



Representation of Pink and Green Symbols as Netizens' Resistance in the 17+8 Movement of People's Demands on Instagram

Ariza Qurrata A'yun¹, Aiska Safna Fitri²

^{1, 2} UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Corresponding Author: Ariza Qurrata A'yun, E-mail: azzaariza@gmail.com

Received June 20, 2026

Revised June 21, 2026

Accepted June 22, 2026

Abstract

Instagram functions not only as a platform for information sharing but also as a digital public sphere that enables people to express aspirations and collective resistance. This phenomenon is reflected in the 17+8 People's Demands Movement, which was represented through the use of pink and green color symbols that later evolved into the *Brave Pink* and *Hero Green* trends on Instagram. This study aims to analyze the representation of pink and green symbols as forms of Indonesian netizens' resistance within the 17+8 People's Demands Movement. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on color symbols as a medium of digital resistance communication, whereas previous studies have predominantly examined resistance through textual narratives and hashtags. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which examines denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. The data were collected from Instagram posts containing pink and green symbols related to the movement through observation, documentation, and literature review. The findings reveal that, at the denotative level, the pink and green symbols function as the visual identity of the movement. At the connotative level, these symbols represent courage, solidarity, hope, and the spirit of struggle in articulating socio-political demands. At the mythical level, the symbols construct a narrative of public resistance against social inequality through digital participation. The study also demonstrates that Instagram serves as a digital public sphere that facilitates the production, distribution, and exchange of meanings in a participatory manner, thereby strengthening collective awareness among netizens. This study concludes that visual symbols on social media function as a medium of political communication and digital activism in fostering collective resistance in the digital era.

Keyword: Representation, Pink and green symbols, Netizen resistance, 17+8 People's Demands Movement, Instagram, Semiotics

Journal Homepage

<https://ojs.iainbatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/semantik/index>

This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

How to cite:

<https://ejournal.uinmybatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/semantik/issue/view/371>

Published by:

Universitas Islam Negeri Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar Press

INTRODUCTION

Technology is advancing at a rapid pace in today's contemporary world. These advancements have undoubtedly brought about significant changes in people's lives, particularly in terms of communication and access to information two aspects that are

inextricably linked to human existence. One tangible manifestation of this technological advancement, especially in the field of communication, is the emergence of digital media, which has created new spaces and methods for people to engage in social interaction, exchange information, and disseminate ideas. In Indonesia itself, internet-based digital media is increasingly being used as a means of communication and information exchange (Arif & Ariza Qurrata A'yun, 2023).

Digital media, as a result of advancements in information technology, has introduced various new forms of interactive communication channels, one of which is social media. Social media is defined as a communication tool that allows users to easily share, create, and participate in content creation. Manning (as cited in Kartini) explains that social media is a term used to refer to a type of “new media” that enables people to contribute interactively. With the advent of social media, people can interact with one another on a much larger scale due to digital and mobile technologies (Sikumbang et al., 2024). Therefore, it can be said that social media serves many functions in supporting human communication. Social media, in its application, is a platform that utilizes online networks or the internet, allowing users to access the various types of information it contains.

One of the most popular visual-based social media platforms in Indonesia is Instagram. According to data compiled by We Are Social, Instagram ranked second behind WhatsApps the most widely used social media platform in Indonesia in 2025, with a user penetration rate of 84.6 percent (“We Are Social Data Report,” 2025). This high figure indicates that Instagram reaches a wide audience and has a relatively high level of user engagement. This opens up the possibility that Instagram not only functions as a platform for sharing photos and other visual content but has also evolved into a space for social interaction, a means of disseminating information, and a platform for shaping public opinion.

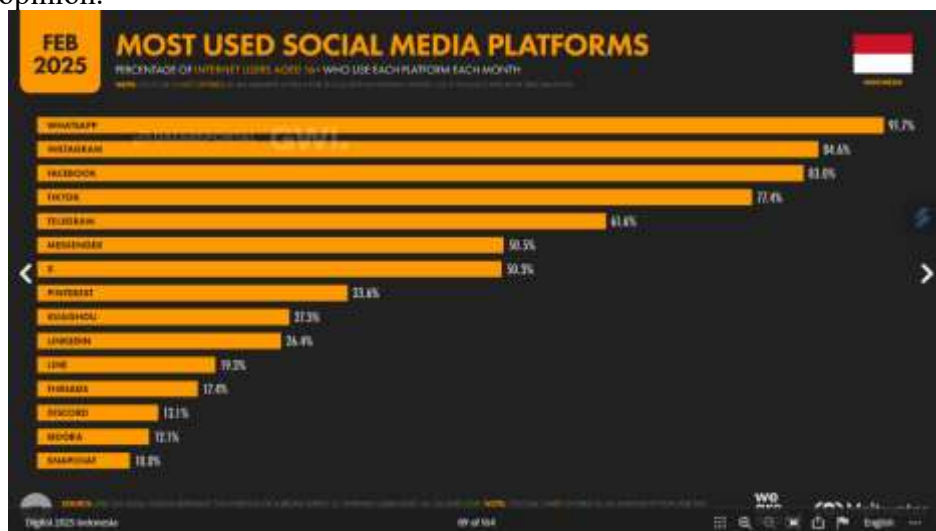


Figure 1.1 Most Popular Social Media Platforms

Instagram is an app commonly used to share photos and engaging visual content (Sikumbang et al., 2024). As one of the most popular social media platforms, widely used by many people in Indonesia, Instagram serves not only as a means of sharing information and entertainment. It can also serve as a medium for identity representation, self-expression, and collective solidarity. This makes Instagram particularly well-suited as a tool for disseminating information, discourse, knowledge, and more through active and creative visual communication. Through Instagram, content creators can convey

messages packaged in visually appealing ways, thereby increasing their appeal to audiences. Thus, Instagram is not merely a form of entertainment but can also be used as a strategic medium for visual communication that influences the formation of perspectives (perceptions), identities, and patterns of social interaction in the digital space (Sari, 2017).

