

Representing National vs Personal Agenda: Media Framing of Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022¹

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Abstract

This study aims to examine how Indonesia's national interests were represented during its G20 Presidency 2022 through media framing, specifically investigating the balance between national and personal political agendas. By conducting a content analysis of online news articles from seven major Indonesian newspapers – Antara, CNBC Indonesia, CNN Indonesia, Detik, Kompas, Republika, and Tempo – the study explores patterns in media representing and issue prioritization. A total of 753 articles were initially collected, with 724 articles analysed after a careful selection process using MS Excel for manual coding. Findings reveal that Antara, the government-funded media, produced the highest volume of G20-related news articles among the sampled outlets. The study covered primarily centred on economic and socio-cultural themes, with less focus on pressing domestic issues such as inflation and public welfare, despite their direct relevance to public interests. This research highlights how national interests were framed through media narratives, often amplifying state-led success stories while minimizing critical perspectives on domestic challenges. Moreover, the study reveals how media dynamics – especially government-linked outlets – align closely with the administration's messaging, raising concerns about political influence, limited freedom of expression, and media bias in Indonesia's public discourse. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how media framing can shape public perception of national interests during international events, particularly in contexts where political influences media narratives.

Keywords: Jokowi, Media, interest, Indonesia, G20 Presidency

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Introduction

State participation in international forums remains an enduring debate within mainstream international relations theory. Realism posits that states participate in international forums and organisations solely with the aim of enhancing their power and security. Cooperation serves as a mechanism for pursuing self-interest, wherein power politics and national interests are underscored as influential factors in the realm of international relations [Mearsheimer, 2019, 2014; Jervis, 1998]. In contrast, liberalism perceives international forums and organisations as vital mechanisms for cultivating collaboration, tranquilly, and shared objectives among sovereign entities. The promotion of international standards, rules, and values is prioritised, with a particular focus on diplomacy, collaboration, and the attainment of shared benefits [Engström, 2023; Berten, Kranke, 2022; Keohane, Martin, 1995]. Constructivism, in its ideal form, perceives international forums and organisations as dynamic social arenas that actively influence the ideas, identities, norms, and behaviours of states. These institutions are perceived as catalysts for transformation, playing a role in shaping the social and conceptual aspects of international politics [Vlassis, 2022; Koslowski, 1999]. The continual debate at hand appears to align with numerous multi-faceted global issues that persistently arise in both industrialised and developing nations.

In the context of international relations, while there exists a considerable debate on the nature of national interests and their interpretations, a consensus emerges across mainstream perspectives regarding the fundamental pursuit of these interests by nations [Ogunseye, 2023]. Despite divergent definitions and emphases within realism, liberalism, and constructivism on what constitutes national interests, a shared understanding prevails - every country strives to safeguard and promote its interests on the global stage. Realism underscores power dynamics and state-centric interests [Troy, 2021], liberalism emphasises cooperation and common interests [Jervis, 2020; Khan, 2014], while constructivism highlights the role of norms and identities in shaping interests [Weldes, 1996; Wendt, 1999]. Nevertheless, all these theories converge on the notion that nations will actively engage and leverage their membership in international forums to advance and defend their national interests [Burchill, 2005]. This consensus underscores the universal drive of states to utilise international platforms, such as forums and organisations, as arenas for the pursuit and protection of their respective national agendas [Umar, 2017].

Given the national interest is critical element for the state foreign policy formulation [Mearsheimer, 2014], state apparatus is constantly attempting to ensure and promote the ultimate interest of the nation [Chubb, McAllister, 2023; Rice, 2000]. However, national interest is a complex and multifaceted idea that can vary significantly from one country to another and can evolve over time [Wu, 2017]. What a nation considers to be in its national interest may be subject to different interpretations and priorities within its own political and diplomatic circles. Nevertheless, in an ever-evolving landscape of multilateral cooperation, a country's commitment to safeguarding and advancing its national interests remains unwavering [Kraeger, 2011]. In the contemporary context of multilateralism, these interests encompass economic growth, national security, environmental sustainability, and the promotion of human rights and global stability [Chen, 2011]. Indonesia, as an important player in the international arena, is particularly fervent in its pursuit of national interests within the framework of multilateral cooperation. The urgency to protect and enhance Indonesia's interests fuels its active engagement in diplomatic dialogues, trade agreements, and environmental initiatives, ensuring its participation contributes to both its own prosperity and global welfare. Since independence, Indonesia's national interest has been defined and embedded in the national Constitution which strives to protect the people, land, and country's sovereignty [Sukma, 1995].

