

## Independent Journalism in the History of Indonesian Media Landscape: A Study Case of Kompas Gramedia

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### Abstract

A complicated combination of political factors, censorship, and the fight for independence has shaped Indonesian journalism history. In this unstable environment, Kompas Gramedia has become a well-known symbol of independent reporting. The history of Kompas Gramedia, one of Indonesia's biggest media conglomerates, from its founding to the present highlights the vital role that the media play in promoting democratic values and guaranteeing the free flow of information. This piece of research explores the development of Kompas Gramedia, emphasizing both the organization's influence on the larger Indonesian media scene and its unwavering dedication to journalistic ethics. The tale of Kompas Gramedia is not only one of a media company's expansion but also a larger one of media freedom in Indonesia. Kompas Gramedia has been instrumental in promoting press freedom and establishing benchmarks for independent journalism, both during the period of severe governmental control and censorship and in the current more liberal and open atmosphere. Through an analysis of the historical background and key turning points in Kompas Gramedia's history, this article offers insights into how independent journalism can flourish in difficult settings and advance a country's socio-political landscape.

**Kata kunci:** *Democracy, Independent Journalism, Indonesian Media, Kompas Gramedia*

### Abstrak

Kombinasi rumit antara faktor politik, sensor, dan perjuangan kemerdekaan telah membentuk sejarah jurnalisme Indonesia. Dalam lingkungan yang tidak stabil ini, Kompas Gramedia telah menjadi simbol pemberitaan independen yang terkenal. Sejarah Kompas Gramedia, salah satu konglomerat media terbesar di Indonesia, dari awal berdirinya hingga saat ini menyoroti peran penting media dalam mempromosikan nilai-nilai demokrasi dan menjamin kebebasan arus informasi. Tulisan ini mengeksplorasi perkembangan Kompas Gramedia, dengan menekankan pengaruh organisasi ini terhadap kancah media Indonesia dan dedikasinya yang tak tergoyahkan terhadap etika jurnalistik. Kisah Kompas Gramedia bukan hanya salah satu ekspansi perusahaan media tetapi juga kebebasan media yang lebih besar di Indonesia. Kompas Gramedia telah berperan penting dalam mendorong kebebasan pers dan menetapkan standar bagi jurnalisme independen, baik pada masa kontrol dan sensor pemerintah yang ketat, maupun pada masa yang lebih liberal dan terbuka. Melalui analisis latar belakang sejarah dan titik balik penting dalam sejarah Kompas Gramedia, artikel ini menawarkan wawasan tentang bagaimana jurnalisme independen dapat berkembang dalam situasi sulit dan

*memajukan lanskap sosio-politik suatu negara.*

**Keywords:** *Demokrasi, Jurnalisme Independen, Kompas Gramedia, Media Indonesia*

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## INTRODUCTION

In the period of Industrial Revolution 4.0, the most important thing that people in Indonesia feel is that knowledge is becoming more widely available, creating a more accurate and plentiful space for individuals to express their opinions (Fernando et al., 2021, p. 1). In this article press freedom refers to the independence of the press from censorship or political meddling (Kenny, 2020, p. 268). Press freedom is essential to a democracy's well-being and ability to function, particularly in light of Indonesia's unstable political environment. In Indonesia, maintaining accountability, openness, and the development of informed citizens all depend on the free press. The foundations of democratic administration, including public engagement, the protection of individual rights, and checks and balances, are severely undermined in the absence of a free press. Promoting transparency is one of the main functions of a free press in a democracy. Journalists in Indonesia expose and document actions that the ruling class might rather remain unreported, shedding light on corporate conduct, societal issues, and government processes. Because it keeps the electorate informed about the decisions and acts of their leaders, this transparency is essential. The unfettered investigation and reporting of the press discourages possible abuses and stops the consolidation of power. Investigative media, for example, has been essential in Indonesia in exposing corruption in the public and private sectors and instigating reforms and legal steps that fortify democratic governance.

