

T.R.

ISTANBUL SABAHAATTIN ZAIM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE EDUCATION INSTITUTE

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**ANALYSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE
DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN INDONESIA : A STUDY ON
THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE 2019 ELECTION**

MA THESIS

Akhmad Faisal HAMZAH

Istanbul

September – 2024

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THESIS APPROVAL

This study has been approved in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MA degree
in Political Science and International Relations

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DECLARATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that this MA thesis titled “*Analysing the Challenges of the Democratic System in Indonesia: A Study on the Role of Media in the 2019 Election*” is my work. I have acted according to scientific ethics and academic rules while producing it. I have collected and used all information and data according to scientific ethics and guidelines on thesis writing at Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University. In both the text and bibliography, I have fully referenced all direct and indirect quotations and sources I have used in this work.



Akhmad Faisal Hamzah

Istanbul, September 2024

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ABSTRACT

ANALYSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN INDONESIA : A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE 2019 ELECTION

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As the global collapse of the democratic system affects the democratic system in Indonesia, it is critical to identify and assess major challenges to Indonesian democracy. The growing obstacles inside the democratic system has given rise to substantial scepticism over its ongoing significance. The continuous advancement of technologies is causing the fundamental principles of the democratic system to gradually weaken. This thesis seeks to address the problems affecting Indonesia's democratic system through a qualitative approach to examine the issues that surfaced during the country's 2019 general election. The issues of identity politics, populist leaders, polarization, and negative campaigns that arose during the 2019 election in Indonesia serve as prominent indicators of the extent to which the democratic system in Indonesia has been eroded.

Keywords: Democracy, Democratic system, Challenges, Social media, Indonesia

ÖZET

ENDONEZYA'DA DEMOKRATİK SİSTEMİN KARŞILAŞTIĞI ZORLUKLARIN ANALİZİ: 2019 SEÇİMİNDE MEDYANIN ROLÜ ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Akhmad Faisal HAMZAH

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Fadi ZATARI

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Küresel demokratik sistemin çöküşü Endonezya demokrasisini de etkilediğinden, Endonezya demokrasisinin önündeki ana sorunları belirlemek ve değerlendirmek çok önemlidir. Demokratik sistem içinde giderek artan engeller, sistemin sürdürülebilirliği konusunda büyük şüpheye yol açtı. Teknolojinin sürekli gelişimi, demokratik sistemin temel ilkelerini zayıflatıyor. Bu tez, Endonezya'nın demokratik sistemini etkileyen sorunları, 2019 genel seçimleri sırasında ortaya çıkan sorunları nitel bir yaklaşımla incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Endonezya'da 2019 seçimleri sırasında ortaya çıkan olumsuz kampanyalar, popülist liderler, kimlik siyaseti ve kutuplaşma, demokratik sistemin erozyonunun önemli göstergeleridir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Demokrasi, Demokratik sistem, Zorluklar, İfade Özgürlüğü, Sosyal medya, Endonezya.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Jokowi	: Joko Widodo
SAFEnet	: South East Asia Freedom of Expression Network
LIPI	: Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia
PDIP	: Partai Demokrasi Perjuangan Indonesia
COVID-19	: Corona Virus Diseas 2019



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Overview

A democratic system is one of the earliest forms of government, established in the fifth century BC and today known as the Athenian democracy. Lipson (1964: 13) believes that “the foundations of the democracy were laid in ancient Greece”. The literal meaning of “democracy” is derived from “*demos*” (meaning “people”) and “*kratos*” (meaning “rule”) from the Greek language (Grayling, 2018: 2), thereby its classical definition is inextricably linked to the word “people”. Shuifa and Jingle claim that the definition of people appears in the compound word “democracy,” which takes on a more limited and specific meaning (Jinglei, 2008: 623).

According to Scott and Makres, democracy gradually disappeared until the 18th century when it came back to America and during the French Revolutionary. Makress (Scott and Makres, 2019: 4) added that this system is designated as a system of governance that is founded on popular sovereignty or majoritarian will and is governed by the will of the people. Unlike other administration systems where the authority is held by a single person, such as in autocratic systems or absolute monarchies, or when authority is held by a small group of people (Barker, 1959: 35-42).

Held (2000: 15) posits that the emergence of classical democracy theory is inextricably linked to three primary intellectual figures: Thucydides, Plato, and Aristotle. Furthermore, the modern theory of democracy that guides the democratic system has been established by various intellectuals including Aristotle, Tocqueville, Schumpeter (Cunningham, 2002: 6), Jurgen Habermas, Hannah Arendt, Jean Jacques Rousseau (Mufti, 2013: 5), and other philosophers. This theory has evolved over the years to produce several new definitions, including liberal democracy, Western democracy, Muslim democracy, and many others. However, this thesis is focused on discussing the democratic system that currently exists instead of dealing with analyzing the theory.

Today, the democratic system is the most widely used system to run a government. The rapid development of democracy occurred in the late 1990s with only one-third of

the world's countries had adopted the system in 1970 (Zakaria, 1997: 22-23). Furthermore, 96 out of 167 countries with populations of at least 500,000 as of the end of 2017 were democracies, according to Desilver (2019). Historically, after the end of the world wars and colonization, the democratic system was not a system commonly used by war-winning or newly independent countries because many countries were led by authoritarian leaders. . The influence of these authoritarian leaders has led to the abandonment of the democratic system. However, since the Cold War involving Russia and the U.S. ended, the democratic system has flourished and continued to spread until it was used by the majority of countries in the world in 2010 (Zakaria, 1997: 23). The significant growth shows that the democratic system appears to be the best form of government, as many countries adopted it to run their government.

The democratic system is used by superpowers and developing countries in various parts of the world, including Indonesia. The democratic system spread worldwide, accompanied by the norms of freedom, liberty, the right to assembly, equality, liberalism, and free speech, and has become the most sophisticated type of government (Fukuyama, 1989: 1-2). In addition, the democratic system is established through the principles of equal implementation of the law for all levels of society, encouraging peaceful leadership changes for a stipulated period, and providing equal rights to all voters during the election (Grayling, 2018: 9). These norms became the advantages of the democratic system, which were not identified in many government systems until increasing number of countries adopted it. The benefits are shown by democratic countries that use and uphold the norms that adhere to the democratic system.

The values of freedom in the democratic system encourage innovation that results in significant technological advances in the early 21st century. The presence of continuously improving technology brings countries that adopt this system to become developed countries, boosting the prestige of the democratic system itself. As a result, this system continued to spread until it was used by more than half of the countries in the world in 2010 (Zakaria, 1997: 23). However, not all countries have successfully implemented the democratic system. Some states such as Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, and Myanmar have failed to implement democratic processes under their regimes. The institutions in these countries do not fully embrace democracy. Instead, they only support it as a universal principle (Martini, 2012: 295).

Although widely used by the majority of the countries in the world, the democratic system indeed has its own flaws. In the past hundred years, the democratic system has experienced at least five significant challenges, starting from the First World War, the Second World War, the Cold War, the economic crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Ziblatt, 2017: 7). One of the researchers who openly criticizes the democratic system is Wael Hallaq, who states in his book that the democratic system is a system with many problems (Hallaq, 2013: 14). However, the failures and flaws of the democratic system has been observed in many countries, including during the election of a populist leader Donald Trump in the U.S, and the withdrawal of the U.K from the E.U., which is evidence of a challenge and weakness of the democratic system in recent years.

Indonesia is among Southeast Asia countries upholding a democratic system, in which the people are the holders of power, decision-makers, and the highest policyholders, represented by the representative institutions (Karima, 2023: 107). This is despite the adoption of other systems other than democracy since Indonesia gained its independence. It was only in 1998, when the reformation movement took place, followed by the fall of Soeharto, who had been in power for 32 years, that Indonesia truly embraced democracy. Indonesians had believed that following an authoritarian dictatorship, Soeharto's downfall would allow them to enact an open democratic system. Yet, more than 20 years later, Indonesia is still far from becoming fully a democratic country and faces numerous challenges in putting the democratic system into place.

The issues pertaining to the democratic system in Indonesia became evident in the 2019 presidential election, which presented unprecedented challenges to Indonesia's democracy. Zuhro (2019: 70-72) defines democracy as a form of governance that is controlled by the people for the benefit of the people. Nevertheless, she asserts that comprehending its significance is challenging due to the intricate and extensive requirements of democracy, including the crucial step of cementing democratic principles. During the 2019 elections, Indonesia embarked on a process of democratic consolidation, with numerous hurdles along the way.

Throughout the 2019 election campaign, issues pertaining to Indonesia's democracy persisted, particularly over the accusations of electoral malpractice. The complexity of these issues escalated as a result of advancements in media technology and the prevalence of online platforms for social interactions. Proliferation of these platforms

over the past decade has posed novel obstacles to the democratic system, such as the dissemination of misinformation, the erosion of democratic principles, the rise of populist groups, and the deepening divide among political supporters. In addition, Indonesia's plurality has resulted in the unintended consequence of freedom of speech, which is typically considered a valuable aspect of a democratic system, and worked against the system in Indonesia.

1.2. Problem Statement

The democratic system is one of the government systems most countries adopt. It has grown rapidly due to the promotion by most Western countries (the U.S. and European countries), claiming it the best system to adopt. Nevertheless, there are several issues with the democratic system implementation, including populist and authoritarian leaders (Ziblatt, 2017: 5), excessive freedom of speech and the press leading to fake news (Alves, 2021: 42), capitalism (which widens the social class gap) (Berg-Schlosser, 2015: 348), corruption (Warren, 2004: 336), and polarization in democratic societies (Ziblatt, 2017: 16). These growing issues undermine both democratic principles and the system itself.

When Donald Trump won the U.S. presidential election in 2017 and served until 2021, the issues and breakdown of democracy came to the surface. Scholars such as Levitsky and Grayling believes that Trump has weakened the democracy that has been established for more than 300 years during his administration. He was viewed as an authoritarian who put the American democratic system in peril throughout his rule; Levitsky and Ziblatt stated that there were warning signals of democratic breakdown in the Trump administration (Ziblatt, 2017: 23).

The collapse of democracy in the Trump era was exacerbated by the arrival of the COVID-19 outbreak, with various divisions due to polarization, freedom of speech (which led to hate speech), and social media (which produced fake news). Furthermore, the COVID-19 outbreak worsened the democratic system. The handling of the outbreak by non-democratic governmental systems where authoritarian leaders imposed restrictions during COVID-19 period was considered more effective compared to countries adhering to democratic systems, which tended to be slower due to the principle of freedom adopted in the system. Cheibub (2020: 23) believes that

democratic countries were concerned about protecting people's social rights, including the freedom to practice religion, travel, and engage in economic activity.

The challenges did not only occur in the U.S., but also in Indonesia, especially during the general election of 2019. The democratic system in Indonesia encountered numerous challenges during the 2019 general election period, including the polarization of society, the advent of populist figures, the spread of politics based on a particular identity, and the unstoppable technological development as well as social media platforms. Alves (2021: 43) explains that technological innovations have allowed false information to spread quickly and manipulate public opinion, making it increasingly difficult for people to obtain the right information. However, the West's claim that this system is the best one to adopt and has been challenged by the problems it faces. To examine how these challenges erode the democratic system, this study was conducted to determine how far the system has survived amidst the problems during the 2019 general election in Indonesia.

1.3. The Rationale of Research

Many researchers have examined the issues of declining democratic system, including Cerny (1999), Alves (2021), Schlosser (2015), Warren (2004), Cheibub (2020), and Denton (2015). Furthermore, studies conducted by Runciman (2018), Snyder (2017), Levitsky and Ziblatt (2017), Luhrmann and Linberg (2019), Wilkinson (2015), Grayling (2018), Reich (2020), Zakaria (2013), Runciman (2019), McCoy (2018) describe the problems that pose a threat to the democratic system. Meanwhile, there are some studies discussing the challenges of the democratic system in Indonesia, including studies conducted by Karima (2023), Fajar (2021), Hui (2020), Winters (2013), and Zuhro (2019). The author discovered discussions regarding the issues with the democratic system in Indonesia that arose during the general election of 2019.

1.4. Significance of Research

Hallaq (2013: 16-21), a professor from Columbia University, argues that there are several flaws and problems with the democratic system. The weaknesses and challenges of the democratic system are not only general and theoretical, and these problems also occur in practice in Indonesia. Examining the challenge of the democratic system in Indonesia is also crucial for highlighting these issues, affirming the principles of the democratic systems, and contributing to the sustainability and

health of the democratic system in Indonesia. With the aforementioned perspective, this thesis aims to identify the issues of the democratic systems in Indonesia. In addition, the most important issue that adds originality to this thesis is that it observes the study of the democratic system challenge in Indonesia during the general elections of 2019, while other studies merely discuss the problem of the democratic system worldwide and vice versa.

1.5. Research Questions

In this study, the author attempted to discuss the democratic system in Indonesia, and examine the problems of the democratic system during the general election of 2019 in Indonesia. There are two research questions posed by this study: “What were the challenges of the democratic system in Indonesia during the general election of 2019?” and “What role did the media play in the democratic issues during the 2019 general election?”

1.6. Thesis Hypotheses

To address the formulated research questions, the following three basic hypotheses were developed:

1. Many problems occurred in the Indonesian democratic system during the general election in 2019;
2. The problems of the Indonesian democratic system during the general election in 2019 are interconnected with each other due to the rapid development of media technology;
3. The development of social media during the 2010-2020 period has become one of the biggest threats to the democratic system in Indonesia;
4. As a result of the dissemination of hoaxes and offensive remarks on online platforms, freedom of speech in Indonesia is entering a critical period with various restrictions imposed by the government.

Freedom of speech, an essential component of democracy, is currently causing unintended negative consequences and eroding democratic systems, notably in Indonesia. Moreover, technological progress poses a significant risk to the democratic system due to the proliferation of social media platforms. Democratic governance is also at risk due to the prevalence and rapid dissemination of public speeches expressing hate, racism, and misinformation. Media technology utilization in the 2019

general election in Indonesia introduced new challenges to the democratic system. Hence, technological advances significantly contribute to the erosion of the democratic system in Indonesia.

Current rapid advancement of technology enables the realization of freedom of speech in Indonesia. Nevertheless, it had a significant influence on the Indonesian democratic atmosphere during the general election in 2019. With the advent of digital media, the issue of freedom of expression in Indonesia has emerged as a new challenge because of the uncontrollable dissemination pertaining misinformation through online platforms. In response to these issues, the Indonesian government has mostly focused on enacting new legislation aimed at restricting freedom of expression in the country. The government's legislative endeavors have had an adverse effect and introduced a range of new obstacles to the democratic system in Indonesia.

1.7. The Research Method of the Thesis

This thesis utilizes the qualitative method to serve the research purpose. This strategy is employed by researchers in an effort to generate information and characterize a phenomenon methodically and accurately. According to Keman (2016; 37), qualitative methods focus on understanding the significance of an intention, action, object, or occurrence. This study utilized a qualitative research approach due to its ability to categorize and explain realities and the meaning people give to relationships.

By employing the qualitative method, this thesis aims to thoroughly describe a certain phenomenon through the collection of data that are difficult to measure statistically. The data in this research include second-party data gathered through scientific books, academic sources, archive sources, library sources, newspapers, databases, international journals, scholarly reports, and internet documents relevant to the research topic. These sources serve as a foundation for discussion, analysis, as well as reference materials for the research.

Once the necessary data were collected, they were analyzed using qualitative research methods. Qualitative research data analysis relies on comprehensive information to interpret variables, is not quantitative, and is employed to explore phenomena thoroughly. In this study, the author supported the approach of Miles and Huberman, who advocate an interactive analysis method that encompasses data collection, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Kandung, 2014: 64).

1.8. The Outline of the Study

This thesis comprises five chapters, starting with general methods of the study and a broad overview of the democratic system history, problem statement, research questions and hypothesis, rationale of research, significance and originality of research, as well as the scope and research methodology of the thesis.

The second chapter discusses the theoretical perspective of the democratic system. It also presents the evolution of the Indonesian democratic system. The chapter focuses on the theory of democracy before highlighting the challenges of the system.

In the third chapter, issues that potentially pose threats to the democratic system in Indonesia during the 2019 general election are discussed. The chapter also explores the political issues that the democratic system in Indonesia faces, as well as the societal challenges contributing to the erosion of the democratic system caused by the general elections in Indonesia.

Chapter four examines the impact of the media and the difficulties the democratic system has to deal with. It also discusses the contribution of media and online interaction platforms in shaping public discourse during the 2019 general election in Indonesia.

Finally, the final chapter provides the study's conclusion and suggestions for prospective future research.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORY OF DEMOCRACY

The chapter's main objective is to provide an explanation of fundamental components that comprise the notion of democracy. The fundamental definition of democracy discussed in this chapter is based on Aristotle's conception as the theory of democracy he proposed is the most fundamental theory of democracy currently being used (Papageorgiou, 1990: 1). This chapter also provides an explanation of the history of the democratic system that has been implemented in Indonesia as well as the general elections in Indonesia. In addition, the chapter discusses the fundamental principles of the freedom of speech. In the final section of the chapter, an overview of the freedom of speech in Indonesia is presented.

2.1. Classical Theory of Democracy

The initial conception of the democratic system can be observed from the thoughts of Aristotle, who was considered by many researchers as the father of democracy. Aristotle was a Greek philosopher originated from Macedonia whose prime intellectual period in Athens occurred in the 4th century before Christ (Makres, 2019: 5-13). One of his best works is the theory of democracy, which remains in use today. During his lifetime, he analyzed several systems of government and laid down the principal foundations that characterize the institutions of a democratic system. He also defined equality as something that should exist in a democratic system. According to Aristotle, a democracy has to promote equality. He stressed that everyone has equal rights and that, in the eyes of the law, there is no master and that everyone is equal (Papageorgiou, 1990: 1). Thus, it is not surprising that many crowned Aristotle the founders of the democratic system based on equality. According to Cunningham (2002: 7), Aristotle classified forms of government as follows:

Royalty, where one person in the common interest; tyranny, a deviation of royalty where one person rules in his private interest; aristocracy or proper rule by the few; oligarchy, which is the deviant from aristocracy; proper rule of the many called 'polity' by Aristotle; and its deviation for which he reserved the term democracy.

On the other hand, Wattimena (2012: 1) explained that Aristotle distinguished several forms of proper government or those that look out for the interest of the populace. First, a monarchy is a form of government where the interests of the many are served by a single figurehead and led by a king. Then, an aristocracy is an administration run by the best people in the society and serves the interests of the society. Lastly, a democracy, or a government composed of many acting on behalf of all people, is sometimes called a constitutional government (Wattimena, 2012: 1). Based on Cunningham and Wattimena's explanation, Aristotle regarded the democratic system as the most ideal and appropriate form of government compared to other forms. This refers to the democratic representation system, which appoints representatives to represent the people, unlike the other two systems, where the interests of the general populace are not represented by the leader.

Lintot (1992: 120-121) explains the foundation of the main principle of the democratic system by Aristotle. Aristotle argued that freedom, or *eleuthera* in Greek, is the chief principle of this theory, and he subsequently divided this principle into two sub-principles. The first is to rule and be ruled. Aristotle contended that the majority of decisions must be authoritative and constitutional since democratic justice is founded on numerical equality rather than equality based on values. In this context, citizens create laws in assemblies or through representatives, reflecting the goals of the general populace and requiring their adherence. The second sub-principle is living following the collective will. The popular will is therefore a mirror of the realization of freedom, whereas the opposing view reflects the traits of a slave.

