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From Hashtag to Policy: Viral Anger and Lawmaking in Indonesia's Digital Democracy

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ABSTRACT
This study analyzes how viral digital mobilization translated public anger into policy responses in Indonesia through the 2025 #BubarkanDPR and 17+8 Tuntutan Rakyat movements. While #BubarkanDPR ("Disband the House of Representatives") emerged as a symbolic critique of legislative privilege and accountability deficits, the 17+8 platform converted diffuse online outrage into twenty-five structured reform demands. Using a qualitative case study integrating digital discourse analysis, media triangulation, and legal document review, the research examines the interaction between emotional mobilization, elite response, and constitutional constraints. The findings demonstrate that viral anger operated as political pressure producing three outcomes: institutional concessions, including suspension of housing allowances and transparency commitments; disciplinary sanctions against legislators after controversial remarks; and activation of oversight mechanisms such as ethics reviews and human rights investigations. However, the core demand to dissolve parliament was constitutionally barred under Article 7C of the amended 1945 Constitution, underscoring structural limits. The study argues that in Indonesia's digital democracy, virality constitutes contingent political legitimacy, capable of triggering short-term accountability but insufficient to transform entrenched power structures.

Keywords: Digital Mobilization, Viral Outrage, Legislative Accountability, Policy Response, Indonesia's Digital Democracy.

I. Introduction

When public anger spreads rapidly through social media and develops into organized collective action, it can generate significant political pressure on governing institutions. This dynamic was clearly reflected in the #BubarkanDPR25Agustus campaign and the 17+8 Tuntutan Rakyat (People's Demands) movement in Indonesia. The hashtag #BubarkanDPR ("Disband the House of Representatives") emerged as a powerful protest slogan expressing frustration with the DPR's perceived elitism, lack of accountability, and prioritization of institutional privileges over public welfare. Triggered by controversial legislative initiatives, public concern over parliamentary allowances, and broader economic inequality, the movement captured widespread dissatisfaction toward representative institutions. The anger circulated quickly across digital platforms, amplified by students, civil society groups, influencers, and members of the Indonesian diaspora.

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However, unlike purely symbolic protest waves, this mobilization evolved into a more structured initiative through the 17+8 Movement, formally introduced in 2025. This platform consolidated 25 public demands: 17 short-term and 8 long-term, addressing issues such as budget transparency, anti-corruption enforcement, police accountability, limits on military involvement in civilian affairs, political party reform, and protection of civil liberties. In this sense, while #BubarkanDPR embodied collective emotional outrage, the 17+8 framework translated that rapidly amplified anger into a coherent reform agenda grounded in democratic accountability and institutional change. Faced with mounting public scrutiny, the DPR responded through a dual strategy of limited institutional reform and symbolic appeasement. On August 31, 2025, DPR officials announced the suspension of housing allowances and the restriction of certain facilities that had been widely criticized as excessive and disconnected from public economic realities (Sekretariat Jendral DPR RI, 2025). In addition, parliamentary leaders issued a broader six-point commitment promising greater transparency in budgeting processes, improved public access to legislative discussions, and enhanced communication between lawmakers and constituents (Saputra, 2025). These measures were framed as evidence that the institution was responsive to public concerns. Although the reforms did not alter the structural foundations of parliamentary power, they functioned as visible concessions designed to restore credibility and demonstrate attentiveness to citizen demands. The timing of these announcements, closely following peak online mobilization, strongly suggests that the intensity and scale of digital pressure played a decisive role in prompting institutional response.

Accountability mechanisms were also activated in response to the controversy. After Ahmad Sahroni made public remarks insulting demonstrators, describing them in derogatory terms, public outrage intensified. The NasDem Party subsequently removed both Sahroni and Nafa Urbach from their DPR positions, and Sahroni was stripped of his leadership role in Commission III (NasDem DPR RI, 2025). These disciplinary actions indicated that social and digital pressure had tangible consequences within party structures. At the institutional level, the DPR's Ethics Council (Mahkamah Kehormatan Dewan) initiated reviews of alleged misconduct, signaling that internal oversight bodies could not ignore widespread public dissatisfaction. The escalation of tensions following the death of Affan Kurniawan further heightened the moral dimension of the movement. In response, Komnas HAM launched an investigation into allegations of police violence and civilian rights violations. This sequence of events demonstrates how rapidly circulating online anger can compel formal accountability procedures, particularly when claims of injustice and human rights abuse become central to public discourse (Bijak Memantau, 2025). Despite these developments, constitutional limits remained decisive. The movement's most radical demand, the dissolution of the DPR could not be implemented because Article 7C of the amended 1945 Constitution explicitly prohibits the president from dissolving parliament. This provision, established to prevent executive overreach following past political crises, functions as a structural safeguard within Indonesia's democratic system. As a result, even intense and widespread digital mobilization operates within clearly defined legal boundaries. The case illustrates that while rapidly amplified public anger can produce short-term concessions, disciplinary sanctions, and investigative actions, its capacity to generate deep structural transformation remains constrained by constitutional design, entrenched political interests, and institutional continuity.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Digital Activism

