

Conference Paper

Digital Advocacy Phenomenon in ASEAN (Case Study: The Social Movement of Milk Tea Alliance in Thailand and Myanmar)

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ABSTRACT

Milk Tea Alliance has gained its popularity as broad youth protests transcending national borders against authoritarianism. The protests started to spread its influence in Far-Eastern countries like Hongkong and Taiwan in 2020. In a matter of months, Milk Tea Alliance quickly broadened its influence reaching Southeast Asian countries, namely Thailand and Myanmar. This research aimed to explain the processes of Milk Tea Alliance advocacy as a social movement in ASEAN settings, especially in Thailand and Myanmar. Methodologically, most secondary data are collected with library research techniques and analyzed explanatively with an integrated framework of analysis consisting of a transnational advocacy network model and digital advocacy concept. This research found that Milk Tea Alliance operates transnationally—by disseminating information, framing public opinion, and gaining mass support—and digitally with the help of social media. The results of the research have implications for the overview of digital advocacy practice in ASEAN.

Keywords: Milk tea alliance, Myanmar, Thailand

Introduction

The accelerated development of technologies in the 21st century signifies the digitalization of human's many aspects of life, including the aspect of policy influence. For example, Milk Tea Alliance is a social movement that embodies the digitized form of policy-influencing agenda they've been originally doing in Hong Kong and Taiwan with the help of online mediums (Barron, 2020). Milk Tea Alliance themselves specializes in a transnational protest movement against authoritarianism and advocacy for democracy and/or democratization. Netizens from different countries are the ones who actively implement the agenda of Milk Tea Alliance with their respective social media account and usually use memes and hashtags to indicate that they represent the movement. Milk Tea Alliance has expanded its influence in Southeast Asian countries with a significant presence in Thailand and Myanmar. In Thailand, the pro-democracy protests to demand royal reform done by Milk Tea Alliance against the Thailand government in August 2020 are the largest since a military coup in 2014 (Tanakasempipat & Chow, 2020). Meanwhile, in Myanmar, Milk Tea Alliance started to spread its influence in that country in February 2021 in response to the coup d'état against the newly elected Burmese democratic government which led to the military junta which they deemed as damaging the development of democracy in the country (Duangdee, 2021). The research about the social movement of the Milk Tea Alliance has its urgency so this research tries to analyze it with a scholarly approach often delving into international studies discipline to satisfy the existing curiosity.

Based on the background of research, there is a problem identification that needs to be addressed. In this term, this research aimed to answer the question representing the problem identification, "How did Milk Tea Alliance conduct their advocacy in Thailand and Myanmar?" The

How to cite:

Reynaldi, H. A., Dhiyaa, C. G., & Imawan, R. (2023). Digital advocacy phenomenon in ASEAN (Case Study: The social movement of milk tea alliance in Thailand and Myanmar). *International Relations on Indonesian Foreign Policy Conference 2022*. NST Proceedings. pages 12-21. doi: 10.11594/nstp.2023.3403

question opens for the explication of Milk Tea Alliance processes of advocacy agenda. Therefore, the outcomes of the research about the Milk Tea Alliance movement in Thailand and Myanmar would not only provide knowledge about that case study but also a broader understanding of humanity's digital civilization, specifically the phenomenon of digital advocacy that ever ensued in Southeast Asia Region.

Material and Methods

The research on Milk Tea Alliance advocacy in Thailand and Myanmar applied a qualitative approach. The case study within this research itself serves as an object of processes, activities, and events exploration of a certain thematic issue (Cresswell, 2004). In a broader sense, this research is done to do a report on perspectives collection, identification of factors relevant to the circumstances under study, and the drawing of the big picture that would be found. In this term, a case study presents general insights which might be of relevance in other contexts instead of projecting mere facts. Most secondary qualitative data are subject to this research data collection of library research technique with the data from books, journal articles, proceedings, reports, and online references. After all, data are sufficiently collected, an explanative manner of data analysis is implemented. This kind of data analysis technique would provide a coherent answer for the problem identifications in a form of research questions predetermined in advance.

