

Click, Post, Fight! Add Yours and Connective Action on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Social media today functions not only as a platform for entertainment but also as a medium for digital activism, facilitating connective action through its various affordances. This study explores the use of Instagram's Add Yours feature as a critical tool in enabling digital connective action within socio-political campaigns, particularly in the context of the "Tolak UU TNI" movement. The study aims to understand how the interactive Add Yours feature facilitates mass mobilization and representations of resistance. A qualitative approach is employed using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. The theoretical frameworks of Social Shaping of Technology (SST) and platform political economy are applied to analyse the construction of meaning and power dynamics embedded in the use of the feature. Findings indicate that Add Yours has transformed from a tool of personal interaction into a medium of collective symbolic resistance. Its affordances encourage broad participation, solidarity, and message dissemination without relying on formal hierarchical structures, reflecting the active role of users in shaping technological function. However, this potential operates within a dynamic interplay among user interests, corporate agendas, and state regulations, revealing that the feature is not neutral but is co-constructed by the policies of the communication technology industry that shape the trajectory and limits of digital activism. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of social media's role in contemporary activism and the paradoxes of digital platforms.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The use of social media as a medium for political expression and mobilization has grown rapidly over the past two decades. Mass actions that were previously tied to physical spaces have now transformed into the digital realm through what is known as connective action, a form of activism based on individual participation and personal communication through digital platforms (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers, 2023). This transformation has occurred because social media is no longer just a space for entertainment, but also an arena for the rapid, distributed, and participatory dissemination of awareness and advocacy of social issues (Herawati, Marom, & Widowati, 2023; Li et al., 2021). Previous research has highlighted that the success of connective actions is influenced by the platform's ability to provide interactive features for sharing, networking, and expanding the reach of messages, such as hashtags, reposts, or share buttons (Shaik, Yousefi, Agarwal, & Spann, 2023; Sinurat, 2023).

Instagram occupies a strategic position in the digital activism ecosystem thanks to its visual-audio character and interactive features that facilitate the production of personalized political content. (Adi, Gerodimos, & Lilleker, 2018; Li et al., 2021). One of the most prominent affordances today is "Add Yours", a sticker-based feature that connects one post to another in a public network. This feature was originally intended to encourage light-hearted interaction and entertainment, but it has evolved into a medium for symbolic resistance and digital solidarity that connects individual actions within an ever-evolving collective narrative. (Maikovska, Righetti, & Waldherr, 2025; Novianty, Puspita, & Sasrit, 2024). Global phenomena such as "All Eyes on Rafah," which garnered more than 47 million posts in May 2024 (Saric, 2024; Shamim, 2024) demonstrating the power of "Add Yours" virality in orchestrating cross-border political expression.

This context was also reflected in Indonesia through the digital campaign "Reject the TNI Law" in March 2025, which rejected amendments to Law No. 34 of 2004. This mobilization took place in a decentralized manner without any formal organization or central figure, but managed to spread widely through Instagram Stories. A poster reading "People Beaten, Medical Personnel Attacked, Journalists Terrorized" was reposted more than 6,400 times using the "Add Yours" sticker in just a few days, making it a node that connected individual participation based on emotional solidarity into a mass-scale connective action. This action demonstrates the dynamics of bottom-up activism that utilizes the logic of sharing in social networks to convey political resistance in a viral and visual manner (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; van Laer & van Aelst, 2010).

However, even though a number of studies have highlighted "Add Yours" as a space for participation by minority issues and digital communities (Maikovska et al., 2025; Novianty et al., 2024), There has been no research specifically examining "Add Yours" as an instrument of political mobilization against the state, especially in the Indonesian context. This gap is even more pronounced given that "Add Yours" content is ephemeral, related to design affordances, and operates within the platform's economic-political structure that commodifies user engagement (Fuchs, 2012, 2014, 2018). Therefore, a theoretical approach is needed that can explain how seemingly neutral technology can be socially engineered into a medium for political action, as emphasized in the Social Shaping of Technology perspective (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999; Williams & Edge, 1996).

Against this backdrop, this study aims to explore how the "Add Yours" content in the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign is interpreted and utilized as a form of connective action on social media. Specifically, this study asks the question: How is the content of Instagram's "Add Yours" feature in the "Reject the TNI Law" connective action socially constructed by users? This study focuses on analysing the content of Instagram Stories in the campaign using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis approach to reveal the construction of symbolic meaning in connected digital networks.

The research is limited to analyzing public content on Instagram's "Add Yours" feature related to the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign during its dissemination period in March 2025. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to strengthening the literature on digital activism in Indonesia, providing new perspectives on the relationship between platform affordances, social technology formation, and visual-based political mobilization in the digital space.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory content analysis strategy to explore the meaning and social practices in the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign through Instagram's "Add Yours" feature as a form of connective action. In line with Social Shaping of Technology, this approach is used to understand how users shape and interpret digital features in their social context. Content analysis combines directed and conventional content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The initial coding framework was constructed deductively based on the concepts of affordances, Roland Barthes' semiotics, and the social construction of technology, while still leaving room for new categories that emerged directly from the data.

