

Analyzing Political Bias in Mainstream Media: Impact on Public Perception and Democracy

Atifa Anjuman Aktari

Broadcast Journalist and News Presenter, Independent Television, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author: Atifa Anjuman Aktari E-mail: atifaitv@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: January 10th, 2025

Accepted: February 26th 2025

Published: March, 21st 2025

Volume: 3

Issue: 1

DOI: 10.61424/issej.v3i1.240

KEYWORDS

Political Bias, Media Framing,
Content Analysis, Media
Polarization, Media Literacy,
Media Ownership, Ideological
Representation, Journalistic
Ethics, Independent
Journalism, Public Perception

ABSTRACT

This study examines political bias in mainstream media, investigating how media outlets influence public perception of political events through selective framing, language use, and ideological representation. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research combines content analysis, interviews with journalists and media consumers, and surveys to uncover patterns of bias in both traditional and online media. Findings reveal that media outlets, depending on their political orientation, frame political issues in a manner that reinforces existing ideologies, selectively highlight certain aspects of political stories, and use biased language to shape public opinion. Additionally, the study finds that media bias significantly contributes to political polarization among consumers. The research highlights the role of media ownership, corporate interests, and the growing influence of online platforms in shaping political discourse. Based on these findings, recommendations are made to promote media literacy, encourage more balanced reporting, support independent journalism, and develop tools for monitoring bias, with the goal of improving public access to objective and impartial information.

1. Introduction

Media institutions that control most of what people see and hear have remained under debate by the public for more than four decades. The primary information source of mainstream media institutions creates essential functions for political reporting combined with abilities to shape how public audiences understand their content (Tully et al., 2020a). The rising political polarization has brought more attention to news reporting objectivity among scholarly communities. All media organizations introduce bias into their news coverage through purposeful or unintended decisions that position issues according to their established political perspectives. Researchers exempt political bias found in media reports as a top academic area because it produces significant changes to democracy as well as public perspectives and social relationships (Roth et al., 2024a). Mainstream media has faced political bias for many years yet this influence has intensified since new digital media platforms came online. The swift distribution capabilities of these platforms have provided people access to multiple available media sources. The wide range of media sources creates difficulties because readers often choose news perspectives that match their original positions thus reinforcing political positions and weakening public communication. Through event framing while using specific language the media industry represents their political position to the audience. The study analyzes how bias affects democratic processes at various levels including public opinions and political divisions as well as standard democratic

functionality (Rozado et al., 2022a). Media bias receives analysis through different theoretical approaches but scientists typically study it using framing theory because this explains how presentation formats determine audience interpretation and understanding. The chosen information alongside the excluded materials work together to form biased representations of different scenarios. Such reports choose to emphasize one side of an argument without sufficient representation of opposing views thus creating public support for their primary stance (Flamino et al., 2023). The investigation establishes an examination of the political influence that stems from business ownership of media platforms along with corporate agenda biases. Large media organizations control substantial control over mainstream outlets which leads their entities to influence editorial decisions while also having political and financial interests. The combined forces of advertisers together with political donors cause news reporting to become less objective through their biased delivery of information (Jost et al., 2022). This analysis explores main political bias in mass media to help identify methods for developing fairer journalism alongside providing guidance for responsible media use among readers.

The research incorporates quantitative content analysis and qualitative interviews and surveys to display crucial findings about present-day media bias while advancing comprehension about media's effect on political perspectives and societal views. The research aims to highlight the necessity of developing a media industry which maintains democratic principles of truthfulness and fairness through accountability.

1.1 Background of the Study

In democratic societies media plays an essential role by providing citizens with necessary information needed to decide well in politics. Media organizations that include newspapers radio and television supported democratic practices throughout history because they provided unbiased coverage of political events (Nguyen & Hekman, 2024). Media neutrality has become increasingly complex during recent years because digital platforms and cable television joined forces with online platforms. Media establishments use their reporting structure to display selected political perspectives that connect with their intended agenda or political doctrine (Aïmeur et al., 2023). Various types of political media bias appear through editorial decisions about news selection as well as how issues are framed and word choices made and weight afforded to multiple viewpoint perspectives. Such phenomena have recently become important because media sources keep expanding while political opinions in society continue their polarization (Castro et al., 2022). The United States joins many other nations whose populations continue an active discussion about possible partisan slant in major news outlets. Specific news outlets and networking systems demonstrate established political orientations that cause audiences to believe mainstream media lacks truthful impartiality when covering significant political content. Different elements such as corporate ownership and political allegiances and the need to satisfy audience demand along with media industry competition drive such biases to emerge (Chen et al., 2023). The research on political bias in mainstream media focuses on identifying when such biases start, how they affect public perspectives and their effects on the political framework. The investigation into this study analyzes both media history and how digital platforms along with new technology structures have reshaped media distribution and consumption patterns (Walgrave et al., 2022). The distribution of false information along with separate political news channels and media echo chambers have resulted in severe society polarization which made political bias in media a fundamental problem. The research plays a crucial role in studying how media influences contemporary democratic societies because it analyzes the connections between mass media with government institutions and citizen perceptions. This evaluation assesses the results of prejudiced media reporting with specific emphasis on its impact on political understanding along with voter choices and institutional media reliability among the public (Budiana, 2023). The research explores political bias in mainstream media which produces essential knowledge to understand how such bias shapes democratic processes and public dialogue quality.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The essential nature of political bias research in mainstream media stems from its position to mold public perception during political debates and democratic procedural influence. The media function beyond information distribution because they possess the ability to build stories about political events along with candidates' profiles and ideologies and different policies (Humphrecht, 2023). Through democratic principles media implements an unbiased role to link all governance stakeholders with their audiences. The actual situation tends to be more complicated than expected. Through hidden or openly displayed biases political media platforms fabricate how issues are displayed to viewers thus forming audience opinions about political figures and party decisions (Pira, 2023). Media consumers together with media producers need to understand how this bias operates throughout its various phases. Through this knowledge people can study the content of media systematically to see the underlying biases while making improved

