CONTESTING PATRIARCHY ONLINE: RETHINKING FEMINIST DIGITAL ACTIVISM UNDER SURVEILLANCE IN INDONESIAN CONTEXT

Rizky Bangun Wibisono[1], Aldisa Qurrota Ayunina[2], Naswa Annyce Nurhaliza[3] and Mauidhotul Hasanah[4]

[1]School of Social and Political Science, University of Glasgow, United Kingdom. [2,3,4]Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia.
rbangunwibisono@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Feminist digital activism has become increasingly vital in confronting gendered repression in online spaces, especially in Indonesia, where state regulation, corporate platform control, and patriarchal norms converge. While prior research has addressed surveillance, algorithmic bias, and legal repression under laws like the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE), less is known about how feminist movements in the Global South collectively resist these forces. This study fills that gap through a qualitative-interpretive approach grounded in critical feminist theory and Nancy Fraser's justice framework—redistribution, recognition, and representation. Drawing on secondary sources including activist publications, academic works, and legal documents, the paper analyzes how Indonesian feminist actors navigate digital criminalization, SLAPP (Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation), and algorithmic exclusion. Findings show that feminist digital activism is not merely reactive but proactive, with strategies ranging from gender-aware digital literacy and legal reform advocacy to transnational solidarity and the development of community-run digital infrastructures. These actions reframe online feminist activism as structural resistance rooted in democratic participation. While limited by the absence of primary ethnographic data, this research offers a critical Global South feminist lens on digital justice and underscores the importance of collective agency in building inclusive and gender-just digital futures.

Keywords: Digital activism, feminism, online surveillance, UU ITE, SLAPP.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the landscape of feminist movements worldwide, offering unprecedented opportunities for women to voice their rights and challenge entrenched gender inequalities. Digital platforms such as social media, blogs, and websites have become vital tools in disseminating information on gender issues and social injustice (Mauliansyah, 2016). Digital feminist activism has opened new pathways for marginalized groups to share their experiences and advocate for their rights on a global scale (Wibisono and Fikri, 2024). This development has significantly altered the dynamics of feminist movements that were previously constrained by geographical boundaries and limited access to information.

As Shirky (2011) posits, social media accelerates the processes of communication and organization within social movements. The digital sphere fosters new channels for building solidarity and mobilizing individuals in real-time. Movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp exemplify the power of social media to bring attention to issues long silenced in public discourse, such as sexual violence and harassment. These campaigns underscore the vital role of digital platforms in amplifying the voices of women who previously lacked the means or confidence to publicly share their experiences (Shirky, 2011). As women around the world joined in solidarity, these movements forged powerful transnational networks that bolstered feminist agency and collective identity.

Digital feminist activism also democratizes participation in social change. Activists can now organize online petitions and virtual demonstrations, extending their reach far beyond traditional methods. Public awareness of gender inequality can be raised through inclusive and accessible online campaigns that engage individuals, communities, and institutions alike (Wibisono, 2023). Moreover, digital spaces allow women to shape collective identities within larger social movements and assume more active roles in reshaping unjust social and political structures.

Despite these transformative potentials, digital feminist activism faces increasing challenges under the regime of surveillance capitalism. One of the foremost threats is online surveillance. Technologies used to monitor digital activity—whether by state actors or anti-feminist groups—pose serious risks to freedom of expression. Zuboff (2019) argues that tech corporations collect and exploit user data for various interests. This data collection can be weaponized to suppress feminist voices, intimidate activists, and manipulate public discourse (Zuboff, 2019). The implications are particularly severe for women activists who are often subjected to digital repression due to their visibility in advocating for gender justice.

Social media algorithms further exacerbate these challenges by limiting the reach of feminist content. Noble (2018), reveals how search engines and digital platforms often encode biases that marginalize specific groups, including women. Feminist narratives are more likely to be filtered out or buried beneath dominant discourses that favor majority perspectives (Noble, 2018). Such algorithmic discrimination impedes the visibility and growth of feminist movements, reinforcing existing inequalities in digital representation.

Digital security threats such as doxing, hacking, and online harassment also place a heavy burden on feminist activists. Vocal critics of social injustice frequently become targets of intimidation, undermining their credibility and stalling the momentum of feminist organizing (Amnesty International, 2022). These hostile digital environments deter participation and contribute to activist burnout. The fear of privacy violations and reputational harm often discourages women from engaging further in digital activism, thereby diminishing the overall efficacy and appeal of the movement.

In response, digital literacy becomes essential. Activists must be equipped with the knowledge to safeguard their digital identities and navigate threats in cyberspace.

Enhanced digital literacy enables activists to understand encryption, avoid cyberattacks, and secure personal data (Wibisono and Fikri, 2024). The development of such capacities is key to sustaining the digital feminist movement amid increasing digital hostility.

Utilizing alternative and safer platforms offers another strategy for countering surveillance and cyberthreats. Feminist activists are encouraged to migrate toward platforms that prioritize user privacy and resist regulatory censorship (Bangun and Fikri, 2024). In some instances, activists employ end-to-end encrypted communication tools to maintain the confidentiality of their discussions. These decentralised tools and platforms provide greater autonomy and protection against digital repression (Bangun and Fikri, 2024). As traditional digital spaces become increasingly regulated and surveilled, feminist movements must innovate to protect their communities and preserve open discourse.

