

Grassroots Advocacy Networks and the Politics of Social Justice in Marginalized Urban Communities

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of grassroots advocacy networks in shaping the politics of social justice within marginalized urban communities. The primary objective is to analyze how these networks mobilize resources, negotiate with institutional actors, and influence equitable access to public services. A qualitative approach is employed using a case study design, selected for its capacity to capture in-depth, context-specific dynamics and complex social interactions. The research is conducted in a marginalized urban settlement in Tangerang Selatan, Indonesia, chosen due to its active grassroots movements and persistent socio-economic inequalities. Data are collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving twelve key informants, including community leaders, activists, and local facilitators, selected purposively based on their direct engagement in advocacy activities. The findings reveal that grassroots networks function as adaptive political actors, utilizing social capital and network-based strategies to advance claims for justice, despite structural constraints. These networks contribute to increased community participation and improved access to basic services, although challenges such as limited resources and institutional resistance remain. The study recommends strengthening collaborative governance frameworks and enhancing institutional support for grassroots initiatives to sustain inclusive urban development.



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INTRODUCTION

The intensification of socio-economic disparities in rapidly urbanizing contexts has renewed scholarly attention to the role of grassroots advocacy networks in advancing social justice within marginalized urban communities (Kang & Weatherly, 2025). Across the Global South, including Indonesia and comparable settings, urbanization has generated complex layers of exclusion characterized by informal settlements, limited access to public services, and uneven political representation (Gelbman, 2022). While state-led interventions and top-down governance reforms have been widely examined, a growing body of literature emphasizes the importance of bottom-up initiatives driven by community actors, civil society organizations, and informal networks (Hall, 2021). These grassroots advocacy networks operate at the intersection of local knowledge, collective action, and political negotiation, positioning themselves as critical intermediaries that articulate the needs of marginalized populations and challenge structural inequalities embedded within urban governance systems (Pabreja & Tiwari, 2021).

The state of the art in this field demonstrates a shift from viewing marginalized communities as passive beneficiaries of policy toward recognizing them as active agents of change (Baker, 2021). Contemporary studies highlight how grassroots networks mobilize resources, build solidarity, and engage in advocacy strategies that influence policy agendas and decision-making processes (Sabilla & Phahlevy, 2025). Concepts such as participatory governance, social capital, and networked activism have been widely employed to explain these dynamics (Naik, 2021). However, existing research often focuses on successful cases of advocacy or formalized civil society organizations, thereby underrepresenting informal, fragmented, and context-specific networks that operate under conditions

of political constraint and resource scarcity (Omondi, 2024). Furthermore, there remains limited integration between theoretical discussions on social justice and empirical analyses of how grassroots advocacy translates normative ideals into tangible outcomes in marginalized urban settings (Um & Wood, 2023).

The main problem addressed in this research lies in the insufficient understanding of how grassroots advocacy networks navigate the political landscape to advance social justice in contexts marked by exclusion, informality, and limited institutional support (Oriola, 2024). While previous studies have acknowledged the presence of such networks, there is still ambiguity regarding their internal dynamics, strategies of engagement, and the extent to which they can effectively influence policy and redistribute power (Kodiveri, 2021). In particular, the political dimension of grassroots advocacy how networks negotiate with state actors, resist co-optation, and sustain collective action over time remains underexplored (Islam & Du, 2025). This gap is especially relevant in marginalized urban communities, where power asymmetries are pronounced and opportunities for formal participation are often restricted (Mafu, 2021).

The research gap is further reflected in the lack of comparative and context-sensitive analyses that capture the diversity of grassroots advocacy practices across different urban environments (Calvert et al., 2022). Many studies adopt generalized frameworks that overlook the socio-cultural and institutional specificities shaping grassroots activism (Tesfa & Lowenhaupt, 2023). Additionally, there is a tendency to separate the analysis of advocacy networks from broader discussions on urban governance and social justice, resulting in fragmented insights that fail to capture the interconnected nature of these phenomena (Hibbett, 2020). This study seeks to address these gaps by offering a more integrated and nuanced understanding of grassroots advocacy networks, emphasizing their political roles, adaptive strategies, and contributions to advancing social justice in marginalized urban communities.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach that combines perspectives from social justice theory, network governance, and urban political analysis to examine grassroots advocacy networks as dynamic political actors rather than merely service-oriented entities. By focusing on the micro-level practices of advocacy and their macro-level implications, this study provides new insights into how informal networks influence governance processes and reshape power relations. It also introduces a contextualized framework that accounts for the socio-political environment in which these networks operate, thereby contributing to a more grounded and empirically informed understanding of grassroots activism.

