

Research Article

Actor Network (Study on the Network Basis of Yasir Mahmud's Electability as a Member of the South Sulawesi Provincial DPRD for the 2024-2029 Period)

Mujiburrahman B*, Muhammad, and Gustiana A. Kambo

Doctoral Study Program in Political Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia

Abstract.

This study aims to analyze the basis of actor networks (Actor-Network Theory/ANT) in shaping Yasir Mahmud's electability as a member of the South Sulawesi Provincial DPRD for the 2024–2029 period. The ANT approach is used to explore the role of human and non-human actors—such as social relations, campaign technology, and local cultural structures—in mediating power dynamics and electoral strategies. This study relies on in-depth interview techniques and documentation as data collection methods, as well as qualitative analysis based on data reduction, presentation, and verification. The results of the study show that strong social networks, cultural closeness to the Bone community, and the use of economic narratives through experience as a fertilizer entrepreneur are the keys to Yasir Mahmud's success. In addition, a patronage-based approach, local values such as *siri' na pacce*, and community empowerment strategies play an important role in building voter loyalty. This study emphasizes that electability in the local context cannot be separated from the complex relations between social, cultural, economic, and technological structures. ANT is a relevant analytical framework for understanding how political agency is formed in a network of mutually constructing networks.

Keywords: electability, local politics, social networks

1. Introduction

The study of networks cannot be separated from the context of power. Actors in building power relations are the efforts of all political forces both at the elite/actor and mass levels. The power network in this context is understood as the quality, capacity, or capital to achieve power from the actors who do it. Understanding of the study of actor networks has developed rapidly from sociological studies in the early 1980s by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour, and John Law. The study of actor networks emerged as an antithesis to Piere Bourdieu's theory which states that actors are human individuals. The view of sociologists views actor networks as having a different explanation, an actor is defined as a source of action regardless of his status as a human or non-human. This

Corresponding Author:
Mujiburrahman B; email:
Mujiburahman1@gmail.com

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is considered a radical idea in the context that inanimate objects (such as technology) also have agency.

Actor network studies originally aimed to explore explicit or implicit power dynamics [1] although they are often said to be politically 'neutral' [2]. In this sense, then, actor network studies can be said to be about power. Originally developed in the field of science and technology studies (STS) by scholars such as Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law, actor network studies gradually gained traction in political science as a framework for analyzing complex socio-political phenomena.

In its development, actor network studies have challenged traditional approaches by emphasizing the relational and networked nature of actors, both human and non-human, in shaping political outcomes. In political science, this has opened up new avenues for understanding how power, institutions, and policies are co-constructed through interactions between multiple actors, including technologies, documents, and organizations. For example, actor network studies have been used to study the role of voting machines, algorithms, and bureaucratic procedures in shaping democratic processes, highlighting how material and non-human actors influence political dynamics [1].

Actor network studies in political science have also provided a critical lens for examining the decentralization of power and the fluidity of agency in governance networks. Traditional political theories often focus on hierarchical structures and human-centered agency, but actor network studies shift the focus to the distributed nature of power, where agency emerges from interactions within networks [3].

The study of actor networks into election studies offers a different lens to understand the complex interactions between human and non-human actors in shaping election processes and outcomes. Elections are not only contests between political parties or candidates, but are also embedded in broader networks that include technologies, regulatory frameworks, and institutional bodies such as the General Election Commission (KPU). For example, the adoption of e-recapitulation systems and open proportional election systems can be seen as non-human actors mediating power dynamics, influencing voter behavior, and shaping the legitimacy of election outcomes. Tracing these networks reveals how elections are co-constructed through interactions between multiple actors, highlighting the relational and material dimensions of democratic practices. This perspective enriches the analysis of election reform, emphasizing

how human agency and material infrastructure contribute to the evolving landscape of political participation and accountability in Indonesia.

One of the keys to success in general election contests is the use of networks. The majority vote system that is implemented causes competition between legislative candidates within one party to become increasingly tight. This encourages legislative candidates to maximize the “party machine” or, if they do not get full support from the party, seek breakthroughs outside the party structure to secure and increase votes. For legislative candidates who get access to utilize the party machine, it does not necessarily guarantee victory. They still need to find other ways, for example by building or utilizing networks outside the party. The network is any social element that can help direct voters’ choices, such as kinship, brotherhood, friendship, work colleagues, and other forms of social relations [4].