Digital activism, defined as the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to achieve social or political change, has become a defining feature of contemporary social movements across democratic and non-democratic contexts (Ortiz et al., 2025). Unlike conventional collective action that depends heavily on formal organizations, centralized leadership, and structured membership, digital activism often operates through decentralized networks where participation is flexible and personalized. This form of mobilization aligns with the concept of connective action, which emphasizes the "co-production and sharing"

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of content based on individual expression rather than strong collective identities (Amaral & Ventura, 2025). In connective action, individuals are not required to formally join organizations; instead, they participate by sharing posts, creating hashtags, reposting content, or producing visual and textual commentary that resonates with their personal values. Digital platforms thus function not only as communication tools but also as infrastructures for political coordination, narrative construction, and legitimacy-building. They enable rapid recruitment, amplify influencers' voices, and create hybrid mobilization that moves fluidly between online expression and offline protest. A central mechanism within digital activism is framing. Framing refers to how issues are presented, interpreted, and made meaningful to broader audiences. Toumaras (2025) emphasizes that digital movements rely heavily on narrative alignment to generate cultural resonance and solidarity. Two framing strategies are particularly relevant: divergent framing and convergent framing. Divergent framing highlights problems, critiques authority, and exposes injustice. It directs attention toward what is perceived as wrong in the existing system. Convergent framing, in contrast, focuses on solutions and shared goals. It unifies supporters around specific demands and reform agendas. In simple terms, divergent framing articulates what is wrong, while convergent framing proposes what should change. The shift from divergent to convergent framing is crucial because it determines whether a movement remains symbolic or evolves into a policy-oriented initiative. Short, emotionally charged slogans often represent divergent framing, whereas detailed lists of demands reflect convergent framing. This distinction clarifies how online outrage can transform into structured civic advocacy.

Digital activism also enables what can be described as epistemological insurgency. Epistemological insurgency refers to the contestation of dominant systems of knowledge production and political authority. It occurs when marginalized groups challenge who has the power to define political reality, interpret events, or establish legitimacy. Rather than accepting official narratives, activists create alternative interpretations through storytelling, aesthetic expression, satire, memes, and digital documentation. This form of insurgency operates at the level of meaning and representation, not physical confrontation. It is a struggle over epistemic authority over who gets to define truth, credibility, and political legitimacy. By circulating counter-narratives, activists destabilize elite monopolies over truth claims and redefine what counts as legitimate political knowledge. However, digital activism is shaped by structural and technological constraints. Platform algorithms influence visibility, often privileging emotionally charged content while marginalizing less sensational narratives. Political surveillance and content moderation policies can restrict expression, particularly in sensitive political contexts. The commodification of visibility also requires resources; content promotion and advertising may determine reach, thereby reinforcing inequality. Bederson et al. (2025) highlight how infrastructural inequities and the digital divide produce uneven participation across gender and geographic lines. Moreover, sustained digital engagement requires continuous emotional and creative labor. Activists must remain active to maintain relevance within algorithmic systems, which can lead to fatigue and burnout. Déri & Szabó (2025) further note generational differences in perceptions of digital participation, where older adults may recognize online engagement as legitimate political action, while younger individuals may regard it as insufficient unless it produces institutional outcomes. These dynamics demonstrate that digital activism expands participatory opportunities but does not eliminate structural constraints or power asymmetries.

2.2. Emotions in Political Communication

The study of emotions in political communication has moved beyond the traditional assumption of the purely rational citizen. Contemporary research recognizes emotions as integral to political judgment, identity formation, and participation. Rather than being irrational distortions, emotions function as embodied evaluations that signal moral involvement and value commitments. They are shaped by social context and can mobilize engagement or deepen polarization. Szałygin (2020) for instance, demonstrates through ethnographic research in rural Poland that emotions such as anger, resentment, and outrage are closely connected to normative ideals and strongly influence electoral preferences. These findings challenge the

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dichotomy between reason and emotion, showing that emotional expression often reflects deeply held political convictions. The study of emotions in political communication has moved beyond the traditional assumption of the purely rational citizen. Contemporary research recognizes emotions as integral to political judgment, identity formation, and participation. Rather than being irrational distortions, emotions function as embodied evaluations that signal moral involvement and value commitments. They are shaped by social context and can mobilize engagement or deepen polarization. Szałygin (2020) demonstrates through ethnographic research in rural Poland that emotions such as anger, resentment, and outrage are closely connected to normative ideals and strongly influence electoral preferences. These findings challenge the dichotomy between reason and emotion, showing that emotional expression often reflects deeply held political convictions. In digital environments, emotional dynamics become even more significant due to the rapid circulation of content and the prevalence of hostile elite communication. Hostility in political discourse can take different forms. Saumer et al. (2024) distinguish between incivility and intolerance. Incivility refers to disrespectful tone, including rude or vulgar language. Intolerance refers to content that excludes or delegitimizes minority groups and violates democratic norms. Experimental findings show that audiences react differently to these forms of hostility. While uncivil communication may not significantly increase negative emotions, intolerant communication generates stronger emotional responses because it constitutes a more serious norm violation. This distinction clarifies why certain messages trigger widespread outrage while others do not.

To provide a clear analytical foundation, this study adopts feelings-as-information theory as its primary framework for understanding how emotions shape political judgment. Feelings-as-information theory proposes that individuals use their emotional states as cognitive cues when evaluating political actors or institutions. Rather than conducting extensive policy analysis, individuals often rely on a simple internal question: "How do I feel about this?" If political communication evokes anger or moral outrage, that emotion becomes informational. People attribute their emotional response to the political actor or institution involved. In this way, emotion functions as a shortcut in political evaluation. Saumer et al. (2024) show that negative emotions mediate the relationship between intolerant communication and political distrust. In other words, the emotional reaction explains why hostile communication decreases trust. Emotions also influence political participation. While anxiety may reduce engagement by increasing uncertainty, anger tends to motivate action. Anger is often described as an approach-oriented emotion because it encourages individuals to confront perceived injustice rather than withdraw from it. In digital contexts, negative emotions elicited by hostile communication are positively associated with increased participation intentions (Saumer et al., 2024). This dynamic is especially visible on youth-dominated platforms such as TikTok, which function as important spaces for digital political activism ((Situmorang & Ritonga, 2025). Emotional contagion spreads rapidly in such environments, transforming individual frustration into collective mobilization. Taken together, this study integrates connective action theory (Amaral & Ventura, 2025), framing processes (Toumaras, 2025), and feelings-as-information theory (Saumer et al., 2024) into a unified theoretical framework. Connective action explains how decentralized individuals coordinate through digital platforms. Framing theory clarifies how grievances are articulated through divergent and convergent narratives. Feelings-as-information theory explains how emotional reactions shape political evaluation and distrust. This integrated framework strengthens the analytical coherence of the study by linking digital mobilization, emotional activation, and institutional response within a single explanatory structure.

III. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative case study design that integrates digital discourse analysis, policy document review, and clearly defined media triangulation to examine how the viral movement #BubarkanDPR and the subsequent 17+8 People's Demands influenced Indonesia's political and policy landscape in 2025. The study is guided by two primary research questions: (1) How was public anger articulated and framed across media platforms during the #BubarkanDPR movement? and (2) To what extent

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did this digitally mediated anger translate into institutional and policy responses? By explicitly formulating these questions, the methodological choices are directly linked to the analytical objectives of tracing narrative formation and institutional reactions. The research adopts a qualitative interpretive paradigm within political communication studies, focusing on how emotions, particularly anger, are transformed into institutional responses. A qualitative case study design is appropriate because the phenomenon under investigation is context-bound, temporally specific, and embedded within Indonesia's socio-political dynamics (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This framework enables an in-depth exploration of meaning-making processes rather than causal generalization. The citation format for Creswell and Poth (2018) has been standardized to ensure consistency throughout the manuscript. Riessman's (2018) narrative analysis framework is employed because it emphasizes the structuring of experience into narrative sequences, making it particularly suitable for examining how viral outrage evolves into structured political claims and policy discourse. This framework allows for the identification of key narrative components such as triggers, turning points, and resolutions, which are essential for tracing the transformation of emotional expression into institutional acknowledgment. While alternative theoretical perspectives, such as framing theory and agenda-setting theory, were considered, these approaches primarily emphasize media salience and issue construction rather than the process through which emotional discourse becomes institutionalized. Their consideration strengthens the theoretical positioning of the chosen framework.

Data collection involves the systematic analysis of 10 media articles and official institutional documents published between January and June 2025. Specifying the exact number of media reports clarifies the scope of data collection. The sampling strategy employs purposive sampling, with sources selected based on relevance, credibility, and representation of different media typologies. The inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) explicit discussion of #BubarkanDPR or the 17+8 Tuntutan Rakyat; (2) publication during the peak period of public discourse; and (3) clear reference to institutional or policy responses. These criteria enhance transparency in the sampling procedure. The selected media represent multiple categories to ensure balanced coverage. Major national outlets include Kompas, Tempo, and Antara News. A popular digital platform, Bijak Memantau, is included to capture broader public-facing commentary. Regional perspectives are represented by Kaltim Post and Tugu Malang. Government and institutional narratives are drawn from publications and releases issued by the Ministry of Communication and Informatics and the Secretariat General of DPR RI. These outlets are selected based on their classification as national, popular, regional, and government media, ensuring variation in journalistic framing and institutional positioning. In addition to media articles, legal and policy documents are analyzed, including the 1945 Constitution, Law No. 14/2008 on Public Information Disclosure, and Law No. 17/2014 on the MPR, DPR, DPD, and DPRD, as well as formal parliamentary statements and press briefings. These documents are used to evaluate the extent to which protest demands are translated into legal commitments or procedural reforms. In this study, media triangulation refers to the systematic cross-comparison of narratives across different categories of media (national, regional, popular, and governmental) and official institutional documents to validate thematic consistency and identify divergences in framing. Triangulation is conducted by comparing representations of anger in journalistic accounts, articulations of civic demands, and formal institutional responses.

The study applies narrative thematic analysis. Following Riessman (2018), discourse segments are organized into narrative units: trigger events, mobilization processes, and the institutionalization of demands. Manual qualitative coding is conducted to identify recurring themes such as digital outrage, elite accountability, symbolic appeasement, transparency commitments, and legal adaptation. Research Question 1 is addressed through discourse and framing analysis of media texts, while Research Question 2 is examined through policy document review and institutional statements, ensuring a clear alignment between research questions and methodological procedures. To enhance reliability, all media reports are verified against multiple sources where possible, and legal references are cross-checked with official repositories. Interpretations are contextualized within Indonesia's constitutional framework and its history of parliamentary crises. Researcher reflexivity is maintained by situating interpretations within broader socio-political developments and avoiding normative judgments regarding protest legitimacy or institutional

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morality. Overall, this methodological design integrates digital discourse analysis, legal-institutional examination, and structured media triangulation within a clearly articulated qualitative case study framework, providing a coherent and theoretically grounded approach to understanding how viral anger functions as a catalyst for policy discourse in Indonesia's evolving democracy.

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1. Case Context

Recent calls to dissolve Indonesia's House of Representatives (DPR), expressed through the viral hashtag #BubarkanDPR, cannot be separated from Indonesia's political history. Rather than representing a completely new demand, the slogan echoes earlier moments when the DPR's legitimacy was questioned or directly challenged. Looking at precedent cases, particularly under President Sukarno and President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), helps explain why the phrase "Bubarkan DPR" carries strong political meaning today and spreads quickly in digital spaces (Era, 2020). The first major precedent occurred during Sukarno's presidency. In July 1959, Sukarno issued the Presidential Decree of July 5, 1959, which formally dissolved the Constituent Assembly and reinstated the 1945 Constitution. This marked a departure from the liberal democratic experiment of the 1950s and paved the way for the establishment of the DPR-GR (Gotong Royong Parliament) in place of the elected legislature (Tempo, 2019). Just a year later, Sukarno disbanded the DPR from the 1955 election following disputes over the state budget, which the legislature refused to approve (Tempo, 2019). These actions were not merely procedural; they symbolized a structural shift towards Guided Democracy, where executive authority overshadowed representative institutions. In retrospect, Sukarno's dissolutions serve as cautionary tales of how parliamentary delegitimization can lead to authoritarian consolidation. Today's calls to "bubarkan DPR" are often juxtaposed against this history, whether consciously or not, as citizens recall moments when executive power sidelined legislative voices to address what was framed as a national crisis. A second precedent emerged during Indonesia's democratic transition. In July 2001, President Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) issued a Presidential Decree that attempted to freeze the parliament (MPR and DPR), dissolve the Golkar Party, and call for early elections (Era, 2020). Unlike Sukarno's decree, Gus Dur's action lacked broad political and constitutional support. Within hours, the decree was rejected, and Gus Dur was impeached and replaced by Megawati Sukarnoputri (Kaltim Post, 2024). This episode highlights a critical contrast with the Sukarno era. Whereas Sukarno's dissolution strengthened executive control, Gus Dur's failed attempt demonstrated that post-reformasi constitutional safeguards were already functioning. The outcome showed that the DPR could not be dissolved unilaterally without triggering institutional resistance. For present-day observers, Gus Dur's case illustrates both the appeal and the risk of radical executive intervention.

The resurgence of "Bubarkan DPR" in 2024–2025 differs from both historical cases in a fundamental way: it originates from civil society rather than from the executive branch. As KBR (2024) reported, many protesters framed the hashtag as an "organic" expression of anger over perceived corruption, unresponsiveness, and excessive privileges enjoyed by DPR members, rather than as a coordinated political plot. In digital spaces, the slogan functions primarily as political pressure rather than as a literal constitutional proposal (Kompas, 2024). Unlike the executive-driven dissolutions of 1959 and 2001, the current movement does not possess legal authority to dismantle the DPR. Following constitutional amendments in the early 2000s, Article 7C of the 1945 Constitution explicitly prohibits the President from dissolving the DPR. This provision was designed to prevent a repetition of past executive overreach. Consequently, contemporary calls to "Bubarkan DPR" operate symbolically. They express dissatisfaction with representation while remaining constrained by constitutional design. Another key difference lies in outcomes. Sukarno's dissolution led to authoritarian consolidation, while Gus Dur's attempt resulted in impeachment. By contrast, the 2024–2025 movement has so far produced policy concessions and public accountability debates rather than institutional collapse. The articulation of the "17+8" platform, which includes demands such as revoking excessive

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allowances, investigating police violence, and increasing transparency in lawmaking, reflects an attempt to convert viral outrage into concrete reform proposals (Tempo, 2024). In this sense, historical memory operates as both inspiration and warning. It strengthens the rhetorical force of "Bubarkan DPR" by linking present grievances to past crises. At the same time, it reminds citizens of the dangers of unchecked executive intervention. The challenge for contemporary movements is therefore not to repeat past dissolutions, but to channel public frustration into reforms that remain within democratic and constitutional boundaries.

4.2. Policy Response to the Mobilization of Collective Emotion and Perspective

When public anger turns into a movement for change, it drives governments to respond in both symbolic and institutional ways. This pattern was visible in the mobilization surrounding #BubarkanDPR25Agustus and the articulation of the 17+8 demands. The protests, which were started by concerns about parliamentary allowances and fueled by snide remarks from the elite, forced the DPR to deal with the legitimacy crisis by taking two steps: reforming institutions and appeasing the public. The first set of responses consisted of administrative concessions. On August 31, 2025, DPR officials announced the termination of housing allowances and restrictions on certain member facilities (Sekretariat Jendral DPR RI, 2025). These measures directly addressed one of the protesters' central concerns: the perception that legislators were enjoying excessive benefits amid economic hardship. In addition, DPR leadership issued a six-point commitment promising greater transparency in parliamentary procedures and improved communication with the public (Saputra, 2025). While these reforms were limited in scope and did not alter the institutional structure of the DPR, they signaled acknowledgement of public grievances. The response also included disciplinary action at the party level. Public outrage intensified after Ahmad Sahroni referred to demonstrators as "the most foolish people in the world." The NasDem Party kicked Ahmad Sahroni and Nafa Urbach out of their DPR seats on September 1, 2025, because they didn't care what the public thought (ANTARA News, 2025). Sahroni also lost his position as Vice Chair of Commission III. These actions were important in showing that perspective mobilization had worked to bring about genuine accountability, even though they were mostly symbolic. The level of public outrage was strong enough to lead to party sanctions and elite discipline. The DPR's Ethics Council, Mahkamah Kehormatan Dewan, was told to collaborate with party disciplinary committees at the institutional level to make sure that members who broke the public's confidence were held accountable. This action showed that accountability procedures were being made more official and applied to more than just one case. The Ethics Council has been criticized for being ineffective for a long time, but its activation in this case showed how public anger made institutional oversight work plainly.

The policy response was even stronger after the sad loss of Affan Kurniawan. After the protests, Komnas HAM looked into police violence and civilian deaths. This shows how public anger translated small accusations into a moral demand for human rights accountability (Bijak Memantau, 2025). This showed how public opinion and policy affect each other: anger created a sense of urgency, which forced state institutions to act, even if it was just to save their legitimacy. Nevertheless, structural limits remained clear. Demonstrators wanted the DPR to be dissolved, but Article 7C of the 1945 Constitution's provisions kept this from happening. This constitutional safeguard reflects lessons from past political crises and was designed to prevent executive overreach. As a result, while emotional mobilization compelled concessions and disciplinary action, it could not alter the fundamental structure of the legislative institution. The DPR's policy response to #BubarkanDPR25Agustus shows how complicated public opinion can be when it comes to running the country. The fact that political parties and the parliament were pressured by perspective mobilization is shown by things like giving people more time off, punishing people who are problematic, and setting up groups to keep an eye on things. But the movement's most extreme demands were restrained by the Constitution. The episode demonstrates that while digital mobilization can disrupt political inertia and trigger accountability measures, deeper institutional change remains contingent on formal legal and constitutional processes. Mobilization motivated by emotion can hold people accountable and break political inaction, but its ability to

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change things is limited by the strength of institutional order and legal frameworks, as shown by the example in Indonesia.

4.3. Political Anger and Social Behavior in Indonesia's Digital Sphere

In contemporary Indonesia, anger has become a driver of political participation. The rise of social media has transformed emotions into political capital, where outrage can quickly escalate into movements that demand accountability and reform (Octaviani Suryanto & Mulyana, 2024). Scholars have noted that digital media has shifted Indonesian political culture from one shaped by television charisma to one increasingly determined by the speed and reach of online discourse (Herdiansah & Sumadinata, 2019). This has produced a climate where political anger is not only visible but also contagious, making virality a form of legitimacy. The local phenomenon of "No Viral, No Justice" demonstrates how visibility in social media has become a condition for political responsiveness and legal action (Azhari, T. B., Ridho, M. A., & Rosyad, 2023; Gussela, M. D., Kurniawati, M., N, J. S., Hermanto, D., Fauziansah, S., & Saebani, 2024). Within this context, hashtags such as #BubarkanDPR or campaigns like 17+8 function not merely as slogans but as channels for mass anger, aggregating emotions into movements that can no longer be ignored by institutions. Scholars of digital politics argue that anger spreads particularly fast on social media because it is a high-arousal emotion that encourages sharing and engagement (Brady et al., 2017; Crockett, 2017). Research on online networks shows that emotionally charged content, especially anger, travels farther and faster than neutral information, increasing its visibility and perceived urgency (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). In this sense, viral anger functions not only as an emotional reaction but also as a coordination mechanism, signaling collective grievance and lowering the threshold for participation in protest (Papacharissi, 2015). Within Indonesia's "No Viral, No Justice" context, this dynamic helps explain how individual frustration can rapidly aggregate into a broader movement once it gains algorithmic amplification. An example lies in the Sri Mulyani deepfake case a fabricated video that depicted the finance minister mentioning teachers as the country's burden (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika, 2025). While technologically manipulative, its spread revealed the susceptibility of Indonesian politics to misinformation framed through emotional appeal. The outrage it generated reflected broader distrust in government institutions and the susceptibility of digital publics to weaponized misinformation. Such episodes reveal how virality itself becomes a vector of political credibility, regardless of factual accuracy (Utami, 2025; Prasodjo, 2025).

Influencers have amplified this dynamic. Figures like Jerome Polin, Andovi da Lopez, and Pandji Pragiwaksono, each with millions of followers, acted as intermediaries between youth culture and politics. Their decision of social media posts, adopting pink-green profile pictures, or even meeting in front of the DPR building lent symbolic weight to online anger. However, influencer participation was not uniform. Some framed their involvement as civic engagement and political education, while others limited their participation to symbolic gestures. The impact of influencer endorsement also varied depending on audience demographics and platform algorithms. Nevertheless, their engagement helped translate online discourse into recognizable public visibility, extending hashtags like #BubarkanDPR, "1312," and "17+8" beyond established political circles. Their interventions blur the boundary between entertainment and political communication, illustrating how influencer culture mediates access to mass attention. The Indonesian diaspora also contributed to this momentum, staging peaceful protests in their cities of residence, including London, Tokyo, Den Haag, Melbourne, Berlin, New York, and others. Abigail Muria, co-founder of What Is Up Indonesia, also appeared in Al Jazeera English news interview. These activities gave the protests global visibility. Diaspora emphasized that political accountability in Indonesia is of concern not only to citizens at home but also to Indonesians abroad. Such international attention intensified pressure on political elites, showing that digital outrage is no longer confined by national borders. Underlying these phenomena is Indonesia's pervasive FOMO (fear of missing out) culture, where neutrality is often interpreted as complicity. On social media, staying silent during a viral wave of anger risks exclusion from the moral community. This cultural norm reinforces participation, even among those with limited political knowledge, since sharing and