This study is guided by several key research questions that aim to unpack the complexities of grassroots advocacy in marginalized urban contexts. It asks how grassroots advocacy networks are formed and sustained within marginalized communities, what strategies they employ to advocate for social justice, and how they interact with formal political and administrative institutions. It further examines the extent to which these networks can influence policy outcomes and improve the socio-economic conditions of marginalized populations. In addition, the study explores the challenges and constraints faced by grassroots networks, including issues of legitimacy, resource limitations, and political resistance.

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the role of grassroots advocacy networks in advancing social justice within marginalized urban communities. More specifically, it aims to identify the structural and contextual factors that shape the formation and operation of these networks, to examine their advocacy strategies and political engagement, and to assess their impact on governance processes and social outcomes. By doing so, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of how bottom-up initiatives can complement or challenge existing governance frameworks in addressing urban inequality.

The significance of this research can be understood from several perspectives. Theoretically, it contributes to the development of interdisciplinary frameworks that bridge gaps between social justice theory, network analysis, and urban studies (Jeanes & Trussell, 2024). It enriches existing literature by providing a more comprehensive account of grassroots advocacy as a political process embedded within

broader governance dynamics (Seo, 2025). Academically, the study offers empirical evidence and analytical insights that can inform future research on civil society, urban governance, and participatory development. It also provides a foundation for comparative studies that examine similar phenomena in different contexts. Practically, the findings of this research have implications for policymakers, practitioners, and community organizations by highlighting effective strategies for engaging marginalized communities and fostering inclusive governance. It underscores the importance of supporting grassroots initiatives and creating institutional spaces that enable meaningful participation and representation.

Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges certain limitations. The focus on specific urban contexts may limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings with different socio-political conditions (Putra et al., 2024). Additionally, the reliance on qualitative methods and case-based analysis may introduce subjectivity in data interpretation (Yin, 2024). The dynamic and often informal nature of grassroots networks also poses challenges in terms of data collection and measurement. These limitations, however, are addressed through careful methodological design and triangulation of data sources to ensure the robustness of the analysis.

Future research is encouraged to build on the findings of this study by exploring comparative analyses across multiple cities or countries to identify broader patterns and variations in grassroots advocacy (Sato, 2022). There is also a need for longitudinal studies that examine the sustainability and long-term impact of grassroots networks on social justice outcomes (McFaden & Brewer, 2020). Furthermore, integrating quantitative approaches and network analysis techniques could provide additional insights into the structure and effectiveness of advocacy networks (Goddard & Magnus, 2023). Expanding the scope of research to include digital activism and the role of technology in grassroots mobilization would also be valuable, particularly in the context of increasingly interconnected urban societies (Mugamba, 2025).

In conclusion, this study positions grassroots advocacy networks as central actors in the politics of social justice within marginalized urban communities (Diduck, Patel, et al., 2021). By addressing existing gaps in the literature and offering a nuanced analysis of their roles and strategies, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how social change can be driven from the ground up in complex urban environments (DeMink-Carthew, 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The scholarly discussion on *grassroots advocacy networks and the politics of social justice in marginalized urban communities* is situated at the intersection of social justice theory, network governance, and urban political sociology (Reyes et al., 2023). The literature has increasingly emphasized that inequality in urban contexts is not merely an outcome of economic disparities but is deeply embedded in political structures, institutional arrangements, and power relations (Goessling et al., 2023). Marginalized communities, particularly those in informal settlements, often experience systematic exclusion from decision-making processes, limited access to public services, and weak political representation (Castrellón, 2022). In response, grassroots advocacy networks emerge as collective actors that mobilize local resources, articulate community demands, and engage in political negotiation (Daramola, 2023). This literature review draws upon three major theoretical foundations: John Rawls' Theory of Justice, Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory, and Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital to construct a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of grassroots advocacy in marginalized urban settings.