Individual capabilities related to their ability to build and utilize extensive political networks are key factors in a candidate’s victory. Political networks function as social infrastructure that connects candidates with various strategic actors, such as political parties, communities, organizations, and constituent groups that have a significant influence on electability. Kahler (2009) describe political networks as a collection of interconnected nodes in a larger social system. These nodes can be individuals, groups, organizations, or even valuable material and digital resources in a political context. The nodes that are formed then play a role in driving the candidate’s political strategy, changing public perception, and facilitating collective action to increase electability in general elections.

Networks in the context of elections also function as a mobilization mechanism that allows candidates to gain electoral support more effectively with minimal costs. Candidates who have strong ties with social organizations, interest groups, or religious and cultural-based communities tend to build public trust more easily. [5] emphasize that the existence of a solid political network allows candidates to optimize their social capital in political momentum, such as legislative elections or regional head elections.

In line with the increasing use of technology in politics, political networks are now not only based on interpersonal relationships, but also expanded through digital platforms and social media. ANT offers a comprehensive analytical framework to understand how the interaction between candidates, media, digital algorithms, and other interest groups shape election dynamics. Therefore, studying candidate victory also requires studying the actor networks that work in shaping public opinion, mobilizing the masses,

and coordinating campaign strategies, candidates can design a more effective and adaptive political approach to social and technological changes. The study of actor networks (ANT) can provide deeper insights into how political networks function in determining election results, both at the local and national levels.

2. Research methods

2.1. Data collection technique

Data collection in this study was carried out using two main techniques, namely in-depth interviews and data documentation. In-depth interviews are the main technique used to obtain information directly from informants, who were selected purposively based on the relevance of their roles to the phenomenon of Yasir Mahmud's election. Interviews were conducted flexibly using interview guidelines that had been prepared based on the formulation of research questions, but were not rigid so that questions could be developed according to the context of the conversation. The researcher acted as an interviewer, conveying his identity and goals openly to the informant in order to create an open and comfortable communication atmosphere. All conversations were recorded, transcribed, then edited according to analysis needs, while voice recordings were destroyed to maintain confidentiality. In addition, documentation techniques were used to complement and strengthen interview data. The researcher collected various written texts, official documents, online media reports, and social media content that were relevant to the research issue. This data was collected manually, then selected based on its contribution to the research questions, both general and specific. This documentation is not only a complement, but also a means to confirm or test claims made by the informant in the interview.

2.2. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study was carried out systematically through three main stages as stated by Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation, and verification or drawing conclusions. The first stage is data reduction, which is the process of selecting and simplifying raw data obtained from the field. In this stage, irrelevant or redundant data is eliminated, while important information is summarized to focus more on things that are directly related to the research question. The second

stage is data display, which aims to compile and organize data into a format that is easier to understand such as a matrix, table, or thematic narrative, so that patterns and relationships between data can be seen more clearly. The third stage is verification and drawing conclusions, which is the process of testing the consistency, relationships, and validity of data both before, during, and after data collection. At this stage, the researcher uses a triangulation approach to ensure the validity of information by comparing data from various sources. Conclusions are not drawn hastily, but through a process of repeated interpretation based on the accumulation of findings during the research.

2.3. Data source

The data sources in this study are divided into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from key informants who had a significant role or knowledge of the election process of Yasir Mahmud in the Legislative Election. This data was collected through direct in-depth interviews, allowing researchers to explore contextual, reflective, and hidden information. The selection of informants was carried out purposively by considering the capacity of the informant to explain the phenomenon being studied in depth. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from previously existing sources such as books, official documents, policy archives, previous research results, online media coverage, and other relevant sources. This secondary data functions as a support and comparison to the findings of the primary data and provides a broader context for the research analysis.

2.4. Research Informants

The selection of informants in this study was carried out intentionally through purposive sampling techniques with a criterion sampling approach, namely setting certain criteria based on the relevance of the informant to the object of study. Researchers selected individuals who were considered to have experience, knowledge, or direct involvement in the process of electing Yasir Mahmud, both from local elites, campaign teams, political parties, election organizers, to community leaders and voters. The informant selection process was carried out in stages and flexibly, prioritizing the principle of saturation, namely stopping the addition of informants when the data obtained began to repeat itself and did not provide significant new information. Researchers also paid attention to the diversity of informants' backgrounds so that the narratives developed were not

biased and reflected various points of view. In its implementation, ethical principles were upheld; each informant was given information about the purpose of the research and their rights as participants, including the right to stop participating at any time, as well as a guarantee of confidentiality of their personal data and statements.

