



Scholar-Activists And The Campus Workers Union Movement In Indonesia: A Media Review

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Abstract. Today's social movements cannot be separated from the role of technology, including social media. The impetus to form a social movement by the academic community in combating the subordination of academic power and the neoliberalization of education in Indonesia. A number of lecturers who then had a critical view of this policy then consolidated themselves to be involved in the movement and organized themselves in a union, namely the Campus Workers Union or what is called SPK. The expansion of this movement cannot be separated from the role of technology, namely social media. Today, social media plays a significant role in social movements. Social media helps social movements in terms of building social networks, promoting social movements, and also mobilizing real-world participation. This article then intends to discuss Donna Haraway's philosophical thoughts on the cyborg practices that exist in the SPK movement. The cyborg perspective is then brought together with three media concepts that are closely related to social movements, namely media practices, mediation, and mediatization, as initiated by Alice Mattoni and Emiliano Treré. This article proposes the application of Donna Haraway's cyborg philosophical thinking to the practical implications of using social media as manifested in the life cycle of the SPK movement. The practical implications, for example, relate to explaining how the temporal character of the movement, the role of actors, and the dynamics that make the movement progressive and do not rule out the opposite, so that it needs to be anticipated.

Keywords: *scholar activist, cyborg, media practice, mediation, mediatization*

1 Introduction

Studies on the role and agency of academics in Indonesia have not been widely published. One phenomenal work that explains the role and position of academics in Indonesia is entitled "Intellectuals and power in the New Order state". Explained in the book, the role of the position of intellectuals cannot be separated from the setting of relations with the style of power that works in each historical period. [1] work in the setting of the New Order period at that time explained the role and position of academics who had a role to build the interests of the government regime at that time, namely development with a technocratic character. After that, there is a work that continues Dhakidae's thesis on the role of intellectuals in the realm of power, namely a study entitled "The vortex of power: Intellectuals and politics in Indonesia's post-authoritarian era" [2]. The work

addresses the role of intellectuals in Indonesia in a post-authoritarian setting when good-governance regimes and institutional democracy are becoming the mecca of political development. Furthermore, the construction of the role and position of intellectuals with campuses or universities as a background that dynamizes the life cycle of academics in actualizing their role or dharma, namely the work of [3]. Fridiyanto provides a comprehensive study of the position of academics as intellectuals in Indonesia, starting from placing them within the scope of the operation of power relations and capitalism, to the influence of new institutionalism which has become the mainstream and ideology of college / university governance.

Until today's development, higher education as a place where the seeds of thinkers, intellectuals, and professionals with various types and flows of scientific thought that continue to change and develop experience the ups and downs of governance paradigm changes [4]. Neoliberalization of higher education and institutional restructuring which today is the paradigm of higher education governance [5] has brought various consequences, one of which is the issue of the welfare of lecturers and other campus workers who are not only seen as a supporting system, but also an important part in building higher education not only as the growth of science but also human character [6]. Actually, the issue of welfare is an excess of the problem of academic freedom, there is a trend of the government withdrawing education funding for political reasons and it is increasingly difficult for akademisi to maintain permanent employment [7]. This context is the background for the formation of the Campus Workers Union (SPK) in Indonesia on August 17, 2023.

The echo of the discourse that academics are workers and must be unionized was further crystallized when the Government promulgated the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No. 1 of 2023 concerning Functional Positions stipulated on January 6, 2023 and promulgated on January 12, 2023. This new regulation overhauled many rules regarding functional positions that impacted not only the welfare of lecturers but also the intertwined power relations that then put academic freedom at stake. After the promulgation of the regulation, the Directorate General of Higher Education conducted a socialization of the completion of Credit Score Assessment (PAK) for lecturers throughout Indonesia, this is a consequence of transforming to a new policy, namely the PAK system for lecturer functional positions. After the socialization and the field of Human Resources (HR) or Campus Personnel asked the lecturers to complete the PAK recognition, a wave of responses, criticisms and demands were addressed to the new policy. Various expressions and aspirations voiced protests and criticisms of the new policy. against Permenpan RB No.1 of 2023, ranging from writing statuses on social media, making opinion pieces in the mass media, to mobilizing public support through online petitions.



