

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Social media is often called the screen era media. It is an online platform that enables individuals to share their thoughts and broadcast them to the public domain. The popularity of social media platforms is continuously rising, and we see a wide array of users, such as Facebook, Instagram, and X. Each of these platforms offers distinct features and caters to different audiences. Nonetheless, their primary purpose is to serve as a means for users to express their thoughts and engage with communities that have similar interests, allowing for the swift, straightforward, and limitless exchange of information across distances and time zones (Arijeniwa & Precious Nwaoboli, 2023).

There is a great deal of content circulating on social media, one of which narrates political issues. The development of social media has transformed the way political actors communicate messages, shape public opinion, and influence society. Instagram, as a visual platform, has become a strategic space for the dissemination of political discourse through text, images, hashtags, and narratives. This shows that social media has been rising as a space for political

discourse for the past few years. This marks one of the transformations in contemporary communication and democratic participation.

For the past few years, social media has shown its function as a global political space that provides a platform for mass mobilization and digital resistance. For instance, in 2024, students from Bangladesh initiated a movement called Monsoon Uprising that opposes the public employment quota system, which is considered unfair and discriminatory. Activists spread videos, memes, and infographics that increase solidarity and public awareness through digital platforms such as Facebook. This makes the online space the main engine of collective resistance (Abir et al., 2025). In Morocco, the Gen Z 212 movement emerged in 2025. It is a youth-led protest against corruption, poor public services, and social inequality ahead of the 2030 World Cup. Social media such as Discord, TikTok, and Instagram are used to organize actions, share information, and create a shared political identity outside the control of conventional media (Hussain, 2025). What remains vivid in our minds is the significant achievement of Gen-Z in Nepal, who organized large-scale protests in 2025. This was sparked by the Nepalese government's prohibition on Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp use within the country. Young people used TikTok and VPNs to communicate and mobilize national

protests despite being blocked. It shows that social media has become a symbol of resistance against barriers to freedom of expression. These three cases show how social media, as a digital space, has evolved into the primary medium for modern political movements, where solidarity, identity, and social action naturally arise from online participation.

Social media is an effective way to raise political awareness among the youth. They can access and follow political developments without relying on conventional media due to the rapid flow of information that is easily accessible. The interactions in digital space encourage critical discourse and awareness of social and political situations. Social media is now not only a source of entertainment for the youth, but also a place to learn and participate in politics. One of Bertolt Brecht's, a German playwright, poet, and theatre director, famous quotes, which emphasizes the importance of political awareness and participation. His quotes include, "The worst illiterate is the political illiterate, he doesn't hear, doesn't speak, nor participate in the political events." Thus, it is very important for the youth in order to stay informed about political issues, and social media plays an important role in supporting that matter.

Furthermore, in Indonesia, social media has become an important platform in providing space for interactions and expanding public participation in political discourse (Noorikhshan et al., 2023). Many influencers and famous people in Indonesia use their platforms to voice out Indonesia's political issues. Two of them are Salsa Erwina Hutagulung and Ferry Irwandi. These two are figures who actively shape Indonesia's political discourse on social media through different approaches, though both are equally influential. Salsa is a graduated of International Relations from Gadjah Mada University. She is now building her career in Denmark. Salsa is known as a figure who combines academic depth, professionalism, and the courage to critique political issues. This can be seen at the time she challenged a member of parliament to a public debate on allowances and accountability. Her podcast and Instagram material emphasizes social literacy, public policy education, and fostering critical thinking in young listeners. Ferry Irwandi, a former Ministry of Finance employee and STAN graduate, he provides thoughtful analysis on social matters, political situations, public oversight of those in power, and governmental strategies. He has rapidly established himself as an opinion leader among young people thanks to his direct and

approachable communication style. They made a big impact with their social media content; they encourage young people to challenge, examine, and actively engage in democratic discourse in addition to consuming political content. They also improve digital political literacy and expand the forum for public criticism.

Several political movements in Indonesia, such as #IndonesiaGelap, #TolakRUUTNI, #KaburAjaDulu, #KawalPutusanMK, and #WargaJagaWarga, are mobilized using social media. These movements have effectively raised public knowledge and participation in political issues through the use of internet channels. These movements demonstrate how hashtags function not only as markers of collective emotion but also as tools for organizing, disseminating information, and applying pressure to decision-makers.

For instance, the #TolakPolitikDinasti movement illustrates how social media users can express strong criticism of dynastic politics and advocate for greater accountability, transparency, and equity in governance. Through online forums, viral posts, infographics, and user-generated commentary, social media transforms individual concerns into collective action,

enabling political discourse to extend far beyond the boundaries of traditional media outlets.

One of the various social media sites where people express their political views is Instagram. Instagram helps spread political information among youth, which creates a space for the development of political consciousness and initiative. Instagram users can utilize images, videos, and infographics to participate in political conversation. Young people who might not actively follow political news on television and in newspapers can now more easily get information about political concerns in Indonesia thanks to the usage of these media as a tool. Stories, reels, and carousel posts are some of their interactive elements that allow political topics to spread quickly and give Indonesian young a platform to voice their ideas.