Another essential component of a democratic society that a free press promotes is accountability. In Indonesia, the public they serve, including elected authorities, must answer to them. As a watchdog, the media examines the activities of those in authority and makes sure they are held

responsible. By continuously monitoring government actions and decisions, the press serves to discourage corruption and misbehavior. Politicians and bureaucrats are more inclined to act in the public interest as opposed to their interests when they are aware that the public is watching them. Because journalistic efforts have exposed corruption and prompted legal prosecutions against wrongdoers, Indonesia has seen significant political and social improvements as a result of its work.

Indonesia has undergone significant changes in the lives of its citizens as a result of its transition to a more democratic governmental structure. The old and new orders have changed as a result of the modifications. These can occasionally lead to social issues, communication issues, and legal issues. One of the most crucial components of a democratic, transparent, and open state structure is media freedom. The fourth democratic milestone—the press as a media announcement—comes hand in hand with bolstering the legal system's ability to maintain national balance. According to research conducted by Nielsen, a global information and measurement business,

Indonesians already consume more online media than print media. There are now six million readers of internet media compared to just 4.5 million readers of print media. Because people believe that knowledge should be freely available online, as it is with online media, the number of print media readers is still declining (Samsudin & Faridah Ibrahim, 2021, p. 3). But not long after this newspaper was established, China and the Greater Indo-Nationality began publishing their publications in regional languages as well as Dutch and Chinese. *Bataviasche Nouvelles*, the first newspaper to be produced in Indonesia, was outlawed and ceased

publication by the Dutch government in 1774.

Japan's status was held from 1942 to 1945, during which time the press underwent advancements and technology also advanced. Since Indonesian politics is undergoing significant and rapid change, the press was extremely important during Japan's standing in the world. The press was employed by the Japanese government as a tool of control in addition to being utilized to promote Japanese causes. The launch of the weekly *Bromartani* in Javanese on January 25, 1855, marked the beginning of the vernacular press's growth in the Indies. The Chinese and Eurasians who worked in the industry, many of whom taught native Indonesians how to print and edit, contributed to its continuous expansion. Because of this, native reading increased by the end of the 19th century

—at least among the few educated and literate individuals. Once the native vernacular press was ultimately founded, it operated with a clear commitment to supporting political fights, unlike its predecessors who were devoted to promoting trade. As a result, between 1903 and 1913, journalists controlled the development of both the local vernacular press and political groups (Subijanto, 2017, p. 1360).

As the times changed, so did the press's evolution in Indonesia; during the Dutch East Indies era, the press served as a trading instrument. Because the Dutch government was keeping an eye on every newspaper and piece of information that needed to be shared, growth and progress during this time were insufficient. The press was utilized as a mobilizing tool to achieve Japanese goals up until the Japanese colonial status in Indonesia. However, unlike the Dutch East Indies era, the press could be extensively circulated while remaining under

the supervision and control of the Japanese government. Following Japan's August 15, 1945, declaration of sovereignty, steps were taken to remove all newspaper publishing facilities from Japanese control. *Surat Kabar* was the first newspaper to be published in that period. Indonesian political conditions continued to heat up from 1945 until 1958 when Indonesian News was launched in Jakarta on September 6, 1945. Japan has given up its sovereignty; the matter involving the Netherlands and Japan is not yet resolved. Prepare for the Dutch to attack by publishing newspapers in the Indonesian language. Propaganda lies behind that. These publications include the Jakarta-based *Fadjar*, the Semarang-based *Soeloeh Rakyat*, the Bandung-based *Padjajaran* and *Persatoean*, and the Surabaya-based *Pelita Rakyat* (Efendi & Akhmad, 2010, p. 14).