This research applied an explanative technique of data analysis so that it is conducted with the help of an analytical framework, i.e. model and conceptual basis. In this case, the transnational advocacy network (TAN) model serves as the basis for explaining the operational processes of advocacy activities done by Milk Tea Alliance in the two countries. Meanwhile, the concept of digital advocacy would provide nuance for this research about advocacy activities because Milk Tea Alliance's advocacy is one done on a digital scheme, unlike most advocacy movements. Considering the results of the research, general insights about the practices of digital advocacy in ASEAN could be extracted. All in all, this research is not only presenting facts and data about the case study but also explicating general insights about the phenomenology of digital advocacy based on the case study which would be serving an overview of digital humanities civilization, especially in the Southeast Asia Region.

Frameworks of Analysis

As explained above, the data analysis for this research utilizes three frameworks of analysis. The followings are the overviews of those three frameworks.

The Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN) model

According to the background of research, Milk Tea Alliance is an unorganized social movement operating in a digital world. Like social movements in common, Milk Tea Alliance indicates that they spread their influence by operating in a transnational advocacy network scheme. It means that the model of the Transnational Advocacy Network or TAN is a relevant framework of analysis that could be used to understand the processes of advocacy done by Milk Tea Alliance in this case. Besides, the model also makes it possible to investigate the correlation between the emergence and operation of the Milk Tea Alliance in both Thailand and Myanmar. The following is an overview of the transnational advocacy network model.

The involvement of non-state actors in contemporary dynamics of international relations constellation has a much higher frequency than the ones in previous periods. For instance, there are groups of non-state parties who engage in a unit known as the transnational advocacy network. That groups could be in a form of NGOs/INGO, research and advocacy organizations, social movements, foundations, mass media, religious groups, trade partnerships, intellectual societies, part of state parliaments, and part of an intergovernmental organization or IGO (Keck & Sikkink, 2018). Regarding this research, Milk Tea Alliance categorizes itself as a social movement with all its unique characteristics. That unit of transnational advocacy network revolves in the

international sphere on a specific issue in which they commit to the same goals, values, general discourses, and the information and service exchange density (Keck & Sikkink, 1998). In other words, a unit of a transnational advocacy network could be comprehended as a bunch of separated parties who consolidate themselves as a form of unity under several points of similarity.

A transnational advocacy network conducts itself to accomplish the so-called “boomerang pattern”. When an individual or community in a country is unable to make their government make changes for a better societal life, then they will strengthen themselves with a far larger group of foreign entities as a transnational advocacy network unit through a boomerang pattern mechanism so that it enables them to increase the intensity of the policy-influencing process. Moreover, this mechanism would also put stronger pressure on the authority because it no longer comes from only domestic actors, but also international or even global audiences.