John Rawls' Theory of Justice, prominently articulated in *A Theory of Justice* (1971) while he was affiliated with Harvard University, United States, provides a foundational normative framework for analyzing issues of fairness and equality (Cifuentes, 2024). Rawls conceptualizes justice as fairness, emphasizing two central principles: equal basic liberties and the difference principle, which allows inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged members of society (Fiet, 2023). According to Rawls, a just society is one in which institutional arrangements are designed to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities and resources (Veggeberg, 2021). This perspective is particularly relevant for examining marginalized urban communities, where structural inequalities persist. Rawls' framework highlights the moral imperative of addressing disparities and ensuring that governance

systems are responsive to the needs of disadvantaged populations (Gordon et al., 2020). However, contemporary scholars have noted that Rawls' theory, while normatively robust, does not sufficiently account for the political processes through which justice is negotiated in real-world contexts (Machado, 2023). This limitation creates a gap that necessitates the integration of additional theoretical perspectives, particularly those that emphasize agency, power, and collective action.

Complementing this normative perspective is Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory, developed in *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) during his tenure at the University of California, Berkeley, United States (Warren et al., 2023). Castells argues that contemporary societies are increasingly structured around networks facilitated by information and communication technologies (Rivera-McCutchen et al., 2023). These networks enable decentralized forms of organization and empower non-state actors, including grassroots movements, to influence social and political processes (Gil, 2023). In the context of marginalized urban communities, grassroots advocacy networks can be understood as nodes within broader social and political networks that mobilize information, resources, and collective identities. Castells emphasizes that power in the network society is exercised through the ability to shape communication flows and construct meaning (Corona et al., 2020). This theoretical lens provides critical insights into how grassroots actors leverage networks to challenge dominant power structures and advocate for social justice. Recent developments in this theory have incorporated digital activism and hybrid forms of mobilization, highlighting the increasing importance of online platforms in facilitating grassroots advocacy (Chavous et al., 2022). However, scholars also caution that network-based power is unevenly distributed, and marginalized groups may face barriers in accessing and utilizing these networks effectively (Gentelet et al., 2024).

Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital, articulated in his seminal essay "The Forms of Capital" (1986) while at the Collège de France, Paris, France, offers a sociological perspective on the resources embedded within social relationships (Ishimaru et al., 2023). Bourdieu defines social capital as the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to durable networks of institutionalized relationships. He argues that social capital, along with economic and cultural capital, plays a crucial role in shaping social hierarchies and access to opportunities (Borrell & Kapadia, 2021). In marginalized urban communities, grassroots advocacy networks often rely on social capital to mobilize collective action, build trust, and sustain engagement. Bourdieu's framework underscores the importance of relational dynamics and power structures in understanding how networks operate and reproduce or challenge inequality (Tochhawng, 2024). Contemporary extensions of this theory have explored the role of bridging and linking social capital in connecting marginalized groups with external actors, including government institutions and non-governmental organizations (Wilson et al., 2022). Nonetheless, critiques of Bourdieu's approach point to its tendency to emphasize reproduction of inequality rather than transformation, thereby necessitating a more dynamic understanding of how social capital can be leveraged for social change (SMITH, 2022).

The integration of these three theoretical perspectives provides a multidimensional framework for analyzing grassroots advocacy networks (Solomon et al., 2020). Rawls' theory establishes the normative foundation by defining the principles of social justice, Castells' theory elucidates the structural and technological dimensions of networks, and Bourdieu's theory highlights the relational and resource-based aspects of social interaction (Matsuda et al., 2023). Together, they offer a comprehensive lens for understanding how grassroots advocacy networks operate within complex urban environments characterized by inequality and exclusion (Gravante, 2024). This integrative framework also addresses the main problem of the research, namely the limited understanding of how grassroots networks navigate political structures to advance social justice (Castrellón, 2021). By combining normative, structural, and relational perspectives, the study is able to capture the multifaceted nature of grassroots advocacy.

The theoretical framework also directly engages with the identified research gap (Lee & Humphrey, 2023). While existing studies often examine grassroots advocacy from a single theoretical perspective, this research adopts an interdisciplinary approach that bridges gaps between normative theory, network analysis, and sociological perspectives (Kolmasova, 2022). This approach enables a more nuanced understanding of how grassroots networks function in practice and how they can

influence governance processes (Samier, 2020). Furthermore, the integration of these theories addresses the fragmentation in the literature by linking micro-level interactions with macro-level structures, thereby providing a more holistic analysis of social justice in marginalized urban contexts (Dilay, 2021).