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## RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research contributes to the generation of hypotheses for additional

investigation and understanding of quantitative data, as opposed to gathering numerical data points or intervening or introducing treatments as in quantitative research. Qualitative research collects the views, behaviors, and experiences of people. Rather than addressing how many or how much, it addresses hows and whys. It might be set up as a stand-alone study using only qualitative data, or it could be a component of a mixed-methods study using both qualitative and quantitative data. The present review serves as an introduction to the fundamental ideas, terminologies, and applications of qualitative research for the readers (Tenny et al., 2022). This article uses the case study methodology, which according to Yin (2009) is an empirical investigation that looks at a phenomenon in its actual setting. Several data-gathering techniques are employed in case study research because it entails a thorough examination of a phenomenon. According to Yin (2009), "research questions" are the cornerstone of a case study research design since they will ultimately dictate the entire course of action the researcher takes when conducting the fieldwork. The research question needs to be precisely defined and narrowly focused. The preciseness with which the research questions are formulated also establishes the study's real unit of analysis.

Validity comes in two flavors : (a) external and (b) internal. The question of whether study results may be extrapolated, or generalized, to other situations is addressed by external validity. According to Yin (2009), since a case study is not based on a sample, it is not appropriate to generalize the findings of the study to a larger population. Instead of checking the external validity by replication, much like in an experimental study, a case study attempts to investigate a specific occurrence, the

question of internal validity comes up. In any case study, there is a possibility that the result could be explained by extraneous, unmeasured, or unexplained factors rather than the suggested or anticipated explanations. However, a researcher does have a significant flaw that undermines the internal validity. The researchers are limited in their ability to mitigate the influence of extraneous elements because case studies are conducted in realistic settings. However, the researcher must take into account all potential unmeasured variables and then work to determine how these variables can affect the study and skew the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Following the declaration of Indonesian independence on August 17, 1945, the period was understood to represent the freedom of Indonesian citizens' human rights, as protected by the Republic of Indonesia 1945 Constitution, to freely choose their path in life. Furthermore, during Sukarno's administration, Indonesian newspapers were granted the press freedom enshrined in the Republic of Indonesia's 1950 Provisional Constitution. This aligned with the 'liberal democracy' practice of 1945–1959 and followed the trend of newspapers closely linked to political parties. However, journalistic freedom was once again curtailed in 1957 due to political unrest, a downturn in the economy, and the emergence of insurgencies outside of Java. Two years later, this circumstance resulted in the 1959 Presidential Decree, which included several provisions such as a return to the 1945 Constitution and the repeal of the 1950 Provisional Constitution, which rendered the press subservient to Sukarno's government's "Guided Democracy" policy and promoted Pancasila ideology as a sort of "political manifesto." Surpersemar (Surat

Perintah Sebelas Maret 1966) took control of the unstable state following the unsuccessful political coup on September 30, 1965, which was supported by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). This resulted in a "transfer of power" from President Sukarno to Lieutenant General Suharto. Approximately 163 newspapers were shut down during Suharto's initial years in power (1963–1967), and thousands of communist media employees or those suspected of being communists were detained and executed (Umar Balahmar, 2021, p.123).

Newspapers could only be published before the democratic era of 1966–1998 if they obtained a press publishing business license, or SIUPP, which was highly expensive and subject to the Suharto regime's oversight. But once the reform era arrived, people started to gain from press freedom. The public had greater access to and openness to the permission to publish mass media without any prejudice. However, the widespread publication of press articles also heightened the pro and contra-opinion for some reasons, including the public's and the government's habituated usage of the previous authoritarian paradigm. Another contributing aspect was the fact that more mass media were operating in the newfound freedom during the first phase of press freedom. After Indonesia's 1998 reforms, the country's press gained prominence, and with the enactment of Law No. 40 of 1999, press freedom was restored once more. The many obstacles putting the country's press in peril were being ignored. Press releases can now be made whenever they want and without the burdensome requirements that accompanied the SIUUP during the New Order era. President Soeharto's resignation in May 1998, which signaled the end of the New Order era, is a "democratic revolution" rather than merely a "democratic reform." This event marked the beginning of a

significant shift in Indonesian democracy from a "guided democracy" a la Soeharto to a constitutional democracy that gives the populace and all facets of civil society the ability to exercise control over the authority exercised by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. It is important to remember, nevertheless, that a triumph in the 1998 democratic battle faced grave danger when the participants, or so-called reformists, became engrossed in the exhilaration that elevates upheaval and revolution to the ultimate aim (Sahasrad, 2014, p. 29).