However, to date, communication studies have largely focused on digital resistance in the form of narratives, discourses, texts, and verbally conveyed messages. Meanwhile, the role of visual symbols as tools of resistance has not been explored in depth. Yet, visual symbols such as color possess semiotic power to convey messages more concisely, emotionally, and collectively, thereby serving as a “shortcut” to meaning in digital communication. In this context, a social movement emerged on social media, particularly on Instagram. This movement included a number of demands formulated as a form of netizens’ resistance to various social, political, and economic issues currently unfolding in Indonesia, and it reached its peak in late August 2025: the “17+8 People’s Demands” Movement.



Figure 1. 2 An example of the use of pink and green symbols in netizens’ resistance, Instagram/@jeromepolin

The 17+8 People’s Demands movement represents the accumulation of public demands that have emerged in the public sphere as a symbol of netizen resistance. On the other hand, this resistance is also expressed through color symbols. In this context, color symbols have emerged that have given rise to a trend: the Brave Pink and Hero Green trend. These trends utilize two colors as forms of resistance: pink and green. The use of color as a symbol demonstrates that color serves not merely as an aesthetic element but also as a medium of representation. Through the visualization of color, netizens can build solidarity, articulate counter-narratives, and strengthen collective identity in the digital public sphere.

According to Kompas.com, the choice of these two colors refers to two iconic figures in the demonstration that took place on August 28, 2025. The color pink is associated with the hijab worn by Ana’s mother, who bravely stood up to a police barricade while waving the red-and-white flag in front of the DPR/MPR Complex in Jakarta. Meanwhile, the color green refers to the ride-hailing jacket worn by the late Affan

Kurniawan, a ride-hailing driver who died after being run over by a Brimob tactical vehicle in Pejompongan, Central Jakarta, while at the demonstration site (Darmawan & Dzalfaroh, n.d., 2025).

This phenomenon is considered interesting because it did not emerge spontaneously but was influenced by a broader social context. The use of pink and green is positioned as symbols carrying specific meanings that have been collectively agreed upon and massively reproduced. By using these two colors as symbols on Instagram such as changing profile pictures or posts to pink and green Instagram users construct a new identity that is not only personal but also signifies their involvement in the resistance movement within the digital realm. Therefore, the main issue in this study lies not only in the widespread use of the pink and green symbols but also in how these symbols are constructed, interpreted, and represented as tools of communication for netizens' resistance.

This phenomenon of netizen resistance can be linked to the concept of the public sphere as proposed by Jürgen Habermas. The public sphere is a concept introduced by Jürgen Habermas to describe a social arena where citizens can gather, engage in rational discussion, and shape public opinion, which can then influence political policy. Furthermore, Habermas emphasizes that an ideal public sphere is characterized by equal access, freedom of expression, and independence from both state and market control (Olubenga, 2017). In this regard, Instagram can be viewed as a form of an inclusive and participatory digital public sphere. Through Instagram, the public can shape opinions, voice criticism, and advocate for the public interest.

Furthermore, the use of color cannot be viewed merely as a design element, but also as a symbol with ideological significance. To unravel this meaning, Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis is employed; this analysis can be conducted through two stages: denotation, connotation, and myth. This will allow for a deeper understanding of how netizens' resistance is formed, exchanged, and interpreted on social media. Purnamasari (in Rayhaniah) explains that semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, which are essential to communication. Semiotics is a field of study that examines signs as a means of representing various things, ranging from objects, ideas, and values to situations, emotions, and so on. According to Roland Barthes, semiotics is the study of signs and their meanings, particularly how visual elements and text can shape narratives and influence the audience's perspective (Purnamasari et al., 2024).

This research is also relevant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) published by the government in Government Regulation No. 111/2022, including SDG Goal 16, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and SDG Goal 17, Partnerships for the Goals ("SDGs Indonesia," n.d.). Digital resistance through visual symbols—such as the use of the colors pink and green is a form of public participation in strengthening collective awareness, fostering peaceful spaces for discussion, and promoting social collaboration in the digital sphere. Thus, this study not only examines digital resistance through color symbols but also provides insight into how public participation on social media can support inclusive and sustainable social development.

In terms of novelty, this study offers a new contribution by examining the use of the colors pink and green as a form of representation of netizens' resistance in the "17+8 People's Demands" Movement on Instagram through Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective, thereby revealing the layers of meaning hidden behind these colors. This study also expands the examination of the concept of public space as a venue for voicing collective digital resistance through the use of specific symbols.

