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## Unboxing the Ballot Box: A Critical Discourse Analysis of International Media Perspectives on Pakistan's 2024 General Elections

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### Abstract

*This research looked at the impact of global agendas and alliances on worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections and how it influenced perceptions of the event, with an emphasis on possible components that were ignored. This research looked at selected headlines from news outlets throughout the world that covered the election. Used a qualitative content analysis method. The examination of media narratives, power relations, and ideological effects was driven by Fairclough's (1989, 2003) three-dimensional model (text, discourse practice, and social practice) and Gramsci's (1971) Hegemony Theory. Data was collected from a wide range of worldwide news sites, including Al Jazeera, The Guardian, Bloomberg, The New York Times, The Independent, Sky News, Time Magazine, France 24, India Today, CNBC, Financial Times, CBC News, Voice of America, Hindustan Times, and BBC News, each of which represents a different area and political ideology. The headlines were coded manually in order to find commonalities, framing decisions, and any elements that were neglected. Uncertainty, instability, and possible anomalies were usually front and center in the news. The narratives represent global interests and ideological stances via their different agendas and alliances. The investigation uncovered previously unnoticed details, such as varied viewpoints, potential explanations beyond initial assumptions, and the effect on certain socioeconomic groups in Pakistan. The way the international media covers complicated events, such as elections, has an impact on many people's perceptions of them. All eyes on the elected administration are drawn to this, casting doubt on its legitimacy. The results show that media stories have the power to either support existing views or challenge them. Furthermore, the investigation reveals the possible minimization of the agency of the Pakistani people and the exclusion of key players. In addition to shedding light on the role of varied viewpoints and critical analysis in shaping public views of complicated events, this research calls for more inclusive and nuanced media practices as a means to promote responsible journalism. This area needs more in-depth analysis of the media environment in Pakistan and interviews with local media and voices, as it only uses small extracts.*

**Keywords:** International Media Coverage, Media Narratives, Diverse Perspectives, Fairclough's Model, Hegemony Theory, Instability, Elections, Pakistan, Content Analysis, Power, Ideology.

### Introduction

The media and political systems of a nation are inseparable (McCombs et al., 1981). There is a critical need for media outlets to educate the public and bring attention to crucial topics. Its impact on public opinion is equally substantial. Research has shown that the media has an impact on

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people's political views and, more specifically, their voting habits. (Dalton et al., 1998; Bartels, 1993). The newspaper, as a component of the mass media, is crucial in shaping the political standards and ideals of every nation. Political fairness, legislation, and electoral values are all examples of possible norms in this context. The newspaper serves as a prominent medium through which political elites may promote and advance their political election campaigns or agendas to the general public. According to Reese (2001), news framing is the process of using words or images to generate patterns or visuals that shape how the audience perceives the information. The process of news framing involves complicated decision-making, where editors and reporters assess the relevance of a news item depending on variables such as available space, the substance of the news, or other circumstances (Blood & Holland, 2004). In Wogu's (2008) account, he explains that the audience not only acquires knowledge about public concerns via the media, but also learns the level of significance to assign to a particular issue or subject based on the focus placed on it by the mass media. According to McCombs (2005), there is a connection between agenda-setting and the public agenda, particularly during election periods.

The 2024 Pakistani general elections received a lot of international coverage. Dramatic turns and tight results characterized these elections. Despite the increase of headlines and analysis, concerns have arisen that some events, accusations, and political figures may be reduced (Dawn.com, 2024). International attention was drawn to Pakistan's 2024 general elections, which were highly fought and surrounded by irregularities. In addition to the stunning vote results, global news coverage helped explain what was occurring in Pakistan. However, the press's propensity to ignore certain allegations, events, and political leaders has raised fresh concerns. It's important to analyze this apparent absence since it may alter the world's image of Pakistan's democracy. The 2024 elections were tumultuous. The opposition coalition offered a viable alternative to the present administration's economic incompetence and corruption. International media emphasized poverty, political fragmentation, and security (Al Jazeera, 2024).

However, these accounts were presented with bias and opposing agendas, prioritizing some information over others. On Election Day, parties claimed fraud, violence, and anomalies. International media outlets reported the events, although detail and breadth varied by source. Delays, arguments, and an early undecided winner fueled the discontent with the counting process. Disputed results raised questions about the media's portrayal of the claims and the electoral process's integrity. Minimizing particular political leaders' roles and narratives may have altered global opinions of the election's legitimacy and fairness. Following this apparent devaluation, questions arise regarding how global politics and ideology shape media narratives.

There are a number of reasons why the world media's coverage of the 2024 Pakistani Elections should be carefully watched for signs of omission of important facts, personalities, and stories. To begin with, in order to have a more realistic and sophisticated view of the elections, it is essential to comprehend the elements that lead to such amplification and the possible outcomes of it. Secondly, understanding the role of global politics and ideological influences in molding media narratives may provide insight on power dynamics that may be at play and how they affect how Pakistan's democracy is seen internationally. These questions have the ability to alter global views as well as the validity of the democratic process itself. Ultimately, a critical analysis may help promote a better-informed and actively participated public conversation on how foreign media should cover complicated and contentious elections.