The 1998 reform is recognized as the primary catalyst for guaranteeing citizens' rights to the media and was a significant turning point in history. The Human Rights Law No. 39/1999 and the second amendment to the UUD 1945, which protected people's access to information and media, came next. The primary media regulatory framework of the post-reformation era is comprised of two laws: the Broadcasting Law No. 32/2002 and the Press Law No. 40/1999. Normatively speaking, these two laws are a positive step forward because they have guaranteed the fundamental requirements for citizens to exercise their right to free speech and expression. But the situation is different when it comes to execution. Laws supporting the freedom of the press were also passed during the Reformation period. The Press Law, enacted in 1999 in Indonesia, ensured press independence and gave journalists legal safeguards. The Press Council, an impartial organization entrusted with defending press freedom and settling conflicts among the media, was also founded by the statute. With this legislative framework, the repressive New Order practices were significantly abandoned, promoting an atmosphere in the media that was more transparent and open. One of the

most significant actions of the Reformation era was the dissolution of the Ministry of Information, which marked a clear departure from the past. Under Soeharto's dictatorship, this ministry served as the mainstay of media control, with the power to regulate and shut down media outlets and publications that expressed disapproval of the government. The main means of official control over the media was eliminated with the dissolution of this ministry, opening the door for a more autonomous press. The Reformation administration demonstrated its dedication to a new age of openness and transparency in media activities by demolishing this organization. By establishing press freedom, the 1999 Press Law drastically changed Indonesia's media laws.

This law marked a dramatic change from the dictatorship's repressive tactics by guaranteeing journalists the freedom to seek out, acquire, and share information and viewpoints without hindrance. Because press freedom was legally protected, journalists were able to work more independently, which promoted an atmosphere that was favorable to dissenting viewpoints and critical reporting. Building a democratic society where the media could fulfill its function as the

public's watchdog and informant required this law amendment. The creation of the Press Council, an impartial organization tasked with defending press freedom and raising journalistic standards, was a key element of the Press Law. The council's responsibilities included settling press disputes, granting journalists accreditation, and encouraging moral behavior in the media sector.

Its establishment aimed to guarantee press freedom as both a practical reality and a legal precept. To protect journalists' rights and preserve the credibility of Indonesia's

media, the Press Council emerged as a key organization. Another important step toward media independence under Soeharto was the 1999 Press Law, which did away with the need for media outlets to apply for official press permissions. The media landscape became more competitive and diverse as a result of this shift, which made it possible for the number of media firms to grow dramatically. A more active and diverse media environment was facilitated by the emergence of new periodicals, radio stations, television channels, newspapers, and television stations. The media was able to represent a wider variety of viewpoints and interests when bureaucratic barriers were removed, which improved Indonesia's democratic discourse. Last but not least, the Press Law gave journalists vital legal rights, guaranteeing that, so long as they followed moral guidelines, they might report without fear of reprisals. These safeguards were essential to creating a climate that encouraged critical reporting and investigative journalism. If journalists adhered to the Press Council's standards, they were protected from prosecution for their reporting. Journalists were encouraged to investigate stories that served the public interest and hold people in positions of authority responsible by this legislative framework, which also helped to establish a safer and more secure working environment for them. However, Masduki & D'Haenens (2022) contended that new politicians who also happen to be private media owners and state apparatuses are the real reasons why media freedom in Indonesia is still restricted, not authoritarian rule. The Indonesian media is still categorized as "partly free" according to a Freedom House survey from 2020. Even with the country's increasing Internet penetration, Indonesians continue to encounter barriers in their quest for a public space that is really democratic.

In a similar vein, Indonesia dropped considerably from its 2002 ranking of 57th out of 139 countries to 119th out of 179 in a recent Reporters Without Borders assessment.