Indeed, the doctrine of neutrality remains the centre of Indonesia's foreign policy [Karim et al., 2023]. Nevertheless, the national interest of Indonesia has undergone a redefinition during the administration of Jokowi [Patriadi et al., 2018].

The G20 platform stands as a crucial arena where nations assert their interests, navigate complexities, and forge collaborations to address global challenges. Within this context, Indonesia's role within the G20 as the 2022 chairmanship garnered scholarly attention. Previous studies have extensively examined Indonesia's active participation and benefits derived from its involvement in this prestigious forum. Scholars have outlined Indonesia's strategies, engagements, and gains as a participant within the G20 structure. For instance, Solechah & Sugito [2023] assert that Indonesia's objectives as the G20 presidency encompassed the promotion of sustainable economic development. The G20 Presidency in 2022, as raised by Indonesia, encompassed various problems that pertain to the global health architecture, digital economic revolution, sustainable energy transition, and six key agendas concerning economics and finance. According to Intentilia [2022], the current G20 presidency presented a significant opportunity to enhance Indonesia's soft power on the global stage by promoting cultural themes. However, the G20 presidency presented an opportunity for Indonesia to showcase its global leadership as a middle power. Nevertheless, the endeavour was perceived as excessively ambitious in light of the waning state of democracy within the nation and the intricate nature of domestic challenges [Al-Fadhat, 2022]. All of these analyses appear to align with the government's assertion, as disseminated through numerous news broadcasts, that Indonesia stood to gain advantages from its role as the G20 presidency in 2022 [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, 2022].

However, a significant gap persists within this body of literature. Most studies have focused on Indonesia's proactive role and the benefits accrued from its membership, overlooking a crucial aspect: how Indonesia's interests and concerns were represented during its G20 Presidency in 2022 through media coverage. This research aims to fill this gap by employing a content analysis approach to explore how Indonesia's priorities, as conveyed through media coverage, shaped its G20 narrative. Media plays a pivotal role in framing public discourse and influencing perceptions of national interests, both domestically and internationally. By analysing news articles from prominent Indonesian outlets during Indonesia's tenure as the G20 Chair, this study seeks to illuminate how the nation's interests were portrayed, and which issues were emphasised in the media discourse. Understanding media representation is essential to comprehending how Indonesia navigates its role on the global stage while balancing domestic political considerations and promoting its national agenda. Through this lens, the research aims to uncover Indonesia's diplomatic efforts and the implications of its G20 Presidency, offering a fresh perspective on the country's engagement within international forums. Indeed, by examining media coverage during Indonesia's G20 Presidency, this study not only supplements existing literature but also provides a nuanced understanding of Indonesia's diplomatic strategies and their impact on both national and global platforms.

Literature Review

Media and International Relations

Media, often considered the "fourth estate," plays a pivotal role as an actor in international relations, exerting significant influence on the global stage. Beyond serving as a mere agent of information, media actively participates in shaping narratives, influencing public opinion [Shanahan et al., 2011], and impacting diplomatic dynamics between nations [Baum, Potter, 2008]. Through agenda-setting and framing, media outlets contribute to the construction of international issues and

perceptions of global events. In times of conflict or crisis, media outlets can wield considerable power, framing narratives that influence not only domestic audiences but also the international community. Moreover, the rise of digital and social media has expanded the reach and immediacy of information dissemination, transforming the way states communicate and engage with each other on the global diplomatic front. As a dynamic actor, media not only reflects but actively shapes the evolving landscape of international relations, contributing to the complexities and nuances of modern global affairs [Durani et al., 2023; Strovsky, Schleifer, 2020; Golovchenko et al., 2018].