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding how visual symbols particularly color can be used to shape the discourse of resistance in the digital public sphere. Academically, research on these symbols is expected to enrich the literature in the field of communication, particularly regarding representation, semiotics, and digital media studies. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere in the context of the digital world. Meanwhile, practically, this research is expected to provide an understanding of visual communication strategies in digital social movements that can serve as inspiration for forms of public resistance in the digital space, particularly in addressing various social, political, and economic issues emerging in society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach as an effort to understand the meaning embedded in a social phenomenon, rather than to measure or calculate data numerically. The data used are qualitative, presented in the form of words, sentences, narratives, and visual elements such as images (Ramadhan, 2021). This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design with semiotic analysis. Descriptive research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the research object based on the data obtained. According to Polit and Beck as cited in Yuliani, the term “qualitative descriptive” is used in qualitative descriptive research and is typically applied to social phenomena. Thus, qualitative descriptive research can be understood as a research method with a simple approach that follows an inductive process—starting from the analysis of a process or event and ultimately leading to a conclusion (Yuliani, 2018).

In this study, the units of analysis are pink and green symbols on Instagram, including various posts and profile photos that feature pink and green symbols. Qualitative data was used, focusing on pink and green signs and symbols, with primary data obtained directly from pink and green symbols on Instagram and secondary data obtained from literature, academic journals, books, articles, online news, and other credible sources. Furthermore, data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and literature review. Data analysis employed Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis, which divides meaning into two levels: denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Phenomenon of Netizen Resistance on Instagram

Technological advancements and the rise of social media have transformed the way people express their critical views in response to social and political issues, one of which is engaging in digital resistance through social media. Instagram, as one of the most popular visual-based social media platforms, is frequently used in this context. Instagram no longer serves merely as a platform for sharing visuals; it is also used by netizens to construct narratives, foster a collective identity, and engage in symbolic resistance. In this context, Instagram functions as a space for digital resistance, demonstrating that resistance does not always take the form of physical actions in the real world but can also be carried out through social media using specific, mutually agreed-upon symbols.

The phenomenon of netizen resistance on Instagram emerged in response to the demonstrations that took place in Indonesia in late August 2025. These events sparked numerous collective expressions in the digital space, particularly on Instagram. This

phenomenon was characterized by the use of specific visual symbols that were reproduced and adopted by netizens in the digital space and widely shared by various users ranging from personal accounts and organizations to numerous influencers who joined the movement. Netizens utilized these visual symbols as a means to express criticism, empathy, and solidarity with the victims, as well as to address the social dynamics unfolding during the demonstrations.

This phenomenon of netizen resistance is carried out through the use of symbols often known as the “Brave Pink” and “Hero Green” trends. These trends employ the colors pink and green as symbols of resistance. Pink and green are used on a massive scale and applied across various forms of content, including profile pictures by altering their color tones as well as in diverse visual content such as posters and graphic designs. These trends have formed a recognizable pattern of resistance that is widely adopted by netizens. Through this process, color is no longer merely a visual element with purely aesthetic value but has become a symbol carrying social and political messages.

The emergence of the “Brave Pink” and “Hero Green” trends was initially driven by various issues that were increasingly causing public concern—ranging from social and political to economic matters. It all began with a statement by a member of the House of Representatives (DPR) that subsequently went viral on social media. The statement was made by TB Hasanuddin, a member of Commission I of the DPR, who claimed that the net monthly salary of DPR members reached Rp100 juta—equivalent to Rp3 juta per day. What drew particular attention from this statement was the size of the official housing allowance, which was replaced with a housing allowance of approximately 50 million rupiah (Chronology of the Viral Story: DPR Salary of 3 Million Rupiah per Day—Receives 12 Million Rupiah in Rice Allowance, 2025).

This statement drew sharp criticism from the public because the figure was seen as far removed from the economic reality of the majority of Indonesians. Meanwhile, in response to the viral statement, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives Sufmi Dasco explained that the housing allowance is only provided for one year, specifically from October 2024 to October 2025. Dasco noted that the allowance would be used to rent a home for 5 years. He explained that the DPR's monthly salary figure of Rp100 million is due to the inclusion of the housing allowance; once the housing allowance is no longer provided, the total will not be that high (Akbar, 2025).

The policy regarding allowances for members of the House of Representatives has become a major public issue. Furthermore, the transparency of the amounts of their salaries and allowances has also been called into question. These figures are perceived as being at odds with the economic conditions of the public, which is currently facing various pressures, such as rising living costs and growing disparities in welfare. This situation subsequently sparked a wave of public criticism and disappointment. The public demanded that these allowances be rejected and emphasized the importance of transparency and accountability in the management of state funds, particularly regarding the salaries and benefits of government officials.