Furthermore, collaboration between feminist movements and human rights organizations strengthens legal protection for women activists. Support from both international and domestic institutions reinforces the defense of free expression and women's rights in the digital public sphere (Norman and Beckman, 2024). In facing restrictive government policies, such as internet shutdowns or online censorship laws, these alliances provide legal recourse and international pressure to safeguard activists from state-sanctioned repression.

It is thus imperative that governments develop policies that uphold freedom of expression in digital spaces. State actors must enact regulations that protect individuals' rights to participate in social discourse without fear of surveillance or persecution. These policies should create safe and inclusive digital environments where feminist voices can thrive. Governments must ensure that digital governance frameworks do not curtail the space for feminist activism, but rather support its role in driving broader social transformation.

In Indonesia, the development of digital feminist activism contends with significant legal and regulatory obstacles. Chief among these is the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), which has been widely criticized for its vague provisions that enable the criminalization of dissent (SAFEnet, 2022). Cases such as that of Baiq Nuril illustrate how digital laws can be used to silence victims of gender-based violence who seek justice through public discourse (Hellen, 2020). Such practices align with the pattern of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP), which are strategically deployed to intimidate and suppress critical voices (ELSAM, 2023). Therefore, reforms in digital surveillance and legal protections for feminist activism in Indonesia are urgently needed from a human rights policy perspective.

While much has been written about the empowering potentials of digital feminist activism, existing research often underplays the structural barriers posed by surveillance technologies, algorithmic bias, and legal constraints—particularly in the Global South

(Wang et al., 2024). There is a paucity of research that examines how these intersecting challenges shape feminist resistance in countries like Indonesia, where legal ambiguities and patriarchal digital infrastructures complicate the fight for gender justice. Furthermore, studies that bridge the macro-political implications of digital surveillance with the micro-level experiences of women activists remain limited.

In this context, Indonesia's *Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE)* and the growing use of *Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP)* emerge not merely as legal instruments, but as powerful tools of repression that threaten to curtail the digital feminist movement. These mechanisms, under the guise of legal order and public decency, have in many cases been weaponized to silence dissent, suppress victims of gender-based violence, and erode the hard-won digital spaces for women's voices. As digital activism increasingly becomes the frontline of feminist struggle in Indonesia, these legal threats serve as both a warning and a call to action. This article therefore aims to critically examine how *UU ITE* and SLAPP are systematically deployed to shrink the civic space for feminist digital activism, while also highlighting the strategies of resistance that activists employ to reclaim, protect, and expand their rights in the digital sphere. Only through such a critique can we begin to reimagine a more just and inclusive digital future for all.

This study seeks to examine the dual nature of digital technology as both an enabler and a suppressor of feminist activism. It aims to highlight how Indonesian feminist activists navigate the contradictions of digital empowerment and repression. By exploring case studies and drawing upon feminist digital theory, surveillance capitalism critique, and algorithmic justice frameworks, this research aspires to contribute to the development of more resilient and inclusive digital activism strategies. Ultimately, it aims to promote policy interventions that protect the rights and voices of women activists in the digital age.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach and employs a literature review method to analyze the dynamics of digital activism within the broader feminist movement. The use of literature review is deemed appropriate as it allows for a comprehensive examination of academic references, peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and institutional reports that engage with themes such as digital activism, online surveillance, and the role of technology in advocating for women's rights.

Through this method, the study systematically gathers and interprets relevant literature to uncover how digital technologies have reshaped feminist advocacy, while also investigating the socio-political constraints imposed by state surveillance and regulatory frameworks. Moreover, the literature-based approach provides a means to explore various strategies employed by feminist activists to resist digital repression and to build digital resilience amidst increasing threats.

By synthesizing a wide range of interdisciplinary sources, this research offers a broader perspective on how technological advancement intersects with feminist struggles, particularly in relation to policy-making and the legal environment that governs digital civic space. The findings of this study are expected to contribute meaningfully to the academic discourse on the role of technology in contemporary social movements, with a specific focus on the pursuit of gender justice in the digital age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of digital technology has significantly transformed the landscape of feminist advocacy, presenting both opportunities and constraints for women's rights activism. Rather than functioning solely as a liberatory space, the digital realm serves as a contested terrain where power is continuously negotiated. Recent scholarship emphasizes that while digital platforms allow for greater articulation of feminist demands, they also reinforce existing social hierarchies (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

One of the most pressing challenges within feminist digital activism lies in the intersection between technology and capitalist interests. Zuboff (2019) identifies this phenomenon as "surveillance capitalism," where user data is commodified by tech corporations for profit and political influence. In this framework, digital platforms—initially hailed as democratizing forces—have increasingly become tools of surveillance and discipline, particularly against women who challenge dominant power structures.