As a significant actor in international relations, media profoundly influences the information flow in global affairs by shaping narratives, disseminating news, and framing issues that capture the attention of global audiences [Gilboa, 2001]. Through the selection and presentation of stories, media outlets actively contribute to the agenda-setting process, determining which events and issues receive prominence in international discourse. The power to construct and frame news stories enables media to influence public perceptions and attitudes toward nations, leaders, and international events [Gilardi et al., 2022; Langer, Gruber, 2020]. In the digital age, the speed and accessibility of information dissemination through various media platforms amplify this influence, allowing news to reach a global audience instantaneously. This dynamic role of media not only reflects the evolving landscape of international relations but also underscores its capacity to mould the collective understanding of global events, thus shaping the broader narrative and discourse in the realm of global affairs [Ng et al., 2021; Kraidy, 2018; Lück et al., 2016].

Media exerts a profound influence on global affairs by shaping public opinion, a force that significantly impacts the foreign policy decision-making process. Through its ability to frame and prioritise international events, media not only moulds public perceptions but also influences the policy agenda [Grossman, 2022]. The issues highlighted and emphasised in the media become part of the broader public discourse, setting the agenda for what is considered pertinent in international relations [Soroka, 2003]. Policymakers keenly observe and respond to the topics gaining traction in the media, recognising that public sentiment, often influenced by media narratives, can shape political priorities. Consequently, media's influence extends beyond framing public opinion; it actively contributes to shaping the policy agenda, as policymakers respond to the issues resonating with the public, ultimately impacting the direction and focus of foreign policy decisions on the global stage [Bjola, 2018; Adesina, 2017]. This intricate interplay underscores the pivotal role of media in the nexus between public opinion and policy formulation [Soroka, 2003].

In addition to its role in shaping public opinion and influencing foreign policy, the media serves as a potent instrument of soft power, playing a critical role in both public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. As a soft power, media outlets project a nation's values, ideas, and cultural attributes, fostering a positive image internationally [Gosling, 2021; George, 2016]. Public diplomacy leverages media channels to engage with foreign audiences, shaping perceptions and promoting understanding. Cultural diplomacy, facilitated by media, involves the dissemination of a nation's cultural expressions, arts, and traditions to build bridges and foster goodwill [Flew, 2016]. Through television, film, digital content, and news outlets, media becomes a vehicle for nations to share their cultural richness, promote dialogue, and create connections across borders. In this way, media, as a soft power tool, not only influences public perceptions but also serves as an instrument for cultural exchange, enhancing a nation's global standing and contributing to diplomatic efforts on the world stage. This strategy has been done by governments such as China [Zhu, 2022], Turkey [Elsawah, Howard, 2021], Qatar [Samuel-Azran, 2013] which publicly is known as state-sponsored media [Hoyle et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2018].

Indeed, through strategic communication and narrative framing, media outlets contribute significantly to shaping the global perception of a country's role, priorities, and contributions within

the G20 platform. The way media covers a nation's engagements, initiatives, and diplomatic efforts during its G20 presidency or participation influences how the international community perceives the nation's leadership and commitment to addressing global challenges. This branding extends beyond mere image-building; it actively shapes the narrative of a country's role in the international community, impacting its diplomatic influence, soft power projection, and the reception of its policy proposals within the G20 and other global forums. As such, media emerges as a vital player in the intricate process of defining and promoting a nation's brand on the international stage. Thus, since the multifaceted roles discussed underscore the pivotal and indispensable position of media as a key factor in international relations, particularly in shaping and constructing state foreign policy.

Media constructing national interest

The conceptualisation of national interest is a nuanced and dynamic process that involves defining the core objectives and priorities that a nation seeks to safeguard and promote on the international stage. National interest encompasses a broad spectrum of concerns, including security, economic prosperity, territorial integrity, and the overall well-being of the populace [Mehmood Khan, 2022; Pistikou, 2018]. The formulation of national interest is inherently shaped by a nation's historical, cultural, and geopolitical context, as well as the prevailing international dynamics. It serves as a guiding framework for the development and execution of foreign policy, directing a nation's engagements, alliances, and responses to global challenges [Feng, He, 2021; Scobell, 2014]. The articulation and communication of national interest to both domestic and international audiences becomes a critical aspect of statecraft, and this is where the media's role becomes paramount [Liu, Chang, 2021; Glanville, 2005].