Adding to the discussion, Nafisa (2013: 40) stated that the primary objective of any democratic system is to prioritize freedom, which is Aristotle's fundamental notion in the democratic system. In addition, a democratic system needs to adhere to three key principles: the social structure, the form of governance, and the philosophical concepts. The term "social structure" describes a democratic system in which everyone has equal rights but is heavily applied to the wealthy and powerful. Accordingly, a democracy's political hiring practices must take into account each person's unique ability or potential to ensure that all citizens have equal representation in the government. Lastly, a democracy places a higher priority on the rule of law to prevent chaos from occurring due to citizens' freedom and political engagement.

Aristotle outlined the four distributions of power in a democratic society in his fourth book. His division of power is comparable to that in the modern times. The division of power by Aristotle includes: (1) deliberative approach concerned with making significant political decisions, (2) jurisdiction, encompassing the responsibilities and role of judges, (3) utilization of judicial authority, and (4) a popular assembly, where all citizens freely participate and make decisions on everything, with the authorities only responsible for preliminary work (Peonidis, 2008: 286). Aristotle's first three distributions of power are similar to modern democracies, but the last one is more similar to a family oligarchy or a tyrannical monarchy.

Aristotle also examined three classes of citizens. The first class is the actual ruler or government. The second class is the officials of the city-state, the majority of whom are not allowed to participate in the judicial system or the government. The final type of citizens is those who are equivalent to the word "people" in the definition of democracy; who are the legitimate residents of the city-state and are eligible to take part in the judicial system and government (Jinglei, 2008: 625-626). Aristotle's understanding of these three types of citizens is only applicable in a democracy and not in another system of government.

The freedom that Aristotle highlighted was subsequently expanded to include freedom of the press and speech, which was also founded based on Aristotle's concept of equality, which states that every person has the same rights, including the right to free speech. Sullivan (2010: 162) claimed that there are two distinct ideas within the concept of free speech: free speech as equality and free speech as freedom. The concept of equalizing the relative opportunities for various points of view to impact political and cultural outcomes is at the heart of free speech equality. To prevent the government from unduly restricting speech that is unusual, unconventional, or challenging, this concept places a strong emphasis on the protection of dissenters' speech from regulation.

2.2. Democracy in Indonesia

The 1945 Constitution of Indonesia demonstrates the democratic ideals of the country. Firstly, the fourth paragraph of the preamble states that Indonesia's independence is derived from a state constitution that upholds the sovereignty of its citizens. Secondly, as mentioned in the second paragraph of the first article of the

amended 1945 Constitution, people have the right to exercise their sovereignty following the constitution (Akbar, 2023: 629:630). Since it was established on the sovereignty of the people in line with the fundamentals of the democratic system, the 1945 Constitution thus unmistakably establishes the framework for a democratic government. According to Ulum (Ibid: 631-633), the development of Indonesia's democratic system is at least divided into several phases, namely parliamentary democracy, guided democracy, new order, and reformation era.

2.2.1 Parliamentary Democracy

The era of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia began with the country's declaration of independence in 1945 and the implementation of the parliamentary democratic system, which is characterized by a powerful parliament, a cabinet answerable to the legislature, and general elections to choose representatives of the people (Manurung, 20022: 6). Because of these characteristics, Manurung believes that the parliamentary democracy is the best form of democracy compared to other democracies and is suitable for Indonesia as a newly independent state.

According to the 1945 Constitution and the 1950 Constitution, the parliamentary democratic system came into effect one month after the proclamation of Indonesia's independence. Soekarno, the first president of Indonesia, implemented this system at the beginning Indonesia's independence based on the Dutch model (Nada, 2023: 5). However, over time, the political tensions that arose during this era made this system ineffective in Indonesia and this democratic system did not last long. In 1959, Soekarno officially announced the dissolution of the parliamentary democracy and launched a new type known as the guided democracy (Akbar, 2023: 631). This also signaled the conclusion of the parliament-based democracy era, and the start of the directed democracy that continued until 1965.

2.2.2 Guided Democracy

In 1959, Indonesia's parliamentary democracy came to an end and guided democracy took over the country's political system. According to Kroef (1957: 113-115), enhancing political stability and strengthening the president's position as both state head and government head were primary goals of guided democracy. Soekarno put forth the design of the guided democracy system based on his nationalism, anti-imperialism, and third political stance (Akbar, 2023: 623). Unlike the parliamentary

democracy, the guided democracy was characterized by the ultimate power of the president, while the legislature would play a smaller role in this democracy. The president also had great power to decide on political matters and ultimately decide how the country developed.

The concept of guided democracy was initiated by Soekarno and received a lot of criticism, one of which came from his vice president, Mohammad Hatta. Hatta was among the many people who strongly opposed the idea. He contended that although Soekarno had established the National Advisory Council, which was meant to represent the main functional groups in society, the Council could not be considered representative of society because these groups were internally divided. Hatta was of the opinion that the National Advisory Council was biased toward certain groups. Furthermore, Hatta believed that political parties that had strayed from the concept's ideals and improperly elevated some individuals to positions of power were to blame for the political unrest that characterized the previous parliamentary democracy (Kroef, 1957: 115-116).

Several conflicts that arose during the implementation of guided democracy inspired Hatta's criticism of the system. Indonesia also went through an economic crisis as a result of the National Advisory Council's improper work. Despite growing government spending and massive infrastructure development, the economy grew little or not at all. This resulted in a growing budgeting deficit, rising production, and rising inflation. According to Bank Indonesia, the exchange rate skyrocketed from 3.80 rupiah to the U.S. dollar in 1950 to 11.40 in 1952 and 45 in 1959, indicating that the government had increased the value of the rupiah from 5 billion in 1952 to 34 billion in 1959 (Vandenbosch, 1961: 331-332). These circumstances brought the Indonesian economy dangerously close to inflation and precipitated a financial crisis. The democratic system ended after the bloody tragedy known as G30S/PKI. This tragedy involved Soekarno, who was eventually replaced by Indonesia's second President, Soeharto.

2.2.3 New Order

Soeharto, who took over from Soekarno as Indonesia's president, marked the start of Soeharto's New Order regime. Throughout the era, Soeharto, who was an army general, prioritized an authoritarian system in the state as Indonesia's democratic

development reached a low point. Pancasila Democracy was the term he used to describe the arrangement he had established then. Despite being known as Pancasila Democracy, the system put in place during the New Order regime was merely theory and conceptualization, and had not yet been put into actual practice.

During the New Order regime, Soeharto did not allow democratic life much room in state and governance practices. For instance, speech restrictions were implemented, elections were manipulated, opponents of Soeharto's administration faced arrests and the practices of collusion, corruption, and nepotism flourished (Manurung, 2022: 9). The New Order lasted for 32 years, ending with the economic crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998. Soeharto was forced to resign from his position after numerous demonstrations in various regions, culminating in students storming into and occupying the parliament building. The fall of Soeharto brought a new phase where the democratic system was restored by Habibie, who was appointed to replace Soeharto and became the third president of Indonesia.

2.2.4 Reformation

Indonesia embarked on a new phase of reform following the collapse Soeharto. Habibie oversaw a reformation in 1998 that witnessed the reintroduction of the democratic system in Indonesia. The reform period served as the basis for the eventual establishment of democracy in the country. Several signs point to the implementation of democracy in Indonesia following the reformation period, including the enactment of a multiparty system, which was demonstrated in the 1999 general election, and the freedom of the press as a public forum for participation in nationality and statehood (Nada, 2023: 6). People's right to associate and congregate by their political goals and ideologies was once more granted at this point.

Democracy in the Reform era applies the values of Pancasila. This concept is similar to the parliamentary democracy but with much better improvement. One of the changes that occurred during this reformation period was the holding of elections that were more democratic and consistent because they were determined in the amendment of the 1945 Constitution every five years. Furthermore, the division of power between three institutions (legislative, executive, and judicial) is also more stable than in previous democracies (Manurung, 2022: 10-11). In addition, citizens' rights are better guaranteed, and the principle of autonomy returns to the people. Habibi also

successfully overcame discrimination during the reform period, resulting in domestic stability.

The journey of democracy in Indonesia after the reformation period continued to improve until 2004 when Indonesia elected the president and representatives of the people directly for the first time through the 2004 general election. The direct election in 2004 was the second election held after the New Order, the first being the 1999 general election. The democratic ecosystem in Indonesia slowly improved as the liberty to free speech, assembly, and communication was restored to the public, including in the media. However, over time, media technology growth and social media emergence brought new challenges to Indonesia's democracy.

2.3. History of the General Elections in Indonesia

Indonesia is among numerous countries worldwide that adhere to a democratic government, with general elections being a defining feature of this type of democracy. General elections are an inevitable outcome for nations that uphold a democratic system. Indonesian elections serve as a mechanism for the citizens to exercise their sovereignty, as outlined in the second paragraph of the first article of the 1945 Constitution. This article affirms the fact that power lies with the public and is implemented in alignment with the constitution (Rustamana, 2023: 2).

The decision to introduce this system in Indonesia was based on its alignment with the normative principles outlined in the official ideology, Pancasila. Pancasila serves not only as the foundation of the state but also as a basic principle that every Indonesian citizen, regardless of their identity, must adhere to, follow, and uphold without any exceptions. Pancasila serves as a framework for society and state, and includes a principle that particularly governs the implementation of the electoral system. The principle, known as democracy, is guided by wisdom and emphasizes the importance of deliberation and representation. The concept of democracy emphasizes that the power and authority to determine a country's leader should be with its people.

Elections have been conducted in Indonesia since 1955 to elect representatives of the populace to the Indonesian parliament. However, direct presidential elections only started to be conducted during the 2004 general election. Historically, 12 general elections have been held in Indonesia since 1955, specifically in the years 1955, 1971,

1977, 1982, 1987, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2009, 2014, 2019, and the most recent election in February 2024 (KPU, 2024).

Indonesia's general elections have undergone multiple phases. From 1955 to 1997, the elections were conducted to select parliamentary representatives. The direct presidential election only started to take place in 2004. From 1971 to 1997, the president was not directly elected by the people. The head of the winning party in the legislative election would eventually become the president. However, in the 1997 election, the president was elected by the parliament through a plenary session.

Over the decades, the election system in Indonesia has evolved in accordance with the development of the democratic system. Typically, each election in Indonesia has unique obstacles aligned with the prevailing period. The 1995 election marked the inaugural election in Indonesia during the tenure of the first president, Soekarno. The 1971 election until the 1997 election were conducted under the leadership of the second president, Soeharto. The 1999 election took place following the Reformation era under the third president, Habibie. Subsequently, in 2004, the first female president, Megawati, led the direct presidential election. Starting from the 2004 election, Indonesia has consistently conducted elections every five years to democratically elect members of parliament as well as the president.

2.4. 2019 Election

Elections serve as a platform for political actors to compete for power, enabling people to contribute to the process of formulating decisions as well as promoting the liberalization of civil and political rights. Democracy also asserts that elections provide an occasion for opposition parties and the public to implement check and balances systems on the ruling party (Novalia, 2020: 50). The 2019 general election simultaneously facilitated both the parliamentary and presidential election. In a historic moment for Indonesia's elections, this was the first time such an occurrence has taken place. The 2019 general election was referred to as the "five-box election" due to the simultaneous implementation of the presidential election, the House of Representatives (DPR-RI) election, the Regional Legislative Assembly (DPRD I) election, the Regency/Municipal Legislative Assembly (DPRD II) election, and the Regional Representative Council (DPD) election. This action was undertaken following the ruling of the highest court in Indonesia that interprets the constitution

(Constitutional Court), as stated in Decree Number 14/PUU-11/2013, with the objective of minimizing the budget on elections and the financial burden on election participants (Novalia, 2020: 52-53). Furthermore, it was essential to minimize the influence of financial manipulation in politics, such as vote buying, misuse of officials' authority, and the prevention of political interference in administrative processes, while also optimising government work programs.

The implementation of simultaneous elections is predicted to enhance the dedication of political parties in forming enduring coalitions to consolidate their dominance in prominent state institutions. Consequently, simultaneous elections are anticipated to enable the restructuring of the presidential system in Indonesia. In order to implement simultaneous elections in 2019, there were both possibilities and problems that needed to be considered, with one of the challenges being analyzed from a political standpoint. The 2019 elections presented several opportunities and challenges from a political standpoint, affecting political parties, the government, voters, and election organisers.

This was the reason for the necessity to develop simultaneous elections from a political standpoint. One potential course of action was to overhaul the representation system, election system, and party system. The primary objective of the 2019 concurrent general election was to establish a more robust and secure presidential system of administration. The formation of the coalition for the presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs was carried out in advance and based on a shared vision and objective, rather than solely aiming to win the election.

The 2019 presidential election included two sets of candidates, each consisting of a presidential candidate and a vice presidential candidate. The 2019 presidential election was notable due to the participation of candidates who had previously contested in the same election, which coincided with the legislative elections. Joko Widodo and Ma'ruf Amin, presidential ticket number 01, were selected as nominees by many parties, including PDIP, Golkar, PKB, PPP, Nasdem, and Hanura. On the other hand, Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, presidential ticket number 02, were chosen as nominees by four political parties, namely Gerindra, PKS, PAN, and Demokrat. The two presidential contenders competed in the 2014 presidential election with a margin of 6.3%. Joko Widodo garnered 53.15% of votes, whereas Prabowo secured 46.85% of the votes (Novalia, 2020: 55-56).

The 2019 presidential election served as a platform for aspiring leaders to demonstrate their capacity for leadership through their campaign. Presidential candidates and their supporters conducted many campaigns through various platforms such as mass media and social media. Candidates utilized mass media as a means to communicate with the broader population. Social media served as a platform for campaigns as modern-day voters exhibited greater interest in viewing campaigns on online platforms such as Instagram as well as WhatsApp. They utilized social media platforms to generate interest in their candidates among internet users, particularly young and inexperienced voters.

2.5. Freedom of Speech

Many believe that the Declaration of Independence of the U.S. started the history of human rights as well as the foundation of freedom of expression. One paragraph of the declaration is widely quoted as a critical point in the development of freedom and equality: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that their creator endows them with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” (United States Declaration of Independence, 1776).

In addition, French’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in 1789 was another declaration many scholars believe to be a milestone in human rights development. The French Declaration states that “men are born and remain free, and equal in rights” (French Declaration of the Rights of Men, 1789). According to Cranston (1973: 2), the French Declaration was influenced by the American revolutions, but it quickly identified itself by adopting the language of rights straight on. On the other hand, Robinson (1911: 182) argued that the declaration of human rights in France had specific political agendas, and the French saw it as a ploy to win over the people’s trust in the authorities at the time. The human rights in the Declaration of Independence of the U.S. and French’s Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen also meant fighting for equality for everyone, including the right to speech and expression.

The freedom and equality highlighted in the aforementioned documents were subsequently expanded to include freedom of the press, speech, and expression. This is also identified in the equality that Aristotle established, which means that every

person has the same rights, including the right to free speech. Sullivan (2010: 143) claimed that there are two distinct ideas within the concept of free speech: free speech as equality and free speech as liberty. The first concept refers to the concept of equalizing the relative opportunities for various points of view to impact political and cultural outcomes, which is at the heart of free speech equality. This concept is to prevent the government from unduly restricting speech that is unusual, unconventional, or challenging. This concept places a strong emphasis on the protection of dissenters' speech from regulation (Ibid: 148).

In contrast, the freedom of speech as liberty aims to protect freedom by preventing the government from interfering in private affairs (Ibid: 155). This idea centers on the need for listeners to evaluate speech and presenters without authoritarian government interference. Sullivan highlighted that government regulations are dubious when they try to equalize the power of speech among speakers and also when they discriminate against different points of view. Initially, this perspective on free speech begins with a reading of freedom of speech as "written in terms of speech", not speakers in the text. However, over time, coupled with the rapid development of media, freedom of speech and liberty have been limited by various government regulations that attempted to reduce them.

Pitaksantayothin (2014: 8) claimed that the ability to say or do what you want without fear of punishment or censorship is essential, enabling people to voice their thoughts and beliefs without worrying about retaliation or censorship from the state or other authorities. Furthermore, the liberty to look for, obtain, and share thoughts and knowledge in any format via any media, including the Internet, is a part of this right. For Pitaksantayothin, this right is critical in the digital era to both personal growth and democratic society because it permits the discussion of opposing ideas and the exchange of divergent points of view (Ibid: 10).

Occasionally, the notion of free speech is abused, leading to the limitations or regulations enforced by the government. This limitation is not consistent with the free speech principle. As opposed to many other supposedly unrestricted personal freedoms such as the ability to drive, consume alcohol, or smoke. Yet, speech is meant to inform, influence, and frequently persuade listeners to agree with the interlocutors. According to Schauer (1983: 243), speech has the potential to do good, and it frequently does,

although it can also be dangerous. The idea of free speech can serve as a haven for those who intentionally discuss dangerous topics when they speak.

Speech is often self-serving; this is true even of speech that is directed toward other people (Ibid). In this sense, defending speech rights as a component of larger individual liberties is acceptable. However, this only supports limited rights for free speech. Since the self-serving nature of an act cannot be a major justification for this principle of limited rights to free speech, neither the traditional defenses of individuality nor freedom of speech are available. Therefore, one fundamental component of well-constructed political and legal institutions is the protection of free speech.

In the digital age, the Internet has completely changed how people access media and information by giving people a voice and a platform to freely express their thoughts and opinions. According to Walters (2023: 9), various social media platforms have broadened the definition of free speech and made it possible for people to interact, exchange information, and participate in public discourse. However, due to its ability to connect billions of people worldwide and provide them with access to a wealth of information, traditional media and information formats are under threat. The Internet also presents new threats, such as criminal activity, political and religious extremism, and manipulation, all of which have been given new venues to flourish and new resources to do so. The freedom of speech on the Internet is widely misused, resulting in the government enacting various laws to address the problems that exist on the Internet. However, the enacted laws tend to limit freedom of speech in cyberspace.

2.6. Freedom of Speech in Indonesia

The right to free expression was maintained and established as a fundamental component of the democratic system in the 20th century. However, after thirty-two years of an authoritarian regime under Soeharto, Indonesians experienced free speech toward the end of the 20th century. The government and political system held sway over the press during the New Order, which resulted in the mass media and other communication institutions generally following political policies in effect at the time. According to Martono (2014: 12), press regulations brought about changes to Law Number 11/1966 on Basic Press Regulations, which was later revised by Law Number 4/1967 and Law Number 21/1982 on Revisions to Law Number 11/1966 on Basic

Press Regulations. Since freedom of speech must be preserved, the freedom of the press protected by this new law was undermined. In the new law, the media were expected to be responsible, meaning that if a media message was discovered to be propagated irresponsibly, a ban would be enforced.

Since the early 1990s, freedom has become a topic of discussion. It has been fought for by the general population, coinciding with the growing public awareness of the need to implement democracy by highlighting the role of the press and mass media as control over power that is being carried out more intensely. This is in addition to the socio-political dynamics of the nation, which are characterized by an increasingly intelligent society and the beginning of the free-market era (Martono, 2014: 12-15). This brought about numerous protests different groups of people in different regions at the end of Soeharto administration. The government at the time ultimately gave in to the people's desire for freedom of expression, which allowed the reins of power to pass and usher in the Reform era. Thus, a new regulation, Law No.40/1999 on Press, was created when Habibie's Reform era began and has been maintained in effect to this day (Manurung, 2022: 15).

One of the key features of the 1999 Press Law is that it guarantees press freedom, which is the right of the press to gather, obtain, and spread information and ideas. Press freedom is a type of popular sovereignty grounded in the values of democracy and justice, and the rule of law became an important turning point for Indonesia's freedom of speech and expression in the 1999 Press Law (Martono, 2014:15). However, the advent of digital media, which is unrestricted by the relevant press law, brought with it new issues in the form of fake news proliferated in digital media.