3. Results and Discussion

In general, the pattern of political participation in South Sulawesi is characterized by a high level of participation in various general elections, which is mostly driven by personal relationships and patronage, rather than political awareness based on policy rationality. This participation is often mobilizational, where political candidates and their campaign teams actively mobilize the masses through emotional approaches and material assistance. This phenomenon creates a high level of participation, but in some cases also has the potential to produce high transactional politics.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the socio-economic transformations that have occurred in recent years, such as increased education and urbanization, have slowly begun to change the characteristics of voters and patterns of political participation in South Sulawesi. Although still partial, the shift from patronage patterns to more critical and rational participation patterns has begun to be clearly seen in the last few general elections, especially in urban areas. Thus, the general characteristics of voters and patterns of political participation in South Sulawesi are a reflection of complex dynamics, which simultaneously reflect traditional values, patronage relations, political pragmatism, and the gradual process of socio-economic transformation. This requires in-depth attention from researchers and political actors to comprehensively understand the dynamics that occur in the field, as well as formulate political strategies that are in accordance with existing local characteristics.

A strong educational and cultural background shaped Yasir's character as an individual who understands local socio-political dynamics. His closeness to the Bone community and deep understanding of local values became important assets in his political career. Before entering politics, Yasir Mahmud was known as a successful young entrepreneur. He once served as President Director of PT. Sulsel Citra Indonesia, a company engaged in agriculture and trade. His achievements in the business world were recognized with various awards, such as Excellence from PT Petrosida Gresik as a Working Partner in 2012 and 2013, as well as an award as Director of Achievement in Agricultural Development from the Minister of Agriculture in 2011.

Yasir's political career began by joining the Gerindra Party. In the 2024 Legislative Election, he ran as a member of the South Sulawesi Provincial DPRD from Electoral District (Dapil) VII, which includes Bone Regency. With 51,234 votes, Yasir won the most votes in his electoral district, making the Gerindra Party the winner in the region (Gerindra 2024; RRI, 2024; Detikcom, 2024). For this achievement, the Gerindra Party DPP appointed Yasir Mahmud as Deputy Chairperson II of the South Sulawesi DPRD for the 2024-2029 period. This appointment was officially announced by the Chairperson of the Gerindra Party DPD for South Sulawesi, Andi Iwan Darmawan Aras, and ratified by the General Chairperson of the Gerindra Party, Prabowo Subianto, and the Secretary General, Ahmad Muzani (Gerindra, 2024; RRI, 2024).

General Elections (Pemilu) in Indonesia are the most significant political agenda in the democratic life of this country. The 2024 Election is not only a momentum for the change of government, but also a reflection of the consolidation of democracy after the reformation. In this context, the legal framework and technical regulations play a central role in determining the success of the implementation of electoral democracy. The 2024 Election is regulated by Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which is the main legal basis for organizing elections. In its technical implementation, the General Election Commission (KPU) issued KPU Regulation (PKPU) Number 3 of 2022 which regulates in detail the stages and schedule for the implementation of the 2024 Election. One of the fundamental aspects of the election system used in Indonesia is the open proportional system. The Constitutional Court (MK) has firmly stated that the open proportional system is a system that is in accordance with the spirit of democracy in Indonesia.

Bone Regency is one of the most electorally strategic areas in South Sulawesi. This area is one of the areas with the largest population. With a population of around 800,000 people, this area not only contributes significant votes in provincial elections, but is also a very strong center of Bugis culture. This cultural identity not only functions as an ethnic marker, but also forms the foundation of values in the political behavior of the community. The value of *siri' na pacce* (self-esteem and solidarity) is the basis of social and political relations, creating a very strong patron-client relationship.

This is understood by political figures such as Yasir Mahmud. As stated by an informant from the success team,

"We all take advantage of Mr. Yasir's campaign approach from various aspects, but the biggest one is emotional and regional ties. That is the culture of the Bone people,

they prioritize pangadereng , sipakatau , and sipakalebbi “ (Interview with Mawardi, 2024).