The media acts as a key intermediary in shaping national narratives that, in turn, influence the conceptualisation of national interest. Through the power of framing and agenda-setting, media outlets play a significant role in constructing and disseminating narratives that resonate with the public and policymakers alike [Crow, Lawlor, 2016]. The media not only reflects the prevailing national discourse but also actively participates in framing issues to align with perceived national interests. This involves not just reporting on events but also interpreting them in ways that shape public understanding. The media's influence on the conceptualisation of national interest extends beyond mere reflection, as it actively contributes to defining the contours of what is considered vital to the nation's well-being and identity [Knackmuhs et al., 2020; Ershov, 2015]. By highlighting specific issues, emphasising particular perspectives, and framing events within a certain context, the media contributes to the ongoing discourse that informs the nation's understanding of its interests and priorities in the global arena. Extensive coverage, including the deliberate use of editorial sections by state-sponsored media, serves to promote and disseminate the government's policy agenda [Liu, Chang, 2021]. This phenomenon is evident in various instances, such as the Free West Papua Movement [Adiprasetyo, 2023], the Mindanao issue [Ladrado, Ponce, 2023], and the Darfur conflict [Alozie, 2005].

Meanwhile, in undemocratic countries the media functions as a controlled conduit for the state, representing a powerful tool wielded by governments to manage and propagate their policy agendas, including foreign policy objectives [Keremoğlu, Weidmann, 2020]. In these contexts, media outlets are often tightly regulated, if not directly owned and operated by the state, leading to a restricted flow of information and the absence of independent, alternative voices [Gehlbach, Sonin, 2014]. Conversely, the media in democratic countries assumes a liberal role, standing as a cornerstone of a vibrant public sphere, and pillars of democracy [Müller, 2014]. Furthermore, media outlets operate with a degree of independence and diversity, fostering an environment where information flows freely

and citizens have access to a spectrum of viewpoints. This pluralistic media landscape includes not only government-sponsored outlets that may align with official foreign policy narratives but also a plethora of alternative media sources [Steppat et al., 2023]. However, this assumption is not entirely accurate, as even advanced democratic countries like Sweden, the UK, Italy, and Bulgaria continue to grapple with challenges to freedom of opinion in the media [Maniou, 2023; de la Fuente, 2022]. On the other hand, in authoritarian regimes like Saudi Arabia and China, there is a growing recognition that the digital age necessitates some level of information openness, prompting discussions about the need for regulatory adjustments [Boas, 2006].

Despite the disruptive influence of social media in both undemocratic and democratic countries, traditional media outlets, or mainstream media, continue to play a pivotal role in shaping public perspectives on foreign policy [Selvanathan, Lickel, 2020]. While social media platforms have altered the information landscape by providing rapid and diverse sources of news, mainstream media maintains significant influence due to its credibility, established editorial standards, and wide-reaching platforms [Salaudeen, Onyechi, 2020]. However, where there is a growing trend of declining trust in the credibility of mainstream media, social media and alternative media platforms can emerge as pivotal players in shaping public discourse and disseminating information, as occurred in Malaysia [Omar, Ahrari, 2020] and Korea [Kim, Johnson, 2009]. Despite the evolving media landscape, mainstream media plays an enduring role as a primary source of information for the public [Laor, Lissitsa, 2022]. Hence, within its dynamics, the media can assume the roles of a watchdog, lapdog, or guard dog, regardless of the adopted political system whether democratic or non-democratic [Whitten-Woodring, 2009; Donohue, Tichenor, Olien, 1995]. Against this backdrop, understanding mainstream media news related to Indonesia's role as G20 presidency is imperative. Analysing the media discussion allows for the identification of key themes, priorities, and the narratives that shape Indonesia's national interest and stance on global issues. Thus, the following section will outline the research methodology, including the selection of media outlets, data collection process, coding procedures, and data analysis techniques employed to examine news coverage related to Indonesia's G20 Presidency. Through a systematic exploration of these methodological components, the subsequent paragraph aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research methodology utilised in this study.