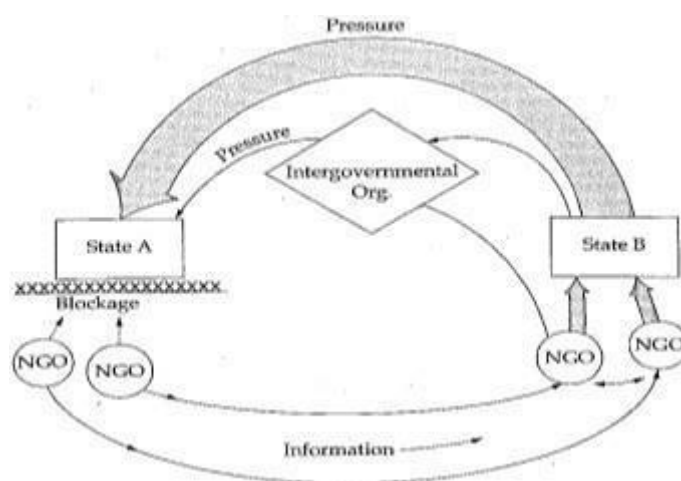


Figure 1. Boomerang pattern of the transnational advocacy network model

By the time a transnational advocacy network forms itself on a particular issue, it often-times will act by putting certain tactics in advance. Academics usually recognize those tactics as four different sub-tactics, namely (1) “information politics” or information production and dissemination; (2) “symbolic politics” or symbols, narratives, discourses utilization; (3) “leverage politics” or alliance formation with stronger entities; and (4) “political accountability” or allied actors’ commitment maintenance (Keck and Sikkink, 2018). A transnational advocacy network scheme offers higher effectiveness than conventional advocacy initiatives which are only done at domestic scope with relatively few actors because a transnational advocacy network carries out some specific steps. Those steps are (1) framing certain debates and issues in advocacy agenda, (2) encouraging symbolic commitment from the authorities, (3) causing procedural changes in both domestic and international spheres, (4) performing policy-influencing, and (5) urging changes in the target actors’ behavior (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). There are indications that Milk Tea Alliance as a social movement mingles itself with tactics and steps known in transnational advocacy network schemes.

The digital advocacy concept

The massive spread of Internet and social media use provides social movement participants with a brand-new platform for advocacy. The growing debates on digital advocacy through the combination of interest groups and social media emphasize the presence of digital access politics, digital information politics, and digital protest politics notions (Johansson & Scaramuzzino, 2019). Essentially, digital advocacy is not a standalone subject for it has interconnection with offline activities. Most digital advocacy agendas are done by certain social movements to gain political

presence with social media means. However, there are also some which are conducting their digital advocacy to bring about the political influence of a certain issue. Thus, there is a postulation that the need for political presence and political influence might be two sides of the same coin. As mentioned before, the online world cannot be separated from the offline one so the use of digital means like social media is not the replacement for real-world activities. In this term, digital advocacy is often defined as a form of community organizing activity by which social media is used as a convenient tool that provides more benefits than drawbacks (Brady et al., 2015). To garner its optimal benefits, the organizer of digital advocacy needs to understand the various types of social media and technologies, maximize their utility, and navigate the challenges that may arise. Digital advocacy could be organized at both domestic and international levels.

The use of social media to conduct digital advocacy often makes use of a feature called a hashtag. Digital advocacy often starts as a hashtag posted by certain people which gains popularity to the point of becoming a social movement that may impact the agenda-setting and policy-making process done by the government (Alifiarry & Kusumasari, 2020). Hashtag-affiliated movement is a platform to perform protests and raise political engagement among the public. Through it, people may play a role in education, criticism, information provision, news expansion, and resource allocation. In this case, #MilkTeaAlliance is a social media hashtag used by netizens to promote democracy and democratization in certain countries.

Results and Discussion

By putting the boomerang pattern of the transnational advocacy network model into practice and the digital advocacy concept on emphasis, the analysis tries to dissect on ways Milk Tea Alliance operates itself. The following is the explanation of Milk Tea Alliance advocacy in every four tactics of the transnational advocacy network.

Information Politics

In the activity of advocacy, information is a very important thing and can be one of the most essential and substantial. The information does not just bring the things that can change or increase understanding of one or several parties separately about something, but also it can bring them to be a unit with the same value and purpose, and sometimes it might budge together (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). In transnational advocacy networks, non-state actors do not formally exchange information, there are several ways such as telephone calls, e-mail, fax communication, and others. The information that is served might be some kind of things that have never been heard or seen, something that may be unfamiliar to some people. Non-state actors do not just give the information of the facts but also give the testimonies, the story about people who have affected life in one country because of some phenomena.

Milk Tea Alliance has little difference from common demonstration groups, rather than taking the street as a place to show their idea and protests the ruling system, they rather take social media to criticize a bad idea and many things that are controversial in the government. Even though the activity goes like that, it did not mean that the symbol of Milk Tea Alliance is seen on the street. In Myanmar and Thailand crises, the Milk Tea Alliance takes a big part in the critics and advocacy activities of the ruling government. They spread the information to each other on social media such as Twitter and Facebook to show how was the real condition in their own country, Myanmar has a problem because of the rebellion of the military junta against the legitimate government and Thailand has a problem of the high demand of democracy system application to the monarchy.