According to Pitaksantayothin (2014: 4), the law also emphasizes that the press should not be controlled, prohibited, or limited in its broadcasting. These provisions in the new law aim to guarantee press freedom in Indonesia. Pitaksantayothin contended that censorship significantly diminishes the significance of freedom of expression, and went on to say that the state may typically be permitted to use censorship in situations where a pressing public interest is endangered, and it is necessary to restrict freedom of expression to protect that interest. However, regimes typically use this to maintain a favorable perception of their judgment, as was the case with the New Order. Consequently, ensuring press freedom in Indonesia is one of the goals of the 1999 Press Law.

With the development of media technology, the Indonesian government passed the law regulating electronic information and transaction in 2008 to face technological advances. This new law establishes guidelines for the use of information technology (Kurnianingrum, 2021: 1) and seeks to enhance the acknowledgement and observance of people's rights and liberties in compliance with relevant Indonesian legislation. However, because of the various interpretations of its provisions, this law has become one of the catalysts for conflict in Indonesia. Defamation, blasphemy, and hate speech are a few of the articles that are open to multiple interpretations. Thus, the contentious provisions in this law prevent it from serving its intended purpose and are still in place today.

Over the past decade, freedom of speech in Indonesia has become more restricted, particularly during the 2019 election. During the period, a multitude of incidents transpired that posed significant challenges to the long-term viability of freedom of speech and expression. Social media, originally intended as a platform for sharing viewpoints, have instead transformed into a mechanism employed to fragment society through the dissemination of fabricated information and the expression of animosity. Despite the government's efforts to implement the 2008 Electronic Information and Transaction Law, this legislation has been utilized as a means to criminalize dissenting groups who hold differing viewpoints from those expressed by certain individuals.

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that freedom of speech in Indonesia is closely intertwined with the crucial function of the media, which plays a vital part in ensuring the continuity of freedom of speech in Indonesia. In addition, social media's advent in digital era contributes a significant impact in ensuring freedom of speech in Indonesia (Lawlai, 2022: 2). This is due to the presence of a two-way communication function on social media platforms, which allows the public to openly express their thoughts and receive feedback in the form of "likes" or "dislikes".

CHAPTER III

CHALLENGES TO THE DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN INDONESIA

In general, the democratic system is criticized by numerous scholars. Many argue that the democratic system is outdated, irrelevant to be implemented, has many problems, and is not perfect to use (Hallaq, 2013: 14). During the 2019 general election in Indonesia, the democratic system faced various challenges ranging from rampant corruption and the presence of populist leaders to the polarization of society, as well as the proliferation of social interaction platforms. Social media integration into the lives of Indonesian citizens has also had a distinct influence on the democratic system.

3.1. Challenges to the Democratic System

In his book *How Democracy Ends*, Runciman (2018) uses examples from both the past and the present to explore the reasons behind democratic collapse as well as warning signs and potential threats. He highlights in his book that the global democratic system was gravely alarmed by Donald Trump's victory in 2017. He explains that Trump used phrases that expressed the wild and angry perimeters of democratic politics, where democracy begins drifting toward its opposite (Ibid: 13). Therefore, Trump's election was a wake-up call for American democracy as it featured various tragedies, including polarization and the deterioration of institutional trust.

According to Runciman (Ibid: 10-14), less obvious processes such as polarization, the deterioration of institutional trust, and the emergence of populist leaders are also responsible for the downfall of democratic regimes, in addition to violent coups and revolutions. Runciman believes that public confidence in the legitimacy of government institutions is essential to democratic systems. At the other extreme, the democratic system is threatened by the numerous polarizations that take place, as well as the emergence of populist leaders. Within the democratic system, these two phenomena have polarized society and produced social problems.

Democratic systems now face a crisis different from what they did in the past (Ibid). Three factors account for the current crisis: political violence, the threat of disaster, and the advancement of information technology. In this context, political violence,

specifically coups, poses a significant threat because they can quickly topple the democratic system. Runciman further argues that one of the things undermining the democratic system is the threat of disasters, which cause people to prioritize self-preservation over the establishment of a democratically based government. Last but not least, the development of information technology poses a serious threat in the form of changes in communication that are increasingly uncontrollable and unintelligible due to robotic leadership (Ibid: 12-13). Therefore, polarization, institutional trust decline, and populist leaders are less obvious threats to democratic regimes, but Runciman also points to political violence, disasters, and information technology advances.

Runciman is not alone in stating that the election of Donald Trump in 2017 is a dire warning for democracy. In their book *How Democracies Die*, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2017: 3) concur that elected leaders' deaths, rather than a general staging of a coup, are currently the primary cause of democracy's demise. At least, this is what Levitsky and Ziblatt observed about Donald Trump's victory in the 2017 election. Moreover, both cited Hugo Chavez of Venezuela and Adolf Hitler of Germany as instances of elected leaders destroying democracy. Chavez and Hitler were chosen to be the leaders of their respective nations, but they swiftly destroyed democracy in those countries.

Levitsky and Ziblatt also explain that political ethics have been lost, which threatens democracy, especially in the U.S. in the context of Donald Trump. Politicians today interfere with courts and intelligence services, view those who disagree with them as adversaries, frighten journalists, and warn of not accepting election outcomes (Ibid: 2-5). Not only was Donald Trump carrying out these actions, but countries such as Hungary, Turkey, Poland, Austria, France, Germany, Netherlands, and others did as well. The election of Donald Trump raised serious concerns about the survival of democracy worldwide due to these dangers. Levitsky and Ziblatt believe that there has been a decline in political ethics in the democratic system which resulted in behaviors such as meddling with judiciary and intelligence agencies, viewing political rivals as adversaries, and using intimidation tactics against the media.

In addition to Levitsky and Ziblatt, Luhrmann and Linberg (2019: 1096) believe that today, autocratic leaders use gradual and legal tactics to weaken democratic institutions and frequently use covert means to accomplish this. To support their actions, electoral autocrats maintain their competitive edge by employing more covert

strategies such as media censorship and harassment, as well as limitations on civil society and political parties. At the very least, Donald Trump used these strategies following his inauguration. Autocratic politicians seem to take cues from one another and adopt strategies that are viewed as less dangerous than doing away with the elections (Ibid: 1095).

Corruption also seriously threatens democratic systems, social media and technological advancements. Democracy is threatened by corruption because it shatters the connection between the people's power to make decisions and their ability to do so by majority vote and voting. Warren (2004: 328) contends that corruption narrows the scope of effective public action, curtails democratic ideals, and directs public endeavors toward areas where unscrupulous dealings can benefit all sides. Corruption also threatens democratic culture by encouraging cynicism toward public discourse and deliberation, eroding confidence in public decisions and damaging public officials' reputations.

Along with corruption, opinions regarding social media platforms and democracy have changed. Sciffrin (2017: 117) states that when social media sites such as Facebook first launched in 2011, many people heralded them as instruments to spread democracy across the globe and claimed credit for inciting protests in several different notions. Yet, while the internet changed protests, it was evident in 2017 that democracy had not improved all that much. People are becoming more conscious of the influence of propaganda and false information on social media and their susceptibility to harmful and ridiculous ideas. Furthermore, Sciffrin (Ibid: 118-119) said that influential people's views are also changing with how social media platforms are perceived about democracy. People who were once upbeat about social media's ability to effect positive change, for instance, have started to caution against the risks associated with digital technology and the dissemination of false information. This change in perspective raises questions about how misinformation affects voting and the health of democracies around the world, including in Indonesia.

Based on the aforementioned studies, it is evident that democratic systems have encountered new and intricate challenges in recent times, resulting from elected governments, political morality, corruption, and technological advancements. In Indonesia, the democratic system is currently facing a range of issues, which can be categorized as political and social challenges (Mietzner, 2015: 121). The general

election, which is one of the manifestations of the value of the democratic system, has actually become one of the phenomena that raises various problems of the system itself. During the 2019 general election, Indonesia encountered various significant occurrences that had an impact on the democratic system itself, some of which were consistent with the findings of the aforementioned experts.

3.2. Political Challenges in Indonesia

The continuous democratic process is shaped by various elements, including political culture, actor behavior, and political forces (Zuhro, 2019: 70). The 2019 general election in Indonesia was conducted on the 20th anniversary of the reform that led to the development and improvement of the democratic process in the country. The democratization process has been notably dynamic, particularly following the elections that took place after the 1999 reform. The dynamics significantly intensified following the introduction of the direct presidential election in 2004.

Zuhro (Ibid: 71) also asserts that the current democratic process in Indonesia, following three consecutive direct presidential elections, is challenging, particularly in terms of enhancing the quality of presidential elections and furthering the development and stability of democracy. The significance of this procedure lies in the fact that every phase of the presidential election will have an impact on the quality of government. Specifically, a high-quality presidential election will exert a favorable impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of governance. The introduction of presidential election serves as a continuation of democratic values, encompassing the assurance of individual freedom and equality, particularly in terms of political rights. Direct presidential elections can be classified as a formal democratic procedure that upholds the assurance of these political rights in this particular situation.

During the 2019 general election, Indonesian democracy faced at least two significant problems: the emergence of populist leaders and the rise of identity politics. These two issues were new to Indonesian politics and had never occurred since the country's independence (Mietzner, 2015: 121). The general election becomes more complex because both of these issues affect the social life of the Indonesian people. Therefore, the rise of identity politics and the appearance of populist leaders should be given special attention to the development of democracy in Indonesia.

3.2.1. Emergence of Populist Leaders

The relationship between populism and democracy is complicated, and a significant amount of academic and popular interest is focused on the impact that populism has on democratic regimes. In Europe, populist parties on the extreme right have stoked fears of a revival of fascism. On the other hand, populist leaders in Latin America who adhere to the Marxist ideology have expressed their concerns regarding a trend toward authorities. Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012: 25-26) contend that populism can foster democratic processes in authoritarian regimes. Yet, the rise of populism is frequently linked to democratic flaws, and the measures that major actors employ in order to combat populism have the potential to have more negative results than positive ones. Although populism cannot be considered a novel phenomenon in and of itself, it is important to pay particular attention to it because it is responsible for the deterioration of the democratic system.

Populism produced a variety of revolutions and unexpected election outcomes. Grayling (2018: 114-117) claimed that the time period extending from northern Africa and the Middle East to the western Europe and northern America in 2010-2016 provided an excellent illustration of both the characteristics and potential populism. This phenomenon climaxed in Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. and the unexpected outcomes at the polls in the Brexit referendum.

Populism is consistently defined by the utilization of mass media to convey the desires and ambitions of the general public, whether it occurs initially or is intentionally orchestrated by populist leaders. According to Panizza (2005: 15), the initial surge of populist leaders in Latin America was linked to the rise of radio for widespread communication. Furthermore, the rise of populism in the Asian region was initially observed during the 2001 general election in Thailand. Thaksin Shinawatra, the prime minister at the time, employed radio and television platforms to bolster his campaign, portraying himself as the savior of Thailand and emphasizing his personal transformation from a disadvantaged youth to a prosperous entrepreneur. The media disseminated Thaksin's uncomplicated and memorable message and his objective of bestowing happiness upon most Thai programs, discussing his actions and opinions on current matters. Thaksin strongly influenced the daily television news and appeared in various special programs. One of these appearances was an evening discussion show where he expressed dissatisfaction with his predecessors (Phongpaichit, 2009: 66-93).

According to Mudde and Kaltwasser (2012), populism can be approached in at least three ways. Firstly, populism can be defined as a distinct form of political movement. According to Gino Germani (Hamid, 2014: 85), populism is a movement that spans all social classes and is structured around a charismatic leader. Populism as a political style is the second strategy that promotes a specific connection between political leaders and citizens. This connection is characterized by a flexible and strategic manipulation of public sentiment to gain and wield political authority. Then, implementing populism as a communication tool is the third approach. Through the use of discursive frameworks that can successfully divide society into two separate groups-“the power bloc” and “the people”- Laclau’s approach clarifies that a frontal challenge to the established domination marks populism (Kaltwasser, 2012: 3-7).

The year 2012 marked the initial emergence of populism in Indonesia. This populism arose during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, where two formidable contenders, namely Fauzi Bowo, the incumbent, and Joko Widodo, also known as Jokowi, the former mayor of Solo, the challenger who was gaining popularity due to his notable accomplishments, competed against each other. This contestation brought together two camps that had significant supporters and high popularity. Jokowi eventually emerged as a populist leader after winning a fiercely contested election against Fauzi Bowo.

Hamid (2014: 94-98) identifies four factors that have contributed to Jokowi’s ascent and the subsequent growth of populism in Jakarta elections. Initially, the residents of Jakarta experienced discomfort due to the deterioration of social structure and governmental framework, as it has proven unable to restore stability effectively. Jakarta is composed of various ethnic groups, and the interactions between these groups are not always harmonious. Jakarta is home to numerous ethnic and religious mass organizations, some of which are willing to use coercive tactics. Another factor contributing to Jokowi’s increasing popularity is the diminishing confidence in political parties. Jokowi’s popularity has increased significantly due to the significant transformations in the economy, culture, and society brought about by urbanization, economic modernization, and globalization. Although these developments are not exclusive to Jakarta, the city is particularly impacted due to its status as the nation’s capital and its growing prominence as a global city. Ultimately, alternative forms of political representation arose beyond conventional political establishments. The

utilization of mass media typically marks populism to convey the desires and ambitions of the general population, either organically or as orchestrated by populist leaders (Ibid).

The triumph of Jokowi in Jakarta can be interpreted as a manifestation of populism. Jokowi emerged as a viable option for the residents of Jakarta, who had lost faith in his administration while not directly involved in Jakarta politics. Jokowi, being an outsider to Jakarta's elite and associated issues, presented a fresh prospect as an alternative leader, instilling new optimism. Despite concerns about his limited expertise as a small-town mayor, his popularity outweighed these reservations in addressing Jakarta's intricate issues. Populism is applicable not only to explain Jokowi's triumph but also to understand his administration's governance. In the initial stages of his administration, he facilitated public participation in the decision-making process either directly or through various forms of media. In addition, he implemented measures to safeguard the lower middle class, such as increasing the minimum wage at the regional level (Ibid: 100-106). To highlight the populism that Jokowi contributed to a new dimension of politics in Jakarta and Indonesia, the presence of Jokowi in Jakarta through elections and his proposed policies can be easily identified.

Jokowi's success in the Jakarta gubernatorial election changed people's perspective on how a leader should be. Jokowi's work propelled him to a higher political stage when, in 2014, he was nominated as a contender for the Indonesian presidency. Nevertheless, the year 2014 posed another challenge for Indonesia's democratic system due to the persistent rise of populism during the presidential election. The election, triumph, and swearing-in of Jokowi as the next president of Indonesia sparked hopes among the populace, particularly those from lower socioeconomic classes, for reform and improved prospects for Indonesian democracy (Hamayotsu, 2014: 174-175). Jokowi was considered a leader who rose from the bottom because he began his political career as Solo mayor and Jakarta governor before winning the Indonesian presidency in 2014. Following the 2014 election victory, Jokowi persisted in his acts all the way up to the 2019 general election.

From this point on, it is impossible to separate the rise of popular political figures in Indonesia from the persona of current president Jokowi, who ran against Prabowo Subianto in the 2014 and 2019 presidential elections. With his personal charm, Jokowi demonstrated a humble and professional background, making him popular at the

grassroots and a popular populist leader among Indonesian political actors (Ibid: 179). With the different characteristics of most Indonesian leaders and politicians, Jokowi has a special place compared to his rival Prabowo, a politician from a respected family. Mietzner (2015: 125-18) views Jokowi as a pragmatic, centrist, and inclusive populist. In his policy, Jokowi rejects the exclusivity of Islam, does not advocate for the overthrow of the previous government, and does not attempt to pit the poor against the rich as other traditional populist leaders do. Instead, he avoids language that is hostile to different countries and suggests technocratic changes to the democratic status quo. Moreover, by endorsing his modest way of life and traditional image as a commoner, as well as by making references to his accomplishments as mayor and governor, Jokowi was also able to organize the grassroots without using the conventional tactics of traditional populism (Mansyur, 2023: 11). His campaigns also promised several benefits in national health and education programs, and Jokowi's persona drew in Indonesia's rural poor by default (Mietzner, 2015: 132).

Conversely, Prabowo comes from a different background than Jokowi. While Prabowo belongs to a family of well-known politicians, Jokowi has no political history. As per Aspinall (2015: 5), Prabowo's father was Sumitro Djojohadikoesoemo, a renowned economist in Indonesia, and his grandfather was Margono Djojohadikoesoemo, the founder of Bank Negara Indonesia (BNI). In addition, Prabowo is also the son-in-law of Soeharto, Indonesia's second president. Prabowo himself has a military background and previously held the position of Special Forces Commander.

As opposed to Jokowi, who was more pragmatic, Prabowo employed fundamental components of classic populism by creating an enemy of the people, including corrupt elites who wanted to destroy the country and presented themselves as foreign plotters and opponents (Aspinall, 2015: 15). Prabowo cultivated a demagogic manner that distinguished him from his fellow politicians. In addition, he preferred extensive public campaigns, delivering speeches with resonant voices, referring to the audience as brothers, employing rhetorical questions, emulating Soekarno's attire, including his cap, and even utilizing vintage microphones (Mansyur, 2023: 12).

The aversion that the Indonesian people have for Indonesian politicians is inextricably linked to Jokowi's popularity, which makes him a populist leader. The glaring disparity between the people, their parliamentary representatives, and Indonesian

politicians is the source of this detestation. This is consistent with the view expressed by Runciman (2018: 78), who stated that social inequality is one of the elements contributing to the rise of populism. However, in the case of Jokowi, the Indonesian people preferred him as a leader because of his rivalry with Prabowo, who comes from a different family strata.

In Indonesia's presidential election in 2019, Prabowo and Jokowi ran a populist candidate campaign. Prabowo Subianto launched a classic populist campaign similar to those used by Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand (Mietzner, 2015: 122). In contrast, Jokowi's preference for a more moderate form of populism was more acceptable to the Indonesian public. These opposing approaches led to fierce competition that resulted in the division of Indonesian society into two camps. The populist campaign strategy also resulted in the emergence of a new phenomenon within Indonesia's democratic system and a populist leader.

Hadiz and Robison (2017: 490-495) proposed three strategies to spread populism. The first strategy is the unification of disparate peoples against their oppressive elites. The second strategy is the ideological strategy, which emphasizes philosophy and the words and ideas of populist movement leaders in particular. According to this perspective, the core of populism is the idea that politics is a struggle between the elites who lack moral character and the masses who possess it (Mudde, 2004: 550). The third strategy is known as the organizational strategy, and it centers on the tools and tactics used by populist movements to circumvent traditional institutions of representation (Mouzelis, 1985: 333). Both Jokowi and Prabowo used the strategies described by Hadiz and Robison.

The public had high expectations after Jokowi was elected in 2014 and stood for his second term in the 2019 general election. Among Indonesian politicians, Jokowi comes from a humble personal and professional background, but his achievements in local government have earned him national recognition. He is hailed as the people's president, and many Indonesians, particularly those outside the ruling political and business elite, hoped he would become a president who is close to the people and improves governance and democracy, as he has done at the local level (Hamayotsu, 2014: 180-182).