Methodology

Approach

This study analysed news articles sourced from the online platforms of seven major Indonesian media outlets namely Antara, CNBC Indonesia, CNN Indonesia, Detik, Kompas, Republika, and Tempo. This research adopts a content analysis methodology to systematically examine and analyse online news articles related to Indonesia's G20 presidency in the year 2022 [Manganello, Blake, 2010]. Content analysis provides a structured and systematic approach to uncover patterns, themes, and nuances within media coverage, offering valuable insights into how Indonesia's interests and concerns are represented during this specific period [Krippendorff, 2019]. The methodology allows for a comprehensive exploration of specific aspects, enabling a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of media narratives during the G20 presidency in the targeted year [Macnamara, 2005]. Furthermore, employing a well-defined theory to evaluate an event improves result validity [Yin, 2009]. The data analysis procedure links the theory to relevant current facts and prior reports [Collins, Stockton, 2018]. Meanwhile, the selection of the seven media outlets was based on several key

considerations. Antara was included as a government-affiliated media source, while CNBC Indonesia and CNN Indonesia were chosen for their influential status as foreign/US-based media entities. Republika, known as a prominent voice for Muslims in Indonesia, representing the largest Muslim population globally, was also included. Additionally, Detik, Kompas, and Tempo were selected for their longstanding credibility and reputable history within Indonesia's media landscape [Keller, 2009; Maksum, Surwandono, Azizah, 2019; Wijayanto, Masduki, 2023].

Search Query

The search query employed for this research focuses on identifying news articles related to "G20 presidency" during the year 2022. This precise query ensures that the data collection is concentrated on the specific time frame when Indonesia held the G20 presidency. Notably, analysis based on Google trends indicates that during 2022, the term reached its peak popularity, further underscoring the relevance and timeliness of the query for this period.

Data Collection and Cleaning

A meticulous process was undertaken to identify and collect relevant online news articles from seven major Indonesian media outlets—Antara, CNBC Indonesia, CNN Indonesia, Detik, Kompas, Republika, and Tempo, all within the year 2022. The initial dataset comprised 753 articles, which underwent a careful cleaning process. The final dataset for analysis was refined to 724 news articles, ensuring the inclusion of high-quality and pertinent data specific to the G20 presidency year as illustrated in Figure 1.

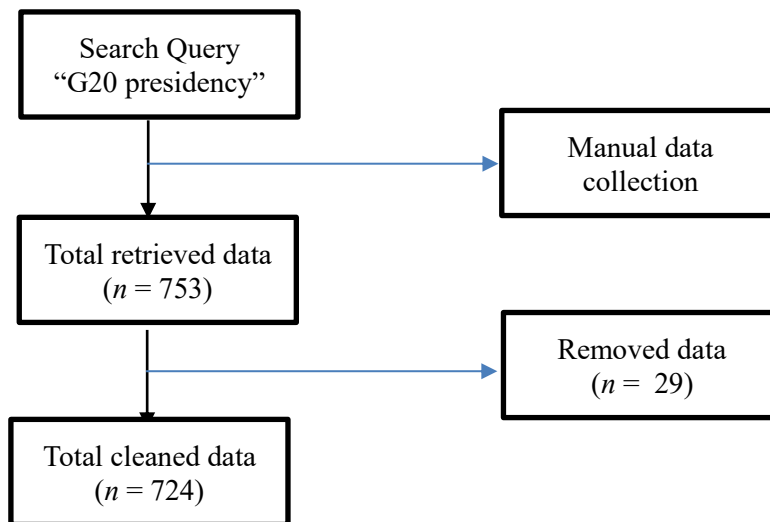


Figure 1. Data extraction process

Coding Process

The coding process involved a detailed search for specific aspects within the content analysis, including social and cultural dimensions, regionalism, politics, military and defence, health, and economy during the G20 presidency in 2022. This targeted approach allows for a nuanced

examination of diverse themes relevant to Indonesia's interests during this specific period.

Code Variables

The code variables utilized in this research are adapted and modified from the works of Fidler [2006] and Spohr & Silva [2017]. These variables serve as a structured framework for coding and categorising the content, ensuring consistency and reliability in the analysis, with a specific focus on the G20 presidency year of 2022.

Manual Coding and Data Presentation

Manual coding was conducted using MS Excel, offering a hands-on and meticulous approach to analysing the content specifically from the year 2022. The final results of the data analysis are presented in various formats, including graphs, charts, and word clouds [Verdinelli & Scagnoli 2013], enhancing the interpretability of the findings and providing a clear and concise overview of the media discourse surrounding Indonesia's G20 presidency during this targeted year.