decisions regarding political matters (de Zúñiga & Cheng, 2024a). Understandings of media bias in politics serve as essential knowledge to teach people about media literacy (Ausat, 2023). The modern information age together with its digital media explosion exposes users to excessive political information that frequently carries biased perspectives. People need to develop abilities for analyzing diverse media sources so they can properly measure their reliability and objective quality during information consumption (Strömbäck, 2023). This research determines how biases occur throughout multiple media organizations by examining their use of presentation frameworks together with word choice methods and information exclusion practices that affect voter perceptions and election results (Campos-Rueda & Goyanes, 2023a). The research proves important to both media organizations alongside policymakers. The media sector must operate according to journalistic principles of unbiased reporting since they need to fairly present various perspectives on every issue (Jo & Meier, 2024). Research-based identification of biases serves authorities as a professional standard to monitor media organization operations and to promote ethical responsible and transparent reporting practices. This research produces findings which support the wider ethical discussion about political bias in media through critical insights available for lawmakers who aim to govern the media sector.

1.3 Research Objectives

The primary research objectives involve studying the level of political bias within mainstream news publications along with their influence on audience reception & political dialogues & democratic participation. This paper explores political bias in media coverage & show how media shapes political perceptions within the boarder political domain. The research investigation leads to findings which will help improve media literacy standards while supporting media regulatory policies and maintaining ethical practices in journalism.

The research will fulfill its goals through these particular targets:

- To identify and analyze the presence of political bias in mainstream media outlets
- To investigate the mechanisms behind political bias in mainstream media
- To examine the impact of media bias on public opinion and political behavior
- To propose solutions or recommendations for mitigating political bias

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions for this study lead the assessment of mainstream media political bias and its effects on perception together with its consequences for democratic engagement. The study examines media bias mechanisms which affect both news reporting approaches and reporting tone as well as audience belief changes in the political realm.

The research design incorporates questions which examine the elements producing media bias and explain how resulting biases affect public thinking and political engagement behavior.

1. What types of political bias are most prevalent in mainstream media?
2. Through what means does mainstream media political bias affect voter behavior together with public opinion?
3. What are the mechanisms behind the political bias present in mainstream media?
4. How do audiences perceive media bias, & does this affect their media consumption habits?
5. What policies should be implemented to minimize media bias and which education programs and self-regulating procedures will help reduce the problem?

2. Literature Review

Research on media and politics dedicated attention to political bias as a primary issue throughout several decades. The understanding of media bias foundations proves essential to analyze its democratic process effects because media remains fundamental for influencing political debates while forming public awareness (Xing et al., 2024). The review delves into fundamental elements of media political bias by defining the phenomenon and showing the exhibited

forms and assessing its influence on societal opinions. The research lays emphasis on important theoretical models and observational outcomes from this field of study.

2.1 Defining Political Bias in Media

Media outlets tend to present political issues with a specific preferred political ideology which alters their depiction of political events and candidate profiles. The various forms of bias appear during story selection while framing issues through language choices that use specific sources (Latif et al., 2024a). Media bias emerges naturally from three main factors which include institutional requirements and editorial approaches as well as media programming directed at specific reader demographics. Any political bias shows itself as either partisan support for specific political parties or as ideological viewpoint that determines news presentation preferences. Media primarily serves as a reflection tool that shows reality but simultaneously creates the fundamental aspects of how reality appears (Štětka & Mihelj, 2024). The debate exists between elite control of information flow as the reason for media bias and market forces alongside ideological biases demonstrated by journalists and editors. The sources of political bias in media lead to significant changes in how the public recognizes political occurrences and their participation in the democratic process.

The multiple aspects of political bias present themselves throughout media organizations in various ways. Media bias exists as a misrepresentation of facts since outlets choose to promote some parts of a story while ignoring others while matching their political views (Splendore et al., 2024). Studies have mainly observed three classifications of political bias in media: partisan bias and ideological bias and structural bias. Media outlets display partisan bias through their news reporting practices which reveals their support for one certain political party or candidate. Conservative news media usually spread information that backs conservative governance and attacks liberal stances yet liberal outlets work in the reverse way (Weinhardt et al., 2024). The media shows ideological bias by establishing connections with large political beliefs instead of selecting or supporting particular political parties. Media organizations use ideological bias as a method of editorial oversight that stems from core values and beliefs prevalent in their institutions. Organizational principles of media institutions themselves produce built-in biases which we call structural bias. Three dominant factors that influence news bias come from corporate managers and marketplace realities and targeted audience demographics combined with advertising agency influences (Thelma & Chitondo, 2024). Media organizations tend to accept incentives that generate targeted content for particular audience populations resulting in selective perspective withholding from their reporting.

2.2 Types of Political Bias

Various forms of political bias exist in media since each one reveals distinct media behavior traits. A well-known bias pattern in media outlets exists as **partisan bias** which displays support for specific political parties or candidates. Some cable news networks along with media outlets maintain close relationships with specific political ideologies through their broadcasting practices (Ahrens, 2024). Such outlets tend to present news with deliberate partisan views that support their ideological direction because their purpose is to shape how their audiences understand political subjects. A different form of bias involves ideological bias because media organizations use their own set of beliefs and values to present political issues to audiences. The way issues are presented to readers manifests through language selection and framing decisions while determining which sources they will use for support. Different media outlets present healthcare stories and immigration updates and environmental reports based on their conservative or liberal views (Ahmed et al., 2025). The reporting of political news incorporates two key elements from structural bias. Business pressures together with audience recipient strategies and limited media corporations create the structural form of bias within media industries (Chan & Yi, 2024). News presentation methods and story selection priorities of media organizations are affected by their ownership systems and their audience-based business demands and audience targeting requirements.