An examination of populism demonstrates that many political phenomena cannot be comprehended without taking into account normative motivations. The same applies to the occurrence of populism in Indonesia. Hawkins and Kaltwasser (2017: 536-537) argue that populism goes beyond mere rhetoric and is rooted in truly held values that can be defended from a philosophical perspective. They also believe that politicians who do not cater to populist sentiments are highly vulnerable. The populism that has surfaced in Indonesia is a manifestation of a grievance that democratic representatives have breached the sacred responsibility bestowed upon leaders who deliberately disregard the rights of their constituents as citizens to fair treatment under the law. Non-populist politicians are typically characterized by their implementation of challenging policies, which they attribute to external factors. They often criticise voters and divert attention away from solving the concerns of the populist support base. Jokowi, with a unique background compared to other Indonesian politicians, has taken use of the opportunity of his rise in the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial race until the 2019 presidential election. This has positioned him as a populist leader well-connected to the people.

This tendency persisted until it reached its peak in the 2019 election, where Jokowi, once again competing against his competitor Prabowo Subianto, secured his position as president for a second term. The clash between these two adversaries elevated the 2019 election to the pinnacle of a contest between populist leaders in Indonesia. Grayling and Levitsky mentioned earlier in their book that developing populist leaders within a democratic system is a dangerous alarm for the system itself.

This tendency also occurs in Indonesia and took place during the 2019 general election, wherein the appearance of President Jokowi, along with various campaign techniques and the image he carried, heralded the birth of a populist leader in Indonesia. It was Jokowi, a leader adored by the people, who made use of his popularity in order to win votes. However, Jokowi's popularity has become a cause for concern for the democratic system in Indonesia, even though the use of popularity is acceptable from a strategic standpoint. The reason for this is that populism in Indonesia is followed by a number of other phenomena, such as the emergence of identity politics and the polarization that takes place inside the core of the Indonesian society.

Being a populist leader is not a strategic error when it comes to winning an election. Populism also employs societal constructs to develop a political strategy that

constructs a narrative aligned with the personal identity of political players. This suggests that the populism being debated in Indonesia does not emerge, but rather stems from underlying negative preconceptions that drive the strategy of garnering support for election candidates (Budiman, 2022: 213). These assumptions are employed to construct favorable impressions towards a particular candidate by expressing concerns or even instigating disorder in order to establish a precarious environment, wherein individuals become aware of the severity of the situation.

In addition, populist politicians who take advantage of unstable situations disseminate stories about how bad things are in Indonesia, such as how many people are oppressed and unfairly left out. Once a candidate has successfully created an unfavorable environment, he or she proceeds to emphasize his or her skills and benefits compared to other candidates. This type of candidates will establish their political persona as “advocates of the people’s voice” to voters mostly from the lower middle class and employ forceful narratives to critique and question established norms or practices, such as opposing economic policy or oligarchy, which are perceived as the root cause of the issue (Ibid: 213-214).

In the context of the 2019 general election, Jokowi, who was already in office, employed a populist tactic similar to the one he used during the 2012 election to elect Jakarta governor and the national election in 2014. In this method, he portrayed himself as a leader who emerged from the common people. Jokowi also fostered a negative ambience by advocating the notion that Indonesian leaders ought to originate from the general populace rather than from the households of political elites. Conversely, Prabowo constructed a narrative instilling fear of the economic decline of Indonesian society, asserting that his presence would rejuvenate Indonesia and lead it to a more prosperous state. In this case, Jokowi and Prabowo both positioned themselves to criticize the elite. The difference is that Jokowi criticized the previous government, while Prabowo rebuked Jokowi’s government.

A number of phrases were utilized by Prabowo during the 2019 general election campaign in order to generate an atmosphere of hostility between good and evil. He employed references to the government’s irresponsibility and recklessness. Prabowo characterized Indonesia as being in a period of economic folly, referring to a condition that was even more unfavorable in practice compared to the neo-liberal economic system. In contrast, Jokowi directed his criticism against the previous government. In

one of his speeches, Jokowi referred to social justice by proposing a solution that would result in a single price for gasoline everywhere in Indonesia. Jokowi subsequently delved into the issue of unfairness in Papua, specifically highlighting the correlation between this injustice and the cost of gasoline. He asserted that all this time gasoline in Java was priced at approximately Rp7,000/liter, however the price of gasoline in Papua can surge to Rp 100,000/liter. Jokowi stated that the establishment of social fairness would commence with the implementation of uniform pricing for gasoline (UNPAR, 2022).

Another attempt was made by both parties when Prabowo used his political tactics to try and rally support from the rural poor, such as farmers. Nevertheless, his endeavors were solely perceived as an attempt to diminish his association with the privileged class. In contrast, Jokowi endeavored to establish himself as a representative of the populace by engaging in meetings and dialogues with many segments of the population. In addition, Jokowi engaged with marginalized Indonesians who were overlooked by the previous administration. As an illustration, he achieved the distinction of being the first Indonesian president to travel to Papua. Because of the popular assumption that Java is the exclusive focus of development in Indonesia, the trip represented a major step forward (Ibid).

Furthermore, the populism that emerged in Indonesia during the 2019 general elections aligned with the models of the populist approach outlined by Mudde and Kaltwasser. The approach of populism in Indonesia encompasses both the factors that contribute to its emergence and the factors that drive its popularity. The supply aspect encompasses political figures and parties that advocate for populist ideologies, while the demand aspect examines the degree to which people embrace populist rhetoric.

Populist leaders have assessed the prevalence of populist ideals in party manifestos, television programs, newspaper articles, and speeches made by political figures. Regarding the demand aspect, they have suggested a set of survey questions to assess populist sentiments and examine the underlying factors of populism. The narratives used by both candidates in the 2019 election presented a new problem with an impact on the democratic system in Indonesia. In addition, the populist narrative produced another problem in the emergence of identity politics, resulting in the polarization of Indonesian society.

A further point to consider is that populism in Indonesia is inextricably linked to the mass media. The events that took place in Latin America and the transformations that Thaksin brought about in Thailand are consistent with this phenomenon. Contrary to the situations in Thailand and Latin America, populist leaders in Indonesia use social media to disseminate populist messages and communicate with younger generation. Media utilization in Indonesia has shifted due to social media major development, with social media use becoming more significant than the consumption of traditional mass media. Accordingly, social media importance in propagating populist messages in Indonesia is far greater than that of mass media.

From the above description, it can be seen that the 2019 election was the eventual result of the presence of populist leaders. The 2019 election was one of the political agendas that culminated Jokowi's success as a leader with popular populism in Indonesia since 2012. One of the damages in the 2019 general election was caused by the populism that Jokowi brought since the previous election contestation. His expertise as the main figure of the news and the strategies he used during the campaign period have proven that the presence of a populist leader is one of the biggest problems for the democratic system in Indonesia.

3.2.2. The Rise of Identity Politics

According to Heller (Kambo, 2018: 124), identity politics is a concept and political movement highlighting differences as the movement's main objective. Typically, identity politics is employed as a tool of manipulation to mobilize political and economic interests. Furthermore, there is a close relationship between identity politics and religion, race, and ethnicity. In this instance, a group typically offers political support to a member of the same race, ethnicity, or religion.

The concept of identity politics is differentiated from the notion of political identity. Political identity is a concept that defines where an individual's interests lie within a political community. On the other hand, identity politics refers to the way in which identity (both political and social) is organized and used as a source and tool for politics. Meanwhile, Sabarudin (2020: 28-30) asserts that the establishment of ethnic politics is preceded by an increasing consciousness among those who strongly identify with a specific ethnic group, forming a sense of unity and solidarity within that group.

In Indonesia, identity politics have polarized the country, sparked social unrest, and threatened democratic institutions. Historically, political identity in Indonesia is rooted in the political movements that preceded its independence in 1945 (Warburton, 2020: 26). The political divide between Islamists and pluralists is one aspect of this issue. These movements were led by supporters of political Islam, who favored an expanded role for Islam in the state, and pluralists, who favored a more secular state that protected religious minorities. However, after independence, the difference in political orientation between Islamists and pluralists remained a major division among political parties in Indonesia.

Sabarudin (2020: 34) states that identity politics re-emerged in Indonesia during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial race. As the country's capital, Jakarta is home to residents from diverse backgrounds. As a result, the candidates running for the position of governor in the 2012 gubernatorial election inevitably engaged in mobilization based on identity. During that period, there were six contenders running to become governor and deputy governor, representing many ethnic backgrounds (Ibid).

Table 3.1: 2012 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election Contenders by Ethnicity

No	Governor and Vice Governor Candidates	Ethnicity
1	Mr. Fauzi Bowo – Mr. Nachrowi Ramli	Betawi
2	Mr. Hendarji Soepandji – Mr. Riza Patria	Java – Betawi
3	Mr. Joko Widodo – Mr. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama	Java – Chinese
4	Mr. Hidayat Nur Wahid – Mr. Didik J. Rachbini	Java – Madura
5	Mr. Faisal Basri – Mr. Biem Benjamin	Sundanese – Betawi
6	Mr. Alex Noerdin – Mr. Nono Sampono	Palembang – Java

Source: Didin Sabarudin, 2020

The 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election was bound to involve identity politics due to the presence of candidates from many ethnicities and religions. The second round of the election included a competition between Jokowi and Basuki T. Purnama, or commonly known as Ahok, who ran against the incumbent, Fauzi Bowo and Nahrowi Ramli. Jokowi, of Javanese descent, and Ahok, of Chinese descent, ran against Fauzi Bowo and Nachrowi Ramli, candidates who belonged to the Betawi ethnic group and

was supported by Betawi community organizations, the native ethnic group of Jakarta. According to Miichi (2014: 63), the disparate ethnic and religious backgrounds of Jokowi and Fauzi Bowo contributed to the emergence of ethnic and religious issues during the 2012 elections. The media and other influential players' role in propagating discrimination and spiritual problems was also inextricably linked to the strengthening of identity issues.

The issue of identity politics resurfaced in the presidential election in 2014 between Jokowi, the incumbent and candidate of the nationalist PDIP party, and Prabowo, the candidate of the Islamist coalition (Warbuton, 2020: 25). It was subsequently observed that identity politics remained a divisive topic in the Jakarta gubernatorial election in 2017 and the presidential election in 2019. The politics of identity is an ongoing issue that extends beyond the presidential election. The issue persists due to the Jokowi administration's responses to certain Islamist elements, which have exacerbated political polarization in Indonesia, by outlawing hate speech and organizations deemed to be anti-Pancasila (Saputro, 2018: 116). Removing the permits of various Islamic organizations whose beliefs deemed at odds with Pancasila as the state principle is one of the more contentious policies of the Jokowi administration, earning Jokowi the reputation as anti-Islam.

The state and religion had been having a steady relationship until the 2019 elections when it became clear that both presidential candidates were using religion to further their identities (Warbuton, 2020: 25-28). In their political pursuits, both candidates aggressively approached *ulamas*, Islamic boarding schools, and religious leaders (Saputro, 2018: 117). Jokowi's decision to select Ma'ruf Amin as his running mate was one example for the approach. Saputro (Ibid: 116-117) claims that Amin was chosen to dispel the notion that he was an anti-Islam leader.

Since the 2014 presidential election, identity politics have become a problem undermining Indonesia's democratic norms. According to Syamsuddin Haris, a political observer of the Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI), the emergence of identity politics in Indonesia occurs due to several factors, including:

1. The effect of policies implemented by the government since the Soekarno period. Because state building is the only focus of the government, it is not serious about developing the character of the country;

2. The government's frequent ambivalence in handling matters about the state and religion;
3. Political parties play no part in the democratic process, allowing sectarian or primitive feelings to naturally arise within society (Lestari, 2019: 15).

This problem culminated in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, which was won by Anis Baswedan. Anis handily triumphed over this sectarian campaign. The blasphemy case against his political rival at the time, Ahok, who was the governor at the time and of Chinese Christian ethnicity, was inextricably linked to his victory. During that period, there was a widespread Muslim protest wave in Indonesia that appeared to call for the government to declare Ahok's actions to be blasphemous (Hui, 2020: 157).

Fernandes (2018: 4-5) highlights the significance of identity politics, specifically religion, as a contributing cause to Anis' triumph in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. His research indicates that Anis emerged victorious in urban towns with significant concentrations of Muslim voters and in densely inhabited regions. Conversely, his rival, Ahok, received fewer votes in regions with significant Muslim voter populations, while gaining more support in places that were Jokowi's stronghold during the 2012 elections (Ibid.).

Ahok was the main target of a more openly religious campaign during the gubernatorial election in 2017. Islamic organizations fiercely opposed Ahok, a Chinese Christian descendant and an ally of Jokowi, claiming that a non-Muslim had no business holding a prominent political position in a nation where Muslims are predominant. However, Anis, an Arab-Muslim backed by Prabowo, Jokowi's opponent, allied with extreme Islamic factions to oppose Ahok. These factions disseminated divisive messages via mosques, recitation groups, and online networks (Warbuton, 2020: 28). The rivalry between Ahok and Anis intensified after Ahok's statement that Jakartans were being "deceived" regarding the position of Quran regarding leaders who are not Muslims (Kwok, 2016: 1). Accordingly, the rivalry between Ahok and Anis serves as an example of how Indonesian Islamic political groups leverage identity politics to outperform non-members.

Ahok's controversial statements drew strong condemnation from Indonesian Muslims. As a result, protests against Ahok, the largest of which was organized by the Islamic

Defense Action 212 (*Aksi Bela Islam 212*), took place in various parts of Indonesia. This action was claimed as a victory for Islamic activism and also a turning point in the birth of identity politics in Indonesia. This wave of Muslim protests against Ahok eventually led to his blasphemy conviction and two-year prison sentence. One piece of evidence of politics based on identity in the Jakarta gubernatorial election is its influence on broader Indonesian political landscape. In addition, the results of the vote count in the Jakarta election also showed that religious identity strongly influenced voting behavior (Warbuton, 2020: 28).

Ahok's problems were exacerbated by social media. During the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election, social media heightened the rivalry between Anis and Ahok and significantly aided the spread of identity politics in Indonesia. Social media were used to spread edited images and videos promoting racist and sectarian themes, which exacerbated political polarization and fostered mistrust. Social media were also a major factor in the propagation of sectarian problems and the upholding of identity politics in Indonesia. This case, therefore, demonstrates how the democratic system is negatively impacted by the existence of social media (Hui, 2020: 157-158).

The issue of identity politics that arose during the 2017 gubernatorial election not only gave rise to Islamist and pluralist or nationalist sentiments but also brought Indonesian democracy to its lowest point, with the emergence of Islamist versus anti-Islamist sentiments. Islamist sympathizers were depicted as backers of Anis, a staunch advocate of an Islamic group that promote the implementation of Islamic rules in Indonesia. Meanwhile, anti-Islamists were individuals who expressed opposition toward Anis and strongly supported Ahok with unwavering determination. The utilization of identity politics in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election led to the emergence of divided feelings among religious communities as well as racial groups. The conflicts stemming from identity politics in Indonesia serve as compelling evidence of the perils associated with employing this technique in a country characterized by its pluralistic population.

The long-standing animosity between Islamists and pluralists, who are now better known as nationalists, which has persisted since Indonesia's independence, is the fundamental catalyst for the emergence of politics based on identity. Issues arising from such politics should not be disregarded. Nevertheless, the ensuing tumultuous political climate since the 2012 Jakarta election, during which gubernatorial candidates

exploited religious, ethnic, and racial sentiments for electoral gain, has transformed this phenomenon into a tangible menace to democracy in Indonesia. This was nowhere more evident than in the 2017 governor race, where identity-based politics undermined the stability of the nation.

The phenomenon of identity politics, which gained momentum during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial race, further intensified during the 2019 presidential election. In 2019, Prabowo and Jokowi faced off just as they were in 2014. Nevertheless, in the 2019 election, both of them projected a distinct image compared to the one they projected in 2014. This statement reflects the level of support shown by Jokowi in the 2017 Jakarta election, where he endorsed his fellow Ahok, while Prabowo, through his political party, put forward Anis as their candidate.

The 2019 election marked the apex of the problem of the politicization of identity and religion, which was influenced by the competition for Muslim votes. The Muslim scholarly agreement movement was formed in response to certain concerns perceived by certain Muslims as harmful to their interest. Its objective was to officially support a presidential candidate. The outcome of the Muslim scholarly agreement event, which included the participation of Muslim scholars as a contender against the current government, advised Prabowo to choose a vice-presidential candidate from the Muslim scholar group, who aligned with the nationalist-religious ideology. Interestingly, the Muslim scholars' agreement's findings were rejected by one of the biggest Indonesian Muslim organizations due to their perceived lack of representativeness among other Muslim scholars. This was because Nahdlatul Ulama, one of the biggest and the oldest Indonesian Muslim organizations, did not feel engaged in that agreement. However, approximately 400 Muslim scholars from Nahdlatul Ulama across Indonesia have officially endorsed Jokowi as a presidential contender for the 2019 elections (Zuhro, 2019: 72-74).

Identity politics that occurred in the 2019 elections was rolled out by both presidential candidates, as evidenced by the strategies used by both candidates. Prabowo, who was affiliated with Islamic groups, tried to obtain as many votes as possible from these groups. Conversely, the selection of Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) chairman as Jokowi's running mate is a separate strategy to participate in gaining more Islamic votes. According to Sonny (2019: 447), the nomination of Amin as candidate for vice-

president for Jokowi indicated the growing politics based on religious identity that occurred over the political situation in Indonesia.

The utilization of identity-based politics during the 2019 election was further enabled by the fiercely competitive nature of the presidential race. Nevertheless, the prominence of identity politics was relatively low in the parliamentary elections because of the diverse and multi-faceted nature of the elections. Playing one identity against another is challenging in the context of multipolar rivalry. Hanan (2020: 17-19) argues that while identity politics is commonly employed in presidential elections, its impact is constrained by two considerations. Initially, essential indicators such as the incumbent's popularity rating and the public's assessment of the incumbent's economic results and performance all indicated the support to the incumbent. Furthermore, there was a lack of distinct identity contrast between current officeholder and his challenger, as both individuals had a similar religious and ethnic heritage. Consequently, it became challenging to persuade a sufficient number of voters that either candidate posed a significant risk to a certain identification group. These two elements constrained the impact of identity politics, rendering it a limited and inconclusive determinant in the election. Given that the Indonesian population is predominantly Muslim, it is both normal and customary for political candidates to compete for the support of Muslim voters in every election. Nevertheless, the over-exploitation of identity-based politics in the 2019 election brought about a distinct transformation in the democratic landscape in Indonesia. The issue of identity politics has caused polarization in Indonesian society, especially due to the presence of social media, which intensified the issues of identity politics, leading to the proliferation of hate speech.

Identity politics occurring in the 2019 elections was believed to have an impact on social rifts in Indonesian society. The conditions seemed to be maintained by political elites to remain in public. Political elites neglect the importance and necessity to compete healthily and elegantly. In addition to poor political education from the elites, the rise of political identity was caused by the insistence on maintaining one's own version of truth values which widened the social distance between communities. This strongly held one-sided truth has given rise to a new class of fanatics. Political elites should call for a kind of national reconciliation to resolve these dangerous upheavals.

In addition, the community should independently redevelop a rational way of thinking about any differences, including differences in political choice.