Primary data was obtained through non-participatory observation of four "Add Yours" templates produced by one public account during the period of March 16–26, 2025. The account was anonymized in accordance with digital research ethics considerations (Gerrard, 2021; Markham, 2012). Sample selection was purposive based on the level of content distribution that exceeded the number of followers of the creator's account, to ensure the social relevance of the campaign. Secondary data consisted of social media documentation and supporting statistical reports. The research instrument was a coding sheet based on Barthes' semiotics (1968, 1972) covering denotation, connotation, and myths combined with the dimension of affordances to identify symbolic meanings and digital participation mechanisms. Furthermore, thematic analysis was conducted to synthesize the findings. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019).

Data validity was maintained through researcher triangulation and inter-researcher discussions during the coding process to minimize interpretive bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). This study, however, has limitations in terms of data scope, which focuses only on one account and a specific period, thus not covering the entire dynamics of the digital campaign.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

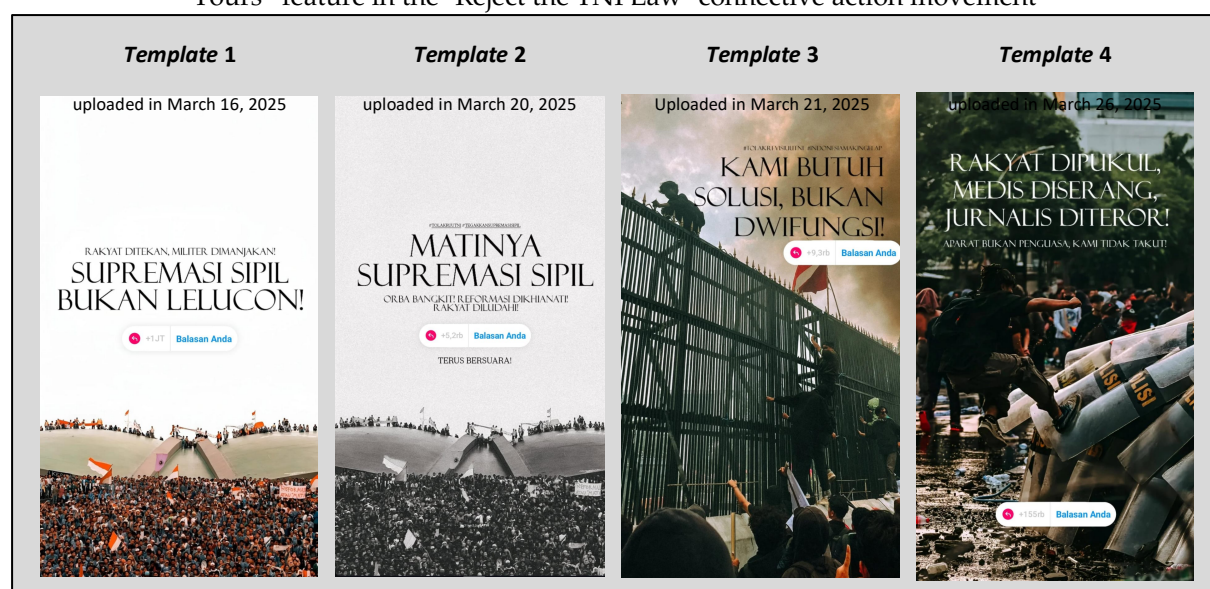
Based on non-participant observation of the XYZ Instagram account, four "Add Yours" posts were found to be an important part of the digital campaign against the TNI Law Revision (RUU TNI). This observation was conducted without direct involvement with the account owner or other users, focusing on the analysis of visual elements and political narratives conveyed. The four pieces of content were selected because they had the highest level of dissemination during the campaign period, thus demonstrating significant public reach and resonance. Although the XYZ account is not considered a popular account, with only 2,148 followers and following 795 accounts, its content managed to reach millions of users. This account consistently utilizes the "Add Yours" feature as a medium for expressing political views on contemporary social issues. In the context of the rejection of the TNI Bill, this feature was modified into an effective digital mobilization tool, demonstrating how social media can function as an arena for expressing public opinion.

The four "Add Yours" templates were uploaded with different but mutually reinforcing narratives: "Civil Supremacy is No Joke!" (1.5 million reposts), "The Death of Civil Supremacy" (5,200), "We Need Solutions, Not Dual Function!" (9,300), and "People Beaten, Medical Workers Attacked, Journalists Terrorized!" (155,000; data as of May 27, 2025). The visuals used show aesthetic consistency: photographs of mass actions or violence by the authorities, large serif typography, and contrasting or

monochromatic color palettes. This style serves not only to attract attention, but also to build political affection and visual solidarity towards the issues raised. Interestingly, the majority of users did not use the “Add Yours” feature to create their own versions. Instead, participation is carried out by reposting the template provided by the XYZ account without modification. This signals a shift from production-based participation to symbolic reproduction-based participation. The power of collective representation in existing templates is considered sufficient to channel public unrest emotionally and politically.