This concern is further exacerbated by the algorithmic biases embedded within search engines and social media platforms. Noble (2018), in her seminal work *Algorithms of Oppression*, demonstrates how algorithms systematically marginalize feminist content, thus undermining the visibility and reach of feminist campaigns. Algorithmic discrimination not only distorts information flows but also replicates racial and gender-based exclusions, ultimately compromising the efficacy of digital mobilization.

Digital repression is not limited to corporate surveillance. State actors also employ technological tools to monitor, discredit, and criminalize feminist activism. In the Indonesian context, the implementation of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) has become a salient mechanism of digital censorship. Articles within the law, particularly those concerning defamation and the dissemination of negative content, are often used to silence critical expression on social media—including those voiced by women activists (SAFEnet, 2022).

These repressive legal measures intersect with what is known in legal scholarship as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). Rather than seeking legal redress, SLAPP suits are deployed to exhaust the resources—emotional, financial, and legal—of activists and critics. In feminist digital movements, this strategy serves to delegitimize women's resistance while reinforcing patriarchal control over digital spaces (ELSAM, 2023; Citron, 2014).

Furthermore, the expansion of state surveillance, coupled with algorithmic censorship, poses a profound threat to feminist solidarity-building across borders. Although earlier research highlights how digital campaigns have catalyzed transnational feminist consciousness (Mehan, 2024; Matthews, 2022), there is growing evidence that surveillance infrastructures disproportionately target women and marginalized groups. These conditions not only diminish feminist visibility online but also limit the formation of safe and inclusive networks essential for sustaining digital activism.

In semi-authoritarian and legally underdeveloped democracies like Indonesia, the combination of techno-surveillance and vague regulatory frameworks intensifies the precarity of feminist digital movements. Unjust regulatory environments foster disillusionment among vulnerable groups and exacerbate social distrust in democratic institutions (Kingston et al., 2021). This is compounded by the normalization of punitive legal instruments that undermine feminist agency in cyberspace.

Responding to these challenges, feminist scholars and activists have advocated for strategic digital resistance—developing alternative platforms, encrypting communication channels, and engaging in digital security training. Nonetheless, these efforts require systemic support. International human rights organizations and non-governmental institutions play a vital role in offering legal protection, amplifying feminist voices, and resisting the encroachment of digital authoritarianism. As Tufekci (2017) suggests, digital movements must evolve beyond technological optimism and develop a nuanced understanding of the infrastructural and political conditions shaping online activism.

By synthesizing these scholarly insights, it becomes evident that digital technology functions as both a tool of empowerment and a mechanism of repression. The future of feminist activism thus depends on the ability to navigate these dualities—leveraging digital spaces for emancipatory purposes while resisting the structural forces that seek to constrain them.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Digital Feminist Activism: Potentials and Vulnerabilities

Digital feminist activism has emerged as a significant force in contemporary social movements, characterized by the use of digital platforms to amplify feminist discourse, build solidarity, and demand structural change. Defined broadly, digital feminist activism refers to the strategic use of digital tools—such as social media, online petitions, blogs, and virtual forums—to challenge gender-based injustice and promote women's rights across geographical and sociocultural boundaries (Ringrose, et al., 2019). It is marked by decentralization, rapid mobilization, intersectionality, and the ability to reach diverse audiences without relying on traditional institutional channels.

The digital sphere has become a critical arena for gender justice, enabling new forms of participation and contestation. Unlike traditional modes of activism that often-

required physical presence and were limited by spatial and social constraints, digital activism facilitates low-barrier engagement (Rentschler, 2014). Through platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, women and gender minorities can engage in storytelling, circulate counter-narratives, and participate in viral campaigns that challenge hegemonic gender norms (Lu, 2023). These forms of digital engagement—ranging from online petitions and viral hashtags to survivor-led storytelling and digital protests—have redefined political participation and collective action within feminist struggles.

One of the most globally influential examples is the #MeToo movement, which gave survivors of sexual violence a platform to share their experiences, challenging the culture of silence and impunity (Mehan, 2024). The virality of #MeToo also showcased the potential of digital platforms to disrupt patriarchal power dynamics by forcing public reckoning and institutional accountability. Similarly, movements such as #TimesUp and #SayHerName has demonstrated how digital spaces can foster solidarity and transnational dialogue among feminists (Matthews, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, digital feminist activism has also gained traction. The @Indonesiatanpafeminis.id campaign exemplifies how online engagement can activate previously disengaged audiences and transform them into agents of social change (Maryani et al., 2021). Likewise, platforms such as the Jakarta Feminist Discussion Group have enabled the formation of collective feminist identities, particularly among urban youth, by providing spaces for information dissemination, dialogue, and mass mobilization (Annisa, 2021; Hermanto, 2022). These local movements mirror global trends, as seen in Algeria, where feminist-led digital campaigns sparked public discourse on women's rights in otherwise conservative societies (Chaif & Finneman, 2024). Similarly, in Kenya and South Africa, digital feminism has been instrumental in confronting femicide and reasserting marginalized voices within dominant socio-political narratives (Okech, 2021).