According to Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001), the core of journalism is the pursuit of truth. To attempt to provide a fair and trustworthy explanation of the facts, a journalist must first gather and then confirm the information. A journalist's account may subsequently be the focus of additional research. For the audience to assess the material for themselves, a journalist must be as open and honest as possible about their sources and procedures. Additionally, the media publisher plays a crucial role since it is their responsibility to put the interests of the public and the truth ahead of their presumptions or self-interest. Moreover, Kovach and Rosenstiel imply that objectivity and neutrality are not fundamental principles of journalism. Beers (2006) defines independent news organizations as those who are not subject to the typical pressures that come with being owned by a major corporation. The content is reflecting these increasing pressures, which include the need to maintain the status quo to appease corporate advertisers and the large audience that these advertisers serve, as well as the commitment of resources to developing "advertising environments" (themes that draw in advertisers who account for the majority of large newspaper revenues and almost all television and radio revenue).

In a more simplified form, independent journalism can be identified as a news organization without any partisan ties whatsoever. In the context of the much-expanding landscape of modern media, restraints upon exchanging dialogues and opinions are now the democratic ideal of a news platform. Habermas described this as a

space that enables people to engage with one another, learn about current events, and discuss them without worrying about swift retaliation from the ruling class. A journalist must also possess an independent attitude, be openminded, and be intellectually curious to be considered independent. A journalist must be able to view the world from a variety of viewpoints, including those that are not associated with their own class, economic class, race, nationality, religion, gender, or ego. Generally speaking, journalism's role in society should be to independently verify the legitimacy of authority.

Independent journalism in Indonesia has been significantly impacted by recent legislative developments. Certain regulations may jeopardize press independence and freedom of expression, while others seek to strengthen media freedom and safeguard journalists. The Press Law, which creates a legal foundation for press freedom and procedures for resolving media-related conflicts, is one of the beneficial legislative accomplishments. The purpose of this law is to guarantee the protection of journalists' rights and to shield them from arbitrary interference. Nevertheless, there have been irregularities in its application and enforcement, and journalists continue to encounter obstacles in completely utilizing their rights. On the other hand, human rights advocates and media experts are concerned about some legislative proposals. For instance, the wide and ambiguous sections of the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE) have drawn criticism because they have the potential to penalize online reporting and expression. This rule has a chilling impact on free speech and investigative journalism because it allows both individuals and journalists to be prosecuted for distributing false information or defamation. Increased

government control over the press is another risk posed by proposed changes to media restrictions. The proposed revisions have the potential to restrict editorial independence and freedom of expression by enacting more stringent licensing requirements and increased control of media content. To avoid fines or closures, media outlets may self-censor more as a result of these legislative reforms.

Kompas Gramedia, or KG for short, is an Indonesian corporation that works in the media industry. On August 17, 1963, KG was established by publishing the *Intisari* magazine under the direction of P.K. Ojong and Jakob Oetama. Through more than 400 business networks, Kompas Gramedia is moving in tandem with all the elements of the country, which are still advancing dynamically beyond every aspect of Indonesian society. Kompas Gramedia created a system of company components that are separated into eight KG businesses: hospitality, manufacturing, education, events and venues, digital, media, retail and publishing, hospitality, and education. Kompas Gramedia's vision and mission are to become the biggest, best, most integrated, and most successful company in Southeast Asia by developing knowledge-based business units that foster an enlightened, diverse, just, and affluent society. The media as a business unit of Kompas As a result of the media's ability to verify the veracity of the information provided by more than 150 print, electronic, and broadcast media outlets, KG is now the largest media company in Indonesia.