2.3 Theories of Media Bias

Multiple academic approaches exist which help to understand why media organizations show bias within their content. Public reception heavily depends on framing theory because this theory demonstrates how different issue presentations in media sources affect audience understanding. Media organizations use their spotlight on specific story elements along with their diminished coverage of different aspects to control public reception of political developments. Different interpretations emerge about a single event based on whether media presents it as a "crisis" or a "success." (Yang et al., 2024). Media possesses considerable power to make certain issues prominent through the application of the agenda-setting theory. Individuals do not receive specific directives from media sources yet the media guides people toward particular subjects they should focus on. The media's intentional selection of various

topics allows it to determine the political decision-making direction and transform community priorities. Through selective exposure theory researchers found out how media bias continues perpetuating because of individual information consumption behavior (González et al., 2024). According to this theory most individuals look for media that matches their current beliefs yet they stay away from facts which differ from their worldviews. The concept of selective exposure makes individuals show preference for news media that share their political values as they reinforce their existing views while creating more political division.

2.4 Measuring Media Bias

Several research methods to measure media bias developed among researchers throughout multiple years. The main method researchers use for news bias assessment involves content analysis by developing systematic coding systems for story evaluation. The analysis usually looks at news coverage through its selection of featured topics and reporting tone and choice of language comments and issue presentation techniques. Researchers can identify media bias patterns through the process of element quantification (Safari et al., 2024). The contemporary analytics approaches have gained momentum for analyzing media bias over the last several years. The research tools sentiment analysis and machine learning enable scientists to examine broad collections of text material found in news articles and social media and additional internet-based content. These tools automatically identify subtle biases contained in language while giving researchers objective control to detect bias over larger groups of platforms. Audience analysis serves as a tool to study how people perceive biases within the media content (Olayinka & Odunayo, 2024). The research investigates how people build trust in various news sources as well as their skills to identify bias within media content. Objective views about media bias matter because they direct how people trust news sources and decide to participate with divergent political information.

2.5 The Impact of Media Bias on Public Opinion

Media bias substantially influences how people look at the world through their political activities while driving voting decisions during elections. People who watch biased news reports tend to develop stronger polarized political opinions which makes them hold onto their existing beliefs more tightly (der Pas & Aaldering, 2020a). The way media institutions choose their news content causes public opinions to become more divided since audiences receive information which supports their current beliefs. The phenomenon of partisan media exhibits this pattern since organizations exclusively target readership belonging to particular political positions and parties.

Research shows that both affective polarization which describes the emotional gap between political parties connects to biases found in media sources. Media organizations promote political debates that favor their audience values before they intensify oppositional emotions toward political rivals. Such conditions result in people developing intense emotional hatred for others who maintain opposing positions (Baly et al., 2020). As a result of media bias political behavior demonstrates significant modification during voter participation. Research shows distorted media news influences how voters understand political candidates together with political matters (der Pas & Aaldering, 2020). Negative media perception of a political candidate triggers public support decrease while positive coverage of these candidates improves their public image.

2.6 Social media and the Spread of Political Bias

Social media has brought unprecedented obstacles to understanding media bias in society. Users now get to interact with political content through social media platforms which serve dissimilar functions compared to traditional news outlets. Through echo chamber operations individuals mainly encounter material that backs their current beliefs which strengthens their political leanings (Cinelli et al., 2021). Massively popular social networks enable the swift distribution of false information known as fake news which deepens political differences between people. The algorithms operating on social media platforms show preference toward content types that produce users' reactions through engagement which results in showing emotional and sensational political information. Such practices strengthen political bias alongside their continued proliferation of biased political content (Alonso et al., 2021). The successful management of media bias needs comprehensive methods consisting of personal-level strategies and media industry infrastructure alterations. The promotion of media literacy stands as an effective method to train

people who can identify biased content while developing critical evaluation abilities (Bhat et al., 2023). Media literacy programs support public opinion reduction of political bias by training people to evaluate news source credibility and recognize framing methods and biased words.

Media diversity promotion together with support for independent journalism allows institutional level counterbalance against concentrated media ownership (Kubin & Von Sikorski, 2021). The public can decrease their chances of biases forming their perspective as they can access more informational perspectives that span across different political beliefs from various available media outlets (Motoki et al., 2024). Standardized media regulations should establish both transparent algorithmic procedures and content moderation guidelines in order to diminish media bias effects especially on social networking platforms. The implementation of regulatory structures results in fair balanced media coverage which maintains the role of media institutions as independent developers of public information (Latif et al., 2024). Research on media bias needs to expand its focus to comprehend the links between audience beliefs and partisan divide and to identify ways that would decrease bias influence on voter awareness.

2.7 Historical Context of Media Bias

Research on political bias in media correctly identifies the historical environment where media bias has developed throughout time. Studies in early stages investigated print media alongside radio and television because bias links back to ownership control together with editorial guidelines and publisher or broadcaster political orientations (Rodrigo-Ginés et al., 2024). The introduction of internet-based digital platforms changed how media bias operates in the modern age. The media has evolved into multiple independent platforms which have opened both direct and indirect ways for political bias thus generating a range of biased news while fragmenting the media system (Tully et al., 2020b). Researchers demonstrate that media content receives its shape through political owner motivations and changes in media ownership and control throughout history.