Findings

This section presents the key findings derived from the content analysis, offering insights into the trends of media coverage and the thematic landscape surrounding Indonesia's G20 Chairmanship. The analysis reveals overarching trends in media coverage and identifies prevalent themes that received significant attention during this period. Word cloud analysis is also employed to visually depict the most frequently occurring terms, offering a snapshot of the key topics that dominated the discourse surrounding Indonesia's role as the G20 Chair. This comprehensive examination illuminates the patterns, emphases, and popular narratives that characterised media representation of Indonesia's G20 Chairmanship, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of public discourse related to the nation's leadership in this important international forum.

This study reveals a notable pattern in media coverage of Indonesia's G20 Presidency, highlighting Antara as the predominant contributor with 119 news-related articles, solidifying its position as the primary government media outlet. However, intriguingly, two leading private media entities, CNN Indonesia (n = 115) and CNBC Indonesia (n = 106), both affiliated with the United States, closely trail Antara, surpassing 100 news articles each. This underscores the global reach and influence of these US-based international media outlets in covering Indonesia's prominent role in the G20. Other major Indonesian national media, namely Tempo (n = 99), Detik (n = 96), Kompas (n = 96), and Republika (n = 93), exhibited a slightly lower but consistent average coverage of Indonesia's G20 Presidency in 2022, with an average of 103.4 news articles across all researched media. As presented in Figure 2, this distribution of coverage provides valuable insights into the varied media landscape and the nuanced dynamics of reporting on Indonesia's leadership in the G20 during the specified period.

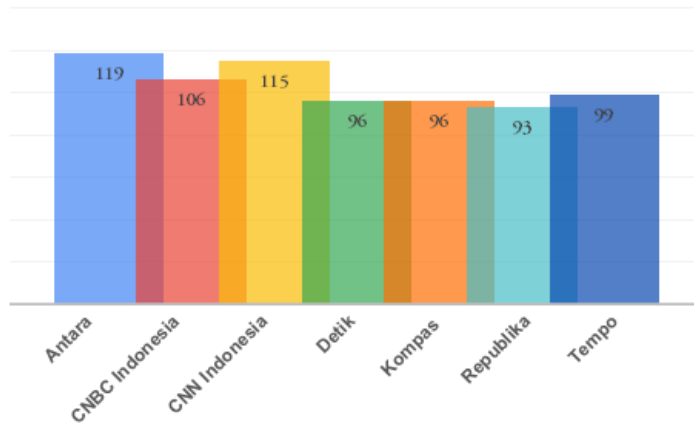


Figure 2. Trends of Media Coverage on Indonesia's G20 Presidency

The analysis of news articles related to Indonesia's G20 Presidency underscores the prevalent themes that dominated media coverage in 2022. The economy emerged as the primary focus, commanding the largest share with 255 articles, indicating a substantial emphasis on economic aspects. Social and cultural issues followed closely, constituting the second-largest thematic category with 191 articles, showcasing a noteworthy consideration of diverse societal concerns. Political issues secured the third-largest position, highlighting the intersection of economic and political dynamics during Indonesia's G20 leadership. In contrast, three specific themes—military and defence (n = 88), regionalism (n = 31), and health issues (n = 35)—received comparatively minor attention in the news coverage. This breakdown (Figure 3) illustrates the nuanced landscape of Indonesia's representation in the G20, emphasising a predominant focus on economic and socio-cultural dimensions, with additional but less extensive coverage on political, defence, regionalism, and health-related aspects.