Sumber: [kompasgramedia.com](http://kompasgramedia.com)

**Gambar 1 Logo Kompas Gramedia**

At the height of Indonesian politics, Catholic journalists of Chinese and Javanese descent created Kompas. The Indonesian government at the time shut down anti-Soekarno and anti-PKI news publications. On Monday, June 28, 1965, Kompas was initially published. It included four hefty pages (Blenzinky, 2010: 2). Together with the help of PK, a weekly editor for *Star Weekly* in the 1950s, and Jakoeb Oetama, editor of the Catholic weekly *Penabur*, Frans Seda, the leader of the Catholic party and Minister of Plantations, published a newspaper known as *Bentara Rakyat*. President Soekarno suggested using the name Kompas, which means guidance, before dawn, and this newspaper formally adopted it. Kompas provoked negative responses from mainstream media, both on the left and off. Because Kompas was founded by Catholics like PK Ojong, Jakob Oetama,

J. Adisubrata, Lie Hwat Nio, Marcel Beding, and Tan Soei Sing, not many people understand it to be Pastor's Command. Kompas has not had an easy ride. Disaster struck three months after Kompas was released, coinciding with the G30S/PKI uprising on September 30, 1965, which led to the publication of Kompas and all other print mass media being prohibited from October 2–6, 1965. Only two publications—the Armed Forces newspaper and *Berita Yudha*, as well as *LKBN Antara* and *Armed Forces News (PAB)*—were authorized to be published. Don't worry, Kompas and a few other newspapers can republish after the atmosphere. Kompas and five other major newspapers broke this "mine" in the middle of 1972, and they were prohibited from publishing for two weeks. However, recent news about limitations on investigative journalism are being expressed by free expression analysts and journalists on



planned changes to Indonesia's broadcasting legislation have been raising alarms on the freedom of expression of the press. The draft bill aims to update Indonesia's broadcasting legislation from 2002. The revisions include prohibitions on the dissemination of content that depicts LGBTQ "behavior," the "exclusive broadcast of journalistic investigation," and content about a figure or profession that exemplifies "negative behaviors or lifestyles that could potentially be imitated by the public" ("Indonesia's proposals to update broadcast law raise alarms," 2024).

The division between state-run and privately owned media outlets greatly influences the content of Indonesian media. In Indonesia, state-owned media outlets like TVRI and RRI have long acted as governmental mouthpieces, spreading stories and policies that are closely aligned with the official line. These media outlets frequently encounter obstacles when covering stories that could negatively portray the government, which restricts the kind of investigative and critical reporting they can do. Because of this connection, state-owned media may be perceived by the public as biased or unduly supportive of the government. Privately held media, such as Kompas Gramedia, on the other hand, follow different guidelines. Driven by a dedication to independence and journalistic integrity, privately owned media are frequently more inclined to take on contentious issues and hold influential people responsible. Their editorial and financial independence from the government gives them the freedom to explore stories that are more relevant to the general people than those with political clout. This independence is best demonstrated by Kompas Gramedia, a privately held media conglomerate. It has established a solid

reputation for critical reporting and in-depth investigative journalism on a broad range of topics, including environmental difficulties, human rights violations, and corruption. By upholding editorial independence, Kompas Gramedia can cultivate public confidence and establish itself as a trustworthy source of objective news.

The fact that Kompas Gramedia is privately held is essential to its capacity to uphold editorial independence. Privately owned companies, such as Kompas Gramedia, have more freedom to operate than state-owned media, which are frequently influenced and controlled by the government. Press freedom in Indonesia remains a complex and often precarious issue.

The results of this study found that the factors that influence the behavior of the government and journalists are dominant in interpreting press freedom in Indonesia, that each violates the act and regulations by taking advantage of the weaknesses of others, both the government and journalists. The government suppresses the news because there is untrue information. On the other hand, journalists use the freedom of the press arbitrarily without regard to the code of ethics, become judges of the government, or provide less useful information to the public, thus damaging communication between the government and the public. In addition, the community is also deliberately bribed with untrue information. (Umar Balahmar, 2021, p.125)