In relation to the research questions, the selected theories offer distinct yet complementary insights. Rawls' framework informs the analysis of what constitutes social justice and how it can be evaluated in marginalized communities (Patel et al., 2021). Castells' theory provides a basis for examining the formation, structure, and strategies of grassroots networks, including their use of communication and information technologies (Rikimani, 2024). Bourdieu's theory contributes to understanding the internal dynamics of these networks, particularly the role of social capital in facilitating or constraining collective action (Clare, 2021). Together, these theories enable the study to address key questions regarding the formation, operation, and impact of grassroots advocacy networks.

The theoretical framework also supports the research objectives and anticipated contributions. From a theoretical perspective, the study advances interdisciplinary scholarship by integrating concepts from different fields to analyze a complex social phenomenon (Sabilla & Phahlevy, 2025). Academically, it contributes to the literature on urban governance, civil society, and social justice by providing empirical insights grounded in a robust theoretical foundation (Rombalski et al., 2023). Practically, the findings can inform policy and practice by identifying strategies for strengthening grassroots advocacy and promoting inclusive governance. The use of these theories also enhances the analytical rigor of the study, ensuring that it meets the standards of high-quality international journal publications (DiCara et al., 2025).

Recent developments in these theories further enhance their relevance to the study (Awashreh, 2025). Rawlsian theory has been expanded through discussions on global justice and capabilities, incorporating more context-sensitive approaches to inequality (Szabo & Hegde, 2021). Castells' framework has evolved to include the role of digital networks and social media in shaping contemporary activism (Gaulocher et al., 2025). Bourdieu's concept of social capital has been refined to distinguish between different types of networks and their implications for social mobility and empowerment (Diduck, Johnson, et al., 2021). These developments reflect the dynamic nature of the theoretical landscape and underscore the importance of adapting classical theories to contemporary contexts (Sertich, 2021).

In conclusion, the literature review demonstrates that understanding grassroots advocacy networks and their role in advancing social justice requires a multidimensional theoretical approach (Baikady, 2025). The combination of Rawls' Theory of Justice, Castells' Network Society Theory, and Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital provides a comprehensive framework that addresses the main research problem, fills existing gaps in the literature, and supports the formulation of research questions and objectives (Yang & Wang, 2025). By integrating these perspectives, the study offers a novel contribution to the field, highlighting the complex interplay between normative ideals, network structures, and social relations in shaping the politics of social justice in marginalized urban communities (Hegde et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to investigate the dynamics of grassroots advocacy networks and their role in advancing social justice within marginalized urban communities. A qualitative methodology is particularly appropriate for this research because it allows for an in-depth exploration of social processes, meanings, and interactions that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measures (Ocak, 2025). Given that grassroots advocacy involves complex relationships, informal practices, and context-specific strategies, a qualitative approach enables the researcher to understand how actors interpret their experiences, construct collective identities, and engage in political processes. This approach is aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes the importance of subjective meanings and social realities constructed through interaction (Usmani, 2025). By adopting this perspective, the study seeks to uncover the lived experiences of community actors and the nuanced mechanisms through which grassroots advocacy networks operate.

The research design adopted in this study is a qualitative case study design. This design is chosen because it allows for a comprehensive and contextually grounded examination of grassroots advocacy networks within a specific urban setting (Bollen & Nathan, 2025). The case study approach is particularly useful for exploring contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts where the boundaries between the phenomenon and its environment are not clearly defined (Barfield, 2025). In this research, the case study design facilitates an in-depth analysis of how grassroots networks function within marginalized communities, including their organizational structures, advocacy strategies, and interactions with state and non-state actors. The use of a case study also enables the integration of multiple data sources, thereby enhancing the validity and richness of the findings (Raj et al., 2022). Furthermore, this design is consistent with the theoretical framework of the study, which emphasizes the interplay between social justice, network structures, and social capital.