From an economic perspective, Bone has a strong agricultural base, especially in the rice and corn sectors. However, economic inequality is still felt, especially by small farmers and the rural poor. Based on BPS data in 2023, Bone has the highest poverty rate in South Sulawesi with more than 80,000 people classified as poor. This condition makes economic issues one of the keys in Yasir Mahmud's campaign. Yasir Mahmud's successful team utilized his background as a fertilizer entrepreneur to provide direct assistance, such as distributing non-subsidized fertilizer to farmers, even before the official nomination was made. As explained by the central team informant:

“We convey to the public that Mr. Yasir is a fertilizer entrepreneur, even before running for office, he often helped farmers with free fertilizer through the YM Community foundation” (Interview with Andi Reza, 2024).

Politically, Bone is an important vote bank and a fierce contestation arena. Elections are not only an arena for competition between parties, but also between local elites, most of whom have kinship ties. In local Bone politics, family closeness is often the main determinant of political loyalty. This is referred to by Anderson (2001) as a form of *primordial democracy* , where voters choose not based on programs, but on social and ethnic ties. Yasir Mahmud, as a local son who has a broad social network, including relations with traditional and religious figures, is able to utilize this social structure to build a solid support base.

Economically, Bone Regency shows positive growth. In 2023, Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) based on current prices reached IDR 46.49 trillion, with economic growth of 3.77%. However, the poverty rate is still a challenge, with the number of poor people reaching around 80,340 people, the highest in South Sulawesi. This inequality shows that economic growth is not yet fully equitable and inclusive.

Politically, Bone is known as one of the strategic vote banks in South Sulawesi. Local politics in Bone are heavily influenced by socio-cultural structures, where descendants of the nobility (*arung*) still have an important role in the government structure. The Bone community tends to believe that being led by a regional head with the title of *arung* provides legitimacy and stability. This creates a unique political dynamic, where traditional cultural values and social structures interact with the modern democratic system.

3.1. Tahapan dan Dinamika Terbentuknya Jejaring

3.1.1. Tahap Mobilisasi Isu

The initial stage of the formation of the actor network began with the mobilization of previously established issues and relationships. The main focus of this stage was to build resonance between the needs of the community, the figure of Yasir Mahmud, and sensitive local issues such as agricultural inequality and the difficulty of accessing fertilizer. Yasir Mahmud utilized his social capital as a fertilizer entrepreneur to respond directly to farmers' problems, which then became the entry point for building electoral relations. At this stage, Yasir Mahmud actively conducted political visits to villages, attended religious and traditional events, and reactivated the social networks that had long been fostered through social activities such as fertilizer assistance and YM Community foundation programs. According to Andi Reza, the central campaign team,

"This campaign team was formed because there was already an emotional closeness, an established friendship, and recommendations from families who were loyal to Mr. Yasir."

Issue mobilization was carried out through political silaturahmi, attendance at traditional and religious events, and through social networks that had been developed before the nomination. The campaign team targeted traditional figures, community figures, and close families to become the initial connecting nodes. Mawardi, the city campaign team, explained, *"Our campaign approach prioritizes pangadereng, namely the Bugis cultural value that glorifies social relations and politeness. We start with silaturahmi, not with political promises."*

In addition, Yasir Mahmud reactivated the social assistance network through the YM Community foundation which had been active since before the nomination. The assistance was not transactional, but framed in a narrative of devotion. Arianto, the coordinator of the Tanete Riattang Barat sub-district, said, *"Mr. Yasir is known for his consistency in helping farmers even before running for office. So when we went down to form a network in the field, the community already trusted us."*

This trust-based approach strengthened the campaign's reach from the start. At this stage, social mapping was also carried out on potential voter base areas and influential figures' nodes. Erwin, one of the influencers, added that the mapping also included identifying points vulnerable to hoaxes and disinformation, especially related to fertilizer distribution.

“We anticipate negative attacks with counter narratives based on facts, because Mr. Yasir has been known to be active in the field and we have documented this on social media.”

Thus, the issue mobilization stage is not only about forming a team, but creating issue resonance between leaders and the people, which is confirmed through social and symbolic interactions in public and digital spaces. This became the initial foundation for the formation of Yasir Mahmud's electoral network which was then developed more systematically in the following stages.