By examining the possibility of underreporting in foreign media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections, this research hopes to fill a current information vacuum. The study aims to promote a more informed and critical engagement with international media discourses surrounding democratic

processes by deconstructing the narratives presented and investigating the underlying factors. It seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the power dynamics shaping global perceptions. Discourse helps people, communities, and nations make sense of social and physical reality. This unified collection of ideas and conceptions frames certain themes in different ways, altering the range of allowed reactions to them. Media discourse shapes public opinion, social structures, and collective understandings. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that the media's impact goes beyond depiction, shaping social realities and spreading narratives.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides a potent perspective for scrutinizing these problems. According to Fairclough (2003), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) explores the intricate connection between text, discourse practices, and the sociocultural environment. It uncovers how language and representation are used to shape power dynamics and impact comprehension. Although earlier research has examined media bias and framing in other situations (e.g., Van Dijk, 1988), there is currently no critical study that particularly investigates the possibility of downplaying in foreign media reporting on the 2024 Pakistani elections.

## **Problem Statement**

Due to political turmoil, fraud claims, and a disputed result, worldwide media followed the 2024 Pakistani general elections. Coverage has prompted questions about whether certain events, allegations, or political figures were omitted. Misrepresenting crucial events, persons, or the process may mislead the elections. This might affect worldwide views of Pakistan's democracy. Media minimization of voter disenfranchisement and anomalies encourages election justice doubts. It may create political instability and democratic distrust. Global politics and dominant ideologies may influence media coverage, stifling disadvantaged voices and promoting agendas. The worst-case scenario: power inequalities and global views of Pakistan deteriorate. Avoiding big events like the Pakistani elections hampers informed conversation. Thinking for oneself and holding significant people responsible is harder for most people. This must be solved since global media may underreport the 2024 Pakistani elections. Global understanding of elections improves with more data and complexity. Keeping voting democratic. Promoting Pakistan's balanced international media coverage. Informing electoral discussions. This study evaluates downplay to educate and keep global media narratives accountable.

## **Significance of the Study**

This critical analysis of foreign media coverage of the Pakistani elections in 2024 is important for a number of reasons. If different elections are underreported by worldwide media, this research will find out. Media narratives are generated by multiple elements; a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective may shed light on this. Here, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used to examine a case study that spans the globe. The findings have the potential to improve CDA techniques for analyzing intricate political conversation. It is recommended that media narratives, particularly those with contentious conclusions and possible biases, be carefully examined, according to this research. This study may be able to present the 2024 Pakistani elections more accurately and inclusively by critically evaluating downplay and adding minority viewpoints and ideas ignored by mainstream media. People may have more faith in democracies and elections if anomalies and distance are reduced. This research has the potential to bring attention to marginalized groups in Pakistan and beyond by showing how ideologies and politics on a global scale impact media stories. Media accountability and public participation

might be bolstered by this study's emphasis on minimizing possible outcomes. Findings from this study could provide light on future election coverage by national and international media outlets, with the goal of fostering more accountable and balanced reporting. There has to be more varied and representative narratives in the media on a global scale, and this study might add to the conversations about media bias and power dynamics. This work has the potential to deepen our academic knowledge, shed light on the Pakistani elections of 2024 from a different angle, raise questions about power relations, and spark a public discussion about the role of foreign media narratives in democratic processes that is both informed and critical.

## Research Questions

- 1) What role do global political agendas and alliances play in shaping the narratives presented in international media coverage of the elections?
- 2) Which specific instances of downplay can be identified in international media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections, in terms of events, allegations, or political actors?
- 3) How does international media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani general elections downplay certain events, actors, or narratives affected by global politics and ideologies, and how does this affect global perceptions and electoral legitimacy?

## Literature Review

This review critically examines this literature to identify media downplay's many facets and its effects on society and politics. According to Dawn.com (2024), worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani general elections may minimize certain events, players, and storylines, raising issues about global politics and ideology. While Critical Discourse examination (CDA) has been used to study media representation (Fairclough, 2003), a detailed examination of foreign media coverage of Pakistan's elections is absent. CDA is used to critically assess downplay in worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections, examining how global political goals and dominant ideologies shape these narratives.

Academic studies of Pakistan in worldwide media reveal media representation's complex relationship with global politics and ideology. Akbar (2011) and Hussain (2013) critically evaluate media coverage of Pakistani events and elections, revealing foreign media agencies' biases, narratives, and discursive techniques. These studies demonstrate how dominant ideologies and geopolitical interests create Pakistan's worldwide image via global political agendas, ideological biases, and media narratives. By synthesizing these academic sources, this discussion seeks to illuminate how global politics and ideological frameworks shape media representations of Pakistan and how this affects public perceptions and international relations.

The 2024 Pakistani elections may be compared to media downplay in other emerging nations for insights. Shahbaz (2020)'s research of the 2018 Pakistani elections gives a local background, while Kuhn's (2004) study of media coverage during the Middle Eastern wars provides larger views on international power dynamics impacting representation. Entman (2004)'s framing in foreign policy shows how global goals impact media narratives about developing country elections.