All templates convey a strong narrative of protest through dense and easily disseminated visual forms (see Figure 1). Roland Barthes' semiotic approach was used to trace how meaning is constructed in each visual. The analysis was conducted on three levels: denotation (literal meaning), connotation (cultural meaning), and myth (the ideology behind it). The analysis was carried out in accordance with the order of uploads and their influence in digital circulation during the campaign..

Figure 1. Four content templates created by the XYZ account on Instagram using the “Add Yours” feature in the “Reject the TNI Law” connective action movement



3.1. Content Analysis Template 1

Based on Barthes' denotative elements in semiotics, the image shows a large crowd gathering and crowding the courtyard of the House of Representatives/People's Consultative Assembly building, with many people holding red and white flags and banners demanding reform. At the top of the image is text that reads: "THE PEOPLE ARE OPPRESSED, THE MILITARY IS SPOILED! CIVILIAN SUPREMACY IS NOT A JOKE!" This text directly conveys a message of criticism against socio-political injustice, particularly regarding military domination and the need for serious civilian supremacy. The photo used is an iconic photo of the occupation of the DPR/MPR building during the 1998 reforms, an important event in Indonesian political history.

Meanwhile, connotatively, this image contains the meaning of the people's struggle against oppression and military domination in politics. The large and enthusiastic crowd symbolizes the solidarity and collective strength of the people in demanding real change and civil supremacy, not just slogans or jokes. The use of iconic photos from the 1998 reform movement reinforces historical and emotional connotations, connecting the current struggle with the spirit of change that once occurred, thereby creating a sense of continuity and legitimacy for the struggle. The text emphasizes

dissatisfaction with the current conditions and calls on the audience to seriously fight for civilian supremacy.

At the mythical level, these images and texts construct a heroic and sacred narrative about the people as a moral force fighting for democracy and justice. The myth that is formed is that the people are heroes who overcame military oppression and upheld true civil values. The occupation of the DPR/MPR building is positioned as a symbol of the people's persistent and unshakeable struggle, while civil supremacy becomes a symbol of the ideal democracy that must be fought for earnestly. This myth strengthens the collective identity as citizens who are aware and active in protecting democracy.

The integration of these three levels of meaning shows that this image is not merely an illustration of a mass protest, but a message rich in social and historical significance. The denotation presents clear visual facts and text, while the connotation reveals symbolic meanings of solidarity, struggle, and the continuity of the history of reform. The myth that has been created elevates the people as moral heroes and guardians of democracy who reject military domination. This image serves as a medium that connects the past and the present, reinforcing the narrative of collective action and the legitimacy of demands for civilian supremacy in the contemporary political context. As part of the "Reject the TNI Law" digital campaign, this content invites the audience to remember and continue the struggle for reform for a better democracy.

In addition, the timing of the upload, which took place before the TNI Law was passed, adds a critical dimension to this template. It serves as an early warning and protest against potential threats to civilian supremacy and the reforms that have been fought for. The use of powerful historical imagery connects contemporary issues with past struggles, creating continuity in the narrative of resistance and political vigilance. This template has been shared by more than a million other Instagram users.

3.2. Content Analysis Template 2

Based on its denotative meaning, this image shows a large crowd staging a demonstration in front of the Indonesian Parliament building, with red and white flags waving and banners demanding reform. The photo has been processed in monochrome (black and white), giving it a historical and serious feel. The main text reads: "THE DEATH OF CIVIL SUPREMACY," followed by supporting sentences: "ORBA RISES! REFORM IS BETRAYED! THE PEOPLE ARE SPIT ON!" and the call to action: "KEEP SPEAKING OUT!" In addition, there are the hashtags #TolakRUUTNI and #TegakkanSupremasiSipil.

The connotative meaning explains that the monochrome colors in the image evoke a sense of nostalgia and seriousness, reminiscent of historical photographs of the occupation of the House of Representatives/People's Consultative Assembly building during the 1998 reform. This associates contemporary actions with previous reform struggles, giving legitimacy and continuity to the people's struggle. The large and compact crowd symbolizes solidarity, collective strength, and the determination of a people who do not give up easily. The text "The Death of Civil Supremacy" contains a sharp criticism of the current political conditions, which are considered to ignore the principle of civil supremacy, with the implication that democracy and civilian control over the military are in decline. Supporting phrases such as "Orba Bangkit!" (New Order Rises!) and "Reformasi Dikhianati!" (Reform Betrayed!) add connotative weight as warnings and accusations against the reemergence of an authoritarian regime that threatens the achievements of reform. The call to "Terus Bersuara!" (Keep Speaking Out!) serves as motivation and a call to continue the struggle, emphasizing that the resistance is not over.

At the mythical level, this image constructs a heroic and moral narrative about the people as guardians of democratic values and freedom who must continue to fight against tyranny and

oppression. The myth that is formed is that of the people as historical heroes who defend and fight for civil supremacy as the foundation of a democratic state. The use of monochrome colors and iconic visuals of the occupation of the DPR/MPR building highlights the historical value of the people's heroic and sacred struggle, connecting the past with the present as a single, ongoing struggle. This myth also emphasizes the opposition between the people (as a symbol of truth and justice) and the authoritarian regime (a symbol of oppression and betrayal of reform), inviting the audience to take a clear moral position in socio-political conflicts.