3.1.2. Formation of Structure and Distribution of Roles

After the initial issue mobilization and social network mapping phase, Yasir Mahmud's winning team entered the internal institutional strengthening phase through the formation of a systematic and tiered campaign structure. This strategy is based on the principle of operational decentralization, where each layer of the team has autonomy in technical implementation, but remains vertically consolidated in one central coordination. This structure consists of a central team, city/district team, sub-district team, to village/sub-district coordinators and TPS.

Arianto, one of the successful teams at the Tanete Riattang Barat sub-district level, explained in depth how this structure was arranged and functioned:

“When this successful team was first formed, I was called by the District Coordinator (Mawardi) and recruited. We formed a structure based on concrete work areas. The most important thing is the role of the TPS coordinator or the lowest network because they are the ones who are in direct contact with the community. They are the ones who conduct door-to-door campaigns, recruit voters one by one, and ensure that vote recording is carried out accurately.”

The formation of the structure is not only about appointing people based on personal closeness, but also based on social track records and operational capacity. Arianto continued:

“We cannot just recruit people. For example, a TPS coordinator must be domiciled at the TPS in question. We never recruit people from outside the location, because their social relations are not strong. This approach is important because it will facilitate communication with residents who are already known to them. So when there is a

program from the center, the distribution is faster and the acceptance is stronger because it is delivered by someone they know and trust.”

Yasir Mahmud’s campaign structure was not rigid, but rather adaptive to local dynamics. For example, in areas with scattered voters and difficult geographic access, the number of team members was increased. In practice, the formation was changed from one coordinator per sub-district to two to three people to speed up data distribution and collection. In one TPS which is usually filled with five members, it was expanded to ten to maximize regional penetration and communication reach.

Mawardi, the city team coordinator, added:

“Before forming a team, I created a strategic plan based on a winning proposal. It contains a mapping of the team structure and a clear division of roles. We have an IT team, a data team, a media team, and a network team. Each has a job description and measurable targets. The network team working below has the main responsibility of binding voters. They manage the dynamics below, while the IT team only provides technical support.”

Internal communication between structures is maintained through a daily reporting system and regular coordination meetings. When dynamics occur in the field, the team from the upper level immediately comes down directly. Andi Reza, the central success team, said:

“We from the central team often go down to the sub-districts and even villages, especially if there are dynamics or obstacles. For example, if there are complaints about logistics distribution or there is unhealthy competition from other teams, we immediately coordinate with local community leaders and resolve them in the field. Our structure is flexible but controlled.”

The distribution of information and strategic orders is two-way. In addition to the central team providing direction, the field team also supplies real-time situational data and reports. This allows the central team to adjust strategies, including modifying campaign messages based on voter aspirations. Communication is done through WhatsApp groups, Google Drive-based spreadsheets, and a structured reporting system.

According to Arianto:

“Every day we send reports. Starting from campaign data, names of residents who have been reached, activity documentation, to evaluation reports from points considered vulnerable. This data is verified by the admin team. If there is a discrepancy,

it is immediately clarified through a call. This system makes our work more disciplined and connected.”

In addition to structural functions, network formation also considers relational and psychosocial aspects. Many team members are recruited based on long-term loyalty, not just technical ability. Mawardi explains:

“This team is not new. They have worked together in previous elections. So the chemistry is already there. If there are new members, usually they are recommendations from people who are already trusted. This is important because we need trust, not just expertise. If you are only good at campaigning but can’t keep secrets or are not loyal, it will be difficult.”

This reporting system is also used to measure team performance. Each region is targeted to obtain a certain number of votes, which is then used as an indicator of work effectiveness. If a team does not meet the target or is found to be passive, an evaluation and potential replacement are carried out.

This was conveyed by Arianto:

“We always use the evaluation principle. If there is a team that works slowly or does not achieve the target, it will be noted. In the next regional elections or general elections, we will probably not use them again. We only maintain networks that are truly loyal and can work,” .

From this description, it can be seen that the formation of a structure is not just a campaign strategy, but rather a complex socio-political mechanism, where the values of trust, communication efficiency, and relational flexibility are key to building and managing electoral actor networks effectively. Integration of Social Media and Technology

As an innovation in the campaign, Yasir Mahmud built a professional media team for digital content management. According to Akang Syarip, the media team, “We present daily content that contains simplicity, addresses the lower class, and displays concrete solutions. This content is distributed via Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, with a paid algorithm so that the audience exposed can reach one million viewers.”