3.3. Societal Challenges in Indonesia

Apart from its impact on politics, the democratic system challenges the social fabric, including Indonesian society. The polarization of society emerged as a major issue during the general election of 2019. Levitsky and Ziblatt (2017, 2017: 8-111) assert that extreme partisan polarization contributes to eroding democratic norms. There has been a breakdown of democratic norms due to this extreme partisanship. Furthermore, polarization is a serious threat that splits societies, especially in highly diverse nations like Indonesia and the U.S. Levitsky and Ziblatt also clarify that as the America's society has become more diverse, and the country has been working toward racial equality, which has led to dangerous reactions and increased polarization (Ibid: 9). After Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, the threat of polarization became more apparent, and this issue extended to Indonesia and other parts of the world. Mansyur (2023: 2-4) categorizes polarization into two distinct forms: as a state and as a process. When viewed as a state, polarization pertains to the degree of antagonism an issue has regarding a particular paradigm. When seen as a process, it denotes the gradual escalation of opposition over time.

In addition, Bouchier (2019: 715-725) contends that with the downfall of Soeharto, Indonesia witnessed an improvement in democratic practices while simultaneously observing a rise in Islamic influence in both public and private spheres. Individuals exhibit heightened attentiveness and scrutiny when engaging in religious rituals, manifesting their adherence to the Islamic faith through various means, such as wearing the headscarf and utilizing sharia-compliant financial situations.

There has been a resurgence of political polarization in Indonesia, particularly during the presidential elections of 2014 and 2019, which was predominantly between Islamists and pluralists. These two factions have historically disagreed since Indonesia gained its independence. However, during the 2019 general election, political actors in Indonesia also fueled the polarization between these two groups by using tactics such as divisive voter mobilization, hate speech dissemination, and public unrest to further their political agendas. The deliberate acts of political actors including populist

figures' speech, intergroup labelling, and attempts to capitalize on public unrest were the root cause of this polarization (Mansyur, 2023: 18).

Mansyur (Ibid: 3) also believes that the present political landscape in Indonesia has two distinct ideologies, namely pluralists and Islamists. He characterizes the pluralists as secular individuals who advocate for a distinct division between Islam and the government. Although this group does not explicitly object to the presence of religious values in public life, they do not believe that Islam or any other religion should be given preferential treatment in the context of the interaction between the state and religion. Conversely, Islamists are individuals who advocate for Islam to hold a superior status in public affairs when compared to other faiths.

In Indonesia, polarization first surfaced during the 2014 election, coinciding with the rise of populist politicians. A rivalry between Prabowo, backed by Islamists and conservative Islamic parties, and Jokowi, who stood for pluralists and nationalists, began with the 2014 election. Jokowi's primary source of support shifted to the PDI Struggle party. In contrast, Prabowo received backing from several Islamist elites, Islamist movements, and civil society organizations, particularly hardline Islamic groups such as Islamic Defence Front organization (Pepinsky, 2020: 54-55). However, the polarization that occurred in Indonesia in 2014 was just the beginning.

Polarization intensified during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial elections. It has been argued that Ahok, a Jokowi supporter who is of Chinese ethnicity and Christian, is ineligible to serve in a Muslim-majority nation. In contrast, Anis, who was associated with Prabowo and opposed Ahok through Islamic groups, was his rival. The social fabric of Indonesian society was divided due to this rivalry. Hamid (2018: 18-23) highlights this polarization, particularly in the wake of the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Many felt excluded from social gatherings in their community and family because they either supported Ahok or Anis.

Polarization in Indonesia peaked during the election in 2019, during which Prabowo and Jokowi entered into their second contest. Prabowo's team portrayed Jokowi to be the adversary of Muslims and as a dangerous challenges to devoted Muslims and Islamic groups. Nevertheless, Jokowi and his allies decided to take the initiative. They utilized the same polarizing narratives on the opposing side by asserting that if Prabowo were to win, it would lead to the establishment of an Islamic state and his

alliance posing a danger Indonesia's pluralistic national characteristic. With the plurality of Indonesian society, both sides' narratives echoed and exacerbated the polarization in the social fabric of Indonesian society. Anti-Islamic narratives and the establishment of an Islamic caliphate were two political strategies impacting the harmony of the social structure of Indonesian culture and exacerbating the polarization that has been established since the previous election.

As an illustration of the conflict that has taken place in Indonesia society, consider the situation in which parents at one of the primary schools in Prabowo's base did not agree with the idea of other parents who support Jokowi joining their WhatsApp group. Even the children were aware of their parents' partisan commitment. In the event that there was a youngster whose parents were in favor of Jokowi, for instance, the child would be subjected to bullying (Warbuton, 2020: 87). It is possible to draw inferences that children are likewise capable of engaging in partisan antagonism as a result of the political decisions made by their parents.

In the 2019 general election, a recurrence of political polarization, similar to what occurred during the 2014 election, was taking place once more. The widespread use of social media has dramatically changed the way information and narratives are shared, impacting the selection of a specific candidate. This phenomenon is comparable to the previous presidential election, where the candidate remained the same but with a different vice president. The individuals that supported certain factions during the past election were also the same individuals. The difference in 2019 was that if people used to only take sources of information or news from television, people used new media that was popular in 2019, namely social media. The shift had an impact on the polarization in Indonesia.

According to Hui (2020: 3-8), the polarization during the 2019 election in Indonesia occurred due to several key factors, including:

1. Black campaigns: The intensive use of black campaigns, where candidates and political parties attacked each other with misleading information, exacerbated polarization in the society;
2. Dissemination of hoaxes: The increasing spread of hoaxes through social media created distrust among voters. These hoaxes often contained misleading

information regarding candidates which reinforced negative views towards political opponents;

3. Social Identity: The 2019 election was also influenced by social identity factors, where voters tended to vote based on ethnic and religious affiliations. This can be observed in how certain issues were raised to attract support from certain groups, which in turn reinforced polarization;
4. Social Media: Social media served as a digital platform that reinforced polarization during the 2019 election, where users tended to interact with content aligned with their views, creating an echo chamber that deepened divisions.

The combination of black campaigns, dissemination of hoaxes, and the role of social identities in shaping online communities and conversations contributed to significant polarization during the 2019 election in Indonesia.

In addition, political polarization may arise when political actors deliberately exploit feelings of resentment to incite animosity. Mansyur (2023: 17-18) explained that politicians exploit popular dissatisfaction by capitalizing on social and political divisions. Prabowo and his followers attempted to take advantage of the turmoil caused by the Islamist group. This group believed that the social, economic, and political systems were primarily influenced by the ideals of secularism and capitalism, which were associated with Western dominance (Hadiz, 2018: 35). The existing system was widely regarded as generating societal inequity, particularly within the economic domain, necessitating the implementation of a new system rooted in Islamic principles. On the other hand, pluralists were concerned that Indonesia was becoming increasingly Islamic.

The polarization during the 2019 general election became more complicated when Prabowo's and Jokowi's supporters classified and labeled one another. Some Islamic groups that supported Prabowo viewed Jokowi as a leader who did not practice strict Islam and who intended to enact laws discriminating against Muslim communities. Meanwhile groups supporting Jokowi viewed Prabowo as a candidate who was backed by religious extremist organizations and wanted to convert Indonesia into an Islamic state or caliphate. Mutual mistrust and emotional anger had resulted from this labeling. In addition, there was mistrust between the two groups. The Islamist group believed that communists supported the pluralist group, while the pluralist group believed that

extremists supported the Islamist group. This labeling built up the polarization between the two groups and turned religious sentiments and group differences into tools for mobilizing or undermining opponents' political support (Mansyur, 2023: 16).

The utilization of identity politics through labeling between the two groups led to polarization during the 2019 presidential election. It also resulted in a significant impact on the public divide and undermining national unity. The act of polarizing through engagement in identity politics was dangerous, as it had effectively resulted in the creation of a profound social schism through the use of labeling between the two factions. Presidential candidates frequently utilized and confronted identity problems as strategic tactics to undermine their political adversaries. The 2019 presidential election campaign phase should serve as a platform for the dissemination of information regarding the proposals put forth by the candidates. The public was eagerly anticipating the development of diverse thematic narratives that would serve as a foundation for decision-making. Regrettably, the campaign season was primarily characterized by the promotion of political campaigns that exploited ethnicity, religion, race, and intergroup, concerns, identity politics, fabricated news material, and offensive language, all of which lacked substantial content.

As the vote count in the 2019 general election neared completion, it became evident that the Jokowi-Ma'ruf ticket was the leading candidate. This incited resentment from the Prabowo-Sandi camp regarding the vote count. According to Al-Hamdi (2024: 67-68), the resentment further incited demonstrations and disturbances in the heart of Jakarta. Riots and protests took place between May 21, 2019 until May 22, 2019. They occurred in proximity to the office of the election supervisory agency and spread to many other locations (Ibid). Consequently, the disturbances led to fatalities of nine individuals, a few of whom were shot by law enforcement. The protests were intensified by Prabowo's complaint to challenge the results of the 2019 election with the claim of cheating by the Jokowi-Ma'ruf team. The Constitutional Court subsequently rejected Prabowo's petition, which further exacerbated the polarization in Indonesia.

The animosity between Jokowi and Prabowo started to diminish when they encountered each other at MRT Station. Jokowi advocated for the elimination of societal labeling. In addition, while assembling his cabinet, Jokowi extended an invitation to Prabowo to assume the position of Minister of Defence, to which Prabowo

consented in the interest of fostering Indonesian cohesion (Al-Hamdi, 2024: 79-80). Nevertheless, the polarization along political lines persisted. Prabowo joining in Jokowi's cabinet has elicited deep disappointment among Prabowo's followers.

The evident polarization in society is reflected in the participation of populist political figures. The polarization pattern is explained by McCoy and Somer (2019: 21) in their article by stating that political elites first struggle for control by organizing voters to boost their electoral value. Then, populist narratives or assertions are employed by political elites to speak for a group. As previously explained, political leaders in Indonesia employ populism as a means of garnering support in the country.

The political dynamics that occurred in Indonesia during the 2019 elections cannot be separated from the development of media, especially social media. Moreover, the emergence of populist leaders, the spread of identity politics, and the polarization that divides Indonesian society are facilitated by the rapid development of media technology. Coupled with the media's partiality towards the contesting candidates, it has become a problem for Indonesia's democratic system. Therefore, the media's partisanship towards political candidates create a bias that occurs in the news coverage.

The presence of social media during the 2019 elections exacerbated the problems of democracy in Indonesia. Social media present is not only as a tool to destroy democracy, but also its presence followed by new phenomena such as labeling political supporters, hashtag wars, and the rise of political buzzers. Furthermore, the narratives that developed on social media during the campaign period were dominated by negative sentiments. Coupled with the spread of hoaxes on social media makes it a political propaganda tool to bring down political opponents. In the next chapter, the details of media and social media issues with the 2019 elections are discussed in detail and comprehensively.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIA AND THE 2019 ELECTION

A central feature of democratic order is the rule of law and the correlative idea that the law applies equally to all and its remedies are similarly available to all. However, this is not the only central feature. A set of civil liberties is essential to the oppression of democracy, such as freedom of expression, the right to assembly, and liberality regarding political choice. One sign of a genuine democracy and a sovereign form of governance is the freedom of speech. Referring back to the fundamental tenet of the democratic system, people represent the ultimate authority in a nation and their point of view should be considered. Speaking and writing are merely two aspects of exercising one's right to freedom of opinion; other forms include writing, books, meetings, and media coverage (Waluyo, 2022: 245). Generally, it is legal for any citizen to voice his or her thoughts, whether they are criticism, comments, or views.

Within a democratic system, the existence of the media is strongly connected to the right to freedom of speech. In today's society, the media's role is significant. Additionally, the media serve its function in the sharing of information, perspectives, ideas, and discourses, which in turn reflects the evolution of society. The media are intricately integrated into social life in contemporary societies, with no existing social issue that is not connected to the media. Lippmann (2007) argues that a key issue facing the media in a democratic society is the reliability of news and the safeguarding of sources. He identifies this issue as stemming from the belief that the media has the ability to address or rectify the deficiencies of democratic thought. Accordingly, politicians consider media to be a panacea for their own flaws in this situation. However, examinations of news reporting and the economic foundation of journalism indicate newspapers invariably and unavoidably mirror reality, suggesting that the media and journalists have gained significant influence in shaping public opinion through propaganda.

In a democratic society, the right to free expression is crucial since free speech is the most basic right that a person has. In addition, freedom of expression enables individuals to articulate their perspectives and beliefs without apprehension of retaliation or sanctions from the government or other entities. Freedom of expression

is crucial for upholding an open and democratic political system and advocating other human rights. It gives people the freedom to express their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs without worrying about interference from the government or repression. Moreover, it is essential for maintaining a nation's pluralism, tolerance, and democratic society. Without worrying about repercussions or censorship, people can have genuine conversations, discuss significant topics, and critique public policy when exercising their right to speech. This makes it possible to create a dynamic atmosphere where fresh concepts are proposed, creative fixes are discovered, and advancements are made. All things considered, a democratic and inclusive society is built on the foundation of free expression. By protecting this freedom, inclusive culture and democracy can be implemented.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental right and is highly valued for several reasons. Firstly, it is crucial for individuals to achieve self-fulfilment and reach their maximum potential. Secondly, it is vital in pursuing truth and knowledge advancement. In other words, those who seek knowledge and truth must consider all perspectives, evaluate opposing views, and embrace diverse ideas. Thirdly, freedom of expression is essential for people to participate in the process of formulating decisions, particularly in the realm of politics. Lastly, it enables societies and states to maintain stability and adaptability (Nasution, 2020: 2). Thus, freedom of expression facilitates the attainment of stability and adaptation in societies and states.

Freedom of speech in Indonesia is regulated in the 1945 Constitution, which protects citizens' freedom to hold and express beliefs. Nevertheless, in practical application, the freedom of expression is frequently constrained by legislation that regulates hate speech, defamation, and the act of insulting religion or the government. There are concerns over limitations on free speech in Indonesia because of the arrest and incarceration of people who are believed to have broken these guidelines. This concern has been observed in the past few years and has undermined the democratic norms in Indonesia.

Since its independence, Indonesia has exercised its right to freedom in expressing opinions according to its constitution and Law No. 40/1999, which governs universal rights of all citizens. In contrast, Indonesia is thought to have suppressed free speech between 2020 and 2020 due to the government's use of the apparatus to stifle the voices of the people, which is seen to be occurring more frequently and in more

inventive ways. This silencing occurs before the people's voices are given a chance to be heard. According to an indicator study, 57.7% of respondents concurred that arrests by government authorities of citizens deemed to be at odds with their political beliefs are becoming more arbitrary (Waluyo, 2022: 243). Considering Indonesia's history as a democracy, it is clear that this should not be permitted. Rather than using the power of arrests to try and stifle dissent, the government should be open to recommendations and criticism. The silencing and arrests also undermine people's sovereignty, which the Indonesian state protects.

The existence of media in Indonesia's democratic realm is crucial for promoting free speech since it provides the general public a forum to disseminate knowledge, viewpoints, and ideas. People can freely express their thoughts, critique governmental actions, and defend their rights through the media without worrying about retaliation. This valuable aspect should be conserved within Indonesia's democratic environment. Unfortunately, freedom of speech has backfired because of legislation abuse. In addition, with the rise of globalization and advancements in digital technology, the obstacles to freedom of speech have become more intricate. However, along with the development of technology and the democratic system in Indonesia, the role of the media in this system has developed into one of the inseparable fundamentals, especially in Indonesian politics and the 2019 general election.

4.1. Media and Indonesian Politics

The 1945 Constitution and Press Law provide Indonesians the privilege of press freedom and the liberty in expressing opinions. Despite the 1945 Constitution's "guarantee" of freedom of expression and opinion for citizens, there is no assurance that the mass media as a tool for expressing opinion will not be censored. This is despite the fact that the principle of press freedom is explicitly outlined in Press Law No.11/1966 on the basic provisions of the press, which unequivocally stipulates that there should be no censorship or restriction imposed on the national press (Surjomihardjo, 2004: 315). Although freedom of the press and expression is legally guaranteed, authorities may curtail these rights if they perceive the press to have excessive influence, be overly critical of the government, or pose a challenge to the authority by disseminating sensitive material.

During the period of Indonesia's proclamation of independence, the media, consisting primarily of radio and newspaper, played a crucial role in disseminating news about the announcement of independence in 1945. Both the government and the people relied on the press or media for the functioning of the state. Nevertheless, during the period of after the independence, the press and journalists in Indonesia faced a difficult environment due to the prolonged revolution and the colonizers' attempts to regain control of the country. Following independence, the fervor that drove the fight for freedom gradually diminished, giving way to fierce rivalry among political factions. The Indonesian press underwent a transformation, transitioning from a struggling press to an active participant in the media landscape. The press effectively transformed into a conduit for political parties. Although the press was characterized by its participatory nature, it may be argued that this period was a brief and favorable time for press freedom, particularly for political journalists. This marked the conclusion of the era of unrestricted media in Indonesia and the commencement of the first presidential government.

Under the first government, Soekarno had a tendency to view the press as a means to further consolidate his presidential authority. This period can be characterized as a period dominated by the communist press and its supporters (Efendi, 2010: 16-18). Meanwhile, other journalistic outlets that opposed Soekarno's dictatorship, as well as the liberal press, were either expelled or prohibited. The press held a pivotal role in the Guided Democracy system, playing a major role in the nation's political landscape. Soekarno, in his role as president, effectively employed his personal charm, political disputes, and national interests, along with his exceptional oratory skills, to bolster his authority through the mass media.

Under Soeharto, the press was entangled in snares and subjected to censorship. The Indonesian Journalist Association, a press group, paradoxically transformed into a catalyst for press censorship. The government's suppression of press freedom had resulted in a decline in its independence and control functions, giving rise to the phenomenon known as the telephone culture (Ibid: 19-21). The government initiated a process of making phone calls and physically visiting print media businesses to regulate the content being published.

During this regime, every media office were required to meet the necessary criteria to obtain a press license. The government exerted its authority on the press, thereby

overturning the conventional power hierarchy. People faced pressures from the government. Disseminating government-biased and unfavorable news was prohibited. If any infraction occurred, the government would issue a strong warning to the mass media, which might potentially endanger its capacity to publish.

The government oversaw all mass media publications for 32 years under the New Order, in particular via the Department of Information. To ensure survival, the mainstream media had to present favorable features of Soeharto regime. The government exploited the national press as a means to uphold its authority, preventing the press from fulfilling its genuine role as an advocate and protector of society. Under the New Order, the Indonesian press was commonly known as the Pancasila press (Ibid: 21-22). From the outside, it appeared unrestricted and accountable. In truth, there was a complete absence of freedom, to the extent that certain activities were explicitly prohibited.

The convergence of media and politics, which has been occurring since the Soeharto era, influences how media workers understand their relationship with power (Romano, 2003: 45). The news media continue to be influenced by restriction of liberty, integrationism, corrupt practices, and are undergoing evolution from dominant political norms. During Soeharto's authoritarian rule, press freedom was severely restricted, leading to widespread media participation in politics as a common occurrence rather than an exception. Journalists, with limited options, unequivocally backed Soeharto and his political party, Golkar. Moreover, leading Indonesian journalists such as Jacob Oetama (Kompas Group), Dahlan Iskan (Jawa Pos Group), Parni Hadi (Antara and Republika), and Surya Paloh (Media Indonesia Group), were reputedly parts of Soeharto's party even after long after Soeharto's downfall (Swestin, 2009: 112). The problematic nature of media characters' involvement in politics has only been recently recognized. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight the significant difference between assuming the role of a political party member and actively performing political responsibilities, while also being actively involved in journalism.

Under the leadership of Soekarno and Soeharto, Indonesia's path toward democracy as a recently deliberated nation was still in the midst of striving for excellence. The development of democracy and politics in Indonesia was closely intertwined with the role of the media. It was inherent that there were disparities in the execution, favoring the authorities, particularly in the media publishing sector. During the periods of

Soekarno and Soeharto, there was some degree of press freedom, but it primarily served to reinforce the existing power structure rather than promoting a fair distribution of power among the executive, legislative, judicial, and public oversight functions. Thus, it is not surprising that during that period, press freedom mostly manifested as a means for the government to exert control over the media, rather than allowing media managers and press consumers to dictate the style and direction of press content.