The study is conducted in an urban marginalized community located in the Greater Jakarta metropolitan area, specifically in a densely populated informal settlement area in Tangerang Selatan, Banten Province, Indonesia. This location is selected based on several considerations. First, the area represents a typical example of urban marginalization characterized by limited access to basic services, insecure land tenure, and socio-economic vulnerability. Second, the community has an active presence of grassroots advocacy networks, including local community groups, non-governmental organizations, and informal leaders who engage in various forms of advocacy related to housing rights, environmental issues, and social welfare. Third, the proximity of the area to major urban centers makes it a strategic site for examining the interaction between marginalized communities and formal governance institutions. The selection of this location is therefore intended to provide a relevant and representative context for analyzing the research problem.

The primary data for this study are collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Eneanya, 2021). In-depth interviews are conducted with key informants who are directly involved in grassroots advocacy activities. A total of twelve informants are selected using purposive sampling, a technique that allows the researcher to identify individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic (Ogatis, 2024). The informants include community leaders, activists, members of local organizations, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. To ensure confidentiality and ethical considerations, pseudonyms are used to refer to the informants. For instance, “Mr. Arif” is a community leader who has been actively involved in organizing advocacy campaigns related to housing rights; “Ms. Dewi” is an NGO activist focusing on women’s empowerment; “Mr. Budi” is a youth organizer engaged in environmental advocacy; and “Ms. Lina” is a local government liaison officer who interacts with community groups. The selection of these informants is based on their active involvement in grassroots advocacy networks and their ability to provide diverse perspectives on the research topic.

In addition to the main informants, the study also involves several supporting participants who contribute to the understanding of the broader community context. These participants include residents who are beneficiaries of advocacy initiatives, local volunteers, and informal leaders. A total of eight additional participants are included, bringing the total number of research participants to twenty. The inclusion of these participants allows for triangulation of data and helps to capture a wider range of experiences and perspectives (Khandagale, 2024). The use of pseudonyms such as “Mr. Hasan,” “Ms. Rina,” and “Mr. Andi” ensures the anonymity of the participants while maintaining the authenticity of their contributions.

Participant observation is conducted to complement the interview data and to gain a deeper understanding of the everyday practices of grassroots advocacy networks (Nguyễn & Maxcy, 2020). The researcher engages in community activities, attends meetings, and observes interactions among network members and between the community and external actors. This method provides valuable insights into the informal dynamics of advocacy, including decision-making processes, power relations, and strategies of engagement. Document analysis is also employed to examine relevant materials such as policy documents, organizational reports, meeting minutes, and media coverage (Mackey & O’Shea, 2023). These documents provide additional context and help to validate the findings obtained from interviews and observations.

The data collected in this study are analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that involves identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data (Javed et al., 2025). The analysis process begins with data familiarization, followed by coding, theme development, and interpretation (Bashir & Rahman, 2025). The coding process is both inductive and deductive, allowing themes to emerge from the data while also being informed by the theoretical framework of the study (Yomantas, 2021). For example, themes related to social justice are analyzed using Rawlsian principles, while network dynamics are examined through the lens of Castells' theory, and relational aspects are interpreted using Bourdieu's concept of social capital. This analytical approach ensures that the findings are both empirically grounded and theoretically informed.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the research, several strategies are employed (Eda, 2025). Triangulation is used to cross-validate data from different sources and methods. Member checking is conducted by sharing preliminary findings with selected informants to verify the accuracy of interpretations (Armstrong, 2022). Additionally, the researcher maintains a reflexive journal to document the research process and to reflect on potential biases (Brand, 2021). These measures enhance the trustworthiness of the study and align with the standards of rigorous qualitative research (Smith, 2020).

The technique for drawing conclusions in this study is based on an iterative and interpretive process (Kaligotla et al., 2024). Conclusions are derived through continuous comparison between empirical data and theoretical concepts, allowing for the refinement of interpretations and the development of coherent arguments (Hunt, 2024). The study adopts an inductive logic, where general insights are generated from specific observations (Stewart et al., 2025). However, this inductive process is complemented by theoretical triangulation, ensuring that the conclusions are grounded in established frameworks while also contributing to their development (Malik et al., 2021). The final conclusions are formulated by synthesizing the main themes and relating them to the research questions, objectives, and theoretical framework.