Public dissatisfaction with this policy was linked to a series of demonstrations that took place in late August 2025 in various regions of Indonesia, including Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, Makassar, and Medan:

1. Demonstration on Monday, August 25, 2025



Figure 1.4 Protest in front of the House of Representatives building in Jakarta on August 25, 2025, as demonstrators demanded a rejection of the salary increase for House members, Tempo/Amson Probel,

This marked the beginning of the protests, which took place early in the week. The demonstrations were attended by people from various segments of society, including students, merchants, online motorcycle taxi drivers, and college students. They expressed their disappointment with House of Representatives members, particularly regarding demands related to the increase in their allowances. The demonstrators demanded that housing allowances and the planned salary increase for DPR members be canceled, as well as greater salary transparency.¹⁰⁸ In addition, the demonstration also called for the disclosure of alleged cases involving the family of former President Joko Widodo and demanded the impeachment of Gibran Rakabuming Raka from the office of vice president. Other issues included tax hikes, the national debt controversy, and the disparity in living standards between DPR members and the general public (August 25 Protesters Set Motorcycles on Fire and Topple Busway Dividers | tempo.co, 2025).

2. Protest on Thursday, August 28, 2025



Figure 1. 5 Demonstration in front of the House of Representatives building in Jakarta by a joint student protest group, Tempo/Ade Ridwan Yandwiputra

The demonstration was attended by labor unions, college students, and high school students. Labor unions held rallies raising various issues. They put forward six demands: the abolition of the outsourcing system; an end to low wages; an end to layoffs; the acceleration of deliberations on the Labor Bill; the passage of the Asset Forfeiture Bill; and a call for the House of Representatives to revise the Election Law. The demonstration proceeded peacefully and dispersed around noon (Chronology of the Demonstration Protesting the House of Representatives That Escalated into Looting | tempo.co, 2025).

3. Demonstration on Saturday, August 29, 2025



Figure 1. 6 Demonstration in front of the Metro Jaya Regional Police Headquarters in Jakarta by students from BEM SI and BEM UI, Tempo/Taufan Rengganis

Thousands of protesters gathered at the Metro Jaya Regional Police Headquarters in South Jakarta. The demonstration was held to protest the repressive actions of law enforcement officers during the previous day's demonstration; one particularly highlighted incident was the death of an online motorcycle taxi driver who was run over by a Brimob tactical vehicle (Thousands Storm Metro Jaya Police Headquarters to Protest Police Violence During Demonstration | tempo.co, 2025).

In response to the various demands raised during this widespread demonstration, the "17+8 People's Demands" movement emerged, initiated by social media activists to unify the demonstrators' various demands. Additionally, the number 17+8 was inspired by Indonesia's Independence Day on August 17. The movement gained traction across various social media platforms, particularly Instagram, through the use of pink and green symbols—known as the "Brave Pink" and "Hero Green" trends—which represent two iconic figures in the demonstrations (The Origins of the 17+8 Movement | tempo.co, 2025).

The "17+8" narrative has been championed by a number of public figures, influencers, and activists. Among them are Jerome Polin (a YouTuber and content creator), Andovi da Lopez (an actor and comedian), Salsa Erwina Hutagalung (a content creator and activist), Abigail Limuria (co-founder of "What's Is Up Indonesia?"), JS Khairen (an Indonesian novelist who writes across various genres), Fathia Izati Malaka (a musician and activist), Andhyta F Utami (an environmental economist), Cania Citta (an activist), and Cheryl Marella (a journalist) (Wijaya, 2025).

The "17+8 People's Demands" include the demands from the August 28, 2025, labor demonstration as well as those from 211 civil society organizations listed on the website of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI). The "17+8" refers to a collection of public demands consisting of two parts. The first part consists of 17 demands that must be fulfilled within one week, with a deadline of September 5, 2025. The second part consists of 8 demands that must be fulfilled within one year, with a deadline of August 31, 2026 (Akashi, 2025).

These demands were submitted to six parties and include, among other things (Sijabat, 2025):

- 1) 17 Demands of the People (deadline: September 5, 2025)
 - Tasks for President Prabowo Subianto
 - a) Withdraw the TNI from civilian security duties and ensure that demonstrators are not criminalized.

- b) Form an independent investigative team to look into the cases of Affan Kurniawan, Umar Amarudin, and all victims of violence by law enforcement during the August 28–30 demonstrations, with a clear and transparent mandate.
 - Tasks for the House of Representatives (DPR)
 - a) Freeze salary and allowance increases for DPR members and cancel new benefits (including pensions).
 - b) Publish budget transparency (salaries, allowances, housing, and DPR facilities).
 - c) Urge the DPR Ethics Committee to investigate problematic members (including through the Corruption Eradication Commission, KPK).
 - Duties of Political Party Chairs
 - a) Dismiss or impose strict sanctions on DPR members who act unethically and provoke public outrage.
 - b) Announce the party's commitment to stand with the people amid the crisis.
 - c) Engage party members in public dialogue with students and civil society.
 - d) A public commitment from the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) not to intervene in civilian affairs during the democratic crisis.
 - Duties of the Indonesian National Police
 - a) Release all detained demonstrators.
 - b) Stop police violence and comply with existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) for crowd control.
 - c) Arrest and prosecute, in a transparent manner, members and commanders who commit or order actions that violate human rights.
 - Duties of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI)
 - a) Immediately return to barracks and cease involvement in civilian security operations.
 - b) Enforce internal discipline to ensure TNI members do not assume the functions of the National Police.
 - c) The TNI must publicly commit to staying out of the civilian sphere during this democratic crisis.
 - Duties of the Ministry of the Economy
 - a) Ensure a living wage for the entire workforce (including but not limited to teachers, laborers, healthcare workers, and ride-hailing drivers) throughout Indonesia.
 - b) Implement emergency measures to prevent mass layoffs and protect contract workers.
 - c) Open a dialogue with labor unions to find solutions regarding the minimum wage and outsourcing.
- 2) 8 Demands of the People (deadline: August 31, 2025)
- a) Carry out a massive purge and reform of the House of Representatives.
 - b) Reform political parties and strengthen oversight of the executive branch.
 - c) Develop a plan for a more equitable tax reform.
 - d) Enact and enforce a law on the confiscation of corrupt officials' assets.
 - e) Reform police leadership and systems to ensure they are professional and humane.
 - f) The Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) must return to their barracks, without exception.