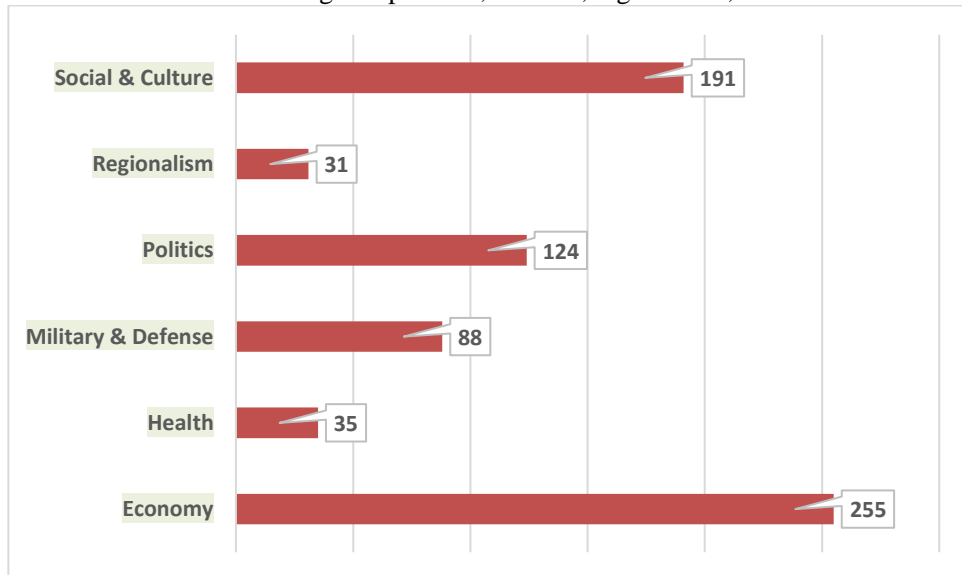


Figure 3. Trends of Topics Related News on Indonesia's G20 Presidency

The word cloud analysis of Indonesia's G20 Presidency-related news indicates a clear

considerations, reflecting the nation's aspirations and goals within the G20 framework [Solechah, Sugito, 2023]. The nuanced exploration of social, cultural, and political themes further contributes to shaping a comprehensive narrative that aligns with Indonesia's multifaceted national interests, emphasising not only economic prowess but also the broader dimensions of its global contributions [Intentilia, 2022]. This highlights the significant role of media in advocating for and shaping the interests of nations participating in international forums [Glanville, 2005]. This aspect appears to have been overlooked by previous researchers, emphasising the need to underscore and explore the role of media in both disseminating government policies and serving as a source of public information [Crow, Lawlor, 2016].

The prominence of Antara as the highest media contributor to Indonesia's G20 Presidency coverage not only underscores the government's commitment to ensuring widespread awareness of the nation's achievements but also signifies a deliberate effort to influence and shape public opinion regarding these accomplishments [Adesina, 2017; Bjola, 2018]. This reveals the significant role of government-sponsored media in disseminating key policies, including enhancing the image of the Indonesian government during its G20 Presidency. What is noteworthy is that mainstream non-government media outlets also extensively cover Indonesia's achievements. This indicates that beyond Antara, other media such as CNBC Indonesia, CNN Indonesia, Detik, Kompas, Republika, and Tempo recognise the importance of informing the public about Indonesia's rising global stature. The narrative of achievement aligns with efforts to leverage benefits from the G20 forum, particularly during the presidency, to advance national interests, especially in the economic realm. The comprehensive media portrayal thus serves as a powerful tool for shaping public perceptions, emphasising the importance of Indonesia's G20 leadership on both the domestic and global fronts. This finds out the significant contribution of the media in constructing Indonesia's achievements (Gilardi et al. 2022; Langer and Gruber 2020) in advancing national interests within the G20 forum, a dimension that received minimal attention from prior researchers.

Indeed, the majority of media coverage of the G20 Indonesia presidency lacks a critical and incisive editorial approach. Instead, it adheres to standard journalistic practices, indicating that both government and private news agencies do not perceive the event as requiring in-depth editorial scrutiny [Liu, Chang, 2021]. Rather, the coverage appears to capitalise on the existing newsworthiness and public appeal of the event [Klikauer, 2018]. While all coverage highlights Indonesia's success in advancing national interest within the forum, it overlooks the domestic challenges the country faced during its presidency, such as the democracy backsliding [Al-Fadhat, 2022; Aspinall et al., 2020], which received insufficient attention from the media. Consequently, these media outlets primarily fulfil the roles of guard dogs and lapdogs, while neglecting the watchdog role of critically examining government shortcomings during the G20 event [Whitten-Woodring, 2009; Donohue et al., 1995]. Certainly, most of news coverage from these seven media outlets extensively focuses on Indonesia's national interest, particularly in the economic sector, aligning with President Jokowi's longstanding vision since taking office in 2014 [Warburton, 2016]. However, amidst concern over threats to freedom of expression in Indonesia following the Internet Bill [Lazarus, 2021], these media merely serve a public relations/diplomacy function [Rae, 2020; Freedman, 2018]. Furthermore, their coverage reflects a broader narrative influenced, in part, by media tycoons entrenched in power circles, raising questions about their independence amidst contentious policy debate [Maksum et al., 2019].