Despite its transformative potential, digital feminist activism remains vulnerable to systemic and technological challenges. The digital sphere is not a neutral space; it is shaped by algorithms, corporate interests, and surveillance logics that can undermine feminist resistance. As Dixit (2021) notes, algorithmic structures often deprioritize feminist content in favor of sensationalist or commercially profitable material. This algorithmic marginalization constrains the visibility of feminist campaigns and limits their reach.

Moreover, digital platforms—while providing new tools for feminist organizing—are also sites of online gender-based violence (OGBV). Forms of OGBV include trolling, doxing, cyberstalking, hate speech, and the dissemination of non-consensual intimate images. These tactics are often deployed to silence and intimidate women activists, particularly those who speak out against dominant political or cultural norms (Okech, 2021). The architecture of platforms tends to inadequately address such violations, thereby exacerbating the psychological, reputational, and sometimes legal

harms experienced by feminist users. The online environment thus becomes a double-edged sword: a space of both empowerment and risk.

Furthermore, the participatory nature of digital feminism is itself stratified. While social media enables wide engagement, it also reflects and reproduces existing social inequalities—such as the digital divide, linguistic barriers, and unequal access to technology—that can exclude women in rural or marginalized communities. These disparities must be critically addressed in both academic inquiry and activist praxis to avoid reinforcing the very inequities that feminist movements seek to dismantle.

In conclusion, while digital feminist activism opens new frontiers for political participation and transnational solidarity, it also encounters significant structural and technological impediments. A nuanced understanding of both its emancipatory potential and its vulnerabilities is essential for advancing gender justice in the digital age. Recognizing the forms of participation, understanding the risks, and building digital resilience are necessary strategies to ensure that the digital space remains a site of transformative feminist resistance rather than a reproducer of gendered oppression.

Digital Repression through the ITE Law and SLAPP Practices

In the Indonesian context, the repressive use of the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE) against women activists illustrates a clear manifestation of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) in digital spaces (Kavaliauskaitė, 2024). Originally enacted in 2008 and amended in 2016 and 2021, the UU ITE was designed to regulate electronic information and transactions. However, several provisions within the law—particularly Article 27 (on immoral content), Article 28 (on false or misleading information), and Article 45 (penalties)—have frequently been used in ways that infringe upon civil liberties, particularly freedom of expression (SAFEnet, 2022; ELSAM, 2023).

One of the most well-known and troubling cases is that of Baiq Nuril, a schoolteacher who was criminalized for distributing audio recordings of verbal sexual harassment by her superior (BBC Indonesia, 2019). Rather than receiving protection as a victim of gender-based violence, she was charged under Article 27(1) for disseminating "immoral content" (SAFEnet, 2022). This case underscored how digital laws—rather than protecting victims—can be instrumentalized to silence women who speak out against sexual violence. The use of the UU ITE in this case closely aligns with SLAPP mechanisms: the objective is not to seek justice, but to deter public participation by intimidating and penalizing individuals who expose systemic abuse.

Beyond cases involving sexual violence, several women environmental defenders and community activists have also faced legal threats under the guise of defamation or incitement. These lawsuits, often triggered by their criticisms of large-scale development projects via social media or digital campaigns, reveal the chilling effect of SLAPP in curbing legitimate and lawful dissent (ELSAM, 2023). Feminist digital activism thus

faces a dual challenge: legal repression through state-sanctioned laws and algorithmic or symbolic violence online, including trolling, doxing, and harassment.

SLAPP lawsuits are typically characterized by three main features: (1) targeting individuals or groups engaging in public advocacy, (2) aiming to intimidate rather than to resolve legal disputes, and (3) exploiting legal loopholes or broad laws to justify suppression (Kavaliauskaitė, 2024; Okech, 2021; Citron, 2014). In Indonesia, this pattern disproportionately affects women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and feminist activists whose digital activism challenges entrenched patriarchal structures or dominant economic interests. Importantly, these practices are often not isolated actions but rather reflect a systemic entanglement of state power, private corporate interests, and persistent patriarchal values.

The role of state actors is central in operationalizing this repression. Through legal institutions and state apparatuses, the government legitimizes control over digital spaces under the banner of morality, security, or public order. Meanwhile, non-state actors, including private corporations, tech platforms, and reactionary digital mobs, participate in the execution of repression either by facilitating biased algorithmic visibility or by launching coordinated harassment campaigns. As Noble (2018) argues, search engines and digital platforms are not neutral tools—their algorithmic design often reflects existing racial, gendered, and ideological biases.

The digital space, once celebrated as an alternative arena for marginalized voices, is increasingly becoming a contested domain where freedom of expression is constrained by hegemonic forces. For women from rural or underprivileged communities, these challenges are compounded by limited access to digital literacy, legal aid, and protective infrastructures. Consequently, they become the most vulnerable targets of SLAPP and legal intimidation (Citron, 2014; SAFEnet, 2022).

Therefore, feminist digital movements must evolve beyond limited tactical responses such as digital security training or the use of end-to-end encryption. While these tools remain important, they are insufficient in confronting the structural nature of digital repression. What is urgently needed is a more comprehensive and collective strategy of resistance—one that reimagines protection not just as a technical fix, but as a deeply political and communal process. This involves fostering community-based infrastructures that offer legal support and protection to those at risk, advancing gender-sensitive legal reforms aimed at decriminalizing dissent and safeguarding those who speak out, and nurturing transnational networks of digital solidarity that connect women activists across diverse geopolitical contexts. Such a holistic approach recognizes that feminist resistance in the digital age must simultaneously engage with law, technology, and collective organizing to meaningfully challenge patriarchal control and authoritarian governance.