Following the reformation in 1998, the Indonesian press underwent significant transformations in its ability to exercise freedom of expression. The outcome was attributed to the enactment of a novel legislation, namely Law No.40 of 1999, which governs the freedom of the press. This law enumerates many roles of the press, such as serving as a means of widespread communication, distributing information, shaping public opinion, functioning as a platform for information, education, and entertainment, exerting control, and operating as an economic entity (Efendi, 2010: 28-29).

The legislation ushered in a new era of freedom of expression through the media, and a free press is a crucial element of a democratic society, serving as a necessary condition for robust social and economic progress. It is necessary therefore to find a middle ground between press freedom and societal obligations. The press is anticipated to deliver news in a manner that is impartial and unbiased. This is essential to ensure that there is no disparity between the public and their leaders in terms of information concerning the functioning of the government.

During the period after the reformation, the freedom of expression was characterized by the creation of new print and electronic media with a variety of packages and segmentation. Another thing that emerged as a new characteristic of the Indonesian press was the bravery of the media in expressing their disagreement with the government. The expansion of press freedom also had an impact on the introduction of economic and cultural liberalization into the realm of mass media, which frequently disregards the component of education.

The freedom of the press is a product of reformation after the fall of Soeharto. Nevertheless, even at this early stage, the press had to remain watchful in preserving the vitality of the national press against the risk of government interference and the

influence of wealthy stakeholders. There was no assurance that a vital, instructive, expert, trustworthy, and influential national press would be able to endure in a transitional political environment, where the influence of the government and the market tends to grow, while the influence of the public is progressively diminished. Unfettered and autonomous media are an indispensable prerequisite for the formation of a democratic system. If, during the reform era, the press institution once again were to fail to foster freedom and independence, and instead allow the press to be under the influence of state domination and control by capital owners, then the failure of the democracy project in the context of Indonesia's political transition would be inevitable and potentially explosive.

Since the implementation of a direct election in 2004 and the decentralization of power to regional governments in Indonesia, local residents have experienced an unprecedented improvement in their political rights. As a result, regional politics function with greater vigor compared to the prior centralized administration. Local media hold greater sway over both the general public and public figures. Lukmantoro (2005: 4) suggests that local media are more likely to be unbiased, autonomous, and impartial than national news outlets, which are influenced by large corporations. Conversely, with the advancement of media and its increased involvement in public discourse, a growing number of individuals in local media transitioned into politics, utilizing the media as a tool to mould their own public perception or that of the candidates they endorsed. Therefore, the significance of local press influencing the political image became crucial, serving not only as a neutral provider of news, but also as a possible means of political influence.

This phenomenon was illustrated in a local election in West Sumatra where Komar, who was one of the leading candidates in West Sumatra, received positive attention from the local media. Komar, a former Tempo and founder of Gamma Magazine emerged as one of the leading contenders for the position of Governor of West Sumatra in early 1999. He had cultivated a strong reputation in the local media. Other journalists in the province also reported on his public relations initiatives, which frequently involved providing free media training. The media in West Sumatra unanimously defended, complimented, and backed Komar. In addition to receiving favorable media coverage, numerous media outlets employed strategies that contributed to the accumulation of votes for Komar. On the other hand, Jabar, the

proprietor of the local media Daily Sinanggalang, was simultaneously running as a candidate for the position. Regrettably, he did not have similar comprehensive media backing as Komar did. The media perceived him primarily as businessman rather than a journalist (Swestin, 2009: 110-113).

It is interesting to observe that, during the election in 2004, a significant number of individuals in Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's campaign team had strong connections with the media. Swestin stated that a member of Yudhoyono's campaign team was the head of Mahaka Group, which held a 50 percent ownership stake in Republika, a prominent national newspaper publisher. In addition, Mahaka Group was in possession of a diverse array of videotrons and advertisement agencies across multiple districts. Additionally, Mahaka is a media corporation that creates television commercials which were employed as campaign instruments for Yudhoyono (Ibid: 111-114). As a result, media engagement in Indonesian politics grew indistinguishable. However, the presence of media also led to numerous issues due to the abuse beyond its functions.

According to the above analysis, the media are significant in Indonesia's political process. Since Indonesian independence, the media have served as a hub for the distribution of news, particularly political news. The government frequently used the media as a means to distribute information regarding its performance. Consequently, the Indonesian government frequently enforced limitations on the press to uphold its reputation in society. Press freedom was therefore affected, but the effects were not fully apparent until after the reformation in 1998. Following the passage of Law No.40 of 1999, the press became a venue for the expression of ideas for the general public.

4.2 Social Media Presence in Indonesia

Quick advancement of technology in the 21st century has caused the Internet to become the prevailing communication medium among the general population in Indonesia. The Internet facilitated the creation of a new media platform known as social media, which is an internet-based platform where users can actively participate, share, and create content, like blogs, social media, wikis, forums, videos, and virtual realities.

Online social networks entered Indonesia during the early 2000s, with Friendster being the platform that gained popularity and widespread usage at the time. In 2004 and 2006, Facebook and Twitter were introduced and quickly gained popularity, making

them the most popular platforms in Indonesia at the moment. In addition, the social media landscape in Indonesia encompasses several communication platforms, such as individual profiles and posts through Facebook, microblogging through Twitter, image sharing through Instagram, and video sharing through YouTube and TikTok (Johansson, 2016: 16).

Social media's emergence in Indonesia marked a new era in the evolution of media platforms. The two types of media exhibit distinct disparities. Conventional media, such as newspapers and radio and television broadcasts, employ a monologue transmission paradigm, wherein a single source disseminates information to several recipients. On the other hand, social media are a dialogic transmission system paradigm in which various sources share information, opinions, and ideas with multiple recipients.

Various models alter societal behavioral patterns in terms of culture, ethics, and norms in Indonesia. With its considerable population and heterogeneous mix of nationalities, races, and religions, Indonesia possesses significant potential for societal transformation resulting from the advent of online social networks, including the manifestation of participatory culture. Participatory culture refers to a cultural environment in which individuals who consume new information are encouraged to actively engage in the process of creating and sharing that content (Jenkins, 2008: 331). Jenkins (Ibid: 256) also stated that a characteristic that is closely associated with social media is the ability of users to engage in direct interaction with one another.

Participatory culture is distinguished by membership, sharing, and various forms of collaborative activities, rather than emphasizing direct ownership as seen in traditional media companies. Also, a notable attribute of the social media environment is its perpetual evolution, encompassing advancements in technology and shifts in user demographics. Social platforms are primarily dynamic entities that are modified by their operators in accordance with the objectives of their owners, the requirements of their users, and the emergence and alterations within their competitors (Dijk, 2013: 7). Consequently, Indonesians developed a fondness for social media, leading to the abandonment of traditional media platforms such as radio, newspapers, and television.

Technological development and social media's existence have exerted influence on multiple sectors in Indonesia, including business, education, and political domains.

Technological advancements in the economic sector have led to the emergence of a new platform known as electronic commerce. The emergence of electronic commerce in the country can be attributed to the societal transformations brought about by the introduction of the Internet in the country. With the rise of numerous e-commerce platforms, Indonesians have shown increasing interest in this field. Tiket.com, established in 2011, and Traveloka, founded in 2012, gained popularity as an online ticket booking service (Mustajibah, 2021: 4-5). This trend led to a growing preference for e-commerce over traditional methods of buying and selling. Online social platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, and TikTok, bring an impact on the economic domain by facilitating the sale of goods and services by its users through digital channels, thereby exerting a beneficial influence on the Indonesian economy.

Unfortunately, the advent of online media networks and electronic commerce has also resulted in the public's engagement in several scams across different platforms, which occurred due to the inability of customers to physically view and test the product, being limited to the confines of a screen. Customers are also increasingly concerned regarding the security of transactions. In 2013, a significant number of individuals fell prey to fraudulent activities. Frequently, purchasers were misled by internet purchase transactions. This type of deception typically occurs when a purchaser has completed the payment, but the purchased merchandise fails to be delivered within a certain timeframe (Ibid: 6).

The Indonesian government responded to the harmful consequences of social media and e-commerce by enacting Law Number 11 of 2008 that governs electronic information and transactions, which governs the use of information and technology transactions as well as the broader field of information technology. This legislation is the governmental reaction to the expanding e-commerce and social media platforms in Indonesia.

E-commerce encompasses various disciplines, including engineering areas such as telecommunications data networks, security, data storage, and retrieval for multimedia. It also involves commercial aspects such as marketing, buying and selling, as well as billing and payment. In addition, e-commerce purchase transactions encompasses the administration of distribution networks and several legal considerations, such as information privacy, intellectual property rights, taxation,

agreement drafting, and legal settlements (Dulal, 2019: 23). Hence, the government deemed it necessary to offer safeguarding for e-commerce transactions via legislation.

This legislation represents the Indonesian government's initiative to offer legal safeguards to consumers engaged in e-commerce transactions. Furthermore, this legislation ensures that consumers have a clear understanding of their rights and responsibilities in online business transactions, serving as a proactive legal safeguard. The government's enactment of Law Number 11 of 2008 has established a sense of legal assurance in response to the numerous fraudulent activities that have emerged from social e-commerce and social media platforms. Hence, the Indonesian government deemed Law Number 11/2008 that regulates information and electronic transactions a crucial measure to safeguard the Indonesian populace.

4.3 The Impact of Law No.11/2008

As previously stated, the 1945 Constitution guarantees freedom of speech in Indonesia, which fluctuated, particularly during the New Order when the government imposed restrictions on freedom of expression. However, this situation changed with the enactment of Law Number 40/ 1999 concerning national pers. This law regulates the mass media and establishes press freedom as a fundamental entitlement for all individuals. Nevertheless, freedom of speech faced a scrutiny in 2008 when the Indonesian parliament enacted the Electronic Information and Transaction Law, which received substantial criticism for its broad and imprecise definition of criminal offences. In the legislation, the police and judges have unrestricted authority to act capriciously within the boundaries of the law. However, freedom of speech remains a subject of controversy as a result of this legislation.

One of the problems arising from the enactment of this law is the article on defamation, which has multiple interpretations. This occurred due to the issues surrounding Ahmad Dhani, one of Indonesia's top musicians, who was indicted for violating Paragraph 3 of Article 45 in conjunction with Paragraph 3 of Article 27 of the law for allegedly making insulting and defamatory remarks in the campaign declaration of the presidential candidate for the 2019 election which was canceled. The case began when Dhani used the word "idiot" in a video blog when he intended to visit the 2019 *Ganti Presiden* (Change the President) declaration in Surabaya on August 26, 2018. At the time, Dhani was detained at the hotel lobby because the event was not granted a permit

to be conducted and he could not attend the event held by supporters of the movement. Dhani, through his vlog which he then uploaded on Youtube, used the word “idiot” when referring to parties who disagreed with the event. A Coalition of Defend NKRI activist then reported Dhani to the East Java Regional Police, which was the party who did not grant the permit to conduct the event.

The case against Dhani illustrates the erosion of freedom of expression in Indonesia. In this case, three problems illustrate the destruction of freedom of speech. The first is the rejection of the Change the President movement. Rejection of an idea by violence and intimidation is a sign of the destruction of freedom of expression. Second, the use of an expletive by Dhani was deemed to be a form of hate speech against groups that were not in line with him which he subsequently posted on YouTube. Hate speech, regardless of its form, illustrates the loss of tolerance and mutual respect that should be upheld in a democratic system. The third is the policing of speech as a result of the rejection of an idea from the party who rejected the idea, which is an improper use of regulations. The three problems highlight the erosion of free speech in the country and Indonesia’s democratic system due to the utilization of social media beyond the allowed limits and the emergence of laws in Indonesia that ruin freedom of speech and expression.

With the increasingly crucial impact of online social networks in information sharing to society and the lack of supervision from the government, the spread of fake news, hoaxes, racism, and hate speech is inevitable. Moreover, no law regulates the spread of news on social media. This is different from television, radio, and newspapers that are bound by the Press Law No. 40/1999, which regulates the rights, obligations, and sanctions against those who spread news that does not comply with current laws. This is further complicated by the law governing electronic information and transaction issued in 2008, which also regulates hate speech containing insults or defamation. This law and social media are two tools that have led to the erosion of freedom of speech as well as the democratic system in Indonesia. This can be seen where the spread of fake news, hoaxes, and hate speech occurs on social media, and the law is used to police opposing parties.

Despite its main purpose of protecting the public from fraud and fake news, the enactment of Law 11 of 2008 has been disastrous due to its controversial articles. One of the problems arising from the enactment of this law is the article on defamation,

which has multiple interpretations. In his article, Ufen (2024: 5) argues that the defamation problem arises because paragraph 3 of Article 27 of Law No. 11/2008 states that defamation is defined as the intentional and unauthorized distribution, transmission, or ease of access of electronic documents and information that contain insulting or defamatory content. Similarly, paragraph 2 of Article 28 of the law defines hate speech as the intentional and unauthorized spreading information intended to stir up hatred or animosity against particular individuals or groups. The above two articles in the Law No. 11 of 2008 are frequently paired with Article 310 of the Criminal Code regarding defamation, Articles 156 and 156a of the same legislation regarding blasphemy, and Articles 14 and 15 of Law No.1 of 1946 regarding false information or fake news (Ibid). This issue also relates to electronic information, including social media. Anyone can be subjected to the above provisions through various ways such as interviews in daily newspapers or statements posted on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp messages, or other social media platforms.

According to Hilmy (2022: 3), one of the detrimental effects of Law No.11 of 2008 is the limitation of Indonesian citizens' freedom of expression in the media. This law was enacted to regulate and prevent Indonesians from engaging in activities that may lead to numerous legal complications. Hilmy also states that there are several actions that must be avoided using social media in order to comply with the regulations outlined in this law. These actions include disseminating pornographic material, sharing news without verified sources or spreading false information, propagating hate speech that targets individuals based on their ethnicity, religion, or race using cultural references, and intentionally provoking other social media users by engaging in insults or defamation (Ibid: 3-4).

Within the listed points, there are other provisions in this legislation that result in the restriction of freedom of speech. Indonesia, as a nation that upholds a democratic system, does not aim to restrict media users from freely expressing their thoughts and opinions. However, it is expected that individuals communicate respectfully and avoid causing harm to others. Hate speech or unfavorable speech expressed by media users, especially social media users, often known as netizens, can be subject to legal action in order to safeguard the victims who have been defamed. Social media platforms serve as diverse repositories of information, drawing from a multitude of global sources. By

simply touching the screen, a piece of written speech might elicit a substantial amount of favorable responses.

Following the passing of this law, the freedom of expression in Indonesia encountered substantial obstacles and advancements. The regulations of hate speech, defamation, and blasphemous or seditious remarks have evolved into limitations on the freedom of expression. The government's actions during this time, including those regarding Papua and several other incidents in the use of force and intimidation against protestors, the restriction of academic freedom, and the dismantling of labor unions, demonstrate this (Nasution, 2020: 37-48).

As stipulated in the 1945 Constitution, human rights are fundamental entitlements that are intrinsically inherent to every Indonesian. The rights in question are highly valuable entitlements held by every citizen, particularly in a democratic nation, because one of the fundamental and highly esteemed privileges in a democratic society is the right to express opinion and enjoy the liberty of expressing oneself. Unfortunately, the introduction of Law No. 11 of 2008 had a substantial influence on these rights. The widespread popularity of social media has prompted various entities, particularly the government, to recognize the necessity of implementing legislation pertaining to digital platforms

According to the government's standpoint, the growing number of hoaxes on social media represent a major threat to national stability because of the popularity of social media platforms and its suitability in disseminating false information. On social media, many ongoing issues have a big impact on Indonesian society (Munandar, 2021: 45). Therefore, from the government's perspective, the limitation on freedom of expression and opinion on social media through this law is intended to maintain community harmony.

Social media exert a significant influence capable of altering the social conduct of the society. To address the impact of social media, the government passed Law No. 11/2008 to administer and regulate electronic information and transactions. This regulation not only has a great effect in addressing the widespread fraud on digital platforms, but it also has a detrimental impact on Indonesian politics. During the 2019 election, this law reached its highest point of influence, causing detrimental consequences that led to societal divisions in Indonesia.

4.4 Media and the 2019 Election

The relationship between media and politics is inseparable in a democratic system. With the advancement of technology, particularly in communication and media, it has been more straightforward to communicate one's goals and perspective. Information can be obtained more expediently and straightforwardly thanks to digital technology. Transparency in formulating new policies is another requirement imposed by globalization, with technology as a tool that makes public control and participation easier to achieve. As individuals who are more vocal in their ambitions and opinions have gradually become an essential component of the political system, it is unavoidable that their views will be expressed through digital media.

Contemporary society relies heavily on the media. McQuail (2012) identifies five perspectives on the function of media in his book *Mass Media Communication Theories*. First, the use of media as a window into experiences and events. The media act as a window for the audience. The media can also be used to gain knowledge about various events. Secondly, the media are considered a reliable source of information regarding global and societal events. As a result, media personnel often do not feel guilty if the media are full of violence, conflicts, pornography, and other negative content because, in their view, the media are just reporting the facts no matter what people like or dislike. Moreover, the audience cannot freely choose the angle, direction, and framing of content, which reflects the reality media professionals choose. Third, the media are viewed as a filter that chooses what to cover. The directors' standards are the basis for the media's selection of topics, data, or other content types. In this context, the media "choose" what audience warrants attention. Fourth, the mass media often serve as a guide, interpreter, indicator, guide, and director of various uncertainties. Fifth, the media provide the public with a range of ideas and information in order to elicit comments and responses (Ibid: 15).

Political journalists view elections as the equivalent of the Olympics for sports reporters. Political journalists strive to discover news content associated with political candidates throughout the election. This aligns with the function of mass media as a highly significant provider of public knowledge, although social media provides greater flexibility as reliable sources of public knowledge. As previously mentioned, the media have a crucial role in providing information and supporting the success of the democratic system, particularly in Indonesia. Thus, the media must transform into

a “public forum” that provides equal opportunities for all individuals to access reliable information and engage in discussions pertaining to diverse opinions and policies.

Fadillah (2019: 3) states that there are two major media organizations in Indonesia, namely Metro and TV One, which exhibit substantial distinctions. TV One and Metro TV are both owned by prominent Indonesian politicians who also happen to be leaders of political parties. During the 2019 presidential election, TV One endorsed Prabowo, while Metro TV endorsed Jokowi. The disparity in support led to the involvement of political interests in the news coverage of the two media outlets. However, this time, the rivalry was observed in the substance pertaining to the programs and policies of the two presidential candidates competing in the 2019 elections.

Fadillah’s study reveals that the distinction in support offered by the two organizations is evident in the gestures, settings, and semantics of the speakers, as well as the communicative attitude of the hosts (Ibid: 4). Supporting Prabowo, TV One demonstrated its function as a governmental watchdog. Hosts and source persons assumed the role of government assessors, displaying boldness in expressing an improper attitude towards the government. Undoubtedly, in a democratic system, the media serve as a crucial government superintendent, ensuring that the ruler’s dominance in the news is scrutinized. However, television lacks the capability to pass judgment on the government and its policies.