The integration of these three levels of meaning shows that this image functions as a powerful visual and verbal communication tool in voicing political criticism and mobilizing social solidarity. The denotation presents the facts of mass action and critical text, the connotation reveals historical meaning, solidarity, and criticism of the decline of democracy, while the myth constructs a heroic narrative of the people as guardians of democracy and opponents of tyranny.

Monochrome colors as visual elements strengthen emotional and historical connections, linking the contemporary context with the 1998 reform movement, thereby adding legitimacy and urgency to the message. However, the timing of the image's upload on March 20, 2025, coinciding with the passing of the TNI Law, gives another meaning to the use of monochrome colors. When compared to the previous template, which used the same colorful visuals and was uploaded before the TNI Law was passed, the use of monochrome colors also signifies that the democracy that was fought for has died because the TNI Law was passed despite strong opposition from the people. In the context of digital connectivity, this content serves to express disappointment with the policy, but on the other hand, it also strengthens collective identity and motivates participation in the campaign to reject the TNI Law and maintain civilian supremacy as a fundamental value of democracy. This template has been shared by around 5,200 other Instagram users.

3.3. Content Analysis Template 3

Based on its denotative meaning, this image shows a large crowd staging a demonstration in front of the Indonesian Parliament building, with red and white flags waving and banners demanding reform. The photo has been processed in monochrome (black and white), giving it a historical and serious feel. The main text reads: "THE DEATH OF CIVIL SUPREMACY," followed by supporting sentences: "ORBA RISES! REFORM IS BETRAYED! THE PEOPLE ARE SPIT ON!" and the call to action: "KEEP SPEAKING OUT!" In addition, there are the hashtags #TolakRUUTNI and #TegakkanSupremasiSipil.

The connotative meaning explains that the monochrome colors in the image evoke a sense of nostalgia and seriousness, reminiscent of historical photographs of the occupation of the House of Representatives/People's Consultative Assembly building during the 1998 reform. This associates contemporary actions with previous reform struggles, giving legitimacy and continuity to the people's struggle. The large and compact crowd symbolizes solidarity, collective strength, and the determination of a people who do not give up easily. The text "The Death of Civil Supremacy" contains a sharp criticism of the current political conditions, which are considered to ignore the principle of civil supremacy, with the implication that democracy and civilian control over the military are in decline. Supporting phrases such as "Orba Bangkit!" (New Order Rises!) and "Reformasi Dikhianati!" (Reform Betrayed!) add connotative weight as warnings and accusations against the reemergence of an authoritarian regime that threatens the achievements of reform. The call to "Terus Bersuara!" (Keep Speaking Out!) serves as motivation and a call to continue the struggle, emphasizing that the resistance is not over.

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3.4. Content Analysis Template 4

At the denotative level, the image shows a demonstrator kicking a police shield during a riot or clash on the street. In the background, a crowd of people can be seen participating in the protest. The rows of police shield clearly indicate the presence of security forces. The text reads: "THE PEOPLE ARE BEING BEATEN, MEDICAL PERSONNEL ARE BEING ATTACKED, JOURNALISTS ARE BEING TERRORIZED! THE AUTHORITIES ARE NOT THE RULERS; WE ARE NOT AFRAID!" The text explicitly conveys the message that the people are experiencing violence, medical personnel are being attacked, and journalists are being intimidated, and affirms an attitude of fearlessness towards the authorities.

Connotatively, the images and text evoke the struggle and resistance of the people against repressive power. The act of kicking the police shield symbolizes courage, defiance, and rejection of authorities who use violence. The crowd in the background emphasizes the solidarity of the masses in the face of pressure from the authorities. The text reinforces this connotation by highlighting the injustice and human rights violations experienced by various groups, the general public, medical personnel, and journalists, who should be protected. The sentence: "THE AUTHORITIES ARE NOT THE RULERS; WE ARE NOT AFRAID!" implies a rejection of the domination of the authorities and a spirit of persistent resistance.

Meanwhile, at the mythical level, images and text construct a heroic narrative about the people as victims and brave fighters against oppression. The myth that has been formed is that the people are symbols of truth and justice who fight against tyrannical and repressive powers. This myth elevates the

values of democracy, freedom, and civil courage as a strong collective identity. The security forces are mythologized as symbols of oppressive power that threaten the freedom of the people, medical personnel, and journalists, who are important pillars of a democratic society. This narrative reinforces the position of the people as moral heroes who are undaunted by violence and intimidation, while inviting the audience to join the struggle.

The integration of these three levels of meaning shows that this image is not merely a visual documentation of the clash between demonstrators and police, but a powerful and complex message about socio-political conflict. The denotation presents clear visual facts and text, while the connotation reveals the symbolic meaning of resistance and solidarity among the people. The myth that has been created elevates the heroic and moral narrative of the people as brave fighters for justice against oppression. In the connective action "Reject the TNI Law," this image serves as a rhetorical tool that mobilizes emotions and collective consciousness, strengthening the identity of a connective action that rejects repressive power and advocates for civil liberties. Thus, this content not only conveys information, but also shapes social and political meanings that motivate participation and solidarity in digital campaigns. This template has been shared by more than 155,000 Instagram users.