Within the theoretical framework of media and international relations, as well as media constructing national interest, this study offers substantial support for the relevance and applicability of these theories. The media's role in shaping public perceptions and constructing narratives that align with national interests is evident, particularly in the strategic emphasis on economic themes. The findings complement existing theoretical perspectives, affirming that media outlets play a pivotal role

in framing and disseminating narratives that reinforce a nation's priorities and interests within international forums like the G20. The theoretical context is robustly supported by the observed patterns in media coverage, emphasising the media's influence in constructing a comprehensive and strategic portrayal of Indonesia's role in the G20, aligned with the nation's broader diplomatic objectives and national interests. Nevertheless, the narrative of achieving national interests at the G20 event appears to have resonated with domestic political advantages [Andi et al., 2021]. This is supported by the growing level of satisfaction with President Jokowi in a survey [Hafil, 2022]. Furthermore, this narrative aligns with a foreign policy vision that prioritises domestic concerns and takes a pragmatic approach focused on economic gains [Wicaksana, 2022; Arif, 2021; Rosyidin, 2017].

Conclusion and policy implications

Theoretically, there exists a significant interplay between International Relations (IR) and the media. In this context, the media serves dual roles: as a crucial avenue for disseminating policy information and as a potent tool for public diplomacy. Governments frequently leverage the media to advance their policy objectives, particularly in the domain of foreign affairs. Indonesia's presidency of the G20 represents a pivotal moment that demands extensive domestic coverage to showcase the nation's achievements on the global stage. This is particularly pertinent amid the backdrop of rising political populism in Indonesia, where the government is keen to ensure widespread public awareness of its accomplishments, including its leadership in the G20. Notably, this analysis underscores the prioritisation of economic issues within the Jokowi administration's national agenda, overshadowing other concerns such as social, cultural, and defence matters. Through state-owned media channels, notably Antara, the government effectively emphasises the economic narrative as a focal point of Indonesia's national interests during its G20 presidency in 2022. Even an analysis of word frequency underscores the prevalence of economic terms, with "economy" being the most prominent, followed by related terms like "investment," "trade," and "cooperation." While Antara takes the lead in highlighting Indonesia's economic interests, other mainstream media outlets exhibit a similar tendency, sparking discussions about media impartiality, especially given potential biases linked to media ownership connections within President Jokowi's inner circle. While the media has been successful in public diplomacy efforts, recent trends suggest a decline in its role as a bastion of democracy, reduced to mere public relations amidst mounting restrictions on expression and media freedoms, particularly in light of the controversial Internet Bill. In the context of Indonesia's G20 presidency in 2022, the media's traditional watchdog function appears to be waning, supplanted by roles similar to that of lapdog and guard dog. This underscores the intriguing notion that, in theory, the construction of national interests is influenced by media narratives, presenting an intriguing dynamic amid the landscape of populist politics in Indonesia.

If the media intends to reclaim its role as a watchdog and uphold democracy, there must be a concerted effort to increase sharp and insightful editorial analysis, balancing out coverage driven solely by ratings or political campaigns. Indeed, the government-sponsored news agency, Antara, should adhere to and support the government's agenda. However, private media outlets should prioritise critical examination over government appeasement, though this can be challenging given the factors at play. This study's limitation lies in its focus primarily on concise news rather than editorial analysis. Future researchers should address this gap to provide more nuanced and comprehensive insights. Moreover, governments should consider establishing official news agencies that are transparent, credible, and capable of reaching global audiences, similar to those in countries like

Singapore, Qatar, Turkey, Russia, and Australia. Indeed, media governance that adheres to democratic principles must be prioritised above momentary business and political interests.

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