Independent media outlets that concentrate on social and political topics have emerged as a result of Instagram's expanding political influence. These platforms provide information in a clear, data-driven way by utilizing Instagram's visual and narrative format. One of the autonomous Instagram media platforms that discusses Indonesian socio-politic is called What Is Up Indonesia (WIUI). WIUI presents fact-based journalism

using laws and other pertinent documents. WIUI primarily targets Indonesians who were educated and raised abroad, are not proficient in Bahasa Indonesia, and are unfamiliar with the complexities of Indonesian politics.

One of Indonesia's political movements, spread through What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram, is #ResetIndonesia. The background of this political movement is the emergence of protests by the Indonesian people against injustice and Indonesian government policies that are considered to be unfair. The word "Reset" used in #ResetIndonesia is not only addressed to Indonesia's House of Representatives, Indonesia's Members of the People's Consultative Assembly, Indonesian National Police, or Indonesia's Constitutional Court. The word "Reset" symbolizes the Indonesian people's dismissal of injustice and their demand for the government to reset existing policies for the benefit of the people (Kumara, 2025).

The #ResetIndonesia movement on social media has generated public discourse demanding that the Indonesian government fulfill people's demands. These demands are known as 17+8: People's Demands, this movement cannot be separated from the sociopolitical context in Indonesia, which is marked by

growing public dissatisfaction with the government's performance and policies. This movement developed as a discourse that followed on from #ResetIndonesia, which emerged due to public concern over the state of democracy, justice, and also disturbing regulations made by the Indonesian government. In this case, the 17+8 discourse emerged in order to outline the people's demands in a more structured manner (Gokce, 2025).

The demands of this movement are directed at the Indonesian government, particularly President Prabowo Subianto, DPR, political party leaders, Polri, TNI, and the Ministries dealing with economic affairs. These demands include rejecting regulations that are considered to threaten democracy and human rights, urging an end to violence committed by the authorities and the criminalization of civilians and activists, also demanding transparency, accountability, and fair law enforcement. In addition, this movement also highlights issues of public welfare, such as economic issues and civil liberties, placing the state as the party responsible for protecting the rights of the people.

One of the main triggers for the emergence of the 17+8 Movement was the large number of Indonesian government

policies that were considered unfair to the public interest. One policy that triggered public anger was the plan to increase the salaries and allowances of members of the legislature, which was perceived as a symbol of the inequality between the political elite and the civilian population (YLBHI, 2025).

The discussion of the revision of the Draft Law on TNI and the Draft Law on Polri also became the reason for the emergence of the 17+8 Movement. The revision of these two laws was seen as triggering the expansion of the authority of security institutions in the civil sphere, which could also weaken the principles of civilian supremacy and democracy. This issue sparked public outrage because it was considered an agenda to revive the practice of the dual function of the state apparatus (BBC, 2025).

What Is Up Indonesia was chosen as the source of research data due to the fact that What Is Up Indonesia is one of the independent media in Indonesia that presents various information on social and political issues in Indonesia. What Is Up Indonesia is known for raising controversial public policies and legislative issues in the year 2020, such as Draft of the New Indonesian Criminal Code (RUU KUHP), the Draft of Law on the

Elimination of Sexual Violence (RUU P-KS), and the Omnibus Law. During that year, What Is Up Indonesia was created due to the difficulties faced by the Indonesian diaspora in understanding national issues due to language barriers. Therefore, What Is Up Indonesia was created with the aim of translating and explaining these issues into English as a result the issues could be easily understood by the diaspora.

The data of the research were obtained from What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram account, which is one of the most widely accessible social media platforms, particularly among Generation Z. As a demographic group currently in a productive stage of life, Generation Z relies heavily on information to support daily activities, decision-making processes, and social engagement. Instagram functions not only as a space for social interaction but also as an important channel for information dissemination and news consumption. Supporting this argument, Sevilla et al., (2024), conducted a research involving five Generation Z students to find out how this generation uses social media as a source of news. The findings revealed that Generation Z shows a strong preference for accessing news through social media platforms. This preference is primarily influenced by the rapid

dissemination of information, ease of access, and user-friendly features offered by social media.

This study attempts to understand how political discourse is constructed and produced in these Instagram posts. In order to do this, the researcher employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a technique that reveals the structure of ideology, power, and marginalization in the text. CDA provides tools to uncover how language and discourse are used to shape social reality, reveal hidden ideologies, and influence public perception.

1.2 Limitation of the Problem

The scope of this study is restricted to the examination of political discourse in Instagram posts from What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram posts regarding the 17+8: People's Demands movement. This research specifically focused on What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram posts titled "17+8 Explainer Simplified: A Summary of the People's Demands", part 1 and part 2. Other posts from What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram account in the form of Instagram stories, video reels, or any other formats that are still related to the 17+8: People's Demands movement are excluded from the scope of this research. The researcher also includes the comments under both parts of the 17+8 Explainer

Simplified posts in analyzing the discursive practice. In analyzing What Is Up Indonesia's content, the researcher only used the three-dimensional model of discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough, which analyzes a discourse from the text-level, discursive practice level, and sociocultural practice level.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does What Is Up Indonesia represent the 17+8: People's Demands movement through their Instagram posts?
2. How are ideologies reflected in the 17+8 discourse constructed by What Is Up Indonesia using Norman Fairclough's CDA framework as the primary lens?

1.4 Objectives of the Research

1. To describe and interpret the representation of the 17+8 Movement in What Is Up Indonesia's Instagram posts.
2. To discover the ideologies reflected in the 17+8: People's Demands movement discourse constructed by What Is Up Indonesia.