3.5. Integration of Content Analysis Results to the Four "Add Yours" Templates

The digital campaign "Reject the TNI Law" constructs a powerful narrative of connective action through the use of visuals and text that simultaneously communicate socio-political criticism, strengthen collective solidarity, affirm the identity of the struggle for democracy, and enliven the spirit of active resistance against military domination and repression. The four templates analysed together form a symbolic ecosystem that connects historical context with the contemporary political situation, reinforcing the legitimacy and urgency of the demand for civilian supremacy.

The sight of large, dense crowds, whether in the form of demonstrations in front of the DPR/MPR building or physical actions such as climbing fences and clashing with the authorities, illustrates massive and diverse collective participation. These crowds are not just a collection of individuals, but symbols of solidarity and collective strength rooted in a shared awareness of injustice and the need for change. The presence of red and white flags and other national attributes affirms the spirit of patriotism that is the moral foundation of the people's struggle, while strengthening their collective identity as active and critical citizens.

The texts accompanying these images voice sharp criticism of military supremacy, which is considered to undermine the principles of civilian supremacy and democracy, and highlight injustice, violence by the authorities, and betrayal of the ideals of reform. Expressions such as "THE DEATH OF CIVILIAN SUPREMACY," "ORBA RISES," "WE NEED SOLUTIONS, NOT DUAL FUNCTIONS," and "THE PEOPLE ARE BEATEN, MEDICS ARE ATTACKED, JOURNALISTS ARE TERRORIZED!" are not only statements of fact, but also moral appeals that invite the audience to take a firm stance against the decline of democracy and repressive domination of power. These messages contain deep emotional and political dimensions, which trigger critical awareness and motivate active participation in the campaign.

Furthermore, the physical actions depicted, such as climbing barbed wire fences and kicking police shields, illustrate the courage and persistence of the people in breaking through repressive barriers. These are not mere symbols of resistance, but rather tangible expressions of a collective determination to face risks in order to uphold justice and civil liberties. This narrative reinforces the people's identity as moral warriors who are undaunted by intimidation and violence, while inviting the audience to join the struggle.

The temporal factor of content uploads, which mostly occurred during critical moments leading up to and during the enactment of the TNI Law, added a dimension of urgency and relevance to the narrative. The use of historical imagery, such as the occupation of the DPR/MPR building during the 1998 reform, linked the current struggle with the spirit of change in the past, creating a continuity of narrative of resistance and political vigilance. The monochrome colour scheme in one of the templates reinforces both nostalgia and seriousness, signifying deep disappointment and warning that the democracy that has been fought for could potentially die if threats are not dealt with decisively.

Overall, these contents serve as effective rhetorical tools in building collective identity, mobilizing solidarity, and triggering critical awareness in the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign. They not only convey information or criticism, but also shape deep social and political meanings, which form the foundation for participation and solidarity in digital campaigns. The widespread resonance reflected in the large number of users who reposted this content demonstrates the effectiveness of visual and verbal communication strategies in strengthening contemporary socio-political movements.

3.6. Connective Action in the "Reject the TNI Law" Movement

The phenomenon of connective action in the "Reject the TNI Law" digital campaign demonstrates the distinctive characteristics of contemporary activism, which is highly dependent on digital communication and flexible individual participation, as explained by Bennett and Segerberg (2012). This study reinforces that social media, particularly Instagram, plays a strategic role as a space for action where individuals can participate without being bound by formal organizational structures or rigid instructions. Findings from the analysis of the "Add Yours" template confirm five key elements of connective action. First, although these accounts are not popular with a limited number of followers, the massive reach of the content shared, with one template shared more than a million times, shows that connective action does not depend on a centralized organizational network, but rather on a decentralized digital ecosystem based on trust between users. This is consistent with the findings of Adi et al. (2018) and (Spann, Agarwal, Stafford, & Okeke, 2023) which states that participation in connective actions is individual and impulsive, and can spread through small, strong networks. This phenomenon reinforces Earl and Kimport's view (2013) that modern digital mobilization relies on weak networks of connections between individuals, rather than hierarchical organizational structures. This movement is bottom-up, rooted in civil society initiatives without the dominance of political institutions or specific public figures. This pattern confirms that "Reject the TNI Law" is a manifestation of the collective unrest of digital citizens that developed in a non-hierarchical manner and was based on emotional solidarity, which was built through simple but powerful visual narratives.

Second, the spontaneous and informal nature of connective actions is reflected in the pattern of user participation, which tends to involve direct reposting without modification of the provided template. This phenomenon shows that participation in campaigns does not require active involvement in content production or the creation of new narratives by individuals, but rather effective and efficient symbolic reproduction. The users' decision to adopt existing templates in their entirety reflects an implicit trust and agreement with the message being conveyed, while also indicating the ease of access and use of content as a medium for political expression.

