

**EMANCIPATING MEDIA FROM AUTHORITARIAN CAPITALISM:  
REFLECTIONS ON INDONESIA'S TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ethics proves critical to businesses in transition to democracy by societies once under authoritarian regimes, whether capitalist or communist. The media industry in Indonesia was one governed by the ethics of crony capitalism that characterised its political economy. Since democratisation in the late 1990s, those same print and television media have been transformed, while newer electronic media such as the Internet and satellite television provide alternative sources of information for the populace. This paper chronicles first how the previous government's control of the media was established but later undermined by a grass-roots people movement. It analyses the ethical implications of political rights, cultural diversity, corporate ownership and market competition for the media industry. The experience of Indonesia demonstrates that establishing appropriate ethical standards in the media business and applying them consistently remains a challenge in newly-democratic developing and emergent economies.