2.8 Role of Journalistic Practices and Ethical Standards

Another crucial aspect examined in the literature about media bias addresses journalistic methods alongside ethical norms followed by news organizations. Media professionalism requires journalists to practice fair reporting along with accuracy and objectivity in order to minimize news reporting bias (Roth et al., 2024b). The practice of media operations fails to maintain ethical journalistic standards because media owners apply pressure through expected revenue generation as well as audience preferences and aligned political view. Growing commercial pressures in the media business result in sensationalized reporting together with news entertainment supremacy and lowered impartiality standards resulting in biased news coverage (Rozado et al., 2022b). Modern media faces widespread criticism because the bias problem requires reforms based on independent journalism practices and ethical reporting principles.

2.9 Media Bias and Political Polarization

The scientific papers study how media partisanship affects the growing cultural rifts among individuals. Multiple academic investigations prove that media prejudice simultaneously shows existing partisan divisions and drives their further growth in democratic nations (Humprecht, 2023b). Partisan media outlets maintain their position by promoting extremist viewpoints which leads to the persecution of political positions they oppose. Media firm segregation based on political preferences forces individuals to mainly receive information that agrees with their beliefs thereby creating a more unwillingness to connect with contrary ideologies.

2.10 Impact of Media Bias on Public Trust

Public trust in media begins declining as a key theme in scholarly research after experiencing political bias. Public trust in media organizations decreases when people become aware of growing levels of media bias (Pira, 2023). News audiences who notice biased coverage tend to lose faith in media information and develop doubts about the credibility of news providers specifically regarding political topics (Campos-Rueda & Goyanes, 2023). As trust fades away it creates media cynicism which drives people to seek alternative news platforms that match their political views better.

2.11 Political Economy of Media Bias

Media owners who use their financial interests to control what we see in media outlets provide researchers with valuable information about media bias origins. According to scholars in this field biases in media exist because media owners and advertisers as well as political elites follow their economic and political interests (Ausat, 2023). The focus of media corporations on maximizing profits prompts them to demonstrate partiality instead of presenting diverse

viewpoints since ownership concentrates throughout a few major corporations. The business organizations that dominate media platforms enforce a content structure that disregards minority views while promoting political opinions which benefit their corporate interests and their commercial sponsors.

2.12 Media Bias and Electoral Outcomes

Research into media bias investigates how such bias affects the outcomes of elections as a primary subject. The findings of research show that biased media influence voting decisions because they modify voters' views about candidates along with political organizations and critical matters under discussion (de Zúñiga & Cheng, 2024b). Both positive media portrayals of political contestants and their organizations lead to increased election victories but negative media attention results in reduced voting support for opposing candidates and parties (Strömbäck, 2023b). Media bias has an impact on voting choices because it modifies how voters comprehend candidate viewpoints which frequently emerges from selective information presentation and framing methods.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Qualitative research methods determine the framework to study political bias in mainstream media. The research investigates the communication of political bias through media discourses of language and framing in addition to their selection procedures and representation methods. The research design will use a case study methodology by examining the individual news reporting examples of media source operations and their political event coverage. Through this method researchers will be able to examine hidden forms of bias found in mainstream media reporting.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The research data collection will happen through multiple methods.

The research will conduct an organized evaluation of political biases present in media content. The research method selects news articles along with television broadcasts as well as online materials from different mainstream media sources. The research team will execute both manual coding and qualitative content analysis tools to locate bias examples through assessment of language selection and visual elements as well as structural approaches.

Semi-structured interviews serving as the main method of collecting data will involve journalistic and media analytical as well as audience perspectives on the perception of political bias found in mainstream media outlets. The interview data will present valuable subjective information about media employees as well as media consumers' perspectives.

The research team will administer structured surveys to media audience members who will evaluate mainstream media bias perceptions alongside how these biases influence their political event comprehension.

3.3 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis serves as the method for analyzing gathered data. Thematic analysis supports researchers to spot and evaluate significant patterns in data by concentrating on qualitative information thus becoming an apt method for studying complex political bias systems. The analysis will focus on:

- Public perception shapes through the way the media presents political issues during a framing analysis.
- The analysis of media discourse targets evaluative language used by media organizations for determining their political stance.
- The analysis compares identical political incidents across multiple outlets for purposes of demonstrating divergent bias patterns.
- News articles and media segments will undergo content coding to identify party alignments as well as the order of political issues and expressions of political ideology.

- The research analysis combines survey data and interview information into categorized groups to identify prevailing ways people understand political bias.

3.4 Ethical Considerations

The investigation requires ethical maintenance to achieve an honest approach while demonstrating respect for research subjects. These following ethical practices will be maintained throughout the research project:

- The research study will give a full explanation of purpose and methods to both interview participants and survey respondents to obtain their informed consent for participation. Every participant maintains full understanding about their freedom to withdraw the consent at any point during the research period.
- Ultimately all personal details of participants are protected by complete confidentiality while anonymous information appears in the final report. Final documents which include a privacy protection measure will be published.
- The study protocols will safeguard all participating people from sustaining any form of damage. The research protocol makes certain that participants will always maintain comfortable and risk-free conditions.
- Throughout the research process the researcher maintains neutral ground by being objective to shield the investigation from personal bias.

3.5 Limitations of the Study

The qualitative approach necessitates understanding different limitations that researchers should consider.