Figure 1. One of the posts responding to the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation No.1 of 2023 on social media Twitter (X)

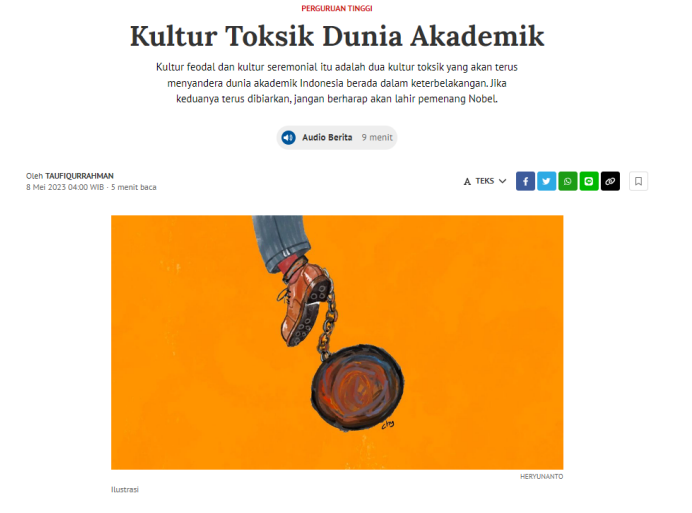
Source: (<https://twitter.com/BurhanMuhtadi/status/1644931204821692422>, accessed on 3 September 2023)

Figure 2. A fragment of the Change.org online petition to cancel the April 15, 2023 Credit Score Recognition (PAK) deadline.



Source: (<https://www.change.org/p/mendikbud-batalkan-deadline-15-april-yang-mematikan-karir-dosen>, accessed on 3 September 2023)

Figure 3. Opinion in mass media about "The toxic culture of the academic world"



Source: Opinion in Kompas Daily on May 8, 2023 written by Taufiqurrahman) (<https://www.kompas.id/baca/opini/2023/05/07/kultur-toksik-dunia-akademik>, accessed on 8 Mei 2023)

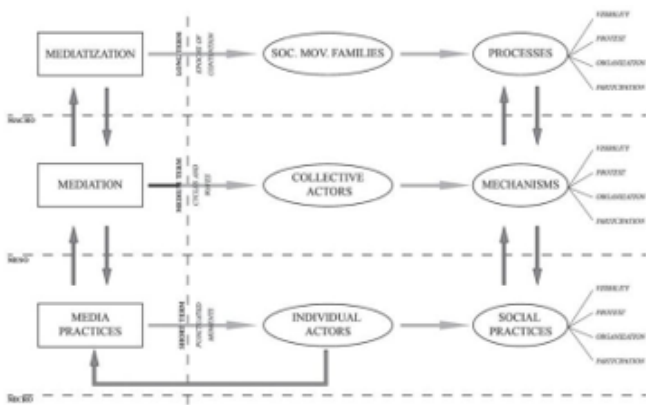
The emergence of various media practice activities above that pivot on individual initiatives then initiate collective activities that open space for discussion. Various institutions then organized public discussions, such as those held and DPP FISIPOL UGM with the title "Senjakala Fate of Lecturers in Indonesia? Review of MenpanRB Policy related to Lecturer Career Ladder"; Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom (KIKA) with the title "KIKA Press Conference on PermenPAN-RB No. 1 Year 2023"; and The Conversation Indonesia with the theme "High burden of lack of appreciation: should lecturers unionize?".

This study uses Donna Haraway's philosophical perspective on the concept of cyborg. In the concept of cyborg, Donna Haraway explains that today, along with the development of technology, there is a complex relationship between humans and technology (8). Haraway's thinking brings the idea of post-humanism. Post-humanism is the view that viewing humans as humans themselves is no longer relevant. This is because humanism has transformed into post-humanism. There are three characteristics of post-humanism, namely first, criticizing anthropocentrism, humans as a standard as the center of influence. Second, humans do not have full rights over the universe. Third, humans are fallible and have limitations on their rationality. In this context, the concept of cultural post humanism develops, which explains new habits or new norms that change the view of humans and humanity that changes as characterized in the idea of post humanism. In the

next stage, this idea will reach the philosophical dimension, namely the philosophy of post-humanism which provides ethical and aesthetic standards. However, what needs to be understood from the idea of post-humanism is that the human condition has changed, so a new explanation of humans is needed. This changed condition then has consequences for determining the Haraway's cyborg idea is used to observe the relationship between scholar-activists and technology [9], in this case new media that has been used, mediating communication, and can even become subjects, active entities in the movement.

The second concept that provides context for the relationship between people and social media technology, as mentioned earlier, is the media studies framework proposed by [10]. In this framework, they explain the important role of social media in social movements. Three levels of media analysis are identified, and the optimization of quality is considered to have a significant impact on the sustainability of social movements. First, media practices, this refers to the actual actions taken by scholar-activists in using social media for the benefit of the movement. Second, mediation, this includes the mediation of social media in connecting fellow scholar-activists and audiences, as well as conveying movement messages. In this part, analyzing the capabilities of social media platforms becomes meaningful to understand how the movement's messages are conveyed. Third, mediatization, in the next flow, the mechanism of working social media actually affects the process of thinking, acting, and perspective in social movements. The workings of this media logic or mechanism then affect the way scholar-activists spread ideas about the movement, change public opinion, and influence social change.