- g) Strengthen the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) and independent oversight institutions.
- h) Review labor laws.

The “17+8 People’s Demands” narrative, along with the pink and green symbols, has spread widely and garnered attention from people across various sectors, including the general public, public figures, influencers, and celebrities who wish to continue advocating for truth and justice. The pink and green symbols have spread widely on social media, particularly on Instagram—a platform primarily oriented toward visuals—through personal posts, reposts of solidarity content, and profile picture changes featuring shades of pink and green. Thus, the pink and green symbols on Instagram are not merely an aesthetic trend but also a form of communication that reflects solidarity, the collective emotions of the public or netizens, and serves as an identity of resistance during that period.

a. Roland Barthes’s Semiotic Analysis

1) The Color Pink

The color pink is a symbol used by netizens in their digital resistance against various social, political, and economic issues that trouble society. At the denotative level, the color pink is defined as a light red or a red mixed with white or a whitish hue, as stated in the KBBI. At the denotative stage—also known as the first or initial stage—the color pink is interpreted solely as a visual element or merely as a color without any ideological, cultural, or political connotations. Thus, in a denotative context, the color pink serves only as a visual marker indicating a specific color within the spectrum, without any additional elements that point to a deeper meaning.

The second level of interpretation is the connotative level. At this stage, the analysis is more complex than at the denotative level because it is influenced by the social, cultural, and psychological contexts inherent in the sign. At the connotative level, the color pink in popular culture is generally associated with feminine characteristics, expressions of sexuality, joy, emotional sensitivity, and symbols of affection or love (Susanto et al., 2025). These meanings are the result of long-standing social and cultural constructions that are widely accepted by society.

However, in the context of social movements and digital resistance—which later gave rise to the “17+8 People’s Demands” Movement through the symbol of pink, often known as “Brave Pink”—a shift in connotative meaning occurred. In this case, the color pink is not interpreted merely as a symbol of feminism or gentleness, but as a representation of courage, moral resistance, and steadfastness. This shift in the meaning of the color pink was triggered by the figure of a woman wearing a pink hijab during the demonstration on August 28, 2025, who performed a bold symbolic act in the presence of security forces. In this instance, the color pink functions as a connotative marker that evokes connotative meanings of courage and resistance.

Next is the mythical stage. This stage is also known as the second stage of meaning-making and is closely related to the interpretive level of connotation. Myths serve as cultural tools to both frame and interpret reality, so that a particular meaning can be collectively accepted by society. The existence of myths serves not only to provide explanations but also to legitimize or offer a reasonable perspective on the values, norms, and ideologies that underpin a culture. At the level of myth, connotations that are continuously reproduced and subsequently collectively accepted by society undergo a process of naturalization. Through myth, the color pink has been naturalized as a symbol of courage and ethical strength, so that this meaning is considered normal and widely

accepted by netizens. The color pink has become a cultural language that conveys social criticism and resistance against authority.

2) The Color Green

The color green is a symbol used by netizens in their digital resistance against various social, political, and economic issues that concern the public. At the denotative level, green is understood as a color resembling leaves in general and is one of the colors in the spectrum resulting from a mixture of blue and yellow.¹¹⁸ At this first level of meaning the denotative level green does not yet carry any social, psychological, or political connotations. In this context, green functions solely as a visual element.

At the level of connotative meaning or the second level of interpretation the color green is analyzed more complexly and is closely linked to the social, cultural, and psychological contexts inherent in the sign. Green is generally associated with growth, harmony, freshness, fertility, and a sense of security (Susanto et al., 2025). However, in the context of social movements and digital resistance which later gave rise to the 17+8 People's Demands Movement through the green symbol, often known as "hero green" a shift in connotative meaning occurred. The color green came to represent the common people, informal workers, the daily struggle for survival, and the sense of powerlessness felt by civilians when caught in a nation's structural conflicts.

This shift in the meaning of the color green stemmed from the death of an online motorcycle taxi driver who was run over by a Brimob tactical vehicle while the unit was securing a demonstration on August 28, 2025. The color green is associated with the work uniform worn by this online motorcycle taxi driver. On this basis, the color green subsequently underwent a shift in its connotative meaning, taking on strong emotional and social significance as a symbol of struggle and sacrifice.