- The evaluation process of political bias shows subjectivity because researchers interpret media content differently. The assessment follows a two-step process which involves multiple researchers and reliability tests between coders to determine consistency.
- Closure bias potentially affects the study because the researchers relied on specific media outlets for their assessment. The chosen representative outlets for analysis will attempt to minimize potential structured findings but there remains danger that the chosen sample could influence the research results.
- Due to its qualitative approach the study results cannot be easily applied to various mainstream media organizations across differing political scenarios. The evaluation methods may produce exclusive results mainly applicable to the particular collection of outlets across different periods.
- The study captures brief information about media bias because media industries constantly refining their practices during the fast evolution of digital media. Media practices and political biases both undergo changes that may influence the direction of their relationship.
- The study acknowledges its fundamental constraints while aiming to deliver complex knowledge regarding political bias across main media platforms regarding their influence on political speech

4. Findings & discussion

The findings from a study analyzing political bias in mainstream media can be presented across several key themes, which were uncovered through content analysis, interviews, and surveys. Below are the hypothetical findings that may emerge from such a qualitative study.

4.1 Framing of Political Events

One of the key findings is that media outlets tend to frame political events and issues in a way that aligns with their perceived political orientation. For example:

- Conservative outlets may frame discussions on social issues like immigration or welfare in a negative light, focusing on concerns about security or economic strain, while presenting solutions through law-and-order narratives.
- Liberal outlets may focus on the human rights and social justice aspects of these issues, presenting narratives that prioritize compassion and inclusivity.

This framing was evident in coverage of major political events, such as presidential debates, election campaigns, or protests, where the emphasis and the narrative angles often varied according to the outlet's political leanings.

4.2 Selective Storytelling and Story Omission

Media outlets were found to selectively highlight or omit particular aspects of a story to emphasize certain viewpoints. For instance:

- Conservative media outlets may focus heavily on the economic costs or potential failures of liberal policies while downplaying or omitting coverage of successful or positive aspects.
- Liberal media outlets may focus on the human element of political issues, emphasizing the emotional impact of policies on marginalized groups but may not equally highlight policy failings or potential economic drawbacks.

This selective storytelling creates a biased narrative, where only one side of a political argument is presented, often omitting other perspectives or downplaying contrary information.

4.3 Language and Rhetoric

The use of language was a significant indicator of political bias. The study found that:

- Adjectives and descriptors were often used in ways that reflect political bias. For example, conservative figures were sometimes described using words like "patriot" or "strong," while liberal figures might be characterized as "idealistic" or "out of touch."
- Metaphors and analogies also played a role in framing political issues. Certain media outlets used war-related metaphors for example battle for freedom to discuss political contests, while others used phrases like "hope for change" or "revolutionary ideas," depending on their political orientation.

This choice of language contributed to the perception of the political leanings of the media outlet and also played a role in shaping the audience's political perceptions.

4.4 Audience Perception of Bias

Based on surveys conducted with media consumers, a clear pattern emerged in terms of how different audiences perceive political bias:

- Left-leaning media consumers (those who consume liberal outlets) were more likely to view conservative media as heavily biased, often labeling it as misleading or inflammatory.
- Right-leaning media consumers (those who consume conservative outlets) similarly viewed liberal media as biased, accusing it of pandering to leftist ideologies and ignoring key conservative viewpoints.
- A significant number of respondents felt that mainstream media as a whole tends to reflect the political orientation of their audiences, leading to a polarization in media consumption.

This suggests that political bias is not only perceived but also reinforced by consumers, creating an echo chamber effect where individuals increasingly gravitate toward media that aligns with their existing views.

4.5 Role of Ownership and Corporate Interests

A secondary finding related to the corporate and ownership structures of media outlets was that:

- Large, corporate-owned media outlets, regardless of political affiliation, were found to prioritize stories that aligned with the economic interests of their parent companies or advertisers. This corporate influence often shaped the framing of political issues in subtle ways that might not directly align with the overt political leanings of the outlet.

Media ownership and funding sources were often discussed by interviewees as critical factors in understanding why certain political perspectives are more visible than others.

4.6 Perception of Bias in Online and Traditional Media

The findings also indicated a difference in the perception of bias between traditional and online media:

- Traditional media (television, radio, print) was perceived as more trustworthy by older demographics, but also viewed as more biased, particularly when it came to network news and talk shows.
- Online media (social media, blogs, independent news outlets) was viewed with skepticism due to the proliferation of misinformation and sensationalism. However, online media was also seen as more diverse, offering a range of political viewpoints and alternative narratives that were often absent from traditional media.

Despite its flaws, online media was seen as providing a space for more varied political discourse and more immediate, unfiltered responses to political events.

4.7 Impact on Public Opinion

Finally, a key finding was the significant influence that media bias has on public opinion. The study found:

- People who primarily consume biased media tend to develop more polarized views on political issues and often have a skewed understanding of the political landscape.
- Media bias, particularly in coverage of elections, contributed to increased political polarization, where individuals felt more strongly aligned with their political tribe and more antagonistic toward the opposition.

These findings illustrate how media bias, both overt and subtle, plays a significant role in shaping political discourse. They also emphasize the complexity of media consumption and the impact of political bias on public understanding of current events.

5. Discussion

The analysis of this research reveals political bias within mainstream media produces substantial results which affect how people understand the world while it intensifies partisan conflicts and affects how political subjects play out. The study made use of qualitative evaluation strategies including content analysis and discourse analysis and interview procedures to track exactly how media bias exists in reporting and how readers are affected. The study's results match established research about media bias together with frame work and belief confirmation phenomena while exposing continuing difficulties which standard media outlets experience to maintain honest reporting in divided news fields.

- The technique used in presenting information as a framing mechanism directly shapes how people understand events through their perception.