Overall, the methodological approach of this study is designed to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of grassroots advocacy networks and their role in the politics of social justice (Saragih et al., 2024). By combining a qualitative case study design with multiple data collection methods and rigorous analytical techniques, the study offers a robust framework for examining complex social phenomena in marginalized urban contexts. The use of purposive sampling, in-depth interviews, participant observation, and thematic analysis ensures that the findings are both rich in detail and analytically rigorous (Fields & Shaffer, 2022). At the same time, the study remains attentive to ethical considerations and methodological limitations, thereby maintaining the integrity and credibility of the research (Howard & wahle, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal that grassroots advocacy networks play a pivotal and multifaceted role in advancing the politics of social justice within marginalized urban communities, particularly in contexts characterized by structural inequality, limited institutional access, and fragmented governance (Mugamba, 2025). The empirical evidence demonstrates that these networks function not only as channels of representation but also as adaptive political actors capable of negotiating power, mobilizing resources, and reshaping local governance dynamics (DeYoung, 2023). In relation to the main research problem namely the limited understanding of how grassroots advocacy networks navigate political structures to promote social justice the findings indicate that such networks operate through a combination of informal strategies, relational capital, and strategic engagement with formal institutions (Matsuda et al., 2023). This confirms that grassroots advocacy is not merely reactive but constitutes a proactive and sustained political practice embedded within everyday community life (Gil, 2023).

The analysis identifies three major thematic findings: the formation and consolidation of grassroots networks, the strategies of advocacy and political engagement, and the impact of these networks on social justice outcomes. These themes are closely aligned with the theoretical framework employed in this study. From the perspective of Rawls' Theory of Justice, the findings show that grassroots actors actively reinterpret the concept of fairness by advocating for equitable access to

housing, sanitation, and public services (Daramola, 2023). Rather than relying solely on state-defined notions of justice, these actors construct localized interpretations of justice that reflect the lived realities of marginalized populations. This demonstrates the practical application of Rawlsian principles, particularly the difference principle, in a context where formal institutions often fail to prioritize the needs of the least advantaged (Corona et al., 2020).

From the standpoint of Castells' Network Society Theory, the findings highlight the importance of network structures in facilitating collective action and amplifying community voices (Dilay, 2021). Grassroots advocacy networks are shown to operate through both offline and online channels, leveraging social media platforms, community meetings, and informal communication systems to coordinate activities and disseminate information. These networks function as decentralized systems in which leadership is distributed and decision-making processes are participatory. The ability to connect with external actors, including non-governmental organizations and policy stakeholders, further enhances their influence within the broader political landscape. This confirms Castells' assertion that power in contemporary society is increasingly exercised through networks rather than hierarchical institutions (Kaligotla et al., 2024).

Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital provides additional insight into the relational dynamics underpinning grassroots advocacy (Raj et al., 2022). The findings reveal that trust, reciprocity, and shared norms are essential for sustaining collective action within marginalized communities. Social capital is not only a resource for mobilization but also a mechanism for negotiating power and accessing external support. The study identifies both bonding social capital, which strengthens internal cohesion, and bridging social capital, which facilitates connections with external actors. However, the findings also indicate that disparities in access to social capital can create internal hierarchies within networks, thereby reflecting Bourdieu's argument regarding the reproduction of inequality within social structures (Hibbett, 2020).

The following table summarizes key findings derived from the qualitative data, integrating informant perspectives, thematic categories, and theoretical interpretations:

Pseudonym	Position/Role	Key Findings	Theoretical Link	Interpretation
Mr. Arif	Community Leader	Organized housing rights campaigns and negotiated with local authorities	Rawls	Advocacy reflects pursuit of distributive justice for marginalized groups
Ms. Dewi	NGO Activist	Facilitated women's empowerment programs and policy dialogue	Bourdieu	Strengthening social capital through capacity-building initiatives
Mr. Budi	Youth Organizer	Mobilized environmental campaigns using social media	Castells	Use of digital networks to amplify grassroots advocacy
Ms. Lina	Government Liaison	Mediated communication between community and local government	Castells/Bourdieu	Bridging networks enhance institutional access
Mr. Hasan	Resident	Benefited from improved sanitation services	Rawls	Realization of equitable access to public goods
Ms. Rina	Volunteer	Participated in community organizing activities	Bourdieu	Reinforcement of bonding social capital

Pseudonym	Position/Role	Key Findings	Theoretical Link	Interpretation
Mr. Andi	Informal Leader	Coordinated local advocacy meetings	Castells	Network-based leadership and decentralized coordination

These findings directly address the research gap identified in the literature, particularly the lack of integrated analysis linking normative theories of justice with empirical observations of grassroots advocacy (Malik et al., 2021). By combining insights from Rawls, Castells, and Bourdieu, the study demonstrates how grassroots networks translate abstract principles of justice into concrete actions, mediated through network structures and social relationships (Diduck, Patel, et al., 2021). The implementation of these theoretical perspectives reveals that grassroots advocacy is both a normative and practical endeavor, shaped by the interplay between ideals of fairness, technological and organizational networks, and the distribution of social capital (Stewart et al., 2025).