In conclusion, the use of the UU ITE law as an instrument of repression against feminist digital activism demonstrates that legal frameworks, when combined with digital technologies, can become tools of authoritarian control. The growing convergence of

digital authoritarianism and patriarchal legal norms requires a robust, multi-level response from activists, legal scholars, and civil society organizations. The fight for gender justice in the digital age must thus include not only technological empowerment but also legal emancipation and structural reform.

Feminist Resistance and the Contestation of Digital Power in Indonesia

The struggle for feminist agency in Indonesia's digital landscape is marked not only by external repression but also by a deeper, systemic configuration of injustice. Drawing from Nancy Fraser's critical theory of justice, this chapter frames the crisis of feminist digital activism as a multidimensional injustice that manifests in three interrelated forms: maldistribution, misrecognition, and misrepresentation (Fraser, 2007). These dimensions converge in digital spaces to structure disadvantage, undermine participation, and delegitimize feminist politics. Far from being isolated incidents of censorship or surveillance, these injustices constitute a patterned and institutionalized mode of domination in the digital political economy—one that reflects broader global trends while acquiring distinct local articulations.

At the level of distribution, Fraser draws attention to the economic structures that shape access to and control over resources. In Indonesia, digital infrastructures are increasingly privatized, commodified, and integrated into global circuits of capitalist accumulation. Corporate platforms like Meta (formerly Facebook) and X (formerly Twitter) mediate most digital interactions, dictating not only how content is circulated but also whose voices are amplified or erased. Feminist expressions are often deemed "unsafe," "offensive," or "non-monetizable" by algorithmic protocols designed to privilege engagement over justice. As Hansson et al. (2023) show, even globally resonant movements such as #MeToo have struggled to gain visibility due to the algorithmic architecture of platforms that sideline feminist discourses, especially those emerging from the Global South. These exclusions are not just matters of visibility—they reflect deeper economic exclusions whereby feminists are denied equal access to digital attention economies that could otherwise sustain their activism.

Fraser's second dimension, recognition, concerns cultural status and the politics of identity. Feminist movements in digital Indonesia are frequently subjected to misrecognition through algorithmic bias, symbolic violence, and epistemic erasure. Algorithms are not neutral; they reflect and reproduce societal hierarchies, privileging content that conforms to dominant gender norms while penalizing content that challenges patriarchy or heteronormativity (Yang, 2023; Noble, 2018). Women and LGBTQ+ activists often report the removal of content, shadow-banning, or disproportionate moderation, revealing a politics of recognition that devalues their speech and frames it as deviant or subversive. Moreover, this misrecognition is exacerbated by targeted online abuse, including doxing and digital sexual violence, which further delegitimizes feminist presence in public discourse (Citron, 2014; Ringrose et al., 2019).

In terms of representation, Fraser emphasizes the need for equal voice and political inclusion in processes that shape the terms of justice. Yet Indonesian feminists are routinely excluded from decision-making spaces related to digital governance. Policies such as the UU ITE are enacted without consultation with women's rights groups or civil society actors, resulting in legal frameworks that criminalize dissent while protecting patriarchal interests (Fatimah et al., 2025); SAFEnet, 2022). This form of political misrepresentation is compounded by the collusion between the state and digital corporations, where both actors benefit from a regulatory vacuum that permits surveillance and repression under the guise of security.

Fraser's concept of participatory parity—the condition in which all individuals can interact as peers in social life—is especially useful in revealing how digital injustice operates intersectionally. Feminist digital actors in Indonesia do not suffer from a single form of subordination but are simultaneously marginalized economically (through platform monetization structures), culturally (through algorithmic misrecognition), and politically (through exclusion from digital policymaking) (Fraser, 2007). These three dimensions are mutually reinforcing: misrecognition justifies maldistribution, while misrepresentation legitimizes both.

To confront this layered structure of injustice, feminist movements must move beyond technocratic fixes and embrace transformative political strategies. While digital security tools and encrypted platforms (Susanty, 2024) are essential for survival, they cannot substitute for a collective challenge to the structural roots of digital inequality. As Fraser argues, justice requires both affirmative remedies (which correct outcomes within a given framework) and transformative remedies (which challenge the framework itself). In this light, feminist digital activism must fight not only for safer platforms but for alternative infrastructures—feminist digital commons—that are governed democratically, prioritize care and equity, and resist commodification.

Building critical digital literacy among activists is central to this struggle. By understanding how surveillance functions, how data is weaponized, and how content is algorithmically ordered, activists can resist the epistemic dominance of corporate and state actors (Duin & Pedersen, 2024). Yet this knowledge must be shared within broader coalitions that include legal advocates, technologists, journalists, and marginalized communities. Cross-sectoral collaboration can help build what Fraser might call counterpublics—alternative spaces of discourse and action that challenge dominant imaginaries and generate emancipatory politics.