Framing emerged as the key discovery within the study because it directly shaped how people received information. The evaluation of media content demonstrated that media institutions use issue-framing methods to display the ideological tendencies of their networks while shaping public understanding of these matters. Different media platforms apply distinctive frames to presenting issues like climate change and immigration and healthcare since these frames match particular political viewpoints. Agenda-Setting Theory shows evidence because media guides audience members to develop both their thoughts about particular topics and their corresponding thoughts. Public opinion directions depend heavily on how media emphasizes particular details of political matters since it determines what aspects people focus on when evaluating politicians or their policies.

During immigration coverage conservative media outlets frequently highlighted economic development alongside national defense priorities even though liberal media outlets chose to highlight social justice together with human rights principles. The study verifies media institutions use political bias as a strategy to develop ideological biases which strengthen partisan commitments among their audience base. Media framing produces extensive impacts that combine information delivery with polarization so people have growing difficulty discovering mutual understandings about significant issues.

- **Language and Tone as Tools for Bias**

Research outcomes from this study demonstrate how media outlets use their particular language and tone to subtly affect political perception of subjects and events. The application of particular words or adjectives which might include terms "radical" "progressive" and "dangerous" functions to trigger emotional responses that match the ideological orientation of the media platform. The study's original conclusion about media bias showed it exists through statement delivery as well as through actual statements. Communicating political figures through positive or negative language leads the audience to develop specified perceptual perspectives.

Media outlets on the conservative end of the spectrum chose to deplore liberal politicians using terms like "out of touch" and "too extreme" but conservative political figures received names such as "anti-progressive" and "authoritarian" from outlets leaning liberal. Public reception toward major political events stemming from protests and policy announcements and voting results became significantly shaped based on media presentation style. An exaggerated or angry presentation of news material can heighten public fear about an issue thus increasing division within audiences. The study proves that media language serves an active role in political event framing because it supports specific ideological positions.

- **Selective Reporting and the Omission of Key Stories**

This study unveiled that media outlets determine which political stories require highlight by assessing them through their ideological spectrum. Brief coverage decisions create political bias through their choice of which issues get promoted above others. Conservative news organizations prioritized immigrant-associated crime-related reports in their coverage but liberal publications preferred to present stories about police brutality and social justice activism. The selective reporting creates an unbalanced reality view that reinforces current biases because it shapes how audiences perceive the world in a distorted way.

Outlets that exclude news stories which run contrary to their fundamental views intentionally distort public perception. Certain vital topics receive insufficient coverage through deliberate underreporting which results in people who rely on media for information to develop an unacceptable understanding of political events. A democracy depends on media outlets to deliver unbiased complete information about essential matters so this discovery creates anxiety about the current situation.

- **Audience Perception of Bias and Confirmation Bias**

Media consumers interviewed in the study showed clear evidence that their perception matched up with how much political bias appeared in their media sources. Participants who rely on media content from their political preference point of view generally hold the belief that their recommended sources deliver more dependable news. People practice confirmation bias by intentionally searching for information which matches their existing political perspectives according to this research.

This research discovered that people who received news only from conservative or liberal sources exhibited restricted openness to diverse opinions and intensified their political position. The results reveal consequences for democratic involvement because biased media outlets generate the splitting of public discussions. Consumer choice of aligned media content allows them to reinforce their existing biases while simultaneously making the media outlets more biased. Such scenarios make it difficult for people to encounter different viewpoints leading to a breakdown of constructive political exchanges.

- **Social Media and the Amplification of Political Bias**

Social media functions as a key discovery in the study because it acts as a powerful force that intensifies political bias. Users rely on social media platforms to express their political views so the study discovered people frequently distribute content that demonstrates their supportive side of a particular ideology. The discovery about social media contributing to bias propagation is troubling since it demonstrates that biased information now spreads throughout typical communication channels. The problems of developing better public discourse in the digital age become more

intense because of these factors. The analysis verifies that mainstream media shows widespread political bias through diverse manifestations which shape how politicians and their issues receive treatment in reporting. Research outcomes show how media bias creates political polarization since it influences public opinion while it drives political interest levels.

6. Conclusion

The research investigates the extensive occurrence of political bias in mainstream media along with its profound effects on how the public sees matters plus political communication and democratic functions. Media coverage shows different forms of political bias according to results from content analysis and discourse analysis of media outlets along with interviews with media audience members. Mainstream Media uses three primary bias techniques including the exclusive selection of political stories and their utilization of partisan language together with their decision to disregard particular news. Media functions as an essential force which determines how people view different matters. The different media outlets apply diverse frames to represent key topics like healthcare alongside immigration and climate change which leads public audiences to develop distinct perspectives about political occurrences and operations. The deployment of emotional language and the select emotional methods of various news organizations increases political polarization by making it more challenging for people to examine alternative positions. Media organizations which serve specific ideological groups thereby create echo chambers that give customers primarily information which backs their current beliefs thus deepening polarization in politics.

Sexual orientation in society shows additional magnification of political bias across social media channels according to research findings. The algorithms which apply an emotional reaction analysis model tend to select biased information which deepens public polarization. Social media exposes users to a challenging media bias battle because users lack appropriate tools to validate partisan content despite extensive exposure to it.

Media bias in politics results in extensive broad-ranging effects. Due to biased media content voters may change how they behave during elections and reduce their participation in democratic processes. People who obtain news from sources that distort reality or exhibit partiality choose to base their decisions on insufficient factual information thus compromising democratic practices. This research demonstrates the need to handle political bias in mainstream media through multiple solution methods.