At the mythical stage closely linked to the connotative stage the color green underwent a process of naturalization as its connotations were continuously reproduced and collectively embraced by society. Green symbolizes the struggle and sacrifice of the common people, who are often the victims of structural conflicts perpetuated by those in power. This symbol is used and embraced by netizens as a symbol of digital resistance. The color green represents the arduous struggle of workers who toil daily to make a living, as well as the sacrifices born from that labor. In this context, the color green does not portray the victims merely as subjects of suffering, but rather as moral heroes who fight tirelessly to meet their economic needs.

b. Color as Visual Ideology

In digital activism on Instagram, color serves as a visual strategy to convey netizens' messages of resistance concisely and quickly. Social media, particularly Instagram, is inherently visual and attention-oriented, making color a "shortcut" to meaning that is, a means of condensing ideological messages that are easily recognizable by the public. The use of pink and green in posts related to the "17+8 People's Demands" movement as a form of netizen resistance demonstrates that color functions not merely as a visual ornament, but also as a symbolic language representing a firm yet concise stance of resistance.

At the denotative level, the colors pink and green used in various Instagram posts appear as ordinary visual elements; literally, these two colors are understood simply as colors without any specific ideological meaning. However, at the second level of meaning that is, the connotative level the colors pink and green carry symbolic meanings that go beyond their literal meanings. At this stage, interpretation is influenced by the social, cultural, and psychological contexts associated with the symbols of pink and green. In

this context, the color pink is no longer interpreted as feminine or soft as in its conventional meaning but rather as courage, moral resistance, and steadfastness. Meanwhile, the color green is interpreted as a symbol of the common people, informal workers, the daily struggle for survival, and the sense of powerlessness felt by civilians when caught in a country's structural conflicts. The combination of these two colors ultimately forms a visual narrative of the resistance carried out by netizens.

This connotative meaning then evolved into a myth, as described by Roland Barthes. In this context, the colors pink and green no longer function merely as visual choices, but as natural symbols that have been naturalized to represent the netizens' resistance movement. Myths operate by naturalizing ideological meanings, leading the public to agree that these colors represent the identity of the netizen resistance movement within the 17+8 People's Demands. Consequently, color has become an ideological medium that obscures the underlying social and political constructs.

Through the levels of myth in Roland Barthes's semiotics, the colors pink and green visually frame a social and political movement. When someone sees an Instagram post featuring pink and green symbols or one dominated by these two symbols they automatically associate it with the people's demands and critiques of the social, political, and economic issues occurring in Indonesia during that specific period, without needing to read a lengthy narrative. This demonstrates that color functions as an effective visual ideology in fostering collective consciousness and solidarity in the public sphere.

c. Analysis of Instagram as a Public Sphere (Jürgen Habermas)

The use of Instagram as a platform where netizens engage in digital resistance regarding social, political, and economic issues using certain mutually agreed-upon symbols constitutes a form of utilizing Instagram as a public sphere. In Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere, the public sphere is defined as a social arena where citizens can gather, engage in rational discourse, and shape public opinion that can subsequently influence political policy (Olubenga, 2017). This aligns with the use of Instagram as a public sphere where netizens can come together to address various social, political, and economic issues that are causing concern and emerging within society.

Initially, the public sphere served as a venue for face-to-face interactions or private discussions among the bourgeoisie to criticize the state authorities of the time (A. G. Prasetyo, 2012). However, in today's contemporary context, the public sphere has transformed into the realm of contemporary media, often referred to as social media. Instagram can be analyzed as a digital public sphere that enables broad, participatory, and open social and political discourse accessible to anyone. Instagram functions as a public sphere by providing a public space where users can access information and express their views, which ultimately helps shape public opinion. In this regard, Instagram is utilized as a platform to channel the aspirations and demands of the people as a form of digital resistance. From Habermas's perspective, this practice reflects a communicative act carried out not only for strategic purposes but also to convey meaning, build mutual understanding, and voice criticism against structures deemed overly dominant.

On the other hand, as a visual-based platform, Instagram is also utilized by netizens to engage in digital resistance through the massive use and reproduction of pink and green symbols, which gave rise to trends known as "Brave Pink" and "Hero Green." These trends utilize colors imbued with deep, collectively agreed-upon meanings as a means of expressing criticism regarding various social, political, and economic issues. Within Habermas's concept of the public sphere, this demonstrates how issues that were initially private such as anxieties, injustices, or individual experiences with government policies

can be brought into the public sphere and debated openly. Instagram has enabled these symbols to circulate widely, be collectively interpreted, and subsequently shape public opinion that challenges the government's dominant narrative. Thus, Instagram functions not only as a medium for expression but also as a platform for the public to foster critical awareness and exercise social control over the state.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion presented in the previous chapters, it can be concluded that netizens' resistance within the "17+8 People's Demands" movement is strongly represented through the use of pink and green symbols on Instagram. An analysis of the pink and green symbols using Roland Barthes's semiotics reveals the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings embedded in these color symbols. It is evident that these visual symbols serve not only as purely aesthetic elements but also carry deeper functions and meanings. The pink and green symbols are used as a medium of visual communication representing the courage, strength, struggle, and sacrifice of the common people. These symbols also carry profound significance in voicing aspirations and criticism regarding various social, political, and economic issues in Indonesia that are causing public concern. Through Instagram a digital public sphere examined via Jürgen Habermas's concept of the public sphere netizens' resistance, expressed through the pink and green symbols in the "17+8 People's Demands" Movement, unfolds in an open, participatory, and massive manner.