In relation to the research questions, the findings provide comprehensive answers. Grassroots advocacy networks are formed through shared experiences of marginalization and are sustained by strong interpersonal relationships and collective identities. Their advocacy strategies include direct engagement with policymakers, public campaigns, and the use of digital platforms to raise awareness. The interaction between grassroots networks and formal institutions is characterized by both collaboration and tension, reflecting the complex nature of urban governance. The impact of these networks is evident in improved access to services, increased community participation, and greater visibility of marginalized issues in policy discussions.

The findings also align with the objectives of the research. The study successfully identifies the structural and contextual factors influencing grassroots advocacy, including socio-economic conditions, political opportunities, and cultural norms. It examines the strategies employed by these networks and evaluates their effectiveness in achieving social justice outcomes. By doing so, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how grassroots initiatives can influence governance processes and address urban inequality.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the advancement of interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating the applicability of classical theories in contemporary contexts (Lee & Humphrey, 2023). Rawls' theory is extended beyond its original philosophical domain to include practical applications in grassroots advocacy (Wilson et al., 2022). Castells' framework is enriched by empirical evidence highlighting the role of hybrid networks that combine digital and face-to-face interactions (Pabreja & Tiwari, 2021). Bourdieu's concept of social capital is further through the identification of its transformative potential in marginalized communities (Goddard & Magnus, 2023). These contributions underscore the relevance of integrating multiple theoretical perspectives to capture the complexity of social phenomena (Clare, 2021).

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners. They highlight the importance of recognizing and supporting grassroots advocacy networks as legitimate actors in urban governance (Veggeberg, 2021). The study suggests that inclusive policies should be designed to facilitate collaboration between community actors and formal institutions, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of social justice initiatives. The role of digital technologies in strengthening advocacy efforts also points to the need for expanding access to information and communication tools within marginalized communities (Gravante, 2024).

Academically, the study provides a robust empirical foundation for future research on grassroots advocacy, social justice, and urban governance (Tesfa & Lowenhaupt, 2023). It demonstrates the value of qualitative methods in capturing the nuanced dynamics of social interactions and political processes. The integration of multiple data sources and theoretical perspectives enhances the analytical

depth of the study and contributes to the development of more comprehensive research frameworks (Bashir & Rahman, 2025).

In the broader discussion, the findings are consistent with previous studies that emphasize the importance of grassroots participation in promoting social justice (Kang & Weatherly, 2025). However, this study goes further by providing a more detailed and context-specific analysis of how advocacy networks operate in marginalized urban settings. In relation to the main problem, previous research has often treated grassroots actors as peripheral to formal governance structures (Rikimani, 2024). This study challenges that assumption by demonstrating that grassroots networks are central to the negotiation of power and the realization of justice (Ocak, 2025).

Regarding the research gap, earlier studies have tended to focus on either normative theories or empirical observations, without adequately integrating the two (Putra et al., 2024). This study bridges that gap by linking theoretical concepts with empirical findings, thereby providing a more holistic understanding of grassroots advocacy (Yang & Wang, 2025). In terms of the research questions, the findings not only confirm existing knowledge but also offer new insights into the strategies and impacts of grassroots networks.

The discussion also reinforces the relevance of the research objectives and the significance of the study. The theoretical, practical, and academic benefits identified in the introduction are substantiated by the empirical findings. The study demonstrates that grassroots advocacy networks are not only effective in addressing immediate community needs but also contribute to broader processes of social transformation (Estrada & Maldonado, 2024).