This informal nature also marks an important shift in digital activism practices, where users no longer need to be bound by formal organizational structures or rigid communication hierarchies. The rapid and unmodified reposting of content allows for a more flexible and spontaneous response to emerging socio-political issues, while accelerating the spread of messages across complex digital networks. Thus, this spontaneity reinforces a more inclusive and diverse dynamic of participation, in

which individuals with different backgrounds and capacities can contribute without bureaucratic barriers or content production obligations.

Third, personalized action frames also play a clear role, allowing users to tailor their involvement without having to create new content, while still feeling engaged in the larger socio-political narrative. This pattern does not reflect passive involvement, but rather a form of symbolic participation based on emotional affiliation. In this context, the power of content lies in its ability to convey public concerns in a concise, visual, and easily disseminated manner within a fluid and horizontal collective narrative chain. Individuals can tailor their involvement according to their personal values, interests, and capacities, without losing their sense of attachment to the collective narrative. The provided "Add Yours" template serves as a flexible framework for action, allowing users to internalize the campaign's message according to their own experiences and perspectives. This mechanism facilitates participation that is both personal and collective, where users are not required to rigidly follow a single narrative, but can articulate their support in ways that are emotionally and symbolically resonant.

These personalized action frames also reflect the transformation of digital media into an open space for dialogue that allows for diverse expression and strengthens collective solidarity. Through the use of consistent and easily accessible templates, users can experience a strong collective identity without losing their unique personal voices. Thus, personalized action frames become an important mechanism in maintaining a balance between individual participation and movement cohesion, which ultimately strengthens the resilience and reach of the "Reject the TNI Law" connective action in the digital realm.

Fourth, individual expression as a driver of participation can be seen in how these contents activate political affection through strong visuals, bold typography, and emotional color tones. Messages such as "The Death of Civil Supremacy," "We Need Solutions, Not Dual Function," and "The People Are Beaten, Medical Personnel Are Attacked, Journalists Are Terrorized" not only convey criticism, but also become a medium for self-expression and the search for recognition in social networks, as stated by Leonardi & Vaast (2017).

Research data shows that the visual and affective characteristics of this participation are consistent with the concept of visual-affective activism proposed by Sotelo-Prol (2023), which is a form of contemporary activism that relies more on emotional engagement through visual media than on rational persuasion alone. In the context of the "Reject the TNI Law" movement, Instagram users creatively adapted and distributed visual templates with strong personal narratives, resulting in a broad and dynamic collective effect. The formation of collective emotion in this movement was realized through the consistent and massive dissemination of visuals across various Instagram accounts.

Content analysis reveals that the visual narratives that received the most responses were those that displayed strong emotional symbols, such as documentation of the occupation of the DPR/MPR building by students, symbols of mass power, quotes about civil supremacy, and photos of student demonstrations. Based on mythical elements in semiotics (Barthes, 1972), these symbols and messages build empathy and collective anger that encourage other users to participate in a chain reaction. Thus, mobilization in this movement does not only depend on the power of rational arguments, but also on the ability of visual narratives to touch and move the collective feelings of the audience. Instagram's "Add Yours" feature proves that lightweight digital infrastructure can be transformed into a networked, fluid, and emotion-based tool for political mobilization.

Fifth, broad access to multilayered social technology, in this case Instagram as a visual platform that enables rapid and widespread dissemination of content, is a crucial factor supporting the success of this connective action. Study by Chang et al. (2022) and Li et al. (2021) strengthening the role of social

media, particularly Instagram, in mobilizing socio-political movements with a reach that can transcend geographical boundaries. Instagram's strength in visual formats also reinforces the appeal and effectiveness of the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign, which is in line with the research of Dumitrica & Hockin-Boyers. (2023) and Schreiber & Schreiber (2024).

These findings also indicate that the "Reject the TNI Law" campaign adopted a digital activism strategy that combined historical continuity and contemporary urgency. The use of iconic images of the 1998 occupation of the House of Representatives/People's Consultative Assembly building as visual backgrounds in several templates connects past struggles with the current political situation, creating a narrative of continuous resistance and moral legitimacy for collective action. This reinforces the mythical dimension of connective action as a people's struggle against military domination, oppression by the authorities, and betrayal of democratic reform.

In addition, the physical actions visualized in the template, such as climbing barbed wire fences and clashing with the authorities, represent collective courage and determination in the face of structural obstacles. These are not mere symbols, but real manifestations of resistance that drive solidarity and active participation. This heroic narrative reinforces the identity of connective action as a medium that not only demands policy change, but also builds critical awareness and deep emotional attachment.

Overall, the digital campaign "Reject the TNI Law" through the "Add Yours" feature on Instagram reflects a new paradigm of digital activism that is decentralized, flexible, and oriented towards collective symbolic expression. Social media serves as a strategic space that enables rapid mobilization and broad participation, while strengthening collective identity and moral narratives that drive action. This phenomenon confirms that in the digital era, connective action is not only about formal organization, but also about how technology and symbols are used creatively to strengthen solidarity and expand the reach of socio-political movements.