Figure 4. Conceptual Framework of Media Analysis in Social Movements



Source: (10)

The relevance of the idea of the cyborg that explains the state of post-humanism can be

witnessed in the three levels of media studies analysis above, the higher up, namely the macro level or mediatization, human dependence on technology or media is getting stronger. What is organic, namely human capacity, and what is artificial, in this case technology, has merged into one. This article then adapts Haraway's further thoughts on post-feminism, according to which the presence of technology has affected the representation and experience of women. With technology women can be more empowered like men, so that the binary separation between men and women is no longer relevant. Haraway then suggests that traditional concepts of body, identity, and gender are not disrupted along with the presence and use of technology that has changed previous conditions. This way of thinking then has relevance and can be adapted to see the phenomenon of scholar-activism which has been powerless with the neoliberalism system of education, administrative demands, publication demands. Conditions then lead to a climate of competition rather than collaboration. Encouraging individuals to behave individually with their respective identities because they are separated in the spaces of various functional positions of lecturers, besides being egocentric rather than building collectivity and improving conditions systematically. These barriers began to be broken down by the SPK movement. Academics from various universities, from various classes of functional positions, from various disciplines then collectivized themselves with one goal of demanding the right to academic freedom and their welfare as professionals who must be fairly valued. Thus, Haraway's idea of post-humanism in this case can give meaning to technology as a tool for empowerment.

2 Methodology

The way to approach the phenomenon of the SPK movement is through a case study approach, namely by in-depth analysis of specific things or cases that occur in the SPK movement. Researchers examined the relationships and interactions of scholar-activists on social media and their communication behavior in driving the movement. Data collection is achieved through observation of media content, be it visual, audio, or writing produced by movement actors. Furthermore, in the context of philosophical thinking, case studies are used to show how philosophical concepts are manifested in real contexts.

3 Result and Discussion

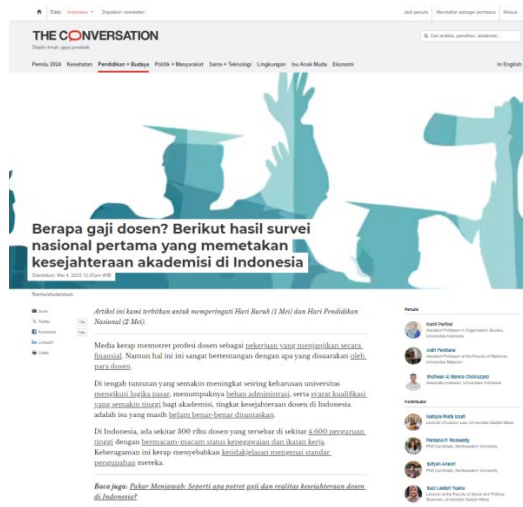
Each level of media analysis affects how much actors play a role and how dependent they are on the communication system shaped by social media logic. In this section, we will discuss each of these levels one by one.

3.1 Media Practices

This level emphasizes the role of individual actors in playing social roles, along with media practices, simply regarding the interaction between social practices and media practices. The

configuration in this interaction is that the media as objects and messages, while individuals produce messages regularly. Thus, when referring to the media as an object, the technology has helped actors engage in the movement. Meanwhile, when referring to individuals involved in the media, the emphasis is not only as recipients of messages, but also on the activeness of individuals in producing messages, both voluntarily and professionally. This effort is not only done through mass media with a high level of credibility by producing professional messages, but also producing messages on social media voluntarily.

Figure 5. Media Publications on Research on Lecturer Salaries in Indonesia by Scholar-Activist SPK Movement



Source: <https://theconversation.com/berapa-gaji-dosen-berikut-hasil-survei-nasional-pertama-yang-memetakan-kesejahteraan-akademisi-di-indonesia-203854> (accessed on 2 Mei 2023)

Figure 6: Social Media Practices of the Scholar-Activist SPK Movement Informing Research on Lecturer Salaries in Indonesia on Social Media Twitter "X"



Source: <https://twitter.com/nabylarisfa/status/1654003273811255297> (accessed on 4 Mei 2023)

Media practices are shown by movement actors in building advocacy messages. They carry out movements through the mass media (see Figure 5) as a channel to disseminate the movements carried out, for example publishing the results of advocacy research. Publicizing the results of advocacy research into the mass media is a communication pattern that they identify with. For example, research conducted by academics from the University of Indonesia is one of the actors in the SPK movement. This research examines the welfare level of lecturers in Indonesia, and is the first research to map the welfare of lecturers. Information about advocacy research is then amplified on social media by academics, to build solidarity and collective knowledge (see figure 6).