This strategy is complemented by the involvement of local influencers who have a strong following on social media. Erwin, one of the influencers involved, said that:

“We made short videos on TikTok and WhatsApp to target young people. Many eventually felt close and interested in choosing Mr. Yasir because his content was touching and relatable.”

3.1.3. Integration of Social Media and Technology

As an innovation in the campaign, Yasir Mahmud built a professional media team consisting of content creators, videographers, scriptwriters, and a content distribution team to manage effective and targeted digital communication. Akang Syarip, one of the media team members, explained:

“We present content every day that contains simplicity, addresses the lower class, and presents concrete solutions. The content is not stiff, but full of empathy. We use Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts, and all use paid algorithm boosting. Our daily target is to reach one million viewers, especially in the final weeks before the vote.”

The content produced is categorized into three types: (1) personalized content—showing the human side of Yasir Mahmud in everyday life; (2) educational content—containing solutions to local problems such as fertilizer, scholarships, or public health; and (3) responsive content—responding to emerging issues such as political attacks or hoaxes. All content is designed to present Yasir as someone who is close, provides solutions, and is representative.

The team works based on algorithmic data. They monitor optimal airtime, audience demographics, and the types of content that get the most engagement. By utilizing *Facebook Ads Manager* and *Instagram Insights*, the team can find out which content to increase and which to reduce.

This strategy is complemented by the involvement of local influencers who have a strong following on social media. Erwin, one of the digital influencers involved in the campaign, said:

“We made short videos on TikTok and WhatsApp to target young people. The themes were light but relevant, for example about the importance of choosing a candidate who has helped the community. Many people ended up feeling close and interested in choosing Mr. Yasir because the content was touching and relatable. It wasn’t a stiff campaign, but it felt like a normal chat.”

Content is also customized based on audience segments. For farmers, video content is packaged in Bugis and features Yasir Mahmud going directly to the rice fields and distributing fertilizer. For women, interactive discussion content is created around MSMEs and access to capital. Meanwhile, for young people, challenge and story time content styles are used.

The media team also synchronizes online activities with offline activities. Every time Yasir Mahmud is present at a social activity, documentation volunteers immediately upload content within a maximum of two hours after the event, to keep it relevant and fresh. This creates the illusion of Yasir's constant presence in people's digital lives.

Erwin added:

"We are not only active on official accounts, but also spread content through RT WhatsApp groups, farmer communities, alumni communities, and women's religious studies. All with personal narratives. So this digital content is not just a self-exhibition, but part of people's daily conversations."

This approach reflects what Howard (2006) calls *managed interactivity* —where digital communication is used not just to convey a message, but to create a sense of engagement and closeness. In the context of Yasir Mahmud's campaign, social media was not just a tool, but an actor in an electoral network that symbolically and emotionally mediated the relationship between candidate and voter.

Thus, the integration of social media and technology in Yasir Mahmud's campaign became a strategic element that expanded reach, deepened closeness, and strengthened the differentiation of political identity amidst fierce competition. This strategy also shows how non-human actors in ANT's perspective are not merely intermediaries, but have agency in influencing political outcomes.

3.2. Coordination, Adaptation, and Conflict Resolution

Yasir Mahmud's network coordination is carried out systematically with a layered and rhythmic communication pattern. Each team, from the center to the TPS coordinator, holds daily meetings, delivers progress evaluations, and updates strategies based on field feedback. This mechanism allows tactical adaptation to changes in the political situation and emergency issues in society.

Suwadi, a member of the media team who was also involved in supervising field coordination, explained:

"Mr. Yasir was incredibly present. Throughout the campaign, he only missed two villages because he had a party meeting in Jakarta. The rest of the time, he went around almost every night, not only handing out stickers but sitting together, asking about the residents' needs, and taking immediate action. That built team spirit and made the residents feel cared for."

Yasir Mahmud's direct participation strengthened the effectiveness of coordination. With a symbolic and real presence among the people, Yasir not only monitored the team's performance, but also became a direct link between political strategy and social reality. His participation in informal forums such as pengajian, night markets, and traditional meetings became a form of down-to-earth and transformative political communication.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, coordination was also carried out digitally. Each sub-district coordinator has a special WhatsApp group with the central team. Communication took place almost every hour, especially leading up to voting day. Mawardi, the city team coordinator, said:

"We formed different coordination groups: for logistics distribution, for campaign documentation, and for vote achievement evaluation. Every night, we update the report at least once. Even if there is a small incident, such as a torn billboard or a hoax issue, it is immediately followed up with clarification and involvement of local community leaders."