Even after the Reformation era ended in 1998 and the nation moved toward democracy, journalists still face serious dangers that compromise their objectivity. These threats can take many different forms,

such as cyberbullying, physical harm, and legal harassment. Indonesian journalists regularly face violent threats while reporting on touchy subjects like environmental crimes, human rights violations, and corruption. Reporters frequently experience violence and intimidation; occurrences range from threats and assaults to, in the worst cases, deaths. An environment of dread is created by such animosity, which discourages journalists from conducting important investigations and stifles the flow of information. To shield its journalists from legal harassment and defamation lawsuits, Kompas Gramedia offers them robust legal support. The group makes sure that when a journalist gets sued for their reporting, their legal team is ready and willing to defend them. Furthermore, Kompas Gramedia works with national and international groups that support press freedom to push for stronger protections for journalists' rights and to oppose laws that restrict their freedom, such as the Information and Electronic Transactions Law (UU ITE). The goal of these initiatives is to give journalists a more secure legal environment in which to work. Kompas Gramedia makes large training investments to guarantee that its journalists are knowledgeable about the best practices for ethical journalism, digital security, and investigative reporting.

## **CONCLUSION**

Press freedom is vital for the health and operation of democracy, particularly in Indonesia's dynamic political climate. A free press is essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and fostering an informed populace. Without it, the foundational aspects of democratic governance, such as public participation, protection of individual rights, and checks and balances, are severely compromised. Kompas Gramedia, as a significant independent media player in Indonesia, serves as an excellent case study

to illustrate these points. A key role of a free press in a democracy is to promote transparency. In Indonesia, Kompas Gramedia's journalists are essential in uncovering and reporting on activities that those in power might prefer to keep hidden, thereby illuminating government processes, corporate behavior, and social issues. This transparency is crucial as it informs the electorate about the actions and decisions of their leaders. By preventing potential abuses and curbing the consolidation of power, investigative journalism from outlets like Kompas Gramedia has been vital in exposing corruption and initiating reforms that strengthen democratic governance. Accountability is another fundamental element of a democratic society that a free press upholds. Kompas Gramedia acts as a watchdog, scrutinizing the actions of those in power and ensuring they are held responsible. Continuous monitoring of government actions deters corruption and misconduct, compelling politicians and bureaucrats to act in the public interest. Journalistic efforts from Kompas Gramedia have led to significant political and social improvements in Indonesia by uncovering corruption and triggering legal action against wrongdoers.

Moreover, a free press facilitates public discourse, which is essential for any democracy. Kompas Gramedia provides a platform for diverse opinions, enabling citizens to engage in meaningful conversations and debates on various issues. This discourse is crucial for the democratic process as it helps individuals form well-rounded views and make informed decisions. By amplifying the voices of marginalized and minority groups, the media ensures that a wide range of perspectives are represented in the public sphere. In contrast, public conversation is often stifled in societies where press freedom is restricted,

leading to a less informed and engaged populace. Indonesia's transition towards more democratic governance has brought significant changes to the lives of its citizens. These changes have often led to social, communication, and legal challenges. Media freedom is a critical component of a transparent and open state structure, as seen through Indonesia's historical struggles and reforms. From the Dutch colonial era to the Japanese occupation and post-independence periods, the Indonesian press has evolved significantly. The enactment of Law No. 40 of 1999 during the Reformation period marked a turning point, restoring press freedom and promoting a more open and transparent media environment. The distinction between state-run and privately-owned media outlets significantly impacts Indonesian media content. State-owned media often align closely with government narratives, limiting critical and investigative reporting. In contrast, privately owned media like Kompas Gramedia are driven by a commitment to independence and journalistic integrity. This independence allows them to tackle contentious issues and hold powerful entities accountable, thereby earning public trust and maintaining credibility. However, press freedom in Indonesia remains fragile, with journalists facing various threats, including cyberbullying, physical harm, and legal harassment. Despite these challenges, the resilience of Indonesian journalists and the continued commitment to press freedom are crucial for the country's democratic health. Ensuring a free press is essential for fostering a well-informed, engaged, and empowered citizenry capable of upholding democratic values and holding those in power accountable. Kompas Gramedia's role in promoting press freedom in Indonesia is vital. Its investigative reporting and commitment to transparency and

accountability exemplify the importance of a free press in a democratic society. By continuing to uphold these values, Kompas Gramedia contributes significantly to the health and vibrancy of Indonesia's democracy.

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