Legal reform, particularly of the UU ITE, remains a non-negotiable demand. The law must be reoriented away from control and toward protection: of expression, of dissent, of feminist knowledge production. As Fraser would argue, genuine representation demands not just inclusion within existing institutions but transformation of those institutions so they no longer reproduce systemic exclusion.

Ultimately, the feminist digital movement in Indonesia must be seen as a struggle for democratic justice in the face of digital authoritarianism and neoliberal patriarchy. It is a struggle not merely for access or safety but for the right to shape the digital future—on feminist terms. By integrating Fraser's multidimensional framework, we see that the path toward a gender-just digital space must confront not only the immediate threats of surveillance and censorship but also the deep political-economic structures that sustain them.

Towards a Gender-Just Digital Space

The struggle for gender justice in digital spaces is not merely about resisting hostile algorithms or enhancing online safety. Rather, it is part of a broader political project—a quest to reclaim digital sovereignty from the overlapping forces of authoritarian states, platform capitalism, and entrenched patriarchal ideologies (Bangun and Fikri, 2024). Achieving a gender-just digital future requires multidimensional strategies that span legal reform, transnational solidarity, and the construction of alternative feminist digital infrastructures rooted in collective values and social justice (Bangun and Fikri, 2024).

Current digital regulations, especially Indonesia's Law on Information and Electronic Transactions (UU ITE), reflect a form of *maldistribution* and *misrecognition* that Nancy Fraser identifies as central dimensions of injustice. This law, instead of protecting the rights of digital citizens—especially women and marginalized activists—has often served as an instrument of control, criminalizing dissent and silencing feminist voices. The resulting climate of fear and self-censorship constrains the possibility of articulating personal experiences of violence or systemic injustice, reinforcing the marginalization of already vulnerable groups.

Legal reform, therefore, cannot be limited to mere cosmetic revisions of problematic articles. A more profound paradigmatic shift is needed—one that reorients digital lawmaking from a logic of surveillance and containment toward a framework centered on protection and participatory justice. Such a framework must include specific legal protections for women activists who are disproportionately targeted by digital gender-based violence, doxxing, and harassment. Legal reform must also be accompanied by institutional commitments to survivor-centered mechanisms, psychosocial support, legal assistance, and comprehensive training for law enforcement to address the complex nature of digital harms from a gender perspective.

Yet legal change alone is insufficient. The experience of global feminist movements demonstrates that solidarity, when enacted across borders, becomes a powerful force for resistance. The #MeToo movement, the fight against feminicide in Latin America, and the digital dissent of Iranian women exemplify the value of transnational feminist learning. These struggles reveal how similar patterns of digital repression—though shaped by differing political regimes—can be collectively challenged

through the exchange of strategies, mutual support, and the construction of shared feminist vocabularies.

Transnational feminist solidarity must move beyond symbolic alignment and extend toward the creation of practical collaborations—co-developing digital safety protocols, sharing encrypted communication tools, and building global pressure against platform corporations like Meta (formerly Facebook) and X (formerly Twitter), whose algorithmic and content moderation policies often reproduce gendered injustice. This form of solidarity also functions as a counter-hegemonic force, challenging the monopolization of digital infrastructure and redefining whose voices matter in global discourse.

At the heart of this movement lies a critical question: *Who owns digital space?* As long as digital infrastructures are controlled by profit-driven corporate entities whose business model depends on data extraction and attention economies, digital space will never be neutral. It will always be structured by the imperatives of surveillance capitalism and shaped by logics that reinforce existing hierarchies of race, gender, and class (Bangun and Fikri, 2024).

Consequently, the construction of feminist digital infrastructures becomes imperative. These are not merely safer alternatives to existing platforms but represent a radically different vision of the internet—one that centers care, consent, community, and autonomy (Wibisono and Fikri, 2024). Such infrastructures involve community-owned platforms that respect user privacy, resist commodification, and allow for unfettered political expression. They include resilient networks for rapid information sharing, emergency response coordination, and long-term organizing, especially among feminist collectives in repressive regimes. They also require sustainable resourcing to support digital literacy programs, research, and capacity-building tailored to the needs of marginalized groups.

Fraser's framework reminds us that justice involves not only the fair distribution of resources (*redistribution*) and the recognition of cultural identities (*recognition*), but also the ability to participate in decisions that shape one's environment (*representation*). Applying this tri-dimensional justice lens to digital space makes it clear that feminist digital justice is not merely about protecting individuals from harm, but about reconstructing the very architecture of participation and power in digital life.

The path toward a gender-just digital space is therefore not a reformist endeavor alone—it is a transformative political project. It calls for courage to reimagine how technology is built, who benefits from it, and how justice can be embedded within its codes and logics. Feminist digital activism must thus be positioned at the forefront of a wider movement to resist the structural inequalities produced by the interlocking regimes of the state, capital, and patriarchy. Combining legal advocacy, transnational organizing, and the development of alternative digital ecosystems is not optional; it is an urgent

necessity to shape a digital future where justice, equality, and dignity are no longer aspirational—but infrastructural.