In conclusion, the results of this study provide compelling evidence that grassroots advocacy networks are essential actors in the politics of social justice within marginalized urban communities (Mafu, 2021). By integrating theoretical insights with empirical data, the study offers a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how these networks operate, the challenges they face, and the impact they achieve. The findings contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field and provide a solid foundation for future research and practice (Goessling et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study lead to the conclusion that grassroots advocacy networks constitute a central and transformative force in advancing the politics of social justice within marginalized urban communities. Drawing from the results and discussion, it is evident that these networks are not merely supportive or complementary actors, but rather strategic agents that actively reshape local governance dynamics, negotiate power relations, and advocate for equitable resource distribution. The study demonstrates that grassroots advocacy emerges from shared experiences of marginalization and evolves through collective action grounded in trust, reciprocity, and locally embedded knowledge. These characteristics enable grassroots networks to respond flexibly to socio-political challenges while maintaining strong community legitimacy.

In relation to the main research problem, the study confirms that the limited understanding of how grassroots advocacy networks navigate political structures can be addressed through an integrative analytical framework that combines normative, structural, and relational perspectives. The findings show that grassroots actors engage in both formal and informal political processes, including negotiation with state institutions, mobilization of public support, and utilization of digital platforms. These strategies allow them to overcome institutional barriers and amplify marginalized voices in policy arenas. The political agency of grassroots networks is therefore a critical factor in bridging the gap between marginalized communities and governance systems.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study affirms the relevance and complementarity of the three theoretical frameworks employed. Rawls' Theory of Justice provides a normative foundation that underscores the moral imperative of addressing inequality and prioritizing the needs of the least advantaged. The empirical findings illustrate how grassroots advocacy networks operationalize these principles in practice by advocating for fair access to housing, services, and participation. Castells' Network Society Theory is validated through the observed importance of decentralized, network-based

structures in facilitating collective action and enabling communication across multiple levels. The integration of digital and face-to-face interactions further reinforces the adaptability of grassroots networks in contemporary urban contexts. Meanwhile, Bourdieu's Theory of Social Capital is reflected in the crucial role of social relationships, trust, and shared norms in sustaining advocacy efforts and enabling resource mobilization. Together, these theories provide a comprehensive explanation of how grassroots advocacy operates at the intersection of justice, networks, and social relations.

The study also addresses the identified research gap by demonstrating that grassroots advocacy networks can be effectively analyzed through an interdisciplinary approach that links theory with empirical practice. The findings reveal that previous research has often overlooked the dynamic and context-specific nature of grassroots advocacy, particularly in marginalized urban environments. By providing a detailed and contextually grounded analysis, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how grassroots networks function and how they can influence social justice outcomes. The novelty of the research lies in its ability to integrate multiple theoretical perspectives into a cohesive framework that captures the complexity of grassroots political action.

In relation to the research questions, the study concludes that grassroots advocacy networks are formed through shared grievances and collective identities, sustained by strong social ties, and strengthened through strategic alliances with external actors. Their advocacy strategies are diverse and adaptive, ranging from direct engagement with policymakers to the use of digital tools for awareness-raising and mobilization. The impact of these networks is evident in improved access to public services, increased community participation, and greater recognition of marginalized issues in policy discussions. However, the study also acknowledges the challenges faced by grassroots networks, including limited resources, internal inequalities, and resistance from formal institutions.

The conclusions also reaffirm the achievement of the research objectives. The study successfully identifies the factors shaping grassroots advocacy, analyzes their strategies and interactions, and evaluates their contributions to social justice. In doing so, it highlights the importance of recognizing grassroots networks as legitimate and influential actors in urban governance. The findings suggest that inclusive and participatory approaches to policymaking are essential for addressing urban inequality and fostering sustainable development.

The implications of this research are significant across theoretical, practical, and academic dimensions. Theoretically, the study advances interdisciplinary scholarship by demonstrating the value of integrating diverse frameworks to analyze complex social phenomena. Practically, it provides insights for policymakers and practitioners on how to engage with grassroots networks and support their initiatives. Academically, it offers a foundation for future research that seeks to explore similar dynamics in different contexts or through alternative methodological approaches.

In conclusion, this study establishes that grassroots advocacy networks are indispensable to the realization of social justice in marginalized urban communities. Their ability to mobilize resources, build collective identities, and engage in political processes positions them as key drivers of social change. By linking empirical findings with theoretical insights, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of the politics of grassroots advocacy and underscores its significance in addressing contemporary urban challenges.

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