Conversely, Metro TV, as a media outlet backing Jokowi, exhibited a distinct approach compared to TV One. Metro TV demonstrated a higher level of cooperation and willingness to accommodate the government and Jokowi’s initiatives as the incumbent president. Metro TV, which is also controlled by one of Jokowi's government ally in order to provide information regarding the government’s performance (Ibid: 5), appeared to function solely as a reporter, rather than fulfilling the job of a supervisor and assessor.

In addition to television, newspaper coverage was also one of the factors considered by the 2019 election participants to convey their ideas. However, there was an imbalance in reporting due to media owners’ involvement and participation of in political landscape. The participation of media owners in politics greatly affected the independence of mass media, such as newspapers. Although the mass media has the nature of simply reporting an event, in reality, the mass media also takes into account

political symbols (Zetra, 2022: 80). In many news reports, *Republika*, one of the largest newspapers in Indonesia, often assigned news sources disproportionately. *Republika* directly quoted Jokowi and his running mate Ma'ruf Amin. However, *Republika* only quoted statements from the members of Prabowo-Sandi campaign team. This demonstrates an imbalance of news that occurred during the 2019 election.

The media played a significant part in the Indonesian general election in 2019 by assuming the role of a platform for political discourse and public debate. According to Kakialatu (2007: 67), media were expected to articulate key issues, provide a forum for consensus-building, and act as a watchdog over the electoral process. However, challenges such as political instability, economic difficulties, and a lack of transparency laws hindered the media's effectiveness in fulfilling these roles. Kakialatu argued that the media often failed to report responsibly, contributing to public discontent and social instability instead of fostering informed democratic engagement.

Media and politics are mutually dependent. Nevertheless, the media, which are supposed to safeguard the democratic system and provide a platform for expressing viewpoints that may challenge political stances, have lost their impartiality, thereby diminishing their effectiveness. The connection between these two groups is established based on journalists' reliance on politicians as a primary source of information. On the other hand, politicians also rely on the media to communicate ideas, including future policies for the best interest of the public. The lack of neutrality exhibited by the mass media during the 2019 election had a significant impact on the democratic system in Indonesia, as it resulted in a deviation from its intended purpose.

4.5 Social Media and the 2019 Election

Along with the development of media technology, a new platform, namely social media, emerged. Social media have been widely regarded as an effective instrument for instigating significant societal changes over the last ten years. The utilization of social media and their influence on politics have been proven by how social media users effectively instigated political uprisings in the Middle East (Newman, 2012: 1-2). These revolutions originated from political groups and grassroots endeavors that utilized social networks and social media platforms to coordinate and strategize protests and public reactions against government actions aimed at suppressing them.

Social media have emerged as an integral component of technologically advanced political campaigns in democracies worldwide.

The utilization of online media campaigns has been systematically examined and analyzed, particularly when professional political messaging campaigns embraced the United States and European countries (Williams, 2012: 5-6). Newman demonstrates that youth in several European countries employ identical instruments to form alliances with people with divergent views from their political leaders' policies. In addition, the Obama campaign utilized identical methods in the 2008 U.S. presidential election to bolster the political movement that propelled him to the presidency (Newman, 2012: 2).

The 2008 U.S. presidential election demonstrated the global significance of utilizing social networks as a crucial instrument in political campaigns (Munzir, 2019: 174). This also motivated politicians in Indonesia to utilize social media for their campaign purposes. For the first time, social media debuted in Indonesian politics in 2012, during the election of Jakarta governor. Social media presence in the 2012 election reduced the role of conventional media like television and radio. While social media use in elections was still in its early stages, there was a sense of optimism over the impact of online social networks on improving political involvement and civic engagement. The confidence was evident in the experiments conducted to predict election results using social media analysis, initially carried out during the 2012 election. Some of these experiments even outperformed the polls.

At the time, governor candidates utilized social media to bolster their support base and present their vision and goal to the public. With 20 social media addresses and three websites, the Jokowi team was supported by people who volunteered to campaign on social media platforms. They were JASMEV (Jokowi-Ahok Social Media Volunteers) members and introduced the tagline "New Jakarta" through social media (Sabarudin, 2020: 37). The role of social media in the 2012 gubernatorial election was relatively significant in introducing the campaign programs of Jokowi-Ahok team.

One aspect that captivated media was Jokowi himself. As a result of the public's desire to see and hear news about Jokowi on both conventional and social media, journalists were encouraged to continue reporting on him. Jokowi listened to the people's wishes instead of choosing bombastic speeches like other politicians. Jokowi also restricted

his speech during the campaign to only two subjects: the Jakarta Smart Card, known as KJP, as a solution to issues pertaining to education, and the Jakarta Health Card, known as KJS, for issues pertaining to health. According to Hamid (2014: 100), an example of a populist tactic that is highly effective in getting extensive media attention is taking the time to listen to the people and offering straightforward solutions to the problems that they face. Thus, Jokowi's campaign approach, which involved positioning himself as a media attraction, was a deliberate exposure of the media in public discourse.

The utilization of social media continued in the election for Indonesian president in 2014. Then, online social networks had become a preferred platform for presidential contenders to conduct their campaigns. Both candidates, Prabowo and Jokowi, recognized that there was a specific group of voters, specifically young and new voters, whom they could only reach through the means they were interested in, especially social media. Both candidates acknowledged the significance of social media platforms to communicate to voters, particularly for campaigns.

Social media are certainly utilized as a communication medium by the government, political parties, activists and professionals. Currently, social media play a crucial role in political parties' dissemination of information regarding their political endeavors to voters. Political parties employ online social networks for political objectives. Dominant platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, have been utilized as a news means of political communication and engagement for candidates and political parties to express their ideas. In the 2014 presidential election, among a total of 190 million voters, 11 per cent were voting for the first time, while 30 per cent were young voters under the age of 30. Additionally, 23 per cent of voters had not yet decided on their choice (Munzir, 2019: 175).

Since the 2014 election, social media have been essential for candidates to garner support from young and inexperienced voters in Indonesia. Candidates who exclusively depend on conventional communication methods, including newspapers, television, radio, as well as posters, tend to struggle in properly connecting with young and new voters. Furthermore, utilizing social media for campaigns offers a benefit in the form of significantly lower cost (Ibid: 176). Social media have evolved into a platform that allows the public to participate in dynamic interactions with candidates, which differs from conventional models that only offer one-way communication.

Political discussions between candidates and the public can be multi-directional, involving discussions between candidates and voters, voters and candidates, or voters and voters themselves (Alam, 2021: 70). Social media presence has a substantial impact on increasing votes and influencing opinions. Hence, the significance of online social networks in Indonesian political landscape is consistently on the rise.

Communication and politics essentially combine and meet at two points, namely conversation and influence (Harahap, 2020: 2). Social media utilization as a communication method in Indonesian politics continues along with the advancement of online social networks in the country. This particular type of media has changed the communication system from one-direction to two-direction to optimize discussions in various sectors. Social media also support the management of issues in an organization such as decision-making, monitoring, evaluating, and absorbing aspirations (Alam, 2021: 69-70). Arising issues can now be controlled and clarified emotionally and through data.

Political communication through social media is one of the efforts carried out by Indonesian politicians in the 2019 election to gain the most votes due to the increasing number of users online social networks in the country. According to Hootsuite and We Are Social research data released in 2019, users of online social networks amounted to 150 million or 56% of Indonesia's entire population, which increased by 20% from the survey of the previous year. In addition, users of online social networks who use gadgets amounted to 130 million, or approximately 48% of the country's population (Kemp, 2019: 31). Hence, the large population of internet users has an impact on the potential for politicians to campaign on social media.

Table 4.1: Indonesian Social Media Users in 2019

Indonesian Social Media Users in 2019	
Total Active Users of Social Media	150 Million
Active Users of Social Media as a Percentage of Total Population	56%
Total Number of Active Users of Social Media via Mobile Devices	130 Million
Active Users of Mobile Social Media as a Percentage of the Total Population	48%

Source: Hootsuite and We Are Social, 2019

With 150 million users in 2019, social media are one of the main platforms used by politicians for their campaigns. Unfortunately, the advancement in online social network technology and the total users of social media are unaccompanied by digital literacy of social media users. According to Purandina and Winaya (2023: 1-5), the digital society must possess digital literacy skills. Digital literacy refers to the competence and understanding of utilizing digital media, communication tools, and networks to locate, assess, utilize, and generate information in a responsible, intelligent, cautious, accurate, and lawful manner, with the goal of promoting communication and interaction in daily life.

The rise of online social networks have diminished conventional media's influence in the 2019 election period as a result of advancements in media technology. The social media landscape in Indonesia had experienced significant growth, placing Indonesia as one of the global leaders in terms of utilization of online social networks (Hui, 2020: 160). Proliferation of online social networks in Indonesia had a major impact on freedom of expression in Indonesia. However, the impact was not taken seriously by the Indonesian government in increasing the digital literacy of the Indonesian people. Hence, rapid progression has not been made in terms of digital literacy and proficiency in using social media platforms.

Proficiency and understanding of digital media utilization are essential in utilizing online social networks effectively. This particular type of skills lags behind the rising number of online social network users in Indonesia. Additionally, Indonesian government has not implemented any programs aimed at improving these competencies. The need for digital literacy for Indonesians is due to the rapid flow of information. With the digital transformation, it is undeniable that disinformation is on the rise and can be found in all sectors, ranging from politics, economy, education, to health.

The 2019 general election presented an opportunity to engage the people in the democratic process by voting for eligible candidates and endorsing their preferred option. The current general election system in Indonesia has a direct influence on the selection of state leaders, including both presidents and regional heads, according to the highest number in votes. Online social networks, therefore, offer politicians the opportunity to engage in direct dialogue with their constituents (Munzir, 2019: 177). As an ad-free platform, social media become a platform that facilitates political

campaigns and improve a candidate's popularity. Furthermore, online social networks including Instagram, Facebook, as well as Twitter may influence public sentiment toward a political candidate, and can potentially reshape the competitive landscape due to the significant influence and empowerment of individuals on these platforms.

Among various transformations in the political sphere, none has had a more significant influence than the way social media have emerged as the most convenient venue for distorting the distinction between truth and falsehood (Harahap, 2020: 7). Social media have emerged as a potent medium for political agendas to propagate their version of reality, a phenomenon known as post-truth. Many politicians have successfully won political contests by utilizing social media as their primary tool, similar to what occurred in the 2019 election.

Post-truth emergence during the 2019 election posed a significant threat to the progress and vitality of democracy in Indonesia. The occurrence can be attributed to the proliferation of negative propaganda, the influence of financial interests in politics, and the dissemination of false information, particularly in relation to the 2019 presidential election campaign. One of the factors contributing to the occurrence of this phenomena was the impact of online social networks and the inadequate digital literacy skills among the Indonesian population. The proliferation of online social networks and social media user growth has significantly increased social media platforms' impact, resulting in unintended negative consequences on the democratic system in the country.

Social media platform availability was a significant factor during the 2019 presidential election in Indonesia. Social media platform utilization, which included Twitter and Facebook, brought about a change in the way candidates campaigned. Moreover, Indonesia's social media growth was rapid that it earned the nickname of "social media country," which is reasonable as Indonesia's active social media users in 2019 comprised 56 percent of Indonesia's population (Kemp, 2019). The leading online social platform in Indonesia is YouTube, with 88 percent of users actively engaging in the application, followed by instant messaging applications WhatsApp and Facebook, which are used by 83 and 81 per cent of the population, respectively (Hui, 2020: 156). Thus, the prevalence of social media usage is evident among Indonesians, who dedicate an average of three hours and twenty-six minutes in social media platform.

In addition, presidential candidates engaged the service of celebrities to promote themselves to their respective fan bases. This was carried out to allow politicians to communicate with and sway the opinions of young people, who constitute a sizeable section of the electorate. During the 2019 election, candidates utilized these platforms to communicate their political messages and engage in conversation with voters, which ultimately affected their votes. Due to the increasing usage of online social networks, particularly among Indonesian youths, politicians are compelled to utilize these platforms to communicate with voters and promote their campaigns (Sulistyanto, 2016: 52-75).

In the 2019 elections, the utilization of social media was getting bigger, especially Facebook and Twitter. This can be attributed to the surge in utilization of these platforms in 2019. At that time, Indonesia had 130 million Facebook and 6.43 million Twitter users, placing it fourth and fifth in the world (Sulistyanto, 2016, p. 52). The Hootsuite data below shows users of online social networks by platform in 2019.

Table 4.2: Users of Social Media in Indonesia by Platform in 2019

Users of Social Media by Platform				
Social Platform	Media	Social Media User	Male	Female
Facebook		130 million	44%	56%
Instagram		62 million	49%	51%
Twitter		6.43 million	35%	65%
Snapchat		3.80 million	87%	8.9%
LinkedIn		12 million	41%	59%

Source: Hootsuite and We Are Social, 2019

In Indonesia, social media are predominantly used by individuals aged between 18 and 35. This represents 82.8 percent of the total users of online social networks (APJII, 2014: 12-31). Based on the data issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) (Bappenas, 2013: 49-52), it is projected that the population of Indonesians aged 15 to 34 would reach 84.5 million in 2014. This statistics corresponded to 44 percent of registered voters in the election, which amounted to over 190 million individuals. Considering these numbers, political campaigns can effectively sway younger voters through Facebook and Twitter. Consequently, both presidential contenders employed social media as a primary instrument in their election campaigns.

The significance of social media in the 2019 presidential election highlights its position in election campaigns during the Reform era. Surprisingly, Sulistyanto (2016) discovered that the winner of the 2019 election utilized social media less frequently than his competitors. Nevertheless, Jokowi, as a winner of the 2019 election, successfully rallied many of his constituents using social media platforms, which can be observed via Twitter. Although both candidates, Prabowo and Jokowi, utilized Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, Jokowi demonstrated superior effectiveness in engaging his constituents on Twitter by producing more retweets, which signifies a more robust connection with voters. The disparity in levels of involvement between the candidates had significant ramifications for their campaigns since Jokowi's capacity to establish a more profound connection with voters might impact the election's outcome. Furthermore, many retweets were associated with news articles that portrayed their preferred candidate positively in the conventional media. Social media utilization during the 2019 election served as a tool campaign strategy for candidates.

In addition to Twitter, Facebook was also used by supporters of candidates as political media. Facebook was also used as a campaign tool to spread hate speech against political rivals to influence the opinions of Facebook users. In the presidential election of 2019, political campaigns were intensively promoted through Facebook due to its great influence as a political media during the campaign (Al-Hamdi, 2024: 82). The presence of Facebook, with 130 million users in Indonesia, made this platform a suitable tool to convey people's aspirations and expression. This platform was also utilized by both candidates through supporters and campaign teams in various ways to attract the attention of other supporters to support their candidate.

According to Novalia (2020: 50), both candidates used the field campaign as bait for novice voters who still did not care about the 2019 presidential election. They used certain diction to attract the attention of the wider community, and then used Facebook to improve their online engagement and remain at the centre of the news. Unfortunately, Facebook, the biggest social media in Indonesia, often became a media platform for hate speech that divided supporters by attacking rival candidate through incessant and often nasty comments.

The growing number of Facebook users in Indonesia presents an opportunity for political parties in Indonesia to utilize this social media platform. Facebook serves as

a political communication platform to effectively engage with a broader audience, particularly targeting prospective new voters. Moreover, social media are highly regarded as an effective platform for campaigns due to its borderless nature, easy accessibility, and ability to broadcast news, invitations, and even topics to shape public opinion. Social media's influence in Indonesia had altered the mindset of its users during the 2019 presidential election.

Political journalists view general elections as the equivalent of the Olympics for sports reporters. Political journalists strive to discover news content associated with political candidates throughout the election cycle. This aligns with the function of mass media as a highly significant provider of public knowledge, although social media provide greater flexibility as reliable sources of public knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the media have a crucial role in providing information and supporting the success of the democratic system, particularly in Indonesia. Thus, the media must transform into a 'public forum' that provides equal opportunities for all individuals to access reliable information and engage in discussions pertaining to diverse opinions and policies.

The discourse on online social networks at the time of the 2019 election encompassed more than merely supportive discussions or the exchange of ideas among the candidates. Rather, it was characterized by negative interactions such as reproaches, insults, hate speech, and berating among candidates' supporters. Additionally, there was a proliferation of slander and dissemination of fake news pertaining to the candidates involved in the contestation. According to Juditha (2017), when news regarding a candidate is shared on social media, most comments are predominantly from individuals who harbor strong dislike or animosity toward the candidate. Accordingly, the supporters of the attacked candidate promptly retaliated with hate speech targeted at the supporters of rival candidates.

The dissemination of information through social media has become increasingly popular and has resulted in the emergence of various short narratives that tend to be untrue, are believed by some readers, and trigger emotional and sentimental feelings of readers due to the low reading literacy. The case of political hoaxes dissemination is one of the problems arising from the increasing number of people using social media, and the spread of political hoaxes itself has become a business enterprise (Nurhidaya, 2020: 140). According to Rahadi (2017: 63), hoaxes circulating in Indonesia are classified in several forms, namely:

1. Fake news, which is false news deliberately created to obscure the truth and facts;
2. Click bait, which is a link to trap people so they receive the hoax news link;
3. Confirmation bias, which is information that is created to cause a biased impact on the information obtained in general;
4. Misinformation, which is false and inaccurate information;
5. Satire, which is information created to criticize certain issues but actually favors certain interests;
6. Post truth, which is information that is subjective and used to shape public emotions regarding an issue; and

The proliferation and regulation of hate speech in the comments sections of social media platforms by opposing supporters is inevitable and challenging to manage. Engaging in name-calling and labeling the candidates and their supporters with derogatory animal names were also prevalent. Not only were these hate speeches targeted towards the three sets of gubernatorial candidates, individuals closely associated with the election vortex, whether directly or indirectly, were also subjected to bullying (Juditha, 2017: 142-149). Social media, initially employed as a tool for political campaign, have evolved into a platform that facilitates the dissemination of hate speech among supporters of opposing candidates. The transformation in the function of social media has led to a detrimental trajectory that undermines the democratic system in Indonesia. The concept of freedom of speech, which ideally promotes constructive dialogue, has taken a negative turn on social media platforms.

The problem described by Juditha that arose was the prevalence of black campaigns on social media. Black campaigns refer to strategic campaigns designed to tarnish the reputation and integrity of a rival. The information contained in a black campaign consists of defamation, falsehoods, or unsubstantiated charges. Such a campaign has the potential to incite conflicts or even lead to the break-up of a nation (Pamungkas, 2019: 20). Negative political campaigns, known as “black campaigns,” are frequently found across social media platforms in Indonesia, which eventually gain significant momentum and capture the attention of the Indonesian population during election campaigns. Social media, originally intended as a hub of information, have now transformed into a platform that enables the dissemination of malicious campaigns orchestrated by irresponsible parties.

Black campaigns have been shown to have an adverse effect on the public's political education. They rationalize any method to achieve the ultimate goal, even if the method is unethical. Black campaigns serve as a remedy for the character assassination of opposing candidates, their teams, and supporters. Pamungkas (Ibid: 25) identified two variables that facilitate the occurrence of negative campaigns through online social networks. Firstly, the negative campaigns are orchestrated by the team of the less popular candidate. Secondly, the campaigns can also be done by a candidate's own team with the aim of claiming to be victims of oppression or defamation.