3.7. "Add Yours" as an Instagram Affordance

Data shows that the "Add Yours" feature is now being used in the context of connective actions to spread social and political issues. The "Add Yours" feature, which was originally entertainment-oriented, has been reshaped into a means of disseminating symbols and meanings regarding criticism of power and civil supremacy in the "Reject the TNI Law" movement. The main aspect that can be used in analyzing this phenomenon is the existence of social media affordances. Affordances are defined as the possibilities for action offered by a platform to its users (Anderson & Robey, 2017; Tuncer, 2021).

The main affordance of Instagram is its visual nature, which facilitates the consumption and production of image- and video-based content (Chen & Peng, 2023). In the context of "Add Yours," the timing of posts, visual theme consistency, and continuous narrative contribute to an ever-evolving cycle of participation, creating a sustainable trend in social movements. Visual uniformity in "Add Yours" also plays a role in shaping collective identity. The use of consistent visual elements, such as poster designs or movement symbols, creates a sense of togetherness and strengthens group identity (Comunello, Mulargia, & Parisi, 2016). In the "Reject the TNI Law" movement, this can be seen from the "Add Yours" posts, which can reach thousands to millions of user posts on Instagram. Emotional narrative strategies, strong visual symbols, and the use of Instagram affordances have proven to increase the resonance of content among users (Comunello et al., 2016). This can also be seen from the distribution pattern of "Add Yours" content, which relies on the power of relevant and interesting visual narratives.

In addition, Comunello et al. (2016) also emphasizes the importance of timing and rhythm in content publishing to attract audience attention. In the "Add Yours" feature, upload timing, visual

theme consistency, and continuous narration are crucial to maintaining participation momentum. Timing, visual theme consistency, and narration not only reinforce the message but also increase user engagement in the ongoing content cycle, keeping them up to date with the movement's trends.

The consistency of the visual theme in "Add Yours" is also crucial in shaping the collective identity of the movement. Comunello et al. (2016) explains that people tend to form homogeneous networks on social media based on shared interests. In the context of "Add Yours," the use of consistent visual templates and symbols serves as a tool for building group identity, creating a sense of togetherness, and reinforcing the idea that participating in the movement is part of a larger group identity. In the "Reject the TNI Law" movement, this can be seen in the thousands to millions of "Add Yours" posts with visual uniformity. Comunello et al. (2016) also highlights how social media not only supports connective actions, but also provides resources for organizing a sense of collective identity and ownership. The "Add Yours" feature allows users to express personal support through uniform visuals, such as identical poster designs, thereby strengthening identity and motivation to continue participating (Dewi, 2024; Novianty et al., 2024; Safitri et al., 2025).

Although visual uniformity is important for group identity, the affordance of content editing on social media (Santos & Portales, 2025) also allows for personalization in "Add Yours." Users can modify their content to reflect authentic individual participation, while remaining within the framework of a uniform visual identity. This supports users' ability to present themselves as politically active and engaged individuals, reinforcing their identity as supporters of social justice and advocacy (Novianty et al., 2024). Movements such as "All Eyes on Papua" and "All Eyes on Rafah" demonstrate how visual uniformity through "Add Yours" has become a hallmark of these movements, strengthening identification with the campaign's goals and shaping online social identities. (Dewi, 2024).

The phenomenon of using the "Add Yours" feature for connective actions such as the "Reject the TNI Law" movement cannot be separated from the central role of algorithms. Simply put, an algorithm is a series of complex instructions or rules in a digital system that stores certain assessment criteria for incoming data (Gillespie, 2016). In the context of social media, algorithms not only regulate the mechanism of content distribution, but also provide assessments of it. Algorithms not only decide how content is distributed, but also contain cultural values that determine what is considered "valuable" or worthy of becoming a trend. In connective action content, if an "Add Yours" post does not meet the eligibility criteria set by the algorithm for widespread distribution, then that content will lose out to other content that the algorithm considers more "valuable" as a trend. This is because the algorithm also actively controls users' exposure to certain content, tailoring it to each user's online behavior, preferences or tastes, and personal information (Klug, Qin, Evans, & Kaufman, 2021). Thus, algorithms become significant "gatekeepers," determining how far a connective action message can reach its audience. Therefore, understanding the role of algorithms is crucial, in addition to examining the complex relationship between platform providers and how activists use social media.

3.7. Economic and Political Dynamics in Connective Action

Instagram, as part of the communications technology industry, operates on an attention economy model, a system in which user attention becomes a commodity that is sought after and monetized by the platform through algorithms and advertisements. Features such as "Add Yours" are designed to increase user interaction and engagement, thereby increasing the frequency of personal data collection, which is then used for the platform's business interests (Fuchs, 2014). Within this framework, the production and consumption of visual content become strategic tools in strengthening the platform's appeal through visual affordances whose characteristics allow users to be both active and passive in their participation (Chen & Peng, 2023).