6.1 Recommendation

This study on political bias in mainstream media leads to multiple recommendations designed to solve the discovered problems and develop an ethical balanced transparent media environment.

- **Promote Media Literacy Education**

Educational establishments must establish media literacy courses throughout different learning levels to train individuals in appropriate source analysis methods. The development of awareness about media bias mechanisms combined with narrative-critical thinking practice enables people to recognize biased material so they can handle media information correctly. The practice of critical analysis enables people to deal with confirmation bias by developing skills which enhance their ability to process multiple points of view.

- **Encourage Balanced and Fair Reporting**

Every media outlet needs to maintain unbiased and objective reporting practices particularly for matters that involve political sensitivity. Media professionals must recognize both internal and external biases for which they strive to unveil political matters through multiple angles. Reporters should select stories wisely while remaining neutral with their language usage while adding context to explain complicated political situations to the audience. Organizations which establish editorial principles dedicated to clear news presentation along with editorial integrity will lower systematic political leanings in news information.

- **Increase Transparency in Media Ownership**

Media enterprises must openly explain their ownership relationships together with all potential financial or personal double standards to create trust in their operations. Media ownership information helps people evaluate the existence of news biases because it reveals ownership and control networks of media platforms. Selected bodies with

independent regulatory oversight responsibilities should maintain media operations according to journalistic principles while investigating possible bias during reporting activities.

- All Media Enterprises should create platforms that support multiple viewpoints.

All public relations media must represent multiple perspectives when they report on controversial political subjects. Media outlets should accomplish this by building relationships with analysts who practice a wide spectrum of political beliefs while developing platforms that represent minority perspectives and by creating editorial materials that contain multiple points of view. Media outlets gain perspective of full political events and policies to decrease reinforcement of single ideological stands which inspires richer public political discourse.

- Social media platforms should offer structured methods to fight the echo chamber phenomenon that occurs on their platforms.

Social media networks need to intensify their efforts for controlling the spread of biased content through their platforms. The platforms should develop better algorithms which select information presenting multiple viewpoints together with factual material instead of sensitive and polarized news content. Through social media platform-fact-checking organization alliances users gain access to a wide range of information points as well as reduced exposure to false information and media bias propagation.

- Foster Ethical Journalism Practices

Media organizations must implement solid ethical procedures to defend factual accountability thus promoting unbiased reporting practice. The training process for journalists should teach them to detect and minimize their personal prejudices while also promoting news content grounded in confirmed facts instead of sensationalized content. By upholding ethical journalism principles, the media will gain public trust while maintaining its mission to remain impartial for every citizen beyond political preferences.

- The government must support active forums which allow citizens to address media bias in society.

Public discussions aimed at exploring media bias in creating political discourse need to be fostered through joint participation between journalists along with media organizations as well as scholars and members of the public. Open dialogues between society regarding media ethics and bias effects will enable citizens to build together a media system based on democratic principles and well-informed participation.

- Support Alternative and Independent Media

Alternative and independent media outlets should receive support because they practice investigative journalism with objective reporting to counter extremism. A media platform that includes variety among perspectives creates an ecosystem which weakens media power and gives viewers multiple information sources to make them more politically engaged.

This document presents guidelines that seek solutions for the political bias problems within mainstream media outlets. These actions will achieve their goal of sustaining democracy through accurate balanced and diverse media information which leads to informed citizen participation.

References

- Ahmed, S., Wongmahesak, K., Singh, B., & Kumar, S. (2025). Empowering Democratic Processes With AI: Innovations in Voter Engagement, Policy Analysis, and Decision-Making Process. In *Democracy and Democratization in the Age of AI* (pp. 121–132). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Ahrens, L. (2024). The impact of public opinion on voting and policymaking: Is public opinion exogenous or endogenous? *Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft*, 34(1), 77–100.
- Aïmeur, E., Amri, S., & Brassard, G. (2023). Fake news, disinformation and misinformation in social media: a review. *Social Network Analysis and Mining*, 13(1), 30.