CONCLUSION

This study has critically explored how feminist digital activism in Indonesia contends with the complex intersection of repressive digital governance, platform capitalism, and patriarchal social structures. The central problem addressed in this research is the increasing difficulty faced by feminist actors in advocating for gender justice online, amid content moderation practices, algorithmic bias, and legal instruments such as the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE) that often criminalize dissent. These challenges are compounded by state-platform entanglements that enable both corporate and government actors to suppress digital expressions, especially those voiced by women, queer individuals, and human rights defenders.

The findings reveal a layered configuration of power in Indonesia's digital space. Firstly, algorithmic control, surveillance mechanisms, and vague legal frameworks operate not as neutral technologies but as tools that reinforce existing gendered hierarchies, silencing feminist discourse and enabling digital violence. Secondly, feminist actors have developed a series of counter-strategies, ranging from digital literacy initiatives and secure communication practices to legal advocacy and cross-sector coalitions involving civil society, technologists, and human rights organizations. These practices highlight the resilience and creativity of feminist movements in constructing alternative infrastructures of safety and resistance. Thirdly, drawing on Nancy Fraser's framework of justice, the analysis demonstrates that feminist digital activism must be understood as a broader struggle for redistribution, recognition, and representation—not only in policy and platform governance, but in the cultural logic and normative values that underlie technological development itself.

The implications of this research suggest that achieving gender justice in digital spaces requires a paradigm shift: from a focus on individual adaptation to collective transformation; from isolated digital safety protocols to inclusive feminist digital ecosystems; and from reactive legal defenses to proactive reconfiguration of the legal and technological infrastructures that govern online expression. Legal reform of the UU ITE is urgent—not only to protect women and marginalized activists from criminalization, but to ensure that digital space remains a site for democratic participation and feminist transformation. Moreover, transnational feminist solidarity plays a vital role in sharing best practices, creating protective networks, and resisting the global dimensions of gendered digital repression.

Nonetheless, this study is not without its limitations. Relying primarily on existing literature and secondary data, it lacks empirical fieldwork that could further illuminate the lived experiences of feminist digital activists across Indonesia's diverse regions and socio-political contexts. A more grounded qualitative approach—through interviews, digital ethnography, or participatory action research—could deepen our understanding of

how feminist resistance is practiced in everyday digital life. Additionally, while Fraser's lens provides a compelling normative guide, future research could integrate indigenous feminist epistemologies to better reflect the pluralities of resistance in Indonesia and beyond.

Moving forward, future work should focus on building, analyzing, and sustaining feminist technological infrastructures—platforms, protocols, and networks rooted in collective care and justice. Research must also interrogate how emerging technologies like AI-driven moderation, biometric surveillance, and predictive policing affect feminist activism, especially in the Global South. It is equally crucial to expand the intersectional scope of digital justice by examining the roles of men, queer, and indigenous communities within broader feminist coalitions to resist shared systems of repression.

In sum, the feminist struggle for a gender-just digital space in Indonesia is not only a reaction to surveillance or repression—it is a radical act of imagination and reconstruction. It challenges the structural inequities embedded in both legal frameworks and digital architectures. It calls for a redistribution of technological power, a recognition of marginalized voices, and a redefinition of who gets to participate in shaping the digital future. This study affirms that feminist digital activism is not only possible in repressive environments—it is indispensable. And as long as injustice persists—online or offline—the resistance will remain fierce, intersectional, and unstoppable.

REFERENCES

Amnesty International. (2022). *Amnesty International Report 2021/2022 THE STATE OF THE WORLD'S HUMAN RIGHTS*. https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/POL1048702022ENGLISH.pdf

Annisa, R. (2021). Digital feminist activism: Analyzing Jakarta Feminist as a collective identity, resources, network, information dissemination, and mobilization. *Jurnal Sosiologi Dialektika*, *16*(2). https://doi.org/10.20473/jsd.v16i2.2021.175-186

Bangun, R., & Fikri, S. (2024). The Role of Generative AI in Shaping Human Rights and Gender Equity: A Critical Analysis. *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies*, *9*(2), 799–834. https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v9i2.13617

BBC Indonesia. (2019, July 5). *PK Baiq Nuril ditolak MA, kuasa hukum "tagih amnesti" ke Presiden Jokowi*. BBC News Indonesia. https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-48878086

Chaif, R. H., & Finneman, T. (2024). "#My Place Isn't in the Kitchen": Examining Feminist Facebook Framing of an Algerian Social Movement. *Social Media + Society*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305124127465

Danielle Keats Citron. (2014). *Hate crimes in cyberspace.* Harvard Univ Press.