The use of Instagram has enabled the pink and green symbols to be created, disseminated, and widely interpreted by netizens, thereby fostering a collective resistance movement among them. This representation of resistance demonstrates that social media has become a public space for voicing various aspirations and criticisms regarding issues currently unfolding in society. Thus, this study confirms that netizens' resistance through the pink and green symbols in the 17+8 People's Demands Movement is a tangible form of social expression in community life in the digital age. The use of pink and green symbols on Instagram serves as an effective visual communication strategy for conveying the people's demands as a form of resistance and demonstrates netizens' active participation in critiquing issues currently unfolding in society.

REFERENCES

- Agustin, N. V. (2025). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes Pada Karya Fotografi Dalam Akun Instagram Oky Arisandi. 3(128).
- Akashi, N. U. (t.t.). 17+8 Tuntutan Rakyat Apa Saja? Ini Isi Lengkap dan 6 Pihak yang Dituntut. detikjateng. Diambil 16 November 2025, dari <https://www.detik.com/jateng/berita/d-8097673/17-8-tuntutan-rakyat-apa-saja-ini-isi-lengkap-dan-6-pihak-yang-dituntut>
- Akbar, A. M., Adrial. (t.t.). Penjelasan soal Tunjangan Rumah DPR Rp 50 Juta Hanya Sampai Oktober 2025. detiknews. Diambil 14 Desember 2025, dari <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-8081049/penjelasan-soal-tunjangan-rumah-dpr-rp-50-juta-hanya-sampai-oktober-2025?page=6>
- Alamsyah, F. F. (2020). Representasi, Ideologi dan Rekonstruksi Media. 3(2).
- Alfarisi, M. F. R., & Huda, A. N. (2024). From fatwa to social media: Unleashing global Muslim solidarity through fatwa and digital activism movement. *Islamic Communication Journal*, 9(1).

- Anshori, I., & Nadiyya, F. A. A. (2023). Peran Ruang Digital Sebagai Transformasi Gerakan Aksi Sosial Mahasiswa Melalui Platform Sosial Media. *Jurnal Analisa Sosiologi*, 12(2). <https://doi.org/10.20961/jas.v12i2.68981>
- Arif, Moch. C. & Ariza Qurrata A'yun. (2023). Kontestasi Media Digital: Analisis Tagar #BubarkanMUI versus #DukungMUI. *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam*, 13(01), 24–49. <https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2023.13.01.24-49>
- Asal Muasal Gerakan 17+8 | tempo.co. (2025, September 4). Tempo. <https://www.tempo.co/politik/demonstrasi-massa-dan-17-8-tuntutan-rakyat-2066527>
- Darmawan, A. P., & Dzalfaroh, A. N. (t.t.). Kenapa Warganet Ramai-ramai Pasang Foto Bernuansa Pink dan Hijau? Kompas.com. Diambil 5 September 2025, dari <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2025/09/03/161500365/kenapa-warganet-ramai-ramai-pasang-foto-bernuansa-pink-dan-hijau-?page=all>
- Fahida, S. N. (2021). Analisis Semiotika Roland Barthes pada Film “Nanti Kita Cerita Hari Ini” (NKCTHI) Karya Angga Dwimas Sasongko. 1(2).
- Fatimah. (2020). Semiotika Dalam Kajian Iklan Layanan Masyarakat (ILM) (1 ed.). TallasaMedia.
- Hasil Pencarian—KBBI VI Daring. (t.t.). Diambil 17 Desember 2025, dari <https://kbbi.kemdikbud.go.id/entri/warganet>
- Hidayat, H. (2020). Simbolisasi Warna dalam Al-Quran. *MAGHZA: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir*, 5(1), 36–50. <https://doi.org/10.24090/maghza.v5i1.3638>
- Ho, W.-C. (2011). James Scott's resistance/hegemony paradigm reconsidered. *Acta Politica*, 46(1), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ap.2010.5>
- Indah Mar'atus Sholichah, Dyah Mustika Putri, & Akmal Fikri Setiaji. (2023). Representasi Budaya Banyuwangi Dalam Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival: Pendekatan Teori Representasi Stuart Hall. *Education : Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan*, 3(2), 32–42. <https://doi.org/10.51903/education.v3i2.332>
- Ivana Grace Sofia Radja & Leo Riski Sunjaya. (2024). Representasi Budaya Jember dalam Jember Fashion Carnival: Pendekatan Teori Representasi Stuart Hall. *WISSEN : Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 2(3), 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.62383/wissen.v2i3.160>
- Kronologi Demo Memprotes DPR hingga Meluas Berubah Penjarahan | tempo.co. (2025, Agustus | 20.29 WIB). Tempo. <https://www.tempo.co/politik/kronologi-demo-memprotes-dpr-hingga-meluas-berubah-penjarahan-2065182>
- Kronologi Viral Gaji DPR Rp3 Juta per Hari-Dapat Uang Beras Rp12 Juta. (t.t.). ekonomi. Diambil 14 Desember 2025, dari <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/ekonomi/20250821092250-532-1264714/kronologi-viral-gaji-dpr-rp3-juta-per-hari-dapat-uang-beras-rp12-juta>
- Marwick, A. E. (2023). *The Private Is Political: Networked Privacy and Social Media*. Yale University Press.