3.2. Mediation Process

Mediation processes are practices of media influence in which the media support the social processes of movements. The media plays a role in supporting conversations, creating meaning, and interpreting movement messages into society. This mediation process explains activist media practices, encouraging the flow of media production, circulation, interpretation, recirculation, which then makes a social movement continue to exist. Here we see the importance of the role of media and social movements. In this mediation process, the agency of movement actors becomes apparent. From here there is actually a circular process and double exchange of meaning, between the agency of movement actors and also and the process of receiving messages through the media. In addition, media in social movements has an important meaning in social practice. Through the media, movement messages are communicated. Media becomes an important infrastructure because it exists in various arenas, whether social, cultural, political, and economic, which then means for the

From the nature of the mediation process that is rooted in the logic of social media, it does not stop at the process of message transmission, namely producing messages and using messages, but goes beyond that, such as the reconfiguration of media technology and the remediation of media

meaning. These two things make emancipation in the movement become realized. The moral message of the SPK movement actualized by academics from various campuses has transcended the boundaries of identity. There are various media activities carried out such as writing opinions in the comments column, sharing information on social media, and creating various public discussions that are held hybridly.

In this sense, the post-humanist view is relevant because it also challenges traditional views of human identity, including class identity, scholarship, and stratification in academia. Even more recently, the movement's issues do not only focus on lecturers, solidarity extends to other subjects working on campus, such as education staff, teaching assistants, research assistants, security personnel, cleaning staff, and even professors-the highest academic positions, This approach creates space for diverse experiences, perspectives, and needs among campus members. Thus, post humanism is clearly actualized in social movements, in the use of technology, social media, which is utilized in social movements. Thus, technology as an integral part of human identity and action, this then changes the way social movements operate which is referred to as sub-activism [11] or digital activism [12].

Figure 7. SPK Collaboration with Various Social Movements from other academic communities

Source: Taken from various sources (2023)



Figure 8. SPK Solidarity and Campus Workers' Multiple Identities



Source: Taken from various sources (2023)

This mediation role then did not stop at the process of movement discourse, but also succeeded in creating networking nodes and then creating real action. The SPK movement has created dialogue and collaboration with various movements that are both fighting for the issue of academic freedom. In this context, the problematization of issues raised by the SPK movement has attracted, embedded, and been able to mobilize social movements based on issues of concern to intellectuals. Then, in this case, it becomes a potential for strengthening solidarity among academics to respond to broader and stronger social issues in the community, which will be part of the next explanation, namely the level of the mediatization process.

3.3. Mediatization Process

The explanation of the mediatization process is an important part of the logic of the media, as explained by those who are oriented towards the tradition of institutionalism, that various social fields or systems adapt to the way the media works [13]. More explicitly, that the growth of media influence is a determinant for the development of modes of interaction that occur in various social and cultural institutions [14]. Mediatization only focuses on the context of powerful media influence in changing social and cultural institutions. In this case, change is about a process that implies the need for time. To discuss mediatization is to discuss the long-term process of a movement. In the case study of the SPK movement that was born recently, this article has not been able to do a deep

analysis. However, some projections can be made. First, observations on discursive structures, media use, media organization and organizational development in social movements. Secondly, temporal and spatial interference, such as whether the narrative power of the movement can survive and develop over time, and maintain its public value in society. In this case, it is very much related to the movement's media strategy, adapting over time. As for spatial issues, this relates to whether the movement's issues are still relevant in the context of having an impact, both locally, nationally and globally. However, when looking at the downward trend of democracy at the global level, neoliberalization of education, and welfare issues, the SPK movement that moves the political contestation of resistance to the hegemony of this unjust system will continue to go hand in hand with (social) media liberalization.

4 Conclusion

The Campus Workers Union (SPK) movement is an inspiring initiative of the academic community because it fights for an emancipatory spirit amidst the invasion of neoliberalization practices in the world of education and repression of academic freedom. The movement found its momentum and managed to consolidate itself into a union. Although in its development, this union experienced difficulties in obtaining legality from the government, on the grounds that the members of the union were civil servants (PNS) [15]. Nevertheless, in the midst of the crisis, the academic community was able to build solidarity and consolidate civil society. The practice of this movement describes what Donna Haraway refers to as the post-humanist perspective. There is a complex relationship between humans and technology (media). So far, the SPK movement has made extensive use of the media to mobilize the movement. By using the media analysis framework, namely media practices, mediation processes, and mediatization processes, the factors between humans and technology are intertwined. On the one hand, movement actors can use the media to mobilize the movement, but on the other hand the operation of media logic, the media becomes more powerful. This condition can affect the success of the movement, so the suggestion that can be offered is to continue to study the dynamics of media and communication, and how the process of human transformation through technology remains oriented towards emancipatory efforts and how inclusivity, cooperation, and technology can be key elements in successful social change.

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