With the changing media environment in Indonesia, social media has become a crucial platform for the public, gradually replacing traditional media like television, radio, as well as newspapers as a primary source of information on campaign issues during elections. Online social networks like WhatsApp and Instagram significantly contributed the dissemination of campaign messaging as well as facilitation of debates around the election. During the 2019 presidential election, Facebook and Twitter played a prominent role in the campaigns. Moreover, the influence of Twitter was diminished due to the emergence of WhatsApp and Instagram. Facebook, however, continued to be the most widely used platform during the 2019 election. Facebook has evolved into a tool for hoax distribution, which had altered the network's position in the 2019 election. In January 2019, a report stated that Facebook contributed to 49.54 percent of all hoaxes on social media (Hui, 2020, 2020: 159). An example of such hoax is a fake Facebook account which was initially utilized to disseminate a video displaying reportedly cast ballots in North Sumatra before the voting day (Metro, 2019: 2).

Based on the aforementioned report, Facebook investigated, identified, and eliminated accounts, pages, groups, and followers tied with the Saracen group, which was connected to an online syndicate accused of spreading false information (Gleicher, 2019: 1). The social media network predominantly targeted Jokowi and aimed to bolster support for his rival Prabowo. Alongside Facebook and Instagram, WhatsApp was also utilized in the deceptive operation. An example of a false claim disseminated over WhatsApp involved the assertion that the criminal intelligence unit was the headquarters for controlling election committee's vote-counting mechanism. In addition, a voice message was disseminated over WhatsApp alleging that a staggering

seventy million counterfeit ballots intended to support the incumbent had been received from China (Hui, 2020: 158-161).

The democratic system in Indonesia faces numerous challenges due to incidents related to social media. This is evident from the multitude of issues that arise as a result of social media presence. The proliferation of false information, deceptive schemes, and derogatory exchanges among political adherents, leading to the polarization of Indonesian society, served as evidence that social media had posed a formidable obstacle to the democratic framework during the 2019 general election. As previously stated, the emergence of social media was one of the contributing elements to the outbreak of polarization in Indonesia. Social media has emerged as a platform for disseminating various information about ethnicity and religion without censorship or oversight from governmental bodies. While mass media are subject to strict laws, social media operate without any legal constraints, allowing them to evade legal supervision.

4.6 The Rise of Political Buzzers

Social media's capacity to significantly impact individuals' political choices also renders it an extensively utilized platform for political campaigns. In addition to the reduced expenses, the ability to reach a larger audience can also be extended to promote candidates to the broader community, particularly to young voters. Nevertheless, this has resulted in the emergence of a new phenomenon known as "buzzers" in Indonesia. According to social media analyst Jeff Staple, a buzzer is an individual whose viewpoint is respected and trusted and elicits reactions from others once they become aware of that opinion (Yuliahsaridwi, 2015: 43). A social media buzzer refers to a user who can exert influence over others solely by the content he or she shares on his or her timeline, such as phrases, photographs, and videos. The information revolution and globalization, which significantly influenced the transformation of conventional political campaign structures and content into highly sophisticated marketing strategies, are inextricably linked to the political buzzers that surfaced during the 2019 general election.

According to Dr Howard, political candidates in up to 89% countries in the world have used political buzzers to disparage their political rivals (Daeni, 2023: 193). In Indonesia, political contenders frequently employ political buzzers to shape public

opinion and garner greater public support to achieve their political objectives. Agus Riewanto, an observer from Solo State University, contends that social media marketing may be executed more effectively (Juditha, 2017: 8-9). Due to the influence of social media, individuals tend to place greater trust in the opinions and statements of their online acquaintances or co-workers rather than relying on the information shown on roadside billboards. Campaigns are frequently characterized by positive and negative campaigns, which may also involve the possibility of black campaigns.

The important role of buzzers as prominent participants in political marketing on social media should not be overlooked. The role of buzzers in Indonesia is crucial for promoting candidates and ensuring their victory over their opponents. Nevertheless, the participation of buzzers in the 2019 elections had consistently been perceived negatively. The detrimental effects of political buzzers in the 2019 elections include the dissemination of misinformation (hoaxes), the polarization of communities, and the utilization of disinformation operations that tarnish the reputation of rival politicians. In addition, adverse campaign tactics by buzzers generate tensions and disagreements on social media and exacerbate poor democratic atmosphere. Buzzers serve not only as a means of marketing to promote the branding of candidates but also play a significant role in spreading negative campaigns against other candidates (Ibid: 204-211). The proliferation of hoaxes, hate speech, slander, and other negative tactics during the 2019 election can be attributed to buzzers' widespread dissemination of such false messages.

One of the issues that emerged during the 2019 elections attributed to buzzers was the widespread dissemination of negative propaganda on social media. The prevalence of black campaigns in the 2019 election significantly surged compared to previous elections, mostly driven by advancements in technology and the active involvement of political buzzers in disseminating black campaigns through social media platforms (Daeni, 2023: 202). Political propagandists harm electoral justice as they contravene the essential tenets of unfettered, equitable, and sincere elections. The undermining of democracy by buzzers occurs through the dissemination of erroneous information, manipulation of public opinion, emotional manipulation, suppression of participation, and lack of fairness and transparency.

Political buzzers influence public opinion and election results on social media platforms through story manipulation, disinformation dissemination, evocation of

strong emotions, and swaying of voters' decisions. They employ positive and negative campaign strategies to influence public opinion and support their preferred candidates. The activities of buzzers who spread sensational or misleading information contribute to the distortion of public discussions and the polarization of society, ultimately affecting the voting system's fairness and honesty. In addition to potentially affecting election results, the widespread use of political buzzers to disseminate misinformation and manipulate narratives on social media platforms also threatens democratic values such as electoral fairness, transparency, and honesty.

One of the forms of propaganda that buzzers engage in on Twitter is political hashtag battles. Twitter witnessed the emergence of political hashtags associated with the 2019 presidential election. The utilization of political hashtags originated in 2018 prior to the presidential election with the hashtags #2019GantiPresiden and #2019TetapJokowi (Al-Hamdi, 2024: 75). The hashtag #2019GantiPresiden was associated with Prabowo's presidential campaign, while the hashtag #2019TetapJokowi symbolized the backing of Jokowi as the incumbent.

Apart from the emergence of political hashtags that colored the world of politics in Indonesia, there was also a political labeling of each candidate's supporters, for example the use of the word "*cebong*" which was identified with Jokowi's supporters (Al-Hamdi, 2024: 75). The term "*cebong*" itself was thought to have existed since the 2014 presidential election. This word was derived from the word "*kecebong*," which means the tailed larva of an amphibian. The word allegedly originated from the mockery of anti-Jokowi groups which stated that Jokowi had a penchant for keeping frogs when he was a mayor of Solo and governor of Jakarta (Ibid).

On the other side, buzzers also pinned the anti-Prabowo with the "*kampret*" label. The term was also thought to have existed since the 2014 presidential election. The word "*kampret*" means a small insect-eating bat. The use of "*kampret*" was thought to have originated from a taunt by anti-Prabowo groups because of the coalition of parties supporting Prabowo, which was referred to as the "Red and White Coalition" or "*Koalisi Merah Putih /KMP*" in Indonesian. It was this KMP that was likely to be slurred as "*kampret*" (Ibid: 76).

During the 2019 presidential election, political labels such as *cebong* and *kampret* were prevalent on Indonesian social media. Political labeling has resulted in new terms such

as “BuzzeRp” and “Kadrun.” In this topic, Drone Emprit conducted research using Twitter to retrieve data between July 1, 2015 and April 16, 2022. The keywords used were related to political labels such as *cebong*, *kampret*, *BuzzeRp*, and *kadrun* during the 2019 general election.

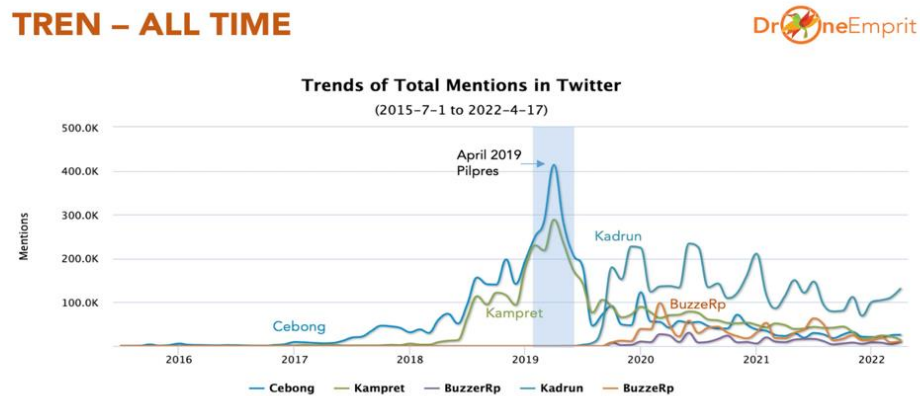


Figure 4.1: Trends of Total Mentions on Twitter

Figure 4.1 shows a number of certain trends of political labels in the 2015-2022 period. The trend of using political labels became relatively high during political years and more specifically during election months. Furthermore, in April 2019, the trend of using the words “*cebong*” and “*kampret*” was at its highest, with the words “*cebong*” reaching nearly 300,000 mentions. The trend of using these political labels gradually declined over time. In late 2019, new political labels emerged to replace the old ones. The label “*kadrun*” emerged and reached more than 200,000 mentions. Meanwhile, the label ‘BuzzeRp’ also emerged and reached a high of 100,000 mentions.

The phenomenon of buzzers and social media in the 2019 general election had undermined the sense of tolerance and mutual respect that should be upheld in the democratic system in Indonesia. Freedom of speech in a democratic system must be accompanied by a sense of tolerance and mutual respect between communities. The presence of social media and buzzers unfortunately ruins both. The role of buzzers during the campaign period, which is to demonizes rivals, is a clear illustration of the loss of tolerance and mutual respect as buzzers typically hurl diatribes aimed at a rival figure. The loss of tolerance and mutual respect is evidence of the erosion of the democratic system in Indonesia.

The advancement of media technology poses a risk to the democratic system in Indonesia. Social media's prevalence and rapid advancement have transformed various platforms into a prominent hub for information and communication that is readily accessible to the society in Indonesia. Undoubtedly, social media development has both beneficial and detrimental impacts. In Indonesia, social media offer several benefits, such as serving as a campaign tool, a marketing tool, an educational tool, and an information centre. However, social media have also had detrimental effects on the democratic system in the country. Social media have emerged as a prominent instrument for malicious political campaigns during the 2019 general election. They have also become a hub for spreading false information and enabling the dissemination of hate speech.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Democracy, as one of the most ancient and extensively employed systems globally, demonstrates its remarkable suitability. It has been spreading around the world since the end of the Cold War with its norms of freedom, independence, right to assembly, equality, liberalism, as well as freedom of speech and expression. The proliferation and impact of this system have progressively increased and facilitated its global dissemination, including to Indonesia. Unfortunately, a range of issues persist inside the democratic system, causing a gradual erosion of its influence. In its development, there are several problems in the implementation of democratic systems globally, ranging from populist and authoritarian leaders to excessive freedom of speech and press, capitalism, corruption, polarization in democratic societies, and the presence of the social media.

A democratic system has been established in Indonesia following the 1998 reform. The principles of freedom, independence, right to assembly, equality, liberalism, and freedom of speech are upheld in Indonesia, as evidenced by the writing of these values in its 1945 Constitution. Yet, entering the second decade of the twenty-first century, Indonesia's democratic system faces various challenges and issues which undermine the long-term viability of this system in Indonesia. During the 2019 general election, Indonesia faced significant issues, such as the rise of populist politicians, the adoption of identity politics, the polarization of society, the restriction of free speech and free expression, social media utilization, as well as the rise of political buzzers. These issues arose throughout the 2019 general election and highlighted the deficiencies and vulnerabilities of Indonesia's democratic system.

The general election in 2019 marked significant events of the development of democracy in Indonesia, specifically pertaining to the democratic system. Throughout the election period, numerous events occurred and significantly influenced the democratic system and undermined the long-term viability of democracy in Indonesia. Several political occurrences arose during the period and contributed distinct characteristics to the democratic system in Indonesia. The 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election marked the emergence of tribal identity politics and resulted in Jokowi's

election as Jakarta's next governor. Jokowi's appeal stemmed from his simplicity and charisma, which had positioned him as a populist leader. However, this phenomenon continued and reached its peak in the 2019 presidential election.

The polarization during the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial race, which involved Islamist and nationalist factions, constituted a notable political phenomenon during the period. The prominence of identity politics reached its zenith in the 2019 general election, leading to widespread divisiveness within Indonesian society. The zenith of this political phenomenon was marked by the intense competition between Prabowo and Jokowi, which took place during the presidential elections of 2014 and 2019. These two actors possessed distinct responsibilities that contributed to their status as challengers to the fragility of Indonesia's democratic system.

During the presidential election of 2019, Jokowi employed pragmatic populism by capitalizing on his modest personal appeal. Jokowi is a leader who was born of the people, as evidenced by his humble origins and gradual rise to power. Jokowi also advocated for the notion that Indonesia's leaders should be selected from the general public, rather than from the families of the political elite, during his campaigns, which established a negative atmosphere. Additionally, his campaigns offered numerous advantages in national health and education initiatives. In contrast, Prabowo employed the fundamental elements of classic populism to fabricate adversaries of the populace, such as corrupt elites who aspired to destabilize the nation and posed as foreign plotters and adversaries. Prabowo constructed a narrative during his campaign that evoked dread among the Indonesian populace regarding the country's economic decline. Furthermore, he asserted that his presence would revitalize Indonesia and transform it into a more prosperous country. Thus, the strategies employed by both candidates were a significant factor in the populism issue within the 2019 election.

The presence of media is crucial in Indonesian politics, as both institutions are mutually dependent. The media, which are supposed to safeguard the democratic system and provide a platform to express viewpoints that may challenge political attitudes, have lost their impartiality, thus reducing their effectiveness. During the 2019 election, television networks such as TVOne and MetroTV turned into media that favored one candidate over the other, impacting the gestures, settings, and semantics of the speakers, as well as the communicative attitude of hosts when it came to political campaigns.

Nevertheless, both conventional media, including television, radio, and newspapers, and social media can exert advantageous and destructive effects on society and the democratic system in Indonesia. Although social media offer significant insights, they can also serve as a platform for disseminating false information, deceptive stories, and prejudiced content that fosters divisions. The proliferation of polarization in Indonesia caused by pervasive influence of online social networks has eroded the ethos of tolerance and mutual respect among the Indonesian populace, which have been reduced due to the unregulated freedom and absence of digital literacy prevalent on social media. In order to tackle challenges arising from social media, it is crucial for the Indonesian government to intervene. To mitigate adverse incidents on social media and maintain the necessary freedom in a democratic society, one effective approach is to provide digital literacy instructions. In addition, promoting the protection of freedom of speech should continue to be a crucial objective in maintaining the enduring viability of democracy and justice in Indonesia.

In the 2019 general election, social media in Indonesia underwent a significant shift, serving as a central platform for disseminating misinformation and hoaxes, and in addition to their role as an important information source. The discourse on online social network in the general election in 2019 encompassed more than positive discussions and the exchange of ideas among candidates. It also involved negative interactions, including denunciations, insults, hate speech, and name-calling among the supporters of the candidates. Additionally, the dissemination of false information was prevalent, in addition to a significant increase in the dissemination of defamatory statements and the propagation of false information pertaining to the candidates. The occurrence in North Sumatera, where a video displaying the production of voting sheets prior to the scheduled voting day, serves as a clear example of the irresponsible utilization of social media.

Social media exerted significant influence on the 2019 general election in Indonesia by moulding public discussions and influencing matters related to democracy. There are several significant roles of online social networks in the 2019 election, including:

1. Information Dissemination: Social media served as a crucial tools for political candidates and parties to communicate views and engage with voters. Online social networks like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter

significantly impacted the dissemination of the latest information on political campaigns;

2. Dissemination of False Information: False information was a prominent feature of the 2019 election and played a central role in campaign discussions, exerting influence on public perception and weakening the democratic process;
3. Facilitation of Political Black Campaigns: Social media were utilized as a platform for engaging in negative campaigns, in which deliberate dissemination of false material was employed to tarnish the reputation of a political rival. The practice of smear campaigns, which involved spreading negative information regarding a person was increasingly prevalent due to the ease of sharing of user-generated content;
4. Utilization of Organized Collectives: Cyber squads and buzzers were utilized to affect public sentiment on the internet. The groups were hired by political parties to magnify their messaging and refute negative storylines;
5. Heightened Political Involvement: The widespread utilization of social media resulted in an upsurge in political engagement among voters, as they allocated more time to deliberate and disseminate election-related information. Nevertheless, this involvement also presented difficulties pertaining to the dissemination of information.

Although the media play a crucial role in enabling communication and participation in elections, they also present substantial obstacles to the integrity of democracy in Indonesia. The advent of social media and digital communication tools, facilitated by the Internet, has had varied effects, but generally erodes democracy in the country.

Furthermore, social media platform emergence of in Indonesia has given rise to a new phenomenon known as political buzzers, who serve not only as a means of promoting a candidate's programs but also criticizing and disseminating inaccurate information about their political adversaries. This has exacerbated and intensified the political atmosphere on social media. The number of negative smear campaigns during the 2019 elections had a substantial increase in comparison to prior elections, mostly due to technological improvements and the presence of political buzzers in spreading such campaigns via social media platforms. The existence of buzzers serves as evidence of the government's ineffectiveness in overseeing social media.

The political buzzer phenomenon in Indonesia was coordinated by specific factions that employed counterfeit accounts that did not correspond to their actual identities, thereby evading detection by governmental officials. The abundance of opinion influencers on social media and the subsequent division of Indonesian society was undeniably a result of the Indonesian government's failure to supervise social media platforms. The lack of clear norms for the appropriate use of social media, along with a deficiency in public education on the matter, had a crucial role in the widespread occurrence of problems on social media platforms. Hence, the inevitable misapplication of social media in Indonesia during the 2019 general election had a deleterious effect on democracy in the country.

The proliferation of vulgarity and derogatory language became widespread in election campaigns on social media as a result of political buzzers' presence. This was further intensified by the act of labeling individuals who supported different candidates. The political labels assigned to specific supporter groups have multiple roots, including the term "*cebong*" which was associated with supporters of Jokowi. Conversely, buzzers also labeled pro-Prabowo supporters as "*kampret*." These words were believed to have originated during the 2014 presidential election.

Political hashtag wars also took place on the Twitter. During the 2019 election, social media were characterized by extensive negative campaigns. Political hashtags related to the 2019 presidential election appeared on Twitter, while the use of these political hashtags started in 2018 before the presidential election, with the hashtags #2019GantiPresiden and #2019TetapJokowi. The presence of buzzers and their influence of social media during the 2019 general election have therefore adversely affected the level of tolerance between groups in Indonesia.

The challenges, phenomena, and key events that occurred during the 2019 general election highlight the prominent influence of social media across several domains. The democratic system in Indonesia faces significant challenges due to the profound impact of social media. Social media, intended as a platform for promoting freedom of speech and expression in Indonesia, are frequently abused and are, in fact, responsible for the degradation of the democratic system. The increased utilization of social media in 2019 was a distinct phenomenon that lacked a corresponding emphasis on education. Social media emerged as a contributing factor to the deterioration of the democratic system in Indonesia during the 2019 election. Therefore, the Indonesian

government must adequately handle the issues brought about by social media if it is to prevent further degradation of the country's democratic system.

It is imperative that Indonesia maintain its democratic system. Nevertheless, the Indonesian government must prioritize the preservation of the ideals associated with the execution of this system. Furthermore, it is imperative for political elites to devote greater consideration to their conduct during campaigns in diverse elections. Issues such as identity politics, polarization, and populist leaders can be prevented if politicians possess moral values and foster unity in Indonesia. More importantly, it is important to exercise prudence when employing mass media and social media to avoid reckless usage for individual or collective agenda.



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