-State Actors in International Relations* (2018), Ani Soetjipto explains that the era of transnationalism has expanded the scope of international relations studies, which were previously limited to interactions between states and formal government actors. Advances in communication and information technology have enabled civil society to become more involved in global issues and to build cross-border networks based on shared interests, including those who are socially, politically, or economically marginalized. This idea aligns with the concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) developed by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in *Activists Beyond Borders* (1999),

which emphasizes the role of non-state actors in influencing international policies and norms.

Keck and Sikkink identify various actors within transnational advocacy networks, such as domestic and international NGOs, local social movements, the media, religious institutions, academic communities, regional and intergovernmental organizations, as well as legislative bodies. Nonetheless, states remain crucial actors in this process. When communication between states and civil society groups is obstructed, a boomerang pattern may occur, where local actors seek international support to pressure their governments from outside.



Gambar 1. Pola *Boomerang Pattern*

The Boomerang Pattern describes a situation where governments block or hinder domestic groups from voicing certain issues or goals. As a result, these domestic groups seek connections with international NGOs or organizations that advocate for the same issues. Typically, domestic groups will approach actors who have greater power or influence than their own government so that if the issue is raised in international forums, these NGOs or actors can exert pressure on the domestic government to lift the blockade on the issue being fought for by the domestic group. If local NGOs can build networks with international NGOs, it creates an opportunity to help achieve their original goals (Kristanti, 2021). Using this framework, this study applies the TANs concept to analyze the strategies employed by the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) in civil resistance against the authoritarian regime in Thailand during Prayuth Chan-ocha's government (2020–2023) through four strategies as follows:

1. Information Politics

The first concept, Information Politics, is a strategy to manage and rapidly mobilize credible information to create significant impact. This movement can be understood as a communicative structure formed to achieve a specific interest. Information politics can be identified through the information a movement raises about a particular issue. Organizations shape information with the goal of making it widely discussed and understood by the public.

2. Simbolic Politics

Symbolic Politics is a strategy used by activists involving the use of symbols to clarify important events or moments regarding the advocated issue. Symbols can take the form of actions or narratives about current situations to attract broad public attention. Activists frame these symbols in ways that help the public remember the events or messages conveyed. Additionally, activists frame problems by providing explanations intended to convince people,

ultimately serving as catalysts for network growth.

3. Leverage Politics

Leverage Politics is a strategy where activists seek to attract actors who possess stronger power to influence policy makers. Strong negotiation skills are essential in this strategy, aiming to enlarge their political opportunities. Furthermore, relationships or connections built with more powerful actors are key to achieving success with this strategy.

4. Accountability Politics

Accountability Politics is a follow-up strategy to Leverage Politics, used when actors with greater power have made commitments or agreements to change state behavior concerning the advocated issue. This approach involves the advocacy network playing a role in monitoring and controlling the consistency between the agrees commitments and actual practice (Sikkink, 2019). According to Blitt (2004) in Tyas (2019), accountability politics is a way for advocacy networks to oversee state commitments to ensure they do not deviate from what was agreed.

3. Research Method

The method that the author will use to examine this research is a qualitative descriptive research design or method. Qualitative research itself is a research method used by a researcher to observe or study a particular natural object. The object in this type of qualitative research is a natural object, existing as it is, not manipulated under any condition, so this method is also called descriptive because it aims to describe a problem as it actually is. In line with what Sugiyono (2017) stated, qualitative research is research used to study a natural object, and in this case, the researcher is an important instrument because they will analyze and explore the object in depth. Furthermore, descriptive method is a research method that shows or reveals the characteristics of a population or a particular phenomenon under study. The main focus of the descriptive research method is to explain the research object or provide answers to an event or phenomenon occurring at that time; the event or phenomenon here refers to the topic or object of the researcher's study. Naturally, the result of descriptive research is a detailed depiction of the problem raised in the study.