- Massa Demo 25 Agustus Bakar Sepeda Motor dan Robohkan Separator Busway | tempo.co. (2025, Agustus | 16.20 WIB). Tempo. <https://www.tempo.co/hukum/massa-demo-25-agustus-bakar-sepeda-motor-dan-robohkan-separator-busway-2062838>
- M.Pd, F. B. S. P., S. Pd. (2023). Buku ajar semiotika. UNISNU PRESS.
- Nasrullah, R. (2012). Internet dan Ruang Publik Virtual, Sebuah Refleksi atas Teori Ruang Publik Habermas. Fakultas Ilmu Dakwah dan Ilmu Komunikasi UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 4(1).
- Nathaniel, A., & Sannie, A. W. (2020). Analisis Semiotika Makna Kesendirian Pada Lirik Lagu 'Ruang Sendiri' Karya Tulus. SEMIOTIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Sastra dan Linguistik, 19(2), 41. <https://doi.org/10.19184/semiotika.v19i2.10447>
- Nisrina. (2015). Bisnis Online, Manfaat Media Sosial dalam Meraup Uang. Kobis.
- Olubenga, E. O. (2017). Mengatur "Bayangan Digital": Kebijakan Publik dan Akuisisi dan Pemanfaatna Teknologi Informasi dan Komuniaksi (TIK) di Afrika. Open Access Library Journal, 4(4).
- Prasetyo, A. A. (2022). Disrupsi Perpustakaan Sebagai Ruang Publik: Membedah Pemikiran Jurgen Habermas dan Ruang Publik Digital. 5(3).
- Prasetyo, A. G. (2012). Menuju Demokrasi Rasional: Melacak Pemikiran Jürgen Habermas tentang Ruang Publik. Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, 16.
- Purnamasari, D., Umami, Z., & Cahyaningrum, R. (2024). Komunikasi Visual Kesehatan Mental Melalui Doodle: Analisis Semiotika Konten Instagram @Wantja "Sulit Untuk Berbahagia. 6(4).
- Rakhmawati, Y. (2019). Buku Ajar Metode Penelitian Komunikasi. Putra Media Nusantara.
- Ramadhan, M. (2021). Metode Penelitian. Cipta Media Nusantara (CMN).
- Ribuan Massa Geruduk Polda Metro Jaya Protes Kekerasan Polisi dalam Menangani Demo | tempo.co. (2025, Agustus | 16.54 WIB). Tempo. <https://www.tempo.co/hukum/ribuan-massa-geruduk-polda-metro-jaya-protes-kekerasan-polisi-dalam-menangani-demo-2064452>
- Saputra, A. S., Kurniasih, D., & Indranika, D. B. (2025). Dinamika Kebijakan Publik Di Indonesia Dalam Menghadapi Isu Viral: Antara Respons Dan Tantangan Implementasi. 12.
- Sari, M. P. (2017). Fenomena Penggunaan Media Sosial Instagram Sebagai Komunikasi Pembelajaran Agama Islam Oleh Mahasiswa Fisip Universitas Riau. 4(2).
- SDGs Indonesia. (t.t.). SDGs Indonesia. Diambil 2 September 2025, dari <https://sdgs.bappenas.go.id/>
- Sijabat, J. P. (t.t.). Instagram. Diambil 17 November 2025, dari https://www.instagram.com/p/DOBr6P_iW0d/?img_index=1
- Sikumbang, K., Ramadhina, W., Yani, E. R., Arika, D., Hayati, N., Hasibuan, N. A., & Permana, B. G. (2024). Peranan Media Sosial Instagram terhadap Interaksi Sosial dan Etika pada

- Generasi Z. *Journal on Education*, 6(2), 11029–11037.
<https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i2.4888>
- Situmorang, W., & Hayati, R. (2023). Media Sosial Instagram Sebagai Bentuk Validasi Dan Representasi Diri. *Jurnal Sosiologi Nusantara*, 9(1), 111–118.
<https://doi.org/10.33369/jsn.9.1.111-118>
- Sobur, A. (2023). *Semiotika Komunikasi* (8 ed.). PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Sulianta, F. (2015). *Keajaiban Sosial Media*. PT Gramedia.
- Susanto, D., Judijanto, L., Sarjani, N. K. P., Solicitor, A., Widyasari, W., Nugraheni, A. M., Prasetyo, D., Narulita, E. T., Negoro, A. T., Saputra, A. A., Latifah, A., Pratama, N. E., & Putri, R. A. (2025). *Pengantar Desain Komunikasi Visual (DKV)*. PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia.
- We Are Social data reportal. (2025, Agustus). *We Are Social*.
<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-indonesia>
- Wijaya, P. (2025, September 4). Siapa Pembuat Daftar Tuntutan 17+8 Rakyat yang Viral di Media Sosial? Ini Sosok-Sosoknya. *merdeka.com*. <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/siapa-pembuat-daftar-tuntutan-178-rakyat-yang-viral-di-media-sosial-ini-sosok-sosoknya-463404-mvk.html>
- Yuliani, W. (2018). Metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dalam perspektif bimbingan dan konseling. 2(2).
-

Copyright Holder :

© Ariza Qurrata A'yun.et.al (2026).

First Publication Right :

© SEMANTIK (Journal of Social, Media, Communication, and Journalism)

This article is under:

