

# Paradigm Shift: From Ownership Issues to Political Mediatization

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## ABSTRACT

The political economy approach that focuses primarily on ownership issues has reached a saturation point and, at the same time, has some limitations. It could not explain the shift that occurred in the democratization process in Indonesia regarding the use of social media in Indonesia. Therefore, this paper offers a political mediatization paradigm in the relationship between media and democracy in the 2019 Presidential Election and the democratic trend in the 1955–2019 elections. This research suggests a map of media usage and the tendency of democracy in Indonesia's 1955 - 2019 General Election and four quadrants of media and political mediatization with two main axes. The first axis has two poles: the media that promote democracy and the media that undermine democracy, and the second axis with the poles of politicizing media and political mediatization. The first quadrant is media that promotes democracy, and there is the mediatization of politics. The second quadrant is media that promotes democracy, and political media is politicized. The third quadrant is the mediatization of politics and media that undermines democracy. The last quadrant shows the politicization of media and media that undermine democracy.

Keywords: Media and Democracy; Ownership Issues; Political Mediatization in Indonesia.

## ABSTRAK

Pendekatan ekonomi politik yang menitikberatkan pada persoalan kepemilikan memiliki sejumlah keterbatasan. Pendekatan tersebut tidak dapat menjelaskan pergeseran yang terjadi dalam proses demokratisasi terkait penggunaan media sosial. Tulisan ini menawarkan paradigma mediatisasi politik dalam melihat hubungan antara media dan demokrasi pada Pilpres 2019, dan tren demokrasi pada Pemilu 1955–2019 sebagai konteks besar. Penelitian ini mengusulkan peta penggunaan media dan kecenderungan demokrasi di Indonesia tahun 1955 – 2019, dan empat kuadran mediatisasi media dan politik dengan 2 sumbu utama. Sumbu pertama memiliki dua kutub: media yang mempromosikan demokrasi dan media yang merusak demokrasi, dan poros kedua dengan kutub yang mempolitisasi media dan mediatisasi politik. Kuadran pertama adalah media yang mendorong demokrasi dan terdapat mediasi politik, kuadran kedua adalah media yang mendorong demokrasi dan terdapat politisasi media politik, kuadran ketiga adalah mediatisasi politik dan media yang merongrong demokrasi, dan kuadran terakhir menunjukkan politisasi media dan media yang merusak demokrasi.

Kata Kunci: Media dan Demokrasi; Isu Kepemilikan; Mediatisasi Politik di Indonesia.

**INTRODUCTION**

Couldry & Hepp (2013) stated that media research, either text analysis, political economy, or reception analysis, does not succeed in answering questions about why the media is important and always growing. Mediatization explains the phenomenon in which the relations between social systems outside the media are increasingly dependent on and adapting to the logic of the media. According to Schulz (2004), a German professor of mass communication and political science, the suffix-ization in the word mediatization has a critical and expressive function, just like globalization or individualization. The concept of mediatization transcends and incorporates media effects by looking at the interdependence or reciprocal relationship between the media and other social systems. This perspective is missing in text studies, political economy, and analysis of media receptions.

The books on political economy that are most cited by scholars in Indonesia are those of Vincent Mosco (2009) and Herman and Chomsky (2002). Masduki’s research (2022), for example, uses these two references as an analytical knife in the case of the rise of conference activities in the field of Communication Studies in Indonesia. Other books that discuss the political economy in third-world countries are rarely used. Books from Wilber (1984), Handelman (2003), and Bel (2008), which may be more relevant to conditions in Indonesia, are still rarely done. Of course, we can learn from the idea of media management in Europe from Curran (2002) or Stickle (2009). However, in reality, macro-level political economy research is more dominant based on media ownership in a country.

From a political economy perspective, media ownership in Indonesia and the relationship between media and politics in Indonesia can be mapped. The reform era has opened up opportunities for the growth of new media. The regulations that are being streamlined are welcomed with great enthusiasm. The UU/Law no. 40 of 1999 gives freedom to the media in Indonesia. There are at least two main articles; article 3 concerns the function of the press as a medium of information, education, entertainment, and social control (paragraph 2), as well as an economic institution (paragraph 2), and article 4 states no censorship, ban, and a prohibition on the national press (paragraph [2]).

In terms of technology, the presence of the internet also gives rise to online media and allows everyone to act as a news producer. The question will be: is a large number of media followed by the growth of public space in society? One thing that can be seen is the issue of media ownership. It is undeniable that media ownership in Indonesia is only owned by a small number of entrepreneurs who are included as members of groups. On the other hand, several researchers have published a map of media ownership in Indonesia.

A researcher from *Lembaga Studi Pers dan Pembangunan* (Institute for Press and Development Studies), Ignatius Haryanto (in Sen & Hill, 2011), released data on media ownership in Indonesia. Haryanto mentioned nine influential media groups that control mass media in Indonesia. These groups include Kompas Gramedia Media Group, MNC, Jawa Pos Group, MRA, Bali Post Group, Mahaka Media Group, Femina Group, Alisjahbana, Bakrie Group, and Lippo Group.

**Table 1.** Media ownership in Indonesia (Nugroho, Putri, & Laksmi, 2012)

No	Group	TV	Radio	Print media	Online media	Owner
1.	Global Mediacom (MNC)	20	22	7	1	Hary Tanoesoedibjo
2.	Jawa Pos Group	20	n.a	171	1	Dahlan Iskan, Azrul Ananda
3.	Compass Gramedia Group	10	12	89	2	Jacob Oetama
4.	Mahaka Media Group	2	19	5	n.a	Abdul Gani, Erick Thohir
5.	Elang Mahkota Teknologi	3	n.a	n.a	1	Sariatmaadja Family
6.	CT Corp	2	n.a	n.a	1	Chairul Tanjung
7.	Visi Media Asia	2	n.a	n.a	1	Bakrie & Brothers
8.	Media Group	1	n.a	3	n.a	Surya Paloh
9.	MRA Group	n.a	10	16	n.a	Adiguna Soetowo & Soetikno Soedarjo

10.	Femina Group	n.a	2	14	n.a	Pia Alisjahbana
11.	Tempo Inti Media	1	1	3	1	Tempo Foundation
12.	Bertasatu Media Holding	2	n.a	10	1	Lippo Group

The research results by Nugroho et al. (2012:39) show that 12 large groups control media ownership. More or less, the same data is also presented by Merlina Lym (2012) regarding the 12 major media conglomerate groups in Indonesia. The main difference is that Tempo Inti Media is not included as part of the media conglomerate, replaced by Media Bali Post Group. The phenomenon of the growth of Media Bali Post Group as a major oligarchy in Indonesia is historically interesting. Ida (in Sen & Hill, 2011) mentions how Satria Narada, owner of the daily Bali Post and Bali TV, expanded his business and controlled nine local TV stations with their entrepreneurial instincts. The business atmosphere dominates almost all media policies in Indonesia. This is related to the background of the owner, who started as an entrepreneur. The following is some data regarding the involvement of media owners with political parties.

The larger group, CT Corp, was owned mainly by Chairul Tanjung, a conglomerate controlling various media and banking companies (CEO of Bank Mega). Although he once admitted to not being interested in being involved in politics in 2014, Chairul Tanjung was recorded as a spokesman for the SBY Democratic Party in 2014. Para Group with PT Para Inti Investindo has its subsidiary, which is PT. Trans Corporation. The company controls the shares of Trans TV and 55% of TV 7 which later changed its name to Trans 7. In 2011, another media joined CT Corp, under a subsidiary of Trans Corp, namely PT Agranet Multicitra Siberkom.

Besides CT Corp, one of the media that is full of political interests is Metro TV, under the auspices of the Media Group owned by Surya Paloh. As we know, Surya Paloh's political affiliation is obvious, namely the National Democratic Party. A political organization that initially called itself a social organization. We can also observe TV One shows that never mention the Lapindo mud, but tend to use the term Sidoarjo mud disaster. It makes sense when we find out who is behind TV One, namely the Bakrie Group. In 2011, the Bakrie Group's Visi Media Asia started to *go public*. Abu Rizal Bakrie is affiliated with the Golkar Party. Metro TV and TV One, as news television stations, have the advantage of broadcasting 24 hours a day (Tapsell, 2015). SCTV and Indosiar are subsidiaries of the EMTEK (Elang Mahkota Teknologi) group which is controlled by the Sariaatmadja family. Indosiar was officially purchased by EMTEK in July 2011 (Nugroho et al., 2012:58).

Finally, the ownership of Global TV, MNC TV, and RCTI are possessed by Hari Tanusudibyo's MNC. Hari Tanu has been involved in political parties since 2011 by joining the National Democratic Party. In 2013, it moved to *Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat* (People's Conscience Party). In 2015, Hari Tanu founded his party, the Perindo Party. In the context of the 2019 election, we can map the media owners and political affiliations of the two presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Jokowi-Amin was promoted by the National Democratic Party with Surya Paloh as the owner of the Media Group, the Golkar party with Aburizal Bakrie, the owner of Visi Media Asia, as well as the non-parliamentary party, Perindo and Hari Tanoesoedibjo, the owner of the MNC Group.

In addition to Tapsell's (2015) research, some studies have tried to explain the political economy struggle and its impact on democracy in Indonesia (Khumairoh, 2021; Nugroho et. al., 2012). A number of these studies have limitations in explaining the media as an entity that is able to influence political institutions with its media logic. It could not explain the interrelation between media logic and political logic. This research is important in the context of the increasing use of social media in the last two presidential elections, namely in 2014 and 2019. Therefore, this study would like to focus on the research question of how the mediatization approach is able to explain the relationship between media logic and political logic in democratization process in Indonesia and its application in the 2019 Presidential Election.

## METHODS

This study uses a meta-methodology –it is the study of extant scientific methods (Zhao, 1991). In this study, meta-methodology is carried out by comparing two research approaches: political economy and mediatization, to analyze general elections in Indonesia 2019. Furthermore, this research also suggests a map of the general trend of the 1955 General Election to the 1999 Presidential Election as a major

context. This method is combined with some primary data as well as secondary data from previous research sources.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Ownership and Criticism of Demonstratives *Publizität*

The monopoly of media ownership and, at the same time, its involvement in political parties have increasingly raised concerns over the role of the mass media as a means of growing public space. There are several problems: the perspective of the tendentious packaging of events, the selection of biased issues, and the erosion of economic interests in media content. Political party advertisements on national TV networks have become our daily menus as if nothing is wrong with this practice.

Thus, Habermas's (in Kellner and Durham, 2006) ideals that the public sphere will encourage the emergence of public opinion have been eroded in the form of mere opinions or public opinion. The mass media will only produce cultural assumptions, normative attitudes, collective prejudices, and values. At most stuck, the mass media will only produce opinions that do not arise from the debate between rational arguments. Consequently, making a public process (making proceedings public/*publizität*) does not work. Fraser (in During, 1999) called it *Demonstratives Publizität*. The situation in Indonesia is reversed in the form of a second public sphere in the scheme of the refeudalization process. Media owners and political party owners create a big bias of interest.

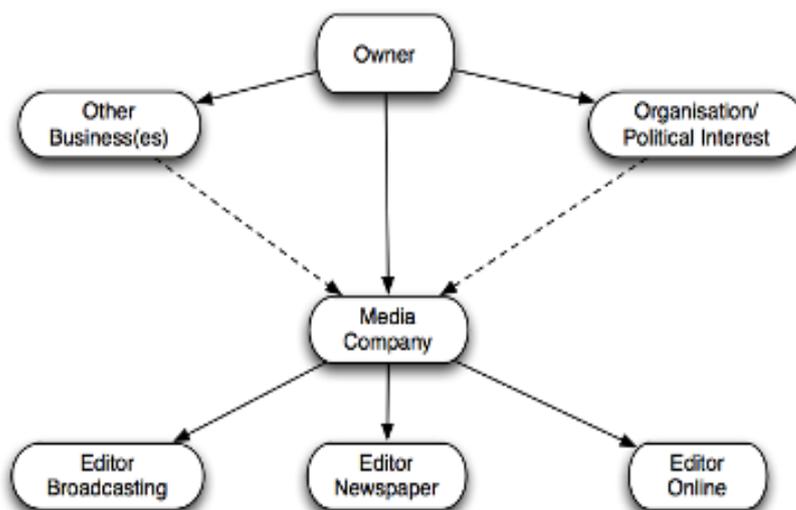


Figure 1. Decision-making mechanisms in the media (Nugroho et al., 2012)

On the other hand, there are attempts to show pseudo-democracy in the form of spectacle. This is what Habermas criticizes with demonstrative *publizität*. *Publizität* is just a product of the public relations public sphere. The bias will certainly be even higher when the media owners play practical politics. Honesty will always be wrapped in the basic principles of public relations: it must be honest but packaged while maintaining a good (company) image.

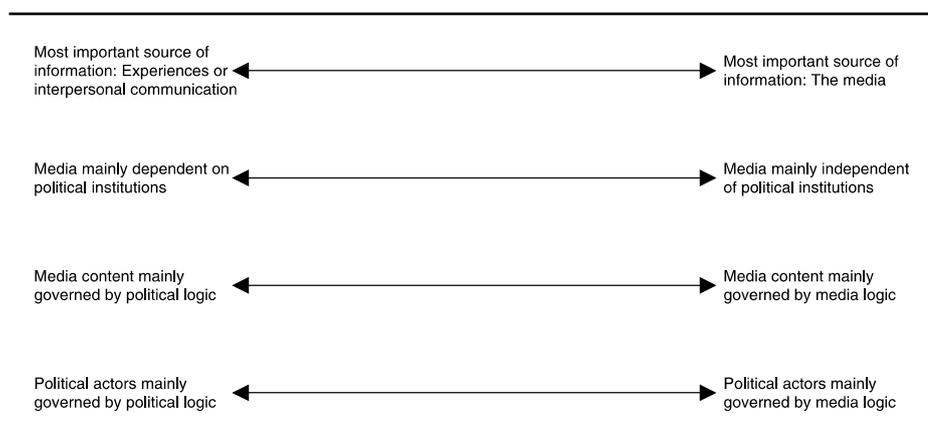
The work of Purnama (2019) shows that the development of the media industry does not necessarily mean the development of the media as a public medium. On the other hand, its development has significantly reduced the notion of media citizenship: the industry sees viewers solely as consumers, not as citizens who have rights to the media. This position has serious implications since it relates to our collective life and how we understand our lives through the media, as it is mentioned by the main definition of the media itself.

## New Paradigm: Mediatization of Politics in Indonesia

In the tension of relations between the political system and the media, the mediatization process begins to shift in the relationship between social/political institutions and the media. Situations where institutions – such as politics – increasingly adopt the logic of the media are referred to as *mediatization* (Hjarvard, 2008). Thus, political mediatization is a contestation of media logic and political logic in the public sphere with the main tendency to dominate media logic over political logic. *Mediatization*, in German called *mediatisierung*, has a different concept from mediation (Wojtkowski, 2012). The concept of mediatization was first used to explain the phenomenon of the relationship between media and politics. According to Asp (1986, in Hjarvard, 2008), mediatization is a process in which the political system is increasingly influenced by and adapted to the demands of the mass media in their political coverage. In other words, there is a pattern of interdependence in which political logic begins to adapt media logic.

Hjarvard (2008) distinguishes mediatization theory from medium theories in the focus of research on technology and culture and the cultural environment that shapes technology. In contrast, medium theories view media as *technological 'nature'*. Second, the scope of mediatization research is empirical analysis, which makes it different from medium theories, which are more historical and macro-analytical. The similarity between the two is seeing the impact of media not on media content and media use, but on various media formats that shape the communication process (Hjarvard, 2008:109). Several studies in politics have been carried out using this mediatization approach (Asp and Esaiasson, 1996; Blumer and Esser, 2018; Calka, 2015, D'Angelo and Esser, 2014; Mazzoleni and Schulz, 1999; and Campus, 2010). In the Indonesian context, research with this approach is still very minimal. One of the articles that provides a mapping of the political mediation process in Indonesia is written by Arifuddin (2016).

Arifuddin (2016:20) divides the mediatization process in Indonesia into three stages. The first stage emerged when the media emerged as the main source of political information with centralized control of President Suharto and his cronies. In the New Order era, mediatization became a totality with a limited number of media, including TVRI, RRI, private TV stations, and other media with very dominant government control at that time.



**Figure 2.** A four-dimensional conceptualization of the mediatization of politics (Stromback, 2008)

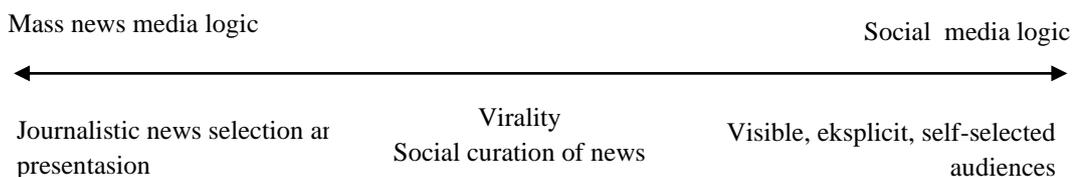
In the second stage, the media becomes more professional and commercial with the changing political situation. The 1998 reformation has given fresh air to the media in Indonesia for the growth of some new media, both online and conventional media. Furthermore, 1999-2015 was referred to as the third stage of the political mediatization process in Indonesia. This is marked by a movement towards an approach and determination of political life in the concepts of media content, adjustment of political vision, and the presence of *spin doctors* who are increasingly dominant in an increasingly instant communication system (Arifuddin, 2016:20).

With the increasingly massive use of social media, political mediatization occurs by adopting the logic of social media, namely the matter of virality. Chart 1 illustrates the evolution from conventional news to contemporary hybrid news ecology (D'heer in Thimm et al., 2018: 175). There is an intersection between the virality factor of the news and the process of socially assessing or

curating news. Suppose the logic of mass media news is driven by journalistic selection and appearance. In that case, it moves to a more visible social media logic, clear audiences, and a process of self-selected audiences.

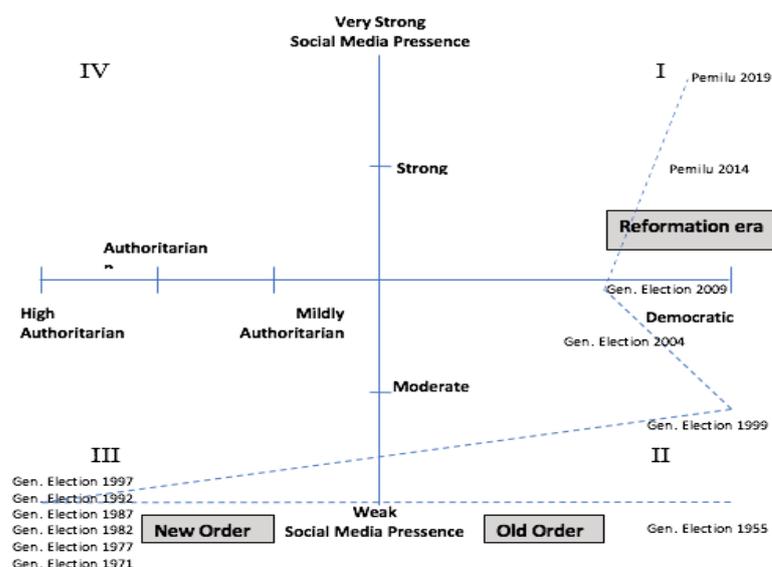
In the practice of internet-based media, both the logic of mass media news and social media logic overlap and compete with other media logics. Thimm, Anastasiadis, & Einspänner-Pflock (2018) more explicitly describe the plurality of media logic that plays on the internet media by calling it media logic. Adding the letter ‘s’ in the word ‘logic’ shows the non-uniformity of media logic in internet-based interactive media. Complex situations arise from the emergence of networked communication, the role of each communication act that contributes to changing media content, and the presence of the internet that creates a different environment.

**Chart 1.** Continuum Series of Media News Logic-Social Media Logic



However, Arifuddin (2016) does not explain what the stages referred to by the fourth dimension, according to Stromback (2008), namely when political actors have been moved by media logic. The following is a discussion regarding mapping the political mediatization process and political logic. In implementing the General Election in Indonesia, several milestones can be mapped related to his preference for democracy and the presence of social media in various forms of campaigns in the process of gaining votes.

The 1955 election, which was held for the first time after the independence of the Republic of Indonesia, is said to be the most democratic election (Suryadinata, 2002) concerning eight criteria, according to Ranney. In the election, there were 172 participating parties. In the 1971 General Election during the New Order, ten contestants participated (Catholic Party, Syarikat Islam Indonesia Party, Nahdlatul Ulama Party, Indonesian Muslim Party, Golkar, Indonesian Christian Party, People’s Consultative Party, Indonesian National Party, PERTI Islamic Party, Indonesian Independence Supporters Association). Furthermore, since 1973 there has been a simplification of the number of parties participating in the general election into three major parties: PPP, PDI, and Golkar.

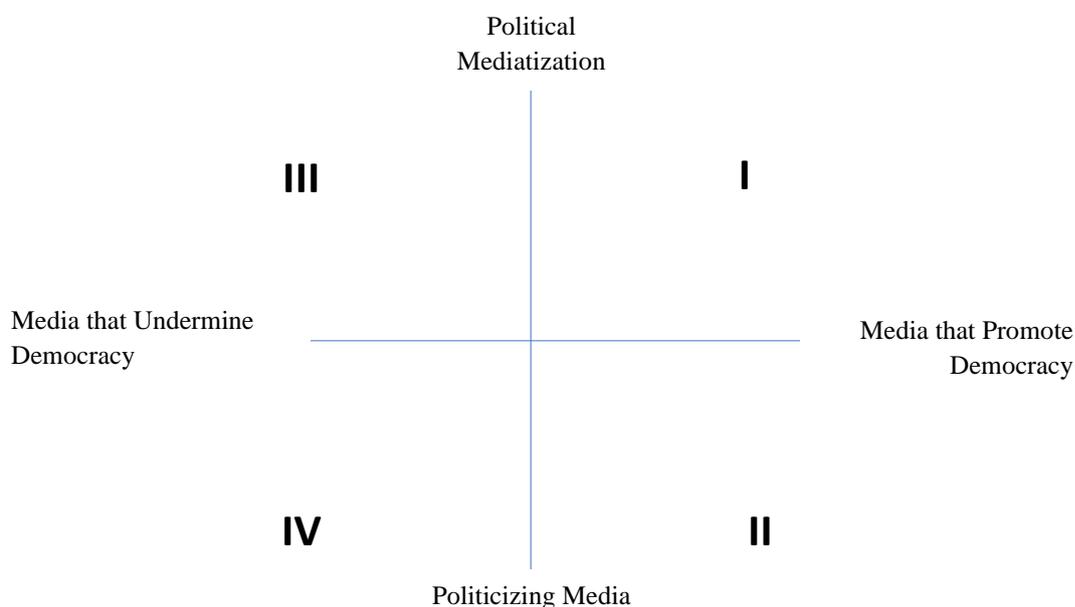


**Figure 3.** Mapping of the social media presence and democracy in Indonesia

In 1999, the first general election in the reform era, there were 48 political parties. The increase in the number of political parties is an expression of pressure on the freedom to establish political parties in Indonesia. The election was also referred to as the most democratic election in Indonesia. The political mediatization approach enables researchers to map the shift in political institutions in the dynamics of the relationship between media logic and political logic. Figure 3 shows how the democratization shift in Indonesia is also closely related to the use of media in politics. On the other hand, it can also be seen how the logic of the media is increasingly independent and influence political logic.

### Mapping the Interrelation of Media and Politic

Based on the elaboration of data and theory, the author maps out four quadrants of the relationship between media and democracy in two main axes. The four quadrants elaborate on the fact that media and politics have their respective strengths. The first axis consists of two poles: the media that promote democracy and the media that undermine democracy, and the second axis with the poles of politicizing media and political mediatization.



**Figure 4.** Four quadrants of media and political mediatization

#### **Quadrant I: Media that promote democracy and there is political mediatization**

Media that encourages democracy can be seen from two sides: ownership and editorial policy. In terms of ownership, it can be seen whether there is an opportunity for the public to become part of the manager or owner of the media or vice versa. The mass media only belongs to a handful of elites. In terms of editorial policy, the media can be seen as facilitating public space for civic and political discussions and encouraging the emergence of discussions in the public sphere as an implementation of strengthening democracy. On the other hand, politics adopt media logic explained by the concept of political mediatization (Esser): professionalism, commercialization, and adaptation to media technology aspects.

The freedom that is wide open with power distributed 'equally' with the facilitation of 'social media' has the potential to grow the excesses of democracy known as populism. When everyone is free, even the state no longer has the authority or hesitates to use its authority, then various radical teachings and incitement by tyrants become wide open. On the other hand, people who stutter with

their freedom feel the emptiness in their freedom, so the tyrants' demagoguery easily moves them to inflame the populist movement.

**Quadrant II: Media that promote democracy and there is a politicization of political media**

The media promote democracy by providing space for the emergence of democratic public spaces, encouraging political participation, and being part of strengthening *civil society*. However, there are attempts by the government to use the media as a means of political propaganda. This condition is often encountered in various situations, considering that politics always requires the media to raise votes. In this context, it is necessary to consider that liberalization is taking place in the media; a very high atmosphere of freedom is not always followed by an automatic strengthening of participation.

**Quadrant III: Mediatization of politics and media that undermines democracy**

Political institutions adopt the logic of media news called by Esser (2013), which has three aspects: professionalism, commercialism, and technological aspects, when political institutions adopt logic in their efforts to be covered by the media. The professional aspect is related to various news coverage criteria: 5W + 1H format, news value criteria, and complex media routines in each mass media.

**Table 2.** News-Media Logic (Esser, 2013)

News-media logic		
<i>Professional aspects</i>	<i>Commercial aspects</i>	<i>Technological aspects</i>
News-production according to distinctively journalistic norms and criteria	News-production according to economically motivated rationales	Medium-specific to technological conditions of news-production

The theory of Reese and Shoemaker explains several factors that influence the content of media news: individual level, media routine level, organizational level, different media, and most importantly, the ideology that surrounds the media institution in which it is present.

**Quadrant IV: Politicization of media and media that undermines democracy**

This situation is a very non-ideal situation. The media does not carry out its function as a supporter of democracy, while on the other hand, political institutions use the media as a propaganda tool. In a situation like this, there will be a frozen democracy (Sørensen, 2008) or political involution (to borrow Geertz's term), which is characterized by the following characteristics:

1. The staggering economy at both the national and local levels
2. The stagnation of the formation of civil society
3. False socio-political consolidation
4. Unresolved socio-political-legal issues from the predecessor regime.

**CONCLUSION**

A political economy approach that focuses on the issue of media ownership alone will not contribute much to seeing the shift in political institutions and the dynamics of democratization that have occurred. This research offers a political mediatization paradigm to explain how the relationship between media logic and political logic shifts in a political mediatization process. The results showed that the political mediatization approach was able to produce an analysis of two main findings related to the relationship between the use of social media: (1) democratic tendencies in Indonesia in the 1955 – 2019 elections and (2) the four quadrants of the mediatization relationship between politics and the media.

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