4. Results and Discussion Results and Discussion Authoritarianism has evolved.

Alongside society's transition from a feudal system to the modern industrial era. During this transitional process, individuals often feel threatened by the diversity of lifestyles that may seem foreign or contrary to the values instilled by traditional authorities. At the same time, they also experience a loss of the sense of security once provided by those former authorities (Hartoko, 2016). After more than three decades under the authoritarian rule of Suharto's New Order regime, Indonesia entered a long transitional phase toward democracy following the 1998 Reformation. This reform marked the end of

a repressive era and opened opportunities for political freedom, press freedom, and human rights. However, in recent years, concerns have emerged about a possible resurgence of authoritarian tendencies.

A. Authoritarianism in Indonesia

The tendency toward indicators authoritariansm in Indonesia after the Reform era displays a different pattern from that of the New Order period. This phenomenon is often referred to as "democratic authoritarianism," a condition in which formal democratic structures remain intact, but democratic values significantly deteriorate (Aspinall, 2020). This form of hybrid governance combines democratic procedures with authoritarian control, allowing ruling elites to maintain the image of legitimacy while concentrating power and limiting genuine political competition (Mietzner, 2020). According to Bajpai and Kureshi (2022), democratic authoritarianism operates through two mechanisms: institutional capture, the monopolization of state institutions to erode checks and balances, and ideational capture, the manipulation of social and cultural narratives to normalize authoritarian norms. Their framework also highlights that autocratization does not always originate from the executive; it can also be reinforced through parliaments, courts, and aligned civil society actors who legitimize illiberal practices under a democratic facade. In Southeast Asia, this process is often justified through populist rhetoric and nationalist discourse that present centralization of authority as a necessary condition for stability and development (Hadiz, 2017; Chambers, 2021). Several key indicators reveal this trend.

These theoretical features are clearly reflected in the Indonesian context. Several key indicators reveal this trend. First, there has been a shift in the balance between the civilian and military sectors, marked by an increasing number of both active and retired military officers being appointed to strategic positions within the civilian government. This reflects a return to a militaristic dual-function approach in a more subtle form, as the military reasserts its influence in politics and governance. Second, the space for civil society is shrinking due to policies and regulations that restrict freedom of speech. The Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE) is frequently used as a legal tool to suppress criticism of the government. Since 2016, more than 300 cases related to violations of freedom of expression in digital media have been processed under the ITE Law, most of them involving criticism of public officials (SAFEnet, 2022). Third, there has been a weakening of law enforcement institutions and anti-corruption bodies, particularly with the revision of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Law in 2019. This revision significantly reduced the independence and effectiveness of the KPK by placing it under the executive branch, enabling political interference in handling corruption cases, including those involving high-level officials (Butt, 2020). Fourth, state security forces have been tasked with monitoring and restricting political opposition movements. This was evident

during the protests against the Omnibus Law in October 2020, which involved excessive use of force, arbitrary arrests, and intimidation of demonstrators by security personnel (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

All of these patterns develop within a framework of democratic legitimacy, where elections continue to be held regularly yet the quality of democracy steadily declines. Authoritarianism in present-day Indonesia is exercised more subtly through crony capitalism, the exploitation of religious identity for political purposes, and the implementation of broadly worded laws that can be used to suppress opposition (Power & Warburton, 2020). While the current form differs from that of the Suharto era, it remains characterized by the strengthening of executive power, erosion of democratic principles, and violations of civil liberties under an increasingly centralized administration (Sukma, 2020).

B. The State of Authoritarianism in Thailand

Thailand exhibits a more explicit form of authoritarianism compared to Indonesia, particularly following the 2014 military coup led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha. Chmnan (2021) emphasizes that the primary characteristic of authoritarianism in Thailand is the "**monarchy-military**" alliance, where state power is exercised through collaboration between the monarchy and the military, grounded in strong traditional legitimacy. This form of authoritarianism in Thailand has several notable features:

- First, the dominance of the military in politics is constitutionally legitimized. The 2017 Constitution of Thailand, drafted under the control of the military junta, grants the military significant authority in political processes, including the direct appointment of Senate members by the National Council for Peace and Order, a body controlled by the military (Prajak, 2018).
- Second, the strict enforcement of the lèse-majesté law. Article 112 of Thailand's Criminal Code allows for prison sentences of up to 15 years for anyone deemed to have insulted, defamed, or criticized the king or the royal family. According to data from iLaw Thailand (2023), since 2020, over 200 pro-democracy activists have been charged under this article, particularly those calling for reform of the monarchy.
- Third, the implementation of special security laws that restrict civil rights. The Internal Security Act and the Emergency Decree grant broad powers to security forces to detain individuals without charges, conduct searches without warrants, and limit the right to assemble. McCargo (2020) notes that these regulations have been widely used to suppress pro-democracy movements, especially since the major protests of 2020.
- Fourth, tight control over media and the internet. According to Freedom House (2023), Thailand consistently receives poor ratings for press and internet freedom, with many independent news websites being blocked and journalists facing legal and physical risks. The revised Computer Crime Act of 2017 grants the government broad powers to block content deemed to

"**threaten national security**" or "**disturb public order**".

- Fifth, the use of nationalism and royalism as tools of social control. Chambers and Waikoolkiat (2020) explain how the Thai state uses the narrative of **"Nation, Religion, King"** (Chat, Satsana, Phramahakasat) to delegimitize opposition movements by labeling them as **"anti-national"** or **"anti-monarchy."** The authoritarian situation in Thailand poses significant challenges for pro-democracy movements, but it has also spurred the emergence of creative forms of resistance, especially among the younger generation who are increasingly unafraid to challenge previously untouchable political taboos.

C. The Milk Tea Alliance Movement's Response in Indonesia and Thailand

Background of the Emergence of the Milk Tea Alliance The Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) emerged in April 2020 as a spontaneous digital movement, initially triggered by an exchange of criticism between Thai and Chinese internet users over a Thai actor who was perceived as supporting the independence of Hong Kong and Taiwan. Arisandy (2021) notes that the hashtag #MilkTeaAlliance quickly eolved into a symbol of cross-border solidarity among pro-democracy activists in regions where milk tea is a popular beverage namely Thailand, Taiwan, Hong Kong and later expanded to include Myanmar, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

According to Chen and Hioe (2021), the unique character of the MTA lies in its grassroots nature, its lack of formal structure, and its strategic use of social media platforms such as Twitter and Telegram. The movement has no central leadership or traditional organization; instead, it operates as a flexible network of digital activists united by solidarity and shared democratic values.

D. Milk Tea Alliance Strategy in Thailand

In Thailand, the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) has played a significant role in supporting the pro-democracy movement, which has raised three key demands: the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha,constitutional reform, and reform of the monarchy. The MTA's strategy in Thailand can be analyzed through the framework of **Transnational Advocacy Networks** as proposed by Keck and Sikkink:

- **Information Politics**, MTA has been instrumental in documenting and disseminating information about police brutality and human rights violations during the handling of protests in Thailand. The Milk Tea Alliance created detailed Twitter threads to explain Thailand's political context to a global audience, including the use of tear gas, water cannons, and the arrest of activists.
- **Symbolic Politics**, the use of creative symbols is a hallmark of the Thai pro-democracy movement supported by MTA. Symbols such as the "three-finger salute" (inspired by *The Hunger Games*), colorful dinosaur statues (representing outdated "dinosaur politicians"), rubber ducks (used as shields against water

cannons), and the milk tea emoji have become globally recognized visual markers.

- **Leverage Politics**, The Milk Tea Alliance has played a role in internationalizing Thailand's democratic struggle by attracting attention from global media and international human rights organizations. The network has urged democratic nations to exert diplomatic pressure on the Thai government regarding human rights and freedom of expression. For example, a report by Amnesty International (2021) on the application of the lèse-majesté law against youth activists received widespread attention due to MTA-led social media campaigns.
- **Accountability Politics**: MTA has contributed to monitoring and reporting human rights violations committed by Thai security forces, including the use of cameras to document and livestream events to ensure accountability. Thai Lawyers for Human Rights (2022) collaborated with the MTA network to document over 1,800 political detentions since 2020.