In internal conflict situations, the approach used is more affective and participatory. Instead of reprimanding or replacing team members in a frontal manner, a dialogue and reconciliation approach is preferred. This is in line with local values such as *sipakatau* (humanizing each other) and *resopa temmangingi* (hard work in honor).

Mawardi said:

"There will definitely be conflicts. As many people, there will definitely be different views. But the solution is communication. We are convinced that a lot of information from outside is provocative and must be filtered. Usually, when there is tension, we gather at night at the post, drink tea, chat casually, and find a middle ground. Because we all work on the basis of trust and emotional relationships, not just political matters."

One example of a conflict that was successfully resolved was when there was a difference in strategy between the media team and the field network team regarding the distribution of digital content. The field team felt that the content was too formal and did not touch on local issues. The solution was for the media team to invite network representatives to participate in compiling content scripts based on community narratives.

According to Akang Syarip; Yasi Mahmud's Social Media team:

"Initially, we made the content rather stiff, with lots of infographics and party jargon. But the field team gave us input, saying that residents preferred short videos, real

stories, and Bugis language. Since then, we have totally revised the content concept. As a result, engagement has increased and the response from residents has been extraordinary. This is proof that coordination must be two-way and mutually trusting.”

In many ways, this flexible, adaptive, and participatory coordination became the foundation of the stability of the actor network in Yasir Mahmud’s campaign. This strategy made every conflict not an obstacle, but an opportunity to strengthen team cohesion and deepen the socio-political roots of the winning network.

3.3. Consolidation and Expansion

As the election day approaches, Yasir Mahmud’s campaign strategy enters a phase of consolidation and expansion. This phase is a stage of intensifying the network work that has been built previously, while expanding reach and strengthening operational stability. In this phase, three main aspects are emphasized: adding field personnel, massive use of information technology, and sharpening political content.

The addition of volunteers was carried out in a structured manner based on TPS mapping data and the number of voters. Arianto, coordinator of Tanete Riattang Barat, explained:

“We increase the number of volunteers at polling stations that are considered crucial or less stable. For example, if usually one polling station is sufficient with five people, we increase it to seven or eight, depending on the number of voters. We also recruit new volunteers based on ID cards. Simply enter the data into our application, and information about the location of the polling station, domicile, and potential network of that person in their village will immediately appear. That way, recruitment becomes efficient and right on target.”

Technology plays a key role in consolidation. Yasir Mahmud’s winning team developed an internal application based on Google Data Studio that functions to: a) Map potential voters; b) Monitor volunteer movements; c) Provide a real-time dashboard for quick count and real count

According to Andi Reza,

“Our application allows all volunteers to input data directly, whether for witness purposes, C1 collection, or incident reporting. All data is collected on a dashboard that can be monitored by the central and district teams.”

In addition to the technological aspect, campaign intensification was also carried out through sharpening political messages. The media team and influencer network were directed to produce content with a more explicit narrative supporting Yasir Mahmud. Content was created based on the results of evaluating public responses in previous weeks.

Erwin, a local social media influencer, said:

“In the last week, we have been posting more video testimonials from community leaders, mothers, and even young people. They tell us directly what benefits they have felt from Mr. Yasir. This content is powerful because residents trust the voices of fellow citizens more than promises from candidates.”

Digital barcodes were also distributed to directly access campaign materials. Volunteers distributed the barcodes to residents so they could access Yasir’s work program, campaign videos, and even the location of the nearest post. The use of these digital tools is a response to the limited physical distribution of leaflets in rural areas.

According to Suwadi,

“We created a public link that contains all the campaign materials. We printed the barcode and volunteers attached it to stalls, motorbikes, and even business cards. This is a cheap and effective way to reach young people and residents who use mobile phones .”

Political literature refers to this strategy as a form of “ *electoral micromobilization* ”, where campaigns target segments of voters with a highly focused, data-driven approach. In the context of ANT all of these devices—apps, barcodes, testimonial content—are not just tools, but non-human actors that actively function to strengthen network connectivity and influence.