Along with that, the political dynamics in this case become even more complex when considering the role of algorithms as invisible filters. As Tufekci stated (2017) Instagram's content moderation policy and ranking mechanism create a politically biased environment. The "Add Yours" feature itself demonstrates its effectiveness in creating viral participation through visual uniformity (Comunello et al., 2016), but simultaneously also functions as an instrument of commodification where every user interaction is converted into data that enriches Instagram's economic ecosystem. (Fuchs, 2014).

Meanwhile, Freelon et al. (2020) revealed that social media-based movements often face "momentum decay," which is a decline in participation after the initial period of virality ends. This is related to the term "clicktivism," which refers to social media activism that tends to be weak and minimalist (Halupka, 2018). The existence of this new style of activism makes social media users feel as if they are participating in and impacting a socio-political movement, even if they are only clicking the "like" button or sharing it on social media platforms. However, this also poses challenges related to the sustainability of the movement because the energy of participation is vulnerable to digital fatigue and a decline in momentum. Furthermore, in a political context, connective actions through "Add Yours" also face the risk of depoliticization. Fragmented, temporary actions with minimal structural organization tend to weaken the long-term impact of social movements. Such political performances can be easily absorbed, neutralized, or even ignored by the formal political system. Activism practices in this case also demonstrate the transformation of political participation in the digital age.

Further observation of the "Reject the TNI Law" movement shows that after the peak of "Add Yours" virality in mid-March 2025, there was a drastic decline in the number of new posts in the following weeks. This phenomenon shows the limitations of the "Add Yours" feature in maintaining the energy of the movement in the long term. Without the conversion of digital participation into real action or further organization, digital movements risk fragmentation or loss of focus. The connective action of "Reject the TNI Law" using the "Add Yours" feature reveals the complexity of power relations in the digital platform economy. This phenomenon illustrates how political activism in the contemporary era is caught in a paradox. Connective action is a form of building collective identity and mobilizing digital solidarity. However, it remains within a framework controlled by technological design and the profit goals of platforms, so that the space for digital politicization is ambivalent: on the one hand, it allows for political expression, but on the other, it is vulnerable to being absorbed and suppressed by the logic of commercialization.

This study highlights the urgent need to reconfigure regulations governing the digital platform industry. Findings indicate that without a policy framework that guarantees algorithm transparency and protection of activist data, the emancipatory potential of social media will continue to be overshadowed by corporate interests. The theoretical implications of this research reinforce criticism of platform business models that exploit political participation for capital accumulation, while opening up space for discussion about new forms of resistance in the era of platform society.

4. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the "Reject the TNI Law" movement is a typical manifestation of connective action in the digital age: decentralized, spontaneous, and based on flexible individual participation without dependence on formal organizational structures. Participation takes the form of personalized action frames, in which individuals express symbolic and emotional support through visually uniform "Add Yours" templates, while still conveying personal affection and experiences. Strong visual narratives serve as triggers for collective empathy and chain participation. Through qualitative content analysis that integrates Roland Barthes' semiotics with the social shaping of

technology framework, this study shows how features initially designed for light interaction can be socially engineered into a means of symbolic resistance and mass mobilization.

The findings also show that the use of "Add Yours" in the "Reject the TNI Law" connective action arose from a dynamic interaction between platform design, algorithmic logic, the context of social movements, and users' social practices. The affordance of this feature enables easy participation, expands the reach of messages, and creates a domino effect of participation that strengthens solidarity without the need for a formal hierarchical structure. Thus, this study underscores that social media technology is not a neutral entity; digital features are shaped by social, political, and economic negotiations between users and platforms. These findings reject technological determinism and reinforce the relevance of the social construction of technology perspective for understanding contemporary digital activism.

At the same time, research identifies the limitations and risks inherent in "Add Yours"-based connective actions. The political economy logic of platforms in the form of attention capitalism, data monetization, and algorithms as "gatekeepers" creates an imbalance of power between platforms and users, and opens up the possibility of restricting public participation. Phenomena such as momentum decay and the risk of depoliticization due to fragmented, temporal participation that is not connected to further organization have the potential to weaken the long-term impact of movements when participation stops at the symbolic level and momentary virality.

Based on this, further research is recommended to pay greater attention to the dimensions of affordances and user experience. A combined approach of content analysis and in-depth interviews with users who share "Add Yours" content can enrich our understanding of their motivations, interpretations, and the consequences of their participation. Cross-platform studies are also important to see how connective actions move and transform between Instagram, X, TikTok, and other platforms. Given the limitations of archiving and historical searches on the "Add Yours" feature, future research should ideally follow ongoing movements in real-time so that the dynamics of participation and changes in narrative can be captured more accurately and contextually.

In practical terms, this study recommends that digital social movement activists should not stop at symbolic participation based on "Add Yours," but consciously link it to more sustainable organizing strategies outside the platform. The use of affordances such as "Add Yours" needs to be optimized through content consistency, cross-platform collaboration, and publication rhythm settings to maintain momentum. At the policy level, strengthening algorithm transparency and data protection for activists is crucial to guarantee freedom of expression, reduce the commodification of political participation, and open space for more emancipatory forms of digital activism within an increasingly dominant platform ecosystem.

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