To make it easier to spread the information, the Thailand and Myanmar Milk Tea Alliance activists usually use hashtags such as #MilkTeaAlliance, #WhatsHappeningInThailand, and #WhatsHappeningInMyanmar to boost the coverage of events on the ground even further. The information that is served is not just about something that has political or social aspects for advocacy and demonstration purposes because the Milk Tea Alliance and supporters share tips on

how to avoid being identified when using the Internet and how street protesters can quickly disperse (Muhammad, 2021). This way, The Milk Tea Alliance succeeded in making its headline and gained the sympathies of the people overseas (Lee, 2021). It can be proven by the action of the Indonesia Milk Tea Alliance that hold the Zoom Cloud Meeting to show solidarity with the Myanmar people. Furthermore, there have been weekly communications and meetings since the first week of the coup between activist friends in Myanmar and activists in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Korea, the Philippines, and members of the Myanmar diaspora in the US and Europe (Muhammad, 2021). Those facts show that to solve the democratic problem of a certain country, international audiences could be mobilized to increase the likelihood of success in solving the existing problems.

Symbolic politics

To create a large network, a “symbol” is important thing because it helps build-ing awareness and understanding about something. Usually, the activist will identify and serve a convincing explanation about some issues, so it can be a powerful symbol where people can put their attention and more of their ideas (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). From time to time, symbolic politics gets easier to spread due to technological advances so that people get wider access to information that is served on the internet. This phenomenon also helps the activist a lot obviously to collect more support for their action, especially from abroad to help provide pressure on the government.

In Thailand, the protests started because some people want a “transition from monarchy to democracy”. In 2020, A Thai human rights lawyer, Anon Nampa was jailed because he published a question about the monarchy’s role in Thai politics during a protest in August 2020 with the theme “Harry Potter vs. He Who Must Not Be Named.” Currently, he is jailed with three other demonstrate leaders without bail, but this had been one of several resistance symbols to Thailand’s monarchy system (Lee, 2021). Meanwhile, in Myanmar, the demonstration on the street has the purpose to refuse the current ruling government because the Military Junta seized power over the legitimate government that led by Aung San Suu Kyi. This kind of matter makes Myanmar people consider that it is not “right” so they come to the street and show their disappointment t the Military Junta, condemned it, and demand the junta surrendering and giving back the government to Aung San Suu Kyi Party. The demonstration became even worst, since one of the protesters, Kyai Shin, shot death on April 3, 2021 by the military junta soldier, this made people’s trust for Millitary Junta falls (Putri, 2021).

The Milk Tea Alliance has its resistance symbol. The name “milk tea” itself refers to the similarity of people in Asia when consuming tea. Hong Kong has *Góngsīk náaihchà* which means Hong Kong-style milk tea, Thailand has Thai Tea, while Taiwan has Boba Tea which has recently become popular. When Myanmar's pro-democracy movement entered the alliance, they also had a similarity in consuming tea with milk in a drink called *laphet*. Wasana Wongusurawat from Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok told The Economist that the milk preference could be seen as a legacy of British colonialism in Hong Kong and Myanmar or trade relations in Taiwan and Thailand. “No doubt we are a country with strong Chinese influence, but at the same time we also share this cosmopolitan history,” Wasana said (Muhammad, 2021). It made the name of Milk Tea Alliance a symbol of resistance to the monarchy and authoritarianism which are rooted from the historic colonialism done by a monarch countries in the past.

Leverage Politics

In this leverage politics, advocacy actors will optimize the function of the organizational network to develop issues, disseminate ideas to achieve the main target of power-raising, and function to increase strength. The power-raising of an organized society is primarily determined by the conditions developing and the issues raised by the organization because there will be equality of interest to rehabilitate policies, and remove up to overthrow a ruling regime through the development of civil power and civil supremacy #. In this case, there is implication of these

civil power and civil supremacy in Milk Tea Alliance advocacy in Thailand and Myanmar, especially when they gain massive supporters.

In Thailand, the shrinking civic space faced by Thailand has had an impact on resistance plus the Covid-19 wave that the country also faced in the summer of 2020. The climax of the demonstration was led by youths who were almost attended by 100,000 people, their target was to change the system in the country, namely the monarchy (Sombatpoonsiri, 2021). Thai civilians are not given freedom of expression, they are silenced by the regime with a law that suppresses freedom of expression (le majeste law). With Covid-19, the opportunity for mass mobilization is even more massively discussed by the Thai public. All countries have experienced adversity due to Covid-19 including Thailand, this moment was used to stage large-scale protests since the 2014 coup. This moment occurred from July to December 2020, the protesters fought against the oppression by the regime and voiced demands for democracy, namely through the reform of the monarchy. The hashtags #MilkTeaAlliance and #WhatsHappeningIn-Thailand became the main headlines in the resistance movement in Thailand, after Hong Kong and Taiwan (Schaffar & Wongratanawin, 2021).