Dixit, S. (2021). I Refused to Say #MeToo: Negotiating Between Individual Agency and "Imagined" Platform Constraints. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 097325862098055. https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258620980550

Duin, A. H., & Pedersen, I. (2024). Building digital literacy through exploration and curation of emerging technologies. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Networked Learning*, *12*, 30–37. https://doi.org/10.54337/nlc.v12.8630

ELSAM. (2023). *Catatan hak digital: Ancaman SLAPP terhadap kebebasan berekspresi di Indonesia. Lembaga Studi dan Advokasi Masyarakat.*

Fatimah, S., Widowati, A. R., & Kamil, A. I. (2025). Perempuan, Digitalisasi, dan Kebebasan Berekspresi: Kajian Hukum Tentang Perlindungan Hak Asasi di Ruang Siber. *ENTITA: Jurnal Pendidikan Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, *Special Edition: Renaisans1stInternational Conference of Social Studies*. https://doi.org/10.19105/ejpis.v1i.19151

Fraser, N. (2007). Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice. *Studies in Social Justice*, *1*(1), 23–35. https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v1i1.979

Gill, R., & Orgad, S. (2018). The shifting terrain of sex and power: From the "sexualization of culture" to #MeToo. *Sexualities*, *21*(8), 1313–1324. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718794647

Hansson, K., Ganetz, H., & Sveningsson, M. (2023). The significance of feminist infrastructure: #MeToo in the construction industry and the green industry in Sweden. *Gender, Work and Organization*. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12994

Hellen, S. (2020, December 14). *Digital Trap of Sexual and Economic Exploitation*. Kompas.id; Harian Kompas. https://www.kompas.id/baca/english/2020/12/14/digital-trap-of-sexual-and-economic-exploitation

Hermanto, R. annisa. (2022). Indonesian Digital Feminist Activism Bridging Global-Local Feminism Discourse: Textual Network Analysis of Jakarta Feminist. *Jurnal Sosioteknologi*, *21*(2). https://doi.org/10.5614/sostek.itbj.2022.21.2.1

Kavaliauskaitė, J. (2024). Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP). *Teisė*, *132*, 94–106. https://doi.org/10.15388/teise.2024.132.7

Kingston, S., Alblas, E., Callaghan, M., & Foulon, J. (2021). Magnetic law: Designing environmental enforcement laws to encourage us to go further. *Regulation & Governance*. https://doi.org/10.1111/rego.12416

Lu, C. (2023). The impact of instagram on feminist activism. Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, *30*(1). https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/30/20231603

Maryani, E., Janitra, P. A., & Ratmita, R. A. (2021, September 13). *@Indonesiatanpafeminis.id as a Challenge of Feminist Movement in Virtual Space*. Frontiers in Sociology. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2021.668840

Matthews, T. (2022). The Politics of Protest and Gender: Women Riding the Wings of Resistance. *Social Sciences*, *11*(2), 52. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci11020052

Mauliansyah, F. (2016). THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF NEW MEDIA (Menelusuri Jejak Kesadaran dan Tindakan Kolektif Massa). *SOURCE : Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.35308/source.v2i2.404

Mehan, A. (2024). Digital Feminist Placemaking: The Case of the "Woman, Life, Freedom" Movement. *Urban Planning*, *9*. https://doi.org/10.17645/up.7093

Noble, S. U. (2018). *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York University Press.

Norman, L., & Beckman, L. (2024). Democratic self-defense and public sphere institutions. *Constellations*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12737

Okech, A. (2021). Feminist Digital Counterpublics: Challenging Femicide in Kenya and South Africa. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *46*(4), 1013–1033. https://doi.org/10.1086/713299

Rentschler, C. A. (2014). Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media. *Girlhood Studies*, *7*(1), 65–82. https://doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070106

Ringrose, J., Keller, J., & Mendes, K. (2019). *Digital Feminist Activism: Girls and Women Fight Back Against Rape Culture*. Oxford University Press.

SAFEnet. (2022). *Laporan tahunan: Potret ancaman kebebasan berekspresi di ruang digital Indonesia 2022. Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network*.

Shirky, C. (2011). The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change. *Foreign Affairs*, *90*(1), 28–41.

Susanty, N. L. (2024). Critical Analysis of the Research on Digital Literacy. *Sinergi International Journal of Education*, *2*(1), 12–25. https://doi.org/10.61194/education.v2i1.149

Tufekci, Z. (2017). *Twitter and Tear gas: the Power and Fragility of Networked Protest*. Yale University Press. https://d-nb.info/124031910X/34

Wang, X., Wu, Y. C., Ji, X., & Fu, H. (2024). Algorithmic discrimination: examining its types and regulatory measures with emphasis on US legal practices. *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence*, *7*, 1320277. https://doi.org/10.3389/frai.2024.1320277

Wibisono, R. B. (2023). Pencapaian Identitas Politik Perempuan di Indonesia. *Jurnal Mengkaji Indonesia*, *1*(1), 67–80. https://doi.org/10.59066/jmi.v1i1.61

Wibisono, R. B., & Fikri, S. (2024). Riding the Wave of Change: Unmasking Transformative Shifts in Digital Activism for Social Justice in Indonesia. *Mimbar Keadilan*, *17*(1), 75–85. https://doi.org/10.30996/mk.v17i1.10452

Yang, C. (2023). Digital Exclusion, Gender Oppression, and How Social Workers can Advocate for Digital Feminism in China. *Columbia Social Work Review*, *21*(1). https://doi.org/10.52214/cswr.v21i1.11205

Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: the Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Public Affairs.