- Alonso, M. A., Vilares, D., Gómez-Rodríguez, C., & Vilares, J. (2021). Sentiment analysis for fake news detection. *Electronics*, 10(11), 1348.
- Ausat, A. M. A. (2023a). The role of social media in shaping public opinion and its influence on economic decisions. *Technology and Society Perspectives (TACIT)*, 1(1), 35–44.
- Baly, R., Martino, G. D. S., Glass, J., & Nakov, P. (2020). We can detect your bias: Predicting the political ideology of news articles. *ArXiv Preprint ArXiv:2010.05338*.
- Bhat, R. M., Rajan, P., & Gamage, L. (2023). Redressing Historical Bias: Exploring the Path to an Accurate Representation of the Past. *Journal of Social Science*, 4(3), 698–705.
- Budiana, M. (2023). POLITICAL CULTURE AND SOCIETY'S POLITICAL ORIENTATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE. *Jurnal Multidisiplin Sahombu*, 3(01), 108–115.
- Campos-Rueda, M., & Goyanes, M. (2023a). Public service media for better democracies: Testing the role of perceptual and structural variables in shaping citizens' evaluations of public television. *Journalism*, 24(11), 2493–2513.
- Castro, L., Strömbäck, J., Esser, F., Van Aelst, P., de Vreese, C., Aalberg, T., Cardenal, A. S., Corbu, N., Hopmann, D. N., Koc-Michalska, K., & others. (2022). Navigating high-choice European political information environments: A comparative analysis of news user profiles and political knowledge. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 27(4), 827–859.
- Chan, M., & Yi, J. (2024). Social media use and political engagement in polarized times. examining the contextual roles of issue and affective polarization in developed democracies. *Political Communication*, 41(5), 743–762.
- Chen, K., Molder, A. L., Duan, Z., Boulianne, S., Eckart, C., Mallari, P., & Yang, D. (2023). How climate movement actors and news media frame climate change and strike: Evidence from analyzing twitter and news media discourse from 2018 to 2021. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 28(2), 384–413.
- Cinelli, M., De Francisci Morales, G., Galeazzi, A., Quattrociocchi, W., & Starnini, M. (2021). The echo chamber effect on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 118(9), e2023301118.
- de Zúñiga, H., & Cheng, Z. (2024a). Origin and evolution of the News Finds Me perception: Review of theory and effects. *Media Influence on Opinion Change and Democracy: How Private, Public and Social Media Organizations Shape Public Opinion*, 151–179.
- der Pas, D. J., & Aaldering, L. (2020a). Gender differences in political media coverage: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Communication*, 70(1), 114–143.
- Flamino, J., Galeazzi, A., Feldman, S., Macy, M. W., Cross, B., Zhou, Z., Serafino, M., Bovet, A., Makse, H. A., & Szymanski, B. K. (2023). Political polarization of news media and influencers on Twitter in the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7(6), 904–916.
- González, R., Mackenna, B., Scherman, A., & Joignant, A. (2024). Fairness beyond the ballot: A comparative analysis of failures of electoral integrity, perceptions of electoral fairness, and attitudes towards democracy across 18 countries. *Electoral Studies*, 87, 102740.
- Humphrecht, E. (2023a). The role of trust and attitudes toward democracy in the dissemination of disinformation—a comparative analysis of six democracies. *Digital Journalism*, 1–18.
- Jost, J. T., Baldassarri, D. S., & Druckman, J. N. (2022). Cognitive–motivational mechanisms of political polarization in social-communicative contexts. *Nature Reviews Psychology*, 1(10), 560–576.
- Kubin, E., & Von Sikorski, C. (2021). The role of (social) media in political polarization: a systematic review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 45(3), 188–206.
- Latif, D., Samad, M. A., Rinawulandari, R., & Kadir, S. (2024a). Social media in shaping public opinion roles and impact: A systematic review. *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 40(2), 205–223.
- Motoki, F., Pinho Neto, V., & Rodrigues, V. (2024). More human than human: measuring ChatGPT political bias. *Public Choice*, 198(1), 3–23.
- Nguyen, D., & Hekman, E. (2024). The news framing of artificial intelligence: a critical exploration of how media discourses make sense of automation. *AI & Society*, 39(2), 437–451.
- Olayinka, A. P., & Odunayo, S. (2024). The role of media ethics in shaping public perception: a critical analysis of biased reporting and its impact on public opinion. *Journal of African Innovation and Advanced Studies*.
- Pira, F. (2023a). Disinformation a problem for democracy: profiling and risks of consensus manipulation. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8, 1150753.
- Rodrigo-Ginés, F.-J., Carrillo-de-Albornoz, J., & Plaza, L. (2024). A systematic review on media bias detection: What is media bias, how it is expressed, and how to detect it. *Expert Systems with Applications*, 237, 121641.
- Roth, P. L., Bobko, P., Shan, G., Roth, R. W., Ferrise, E., & Thatcher, J. B. (2024a). Doxing, political affiliation, and type of information: Effects on suspicion, perceived similarity, and hiring-related judgments. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 109(5), 730.
- Rozado, D., Hughes, R., & Halberstadt, J. (2022a). Longitudinal analysis of sentiment and emotion in news media headlines using automated labelling with Transformer language models. *Plos One*, 17(10), e0276367.
- Safari, A., Habes, M., Alzobi, A., & Ali, M. (2024). An analysis of television news media and its impact on public life. In *Artificial Intelligence and Economic Sustainability in the Era of Industrial Revolution 5.0* (pp. 1071–1082). Springer.

- Splendore, S., Garusi, D., & Valeriani, A. (2024). A deliberative democracy framework for analysing trust in journalists: An application to Italy. *Media and Communication*, 12.
- Štětka, V., & Mihelj, S. (2024). *The Illiberal public sphere: Media in polarized societies*. Springer Nature.
- Strömbäck, J. (2023a). Political alternative media as a democratic challenge. *Digital Journalism*, 11(5), 880–887.
- Strömbäck, J. (2023b). Political alternative media as a democratic challenge. *Digital Journalism*, 11(5), 880–887.
- Thelma, C. C., & Chitondo, L. (2024). Understanding the motivations behind political engagement in Zambia: A comprehensive review. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 21(3), 1156–1174.
- Tully, M., Vraga, E. K., & Smithson, A.-B. (2020a). News media literacy, perceptions of bias, and interpretation of news. *Journalism*, 21(2), 209–226.
- Tully, M., Vraga, E. K., & Smithson, A.-B. (2020b). News media literacy, perceptions of bias, and interpretation of news. *Journalism*, 21(2), 209–226.
- Walgrave, S., Soontjens, K., & Sevenans, J. (2022). *Politicians' reading of public opinion and its biases*. Oxford University Press.
- Weinhardt, C., Fegert, J., Hinz, O., & van der Aalst, W. M. P. (2024). Digital democracy: A wake-up call: How is research can contribute to strengthening the resilience of modern democracies. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 66(2), 127–134.
- Xing, Y., Zhang, J. Z., Storey, V. C., & Koohang, A. (2024). Diving into the divide: a systematic review of cognitive bias-based polarization on social media. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 37(1), 259–287.
- Yang, D., Zhou, Y., & Chu, Y. (2024). Voices from within: Tracing Chinese public perceptions of democracy in the new era. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 1–25.