In connection with this research, Milk Tea Alliance became the driving force for the demonstrators who were dominated by youth. They are guerrillas through social media and in person on the field. This movement requires the support of strong actors to be able to advocate and influence the public. The increasing number of demonstrations in Thailand cannot be separated from the role of actors who have a stronger influence. Social movements require the participation of actors, both individuals, NGOs, and community organizations to influence the emergence of a triggering event which then makes the issues raised relevant for discussion by the public at large (Sandoval-Almazan & Ramon Gil-Garcia, 2014).

Protests in Thailand have started since last July when the country's lockdown status was imposed, some of the demonstrators were led by university students and school students collectively known as the "Free Youth Movement" (SCMP, 2020). Some of these groups were also arrested by Thai authorities for their actions which were deemed to threaten the government. In addition, Thai human rights activist and lawyer, Anom Anom, also took part in the resistance movement. When asked for information by reporters, Anom explained that "what we said is legal and under the constitution and when the time comes for the constitution to be amended or a new to be drafted. We must continue to actively raise issues for the new draft constitution" (SCMP, 2020). Various public figures and celebrities also participated in the movement. One of them is Dechatorn Bamrungmuang, who is a rapper and has also released a song called "lacks political freedom". In addition, over the past week bloggers, streamers and YouTubers have helped raise money to donate to injured protesters and pay bail for arrested activists. Even a fan group of girl band Girls Generation in Thailand, on the Twitter account @WithSNSD_TH has collected more than 779,000 baht (US\$24,946) in just less than two days (Malaysia News, 2020). The K-pop fan base in Thailand is one of the largest in Southeast Asia, so this phenomenon has become a new form of a social movement whose purpose is to support humanity, criticize laws, or protest against the ruling government (Andini & Akhni, 2021).

Activists from other countries such as Taiwan and Hong Kong who have previously joined the Milk Tea Alliance also coordinate with the Milk Tea Alliance in Thailand, this is done either for collaboration or to support each other. In October 2020, NGOs in Taiwan and several political parties in Taiwan will hold a press conference to support Thailand's pro-democracy struggle (McCartney, 2020). Support also continues to flow for Thailand from Hong Kong, one of which is the country's leading activist, Joshua Wong, sending a letter of protest to the Thai Consulate in Hong Kong to express solidarity with the pro-democracy movement in Thailand (Siu, 2020).

In Myanmar, Myanmar is the youngest country to join the #MilkTeaAlliance, the anti-coup demonstrators are also synergizing with the movement in Thailand. Myanmar adopted the same symbol used in Thailand, namely the '3 finger salute' (The Guardian, 2021b). One of them was carried out at the moment when tens of thousands of protesters gathered around the Sule Pagoda

in downtown Yangon, the moment was used by one of the activists of the Myanmar movement, Myatt. Myatt did so in front of the Myanmar police who were on guard. Previously, Myatt read the tactics used by Hong Kong which were then translated into Burmese and then shared thousands of times on social media (Reuters, 2021). Social movements in Myanmar also act in online and offline forms, one of which is #WhatsHappeningInMyanmar, all of which are translated into various languages, symbols, ethnicities, races, and religions which are combined to strengthen the resistance movement. For Myanmar activists, what is happening in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand affects their protest repertoire (Reuters, 2021). This movement is mostly dominated by youth, who also feel that their role is very important in the pro-democracy movement coupled with a large number. They were also the target of arrests because they were considered dangerous and had a big influence on the wave of demonstrations. The arrest of Auu San Suu Kyi Since the coup on February 1, 2021, at least 21 protesters have been killed and other civilians have been arrested (Tanakasempipat, 2021).