Consolidation also involves intensive evaluation of network loyalty and performance. Mawardi explained:

“In the last week we opened reports from all sub-districts. Who achieved the target, who was weak, and who needed help. We sent a flying team to back up areas that were not yet stable. Everything was done quickly and based on factual reports.”

Flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to field dynamics are the keys to success in this stage. Yasir Mahmud also remains active in the field, attending community thanksgiving events, sympathetic campaigns, and praying in congregation at village mosques. This personal presence creates an authentic impression of closeness and strengthens the perception that Yasir is not just a candidate, but part of the community.

Thus, the consolidation and expansion phase shows how previously static networks become more dynamic, responsive, and inclusive. Digital technology not only expands reach, but also simultaneously activates the circulation of information and authority. Meanwhile, social relations and local values remain the irreplaceable foundation of legitimacy.

Yasir Mahmud's campaign at this stage reflects the characteristics of a modern electoral campaign based on *hybrid mobilization* - a combination of traditional, digital, and structural approaches. The results of this consolidation are evident in the high vote share and even distribution of support. Victory is not only the result of individual strength, but the effect of a network of actors who support, mediate, and strengthen each other.

The process of forming a network of actors in Yasir Mahmud's campaign is a concrete example of systemic work between humans, technology, and local values. From the initial mobilization stage to the final consolidation, this network is not only structural but also affective and symbolic. The integration of traditional social relations and digital campaign technology makes Yasir Mahmud's winning strategy relevant in the complex local political context of Bone. With the ANT approach, we understand that victory is not the result of one dominant actor, but the result of the collective work of interconnected and strengthening networks.

The description above shows how the power of Yasir Mahmud's campaign network cannot be separated from the strategic use of technology and social media. Interview findings from Akang Syarip and Erwin show that touching narratives packaged in simple language have succeeded in building emotional closeness between candidates and voters. This is in line with the concept of *managed interactivity* put forward by [6] that political communication strategies in the digital era must be able to create managed interactions that feel personal to the audience.

Other literature such as [7] also supports this finding, that social media in politics is not only a distribution tool, but becomes part of the configuration of power because of its ability to mediate symbolic relations and shape political perceptions. In the context of Yasir Mahmud, this approach is realized by uniting the symbolic power of local identity (such as Bugis language content and village community visuals) with digital technology (such as social media algorithms and campaign barcodes).

From the perspective of *Actor-Network Theory*, we see that Yasir Mahmud's success is not only due to personal capabilities or party support, but also because of his

ability to build a network that integrates human and non-human actors. Applications, content, visual devices, and volunteer networks all function as nodes in a mutually reinforcing campaign network. In conclusion, Yasir Mahmud's campaign is a model of political success based on the hybridity of technology, social relations, and collaborative communication management.

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4. Conclusion

This study shows that Yasir Mahmud's success in winning the most votes in the 2024 Legislative Election in Electoral District VII of South Sulawesi cannot be separated from the strategic role of the actor network that was built and mobilized effectively. The *Actor-Network Theory* (ANT) approach provides a new perspective in understanding that the electability of political candidates is not only determined by individual or party factors alone, but also by complex interactions between human and non-human actors, including technology, regulations, social media, and local cultural values.

Yasir Mahmud made careful use of kinship-based social networks, emotional closeness to the Bone community, and his position as a local figure with a successful track record in the agribusiness sector. Patronage relationships, cultural values such as *siri' na pacce*, and closeness to religious and traditional communities, became social capital that was strengthened by the distribution of agricultural assistance before the nomination. This shows that networks are not only a tool for mobilization, but also an instrument for building public trust.

In addition to human networks, non-human elements such as open proportional electoral systems, the use of digital media, and technology-based campaign mechanisms also play an important role in the formation of images and the spread of political influence. ANT in this context successfully explains how social, material, and digital

structures are interrelated in driving certain political outcomes. Methodologically, this study combines in-depth interviews with media and regulatory documentation, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the dynamics of power distributed within the network. The findings also show that Bone as a strategic region has distinctive political characteristics: high participation based on emotional and cultural loyalty, but begins to show signs of shifting towards political rationality as education and urbanization increase. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding local power maps not only through institutional structural analysis, but also through a more flexible, contextual, and reflective actor network approach to technological and social change. This study not only contributes to network politics theory, but also provides practical implications for political campaign strategies in areas with strong socio-cultural dynamics.

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