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reposting serve as low threshold acts of belonging. This is how movements become more viral and spread widely across the internet.

Another notable phenomenon in Indonesia is the circulation of memes and humorous videos. One frequent target of Indonesian netizens is Ahmad Syahroni, a legislative member who became involved in a heated argument with rising diaspora influencer Salsa Erwina Hutagalung during the movement. Netizens unearthed old photos of Syahroni from Facebook, showing him wearing colourful pants. This illustrates how humour and satire in Indonesia are not merely entertainment but powerful mechanisms of political critique. Why does anger "work" in this climate? Research shows that anger is an approach emotion, one that motivates individuals to confront perceived injustice. In Indonesia, where conventional channels of accountability are often distrusted, anger becomes the emotional fuel that drives people into digital arenas. It resonates because it signals moral clarity, a refusal to stay neutral, and a promise of collective empowerment. In the context of Indonesian politics, virality ensures that this anger is not dispersed but amplified, forcing political elites to respond, whether by policy shifts, public statements, or symbolic gestures. Beyond Indonesia, similar patterns of digitally amplified anger have emerged in other democratic contexts. Movements such as #BlackLivesMatter in the United States, the candlelight protests in South Korea, and youth-led demonstrations in Thailand demonstrate how social media can transform collective emotion into sustained political pressure. In these cases, viral outrage did not immediately dismantle institutions but compelled institutional actors to respond through investigations, resignations, policy revisions, or electoral consequences. Digital mobilization thus functions as an informal accountability mechanism, increasing reputational costs for political elites. However, Indonesia's situation differs in one important respect. The constitutional prohibition against dissolving the DPR creates a firm institutional boundary that emotional mobilization cannot cross. Whereas in some political systems executive discretion or parliamentary fragility may allow rapid structural shifts, Indonesia's post-reformasi constitutional design deliberately constrains such possibilities. This creates a tension between expressive politics and institutional durability. Viral anger may intensify demands for radical change, yet constitutional safeguards channel those demands into more incremental reforms. This dynamic highlight a broader transformation in democratic governance. In highly connected societies, legitimacy is no longer negotiated solely through elections or formal deliberation; it is also shaped through digital visibility. Hashtags, memes, and influencer endorsements do not replace institutional processes, but they increasingly influence their tempo and direction. The Indonesian case suggests that while emotional mobilization can disrupt political inertia, durable reform still depends on navigating constitutional frameworks. Digital anger may initiate accountability, but institutional change requires legal and procedural continuity.

4.4. Legal Foundations and Constitutional Mandates of the 17+8 People's Demands

The 17+8 Tuntutan Rakyat (People's Demands) movement represents a legal-political expression by civil society that carries significant constitutional weight, as it directly engages with fundamental principles of the rule of law, democracy, and human rights protection. From a constitutional perspective, many of these demands are grounded in existing legal provisions rather than operating outside the legal system. The substance of the demands can be grouped into several institutional categories. Regarding presidential responsibilities, the call to withdraw the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) from civilian security roles relates to Article 30 of the 1945 Constitution, which regulates national defense and security. Article 30 establishes a separation between defense and civil order, placing military authority primarily in the domain of national defense rather than daily law enforcement. This principle is reinforced by Law No. 34 of 2004 on the TNI, which limits the military's function to defense tasks. Similarly, demands to stop the criminalization of demonstrators and to establish an independent investigative team for cases of state violence draw on Article 28I of the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees the protection of human rights, as well as Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights. These provisions obligate the state to respect, protect, and fulfill fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and protection from abuse. Demands directed at the DPR focus on transparency, accountability, and integrity. Calls to suspend salary and allowance increases, publish detailed