The wave of protests that occurred in Myanmar also received high support from Myanmar civilians. Support for pro-democracy activists was also shown by the international community, at least 200 people in Taiwan, dozens in Bangkok, Melbourne, and Hong Kong also took to the streets waving Milk Tea Alliance signs and flags (Potkin & Tanakasempipat, 2021). With the uncertain political situation in Myanmar, the people are building a democratic climate in their way. One of them is in Yangon, where there are several thousand community members who gather annually and regularly in a special forum, to be more precise in Naganyay Pwes. It is not limited to political forums but also includes weddings, funerals, or simply at homes and tea-houses (Thein-Lemelson, 2021). These communities also build networks across the country through social media. So that the current movement is the one that they have prepared more than a few years ago, although they also say that the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong and Thailand has become a repertoire of actions in Myanmar.

Myanmar is not a country that adheres to one religion but in this movement, religion is an important factor and can have a significant influence on the sustainability of the movement, as well as contribute to easing tensions between diverse communities. The majority religion in Myanmar is Buddhist, almost 88% of Myanmar's population is Buddhist, and the rest is divided into Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, and Hinduism. Religious leaders in Myanmar took part in this movement by joining the march with protesters who were considered a support movement (Frydenlund et al., 2021). This is one way to make the advocacy movement a success through influential figures, in this case, religious leaders.

Political Accountability

Political accountability is the ability to help actors who have great influence act according to a predetermined plan. In practice, advocates try to influence important actors in a country to change a policy to suit the wishes of advocates (Keck & Sikkink, 1999). Accountability Politics is needed because activists in Myanmar and Thailand need immediate changes that can be implemented according to their goals. The hashtags #WhatsHappeningInThailand and #WhatsHappeningInMyanmar became a public response which then went viral on social media and at least they provided information on the conditions that were happening in their country.

In Thailand, the reform of the monarchy became the main goal of the demonstrators in protesting, in addition to the limitation of public space for civilians. After carrying out a massive protest the demonstrators made an agreement with the opposition in parliament to convey and finalize their demands against the Thai Government, and if these demands were not met, the activist representatives said they would again hold a large-scale demonstration in September (SCMP, 2020). However, on the contrary, the demands and proposals for amendments to change the protesters were not met by the Thai parliament. Thailand's parliament has only granted a non-essential demand for the time being, namely maintaining the previous electoral system, where the voter system provided two ballots, one for candidates and one for political party elections.

Another demand that was also not fulfilled was that the demonstrators wanted to reduce the power of the Senate in conducting the election of the Prime Minister. The decision is seen as helping to keep PM Prayut in his position as head of government (Thanthong-Knight, 2021). In addition, the Thai government responded with repressive actions against the demonstrators, and the leaders of the movement were arrested for inciting and defaming the Thai government. The Thai government used le majeste law to carry out these repressive measures. Tyrell Haberkorn a Professor from the University of Wisconsin-Madison said that "The repressive response from the state indicates the fear of those who hold power. The sophistication and steadfastness of response by activists indicate that they're not swayed by this fear" (Thanthong-Knight, 2021).

International support also came for Thailand, the activists took advantage of social media with the Milk Tea Alliance hashtag which later developed into a very strong alliance and with this, made the digital activity a social movement that had the same impact on the public without violence. As the pro-democracy movement in Thailand gained momentum, protesters in Thailand mobilized the Milk Tea Alliance hashtag on Twitter to amplify its demands, goals, and influence on Thai society. This resulted in a huge wave of support from international activists, foreign media, and human rights organizations (Thomas et al., 2020). There is no evidence to suggest that there is any involvement of international actors on the ground. But at least diverse voices of support from global leaders, international activists, and social media platforms have joined online to build information, discussion, narrative, and opinion around the Milk Tea Alliance movement in Thailand. English hashtags such as #WhatIsHappeningInThailand, #PrayForThailand, and #RespectThaiDemocracy are used by pro-democracy activists to increase international visibility (Thomas et al., 2020).