In Thailand, the MTA movement successfully transformed the nature of digital activism by introducing methods such as "digital flash mobs" and coordinated hashtag campaigns. Sombatpoonsiri (2021) highlights how this movement has helped shift the political discourse by creating space for discussions about monarchy reform an issue that was previously highly taboo in Thai politics.

E. Milk Tea Alliance Strategies in Indonesia

In Indonesia, the Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) focuses more on specific issues such as the rejection of the Omnibus Law on Job Creation, advocacy for human rights violations in Papua, and support for student movements. Unlike Thailand, Indonesia's context does not involve direct military repression, but rather a systematic weakening of democratic institutions.

- **Political Information,** In Indonesia, the MTA functions to disseminate alternative information about issues often overlooked by mainstream media. Show how the MTA network spread information about demonstration against the Omnibus Law and state violence in Papua, which frequently experiences internet restrictions. Hashtags such as #ReformasiDikorupsi and #PapuanLivesMatter gained support from the MTA network at the regional level.
- **SymbolicPolitics,** Resistance symbols in Indonesia, such as the West Papuan Morning Star flag or the "Reject Omnibus Law" logo, received visual support from the community. Putra (2021) analyzes how activists in Indonesia use MTA's visual aesthetics (white, black, and yellow colors) in their digital campaigns to create a sense of unity with the regional-scale movement.
- **Leverage Politics,** MTA plays a role in helping Indonesian activists draw attention from international human rights organizations, particularly on sensitive issues like the situation in Papua. Representatives from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have become increasingly active in monitoring the human rights situation in Indonesia, thanks to MTA campaigns focusing on freedom of expression and human rights violations.

- **Accountability Politics,** Unlike in Thailand, the MTA's political accountability in Indonesia is more oriented toward monitoring reform promises and government policies. The MTA activist network contributes to documenting human rights violations and freedom of expression issues, such as the arrest of activists under the ITE Law, and shares them with international netwoeks. Brillyanto (2021) notes that the MTA movement in Indonesia does not yet have a structure as strong as Thailand's, but it has great potential as a cross-border solidarity platform, particularly in supporting identity-based movements and specific issues that receive little attention from mainstream media.

F. Comparing the Effectiveness of MTA in Indonesia and Thailand

- **Level of Mobilization** in Thailand, MTA served as a driver of mass mobilization, with demonstrations involving tens of thousands of participants at its peak in 2020–2021. In contrast, in Indonesia, MTA functions more as a support network for pre-existing movements, without being able to initiate significant new mobilizations (Wibowo and Prawira, 2024).
- **Focus of Issues,** MTA in Thailand strongly focuses on fundamental political reforms, including sensitive issues such as monarchy reform. In Indonesia, the MTA's focus is more diverse, addressing various specific issues such as Papua, the ITE Law, and environmental concerns, which according to Ardianto (2022) limits its influence on national discourse.
- **Government Response,** The Thai government responds to MTA with harsh repression, including arrests and the use of lèse-majesté laws. Meanwhile, the Indonesian government's response tends to be more subtle, employing legal instruments like the ITE Law or blocking certain digital platforms, without direct confrontation with the transnational movement (Saraswati, 2022).
- **Diaspora Involvement,** The Thai MTA successfully mobilized its diaspora in various countries to support the movement, creating indirect diplomatic pressure. In Indonesia, diaspora involvement in the MTA movement has been more limited, although it holds considerable potential (Firdausi, 2023). Nonetheless, both countries share similarities in their use of digital strategies and the strengthening of cross-border solidarity, which Farhadian (2022) sees as key assets in resisting authoritarianism in the region.