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budget information, and conduct integrity checks are consistent with Article 20A paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution, which defines the DPR's oversight function. Article 20A confirms that the DPR is not only a law-making body but also subject to public accountability. Budget transparency is further supported by Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure, which requires public institutions to provide access to financial and programmatic information. Under this law, citizens may file formal complaints if such information is withheld, demonstrating that transparency demands have a concrete legal pathway. The call for the DPR Honorary Council (Badan Kehormatan, BK) to actively examine problematic members and cooperate with the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) reflects mechanisms already embedded in Indonesian law. Ethical oversight of DPR members is regulated by Law No. 17 of 2014 (UU MD3), which grants the BK authority to investigate violations of the code of conduct. However, when alleged violations involve criminal offenses, enforcement falls under the authority of law enforcement institutions such as the KPK. The demand for cooperation between these bodies reinforces the constitutional principle of checks and balances.

Political parties are also addressed in the 17+8 platform. Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution regulates elections and affirms the central role of political parties in democratic representation. Law No. 2 of 2011 on Political Parties further obligates parties to conduct political education and ensure internal accountability. Therefore, party-level sanctions against members who damage public trust are not merely political gestures, but actions grounded in statutory responsibility. The role of the police and the TNI in the movement highlights ongoing tensions regarding civilian supremacy. Law No. 2 of 2002 on the Indonesian National Police (Articles 13 and 14) outlines the police mandate to protect and serve the public while respecting human rights. Demands to halt violence against demonstrators and release detained protesters align directly with these statutory duties. Meanwhile, calls for the TNI to "return to the barracks" reflect post-1998 security sector reform principles, which sought to limit military involvement in civilian governance following the authoritarian period. Economic demands within the 17+8 framework—including calls for living wage policies, prevention of mass layoffs, and dialogue with labor unions—are linked to Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which guarantees the right to employment and a decent standard of living. These principles are further regulated under Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower (as amended by the Job Creation Law). In this sense, the economic dimension of the movement invokes social justice commitments already embedded in constitutional design. The eight long-term demands extend beyond immediate policy concerns toward structural reform, including tax reform, an Asset Forfeiture Law, strengthening Komnas HAM, and internal cleansing within the DPR. From a legal standpoint, these demands represent proposals for institutional strengthening rather than constitutional rupture. Their realization would require legislative amendment, executive policy reform, and bureaucratic implementation through established procedures. Overall, the 17+8 People's Demands can be understood as a form of democratic social control. They operate within constitutional boundaries, seeking enforcement of existing rights and improvement of institutional performance rather than rejection of the constitutional order itself. While political interests, bureaucratic resistance, and institutional limitations may constrain implementation, the movement's core demands are legally grounded and constitutionally legitimate. This legal foundation distinguishes the 17+8 platform from purely populist calls for dissolution, positioning it instead as an attempt to recalibrate governance through mechanisms already provided by Indonesia's constitutional framework.

V. Conclusion

The 17+8 People's Demands reveal the interaction between public anger, constitutional order, and institutional accountability in Indonesia's democratic system. Rather than existing outside the legal framework, the movement demonstrates how civic mobilization can operate through constitutional and statutory mechanisms. The demands concerning presidential authority, parliamentary oversight, political party reform, security accountability, and economic governance are grounded in identifiable legal provisions. This clarifies that digital activism in Indonesia functions as constitutionally embedded oversight rather than extra-institutional disruption. Public anger becomes politically influential when it is translated into structured,

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legally grounded demands. The findings also show clear limits. Viral outrage can generate concessions, disciplinary actions, and oversight activation, but it does not automatically produce structural reform. Institutional design, constitutional safeguards, and entrenched political interests constrain transformative change. These limits reflect deliberate post-reformasi constitutional safeguards, explaining why radical restructuring remains unlikely even under intense digital pressure. As a result, digital mobilization primarily increases responsiveness and reputational costs for elites rather than redistributing power. Future research should advance this analysis in several directions. Comparative studies are needed to assess whether similar patterns of bounded responsiveness occur in other democracies. Longitudinal research should evaluate whether short-term concessions evolve into sustained institutional reform. Scholars should also examine how algorithmic amplification shapes visibility and elite response. Finally, interdisciplinary approaches combining constitutional analysis and political communication could better measure the relationship between emotional framing and policy outcomes. Practically, institutions should strengthen proactive transparency to prevent escalation into viral crises, while civil society actors should align emotional mobilization with feasible legal pathways. Overall, the 17+8 movement demonstrates that digital outrage in a rule-of-law democracy operates as a conditional accountability mechanism, politically influential yet structurally constrained.

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