In Myanmar, Myanmar became the last country to join the #MilkTeaAlliance, the movement became the axis of the demonstrators to convey their demands. They demand to reject the coup and demand the immediate release of elected leader Auu San Suu Kyi. The coup that occurred in Myanmar was caused by the crushing defeat of Senior Military General Min Aung Hlaing against his opponent National League Democracy (NLD) party leader Auu San Suu Kyi in the previous general election. They asked for a re-vote because it was considered that the election was fraudulent (The Guardian, 2021a). The coup that took place in February 2021 threatened the democratic life that had been carried out in the country.

The elected party (NLD) has become much talked about because it is considered better for leading Myanmar during the 2015-2020 period through Prime Minister Auu San Suu Kyi. In the early period, Myanmar was undergoing a post-resurrection phase through a military-led state system. With the coup, Myanmar automatically experienced a democratic setback. The coup action received a lot of attention and condemnation from international organizations, NGOs, states, and state leaders. Activists from other countries are also increasingly increasing their demands by demonstrating or fighting online through #MilkTeaAlliance (Ibnu Sani, 2021). One of the top US officials, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, said "The military must reverse these actions immediately," while Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, a longtime supporter of Aung San Suu Kyi, called on the Biden government to respond firmly to the coup in Myanmar (Kipgen, 2021). This support can be a moral injection for pro-democracy supporters. The attitude of support from Myanmar politicians, Kyaw Moe Tun, Myanmar's envoy to the United Nations, did a 3 finger salute, after making his last speech at the United Nations he made the same gesture used by the demonstrators as a way of respecting the situation in his country which in the end he was dismissed by the Junta military on February 27 (Lee, 2021). His speech at the United Nations tried to invite him to see the condition of his country so that other countries can try to help overcome the situation facing Myanmar. This is a symbol of solidarity and a form of success for activists to influence important actors in a country.

Alliances and social movement communities are important factors in the resistance movement in Myanmar, one of which can prevent the country from being in a state of isolation. The demonstrators also urged ASEAN to act against the coup in Myanmar (Jacinto, 2021). Milk Tea

Alliance is of the view that ASEAN can mediate the conflict in Myanmar. However, ASEAN has a principle of not interfering in the domestic affairs of other ASEAN member countries (non-interference) (Molthof, 2012). A year later, ASEAN just held a meeting in Jakarta on April 24, 2021, in which ASEAN produced a 5-point 'consensus plan' which was also only a recommendation and was unable to change the conditions of the coup carried out in Myanmar (ASEAN Secretariat, 2021). In addition, during the preparation and meeting the opposition parties were not consulted, giving the impression that ASEAN gave legitimacy to the Junta. From the start, the opposition in Myanmar favored the real movement by the Milk Tea Alliance over ASEAN which was considered in the consensus more favorable to the Junta (Oxford Analytica, 2021).

Conclusion

Essentially, the emergence of the Milk Tea Alliance as a social movement in Thailand and Myanmar has some causal factors. The factors themselves could be divided into two types, namely the demonstration effect and event-based causes. The demonstration effect indicates that what caused Milk Tea Alliance to emerge in Thailand and Myanmar is the presence and influence of the movement itself which has existed in Hong Kong and Taiwan so that in other words, the Milk Tea Alliance in Hong Kong and Taiwan inspired the rise of themselves in Southeast Asia settings, especially Thailand and Myanmar. Meanwhile, the event-based causes represent a specific occasion that preceded the emergence of the Milk Tea Alliance in Thailand which was caused by the demand for royal reform or democratization of the Thai government, and Myanmar which was caused by the coup d'état committed by the military junta. Understanding the emergence of the Milk Tea Alliance in Thailand and Myanmar then provides a good foundation to analyze how they operate in those two countries as explained in the results and analysis of this research.

The results found in this research above imply that the practice of digital advocacy in ASEAN has gained its prevalence as proven by the case study of this research. Even more, the practice of digital advocacy in this region shows its more advanced forms as it is done in a transnational advocacy network scheme. That said, Milk Tea Alliance utilizes the transnational advocacy network digitally to spread its influence through means like social media hashtags to assert its political presence and deliver its political influence on the problematic government. These facts show that transnational digital advocacy in ASEAN isn't less advanced than the ones that originated from Western countries like the #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo Movement. Milk Tea Alliance has served as proof that the digital civilization in ASEAN has developed a sophisticated culture in a form of a transnational digital advocacy network.

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