G. MTA's Linkages with Global Movements

The Milk Tea Alliance does not stand alone but is connected to a broader network of global civil society movements. According to research (Rohma, 2020), MTA has established ties with various international organizations such as:

- **International Human Rights Organizations,** Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch actively handle cases raised by MTA activists and increase their legitimacy through official reports and advocacy at the international level. Annual reports (Amnesty International, 2022) on the

human rights situation in Southeast Asia specifically highlight MTA's contributions in documenting human rights violations in Thailand and Indonesia.

- **Global Digital Activist Networks,** MTA is connected to digital security activist communities such as Access Now and the Electronic Frontier Foundation, which provide technical assistance related to communication security and online privacy for activists at high risk. More than 300 MTA activists in Thailand and Indonesia have received digital security training from these networks (Digital Rights Monitor, 2023).
- **Solidarity with Pro-Democracy Movements,** MTA has built solidarity with pro-democracy movements in other regions, such as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong, the Sunflower Movement in Taiwan, and the Spring Revolution in Myanmar. The exchange of tactics and strategies among these movements creates “cross-national collective learning,” strengthening each movement’s capabilities.
- **Academic Institutions and Think Tanks,** Universities and research institutions around the world are increasingly producing studies on MTA, providing academic legitimacy and increasing the movement’s visibility. Research conducted by institutions such as the ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute and the ANU Southeast Asia Institute has helped position MTA as a significant phenomenon in contemporary social movement studies (Chachavalpongpun, 2022).

H. Impact and Limitations of Transnational Solidarity

Although the MTA shows great potential as a form of transnational solidarity, the movement also faces several challenges:

- **Sustainability Challenges,** Digital-based movements like MTA often struggle to maintain momentum over the long term. Digital activism is prone to what is called a "fatigue cycle," where public attention quickly shifts to other issues over time.
- **Digital-Material Gap,** despite its success in the digital realm, MTA faces challenges in translating online solidarity into real-world change. Fakih (2022) argues that without an approach that links digital activism with grassroots mobilization, the impact of such movements will remain limited.
- **Adaptive State Responses,** Authoritarian governments are becoming increasingly adept at responding to digital activism, developing counter-strategies such as digital propaganda, information manipulation, and strict cyber laws. According to Agustina (2023), both the Thai and Indonesian governments have developed complex “digital instruments” to suppress the influence of movements like MTA.
- **Limited Accesto Decision- Makers,** although successful in building solidarity and raising public awareness, MTA still faces challenges in directly influencing policymakers. Artha et al. (2022) note that in both countries, access to formal decision-making processes remains limited for transnational civil society movements. However, the core essence of MTA may not lie in the direct effect on enacted policies, but rather in its ability to foster an

"imagined solidarity" that transcends national borders. In the long term, this could impact on the formation of a regional political identity that upholds democratic values.

5. Conclusion

The Milk Tea Alliance (MTA) both in Indonesia and Thailand demonstrates how transnational digital networks can reconfigure civil resistance under contemporary authoritarianism. This study explicitly finds that the MTA responds to authoritarianism in Indonesia and Thailand through all four mechanisms outlined by Keck and Sikkink's (1999) *Transnational Advocacy Networks* (TANs): information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics. In both cases, the MTA effectively uses information politics to expose human rights violations and mobilize global awareness, while symbolic politics—through creative imagery or world trend symbols such as the three-finger salute and online hashtags—translates local struggles into globally recognizable narratives. Leverage politics is more visible in Thailand, where transnational advocacy has pressured international institutions to condemn state repression, whereas in Indonesia, it remains limited to issue-based collaboration. Finally, accountability politics is pursued through collective monitoring of human rights violations and government actions, although its impact is constrained by the fragmented structure of the movement. By comparing both country, this study concludes that the MTA's effectiveness depends on the degree of authoritarian closure. In Thailand's overtly repressive environment, MTA functions as a high-risk mobilizing network; in Indonesia's subtler form of democratic authoritarianism, it serves as an amplifier that sustains digital awareness rather than mass protest. This contrast reveals that transnational advocacy networks are not static structures but adaptive ecosystems that recalibrate their strategies according to local political opportunities.

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