Understanding the 2024 Pakistani elections requires Laclau and Mouffe (1985)'s Hegemony Theory. Story building and downplay may be understood by studying how multinational alliances and economic interests shape media outlets in complicated networks. Discourse analysis reveals how current social debates negotiate power and solidarity, according to Wodak (2009).

This CDA and Hegemony Theory study evaluates global media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections for downplay. Deconstructing these narratives and uncovering power dynamics may challenge prevailing depictions and encourage a more informed and critical public discussion on foreign media's coverage of complex political events. Roberts (2010) says Gramsci's ideas are still useful for comprehending complicated social and political developments.

The 2024 Pakistani elections, typified by political tension, anomalies, and disputed results, received worldwide media interest. Though substantial media chronicled the events, questions about downplaying key components have emerged. This research review uses a variety of theoretical theories and case studies to examine how this potential downgrade phenomena affects global views and election legitimacy.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model**

Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) paradigm provides a solid framework for examining worldwide media reporting of the 2024 Pakistani elections. The model's focus on language, power, and social context makes it ideal for studying how worldwide political agendas and ideologies affect media coverage.

#### **Fairclough's 3-D CDA Approach**

**Text.** Concentrates on discourse language, including word choice, framing, metaphors, and other aspects.

**Discursive Practice.** Media biases, source selection, and editing choices affect discourse formation and circulation.

**Social Practice.** Examines authority, ideology, and dominant discourses in the discourse's social and historical context.

This research examines Fairclough's Textual, Discourse Practice, and Social Practice aspects to find downplay in media texts. It may identify bias and omission via framing, language, and visuals. Exploring production and consuming processes reveals media narratives' political ties and dissemination methods. The research is enhanced by understanding global power dynamics and prevailing ideologies, which highlight the factors that shape media coverage of Pakistan's elections. The study uses a comprehensive framework to explain media downplay and its effects on global views and political legitimacy. This research might provide light on the complicated relationship between global politics, media discourse, and ideology in 2024 Pakistani election coverage by utilizing Fairclough's model.

### **Hegemony Theory**

This study uses Gramsci's (1971) ideas to understand media narratives and ideological impacts on Pakistan's electoral scene. The study's interdisciplinary approach, aimed at readers interested in Marxism, critical theory, postcolonialism, and globalization, resonates with 20th-century intellectual currents, such as Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michel Foucault, and Noam Chomsky's strong engagement with language and discourse. The study examines worldwide media coverage and ideological hegemony and shows the importance of language analysis in understanding modern socio-political issues. The Gramsci framework, especially hegemony, may illuminate how dominant groups retain power via culture and ideology. Think about how

democracy and neoliberalism affect media narratives. This enhances your downplay ideology study. Investigate how these narratives obtain credibility while marginalizing other viewpoints. Consider how media reinforces and challenges hegemony. This improves resistance and alternative narrative analysis.

This research uses Antonio Gramsci to explain power, ideology, and language in political and cultural debate. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Hegemony Theory help the research negotiate discourse's intricacies, drawing on Gramsci's focus on language as a site of political struggle and hegemonic contestation. Using CDA, researchers can uncover hidden meanings and power dynamics in language, while Hegemony Theory helps them understand how discourse reinforces or challenges ideologies to maintain or challenge power structures. Using these methods, the research seeks to comprehend the complicated relationship between speech, power, and ideology in Pakistan's 2024 General Elections and improve social and political understanding.

Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis paradigm underpins this study. This approach offers complete discourse analysis spanning text, discourse practice, and social practice. We may uncover media narrative power dynamics by carefully analyzing individual media texts (articles, editorials, broadcasts) in the context of their production processes and Gramsci's (1971) Hegemony Theory's larger societal context. Downplay is identified, but the methods and ideas behind it are examined.

Across settings, media downplay literature shows a complicated interaction of incentives and ideologies. In international coverage, van Dijk (1988) and Said (1978) have examined how media outlets may minimize specific events or storylines. These studies illuminate political objectives, ideological prejudices, economic interests, and cultural views that shape media depictions. Downplay during elections or politically tense situations may reveal how information transmission is strategically used to mould public opinion and preserve hegemonic power systems.

## Previous Studies

Butt and Ashraf's (2023) research, "Patterns of Press Partisanship: A Framing Study of Pre and Post Polls of 2018 In Pakistan," looks at the editorial bias that existed in Pakistani newspapers during the 2018 election. Applying framing theory, this study examines the coverage of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) (PML(N)) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in both the Urdu and English media before and after the 2013 election. To better understand how the press depicts parties and how they may influence voters, it is helpful to examine conflict, attribution of blame, and economic repercussions frames. By combining text analysis with a coding method, we may systematically evaluate press bias across various publications and periods. The research provides valuable insights into how framing influences how the public perceives political campaigns and elections.

Gardezi and Ali (2023) used quantitative content analysis to examine the coverage of the US presidential election in significant Pakistani and Indian elite media. Researchers in both nations discovered that major news channels reported the election in different ways. Agenda shaping and media conformity theories are theoretically related to this study. It came to light during the presidential campaign that the two countries' newspapers used a foreign policy and national interest oriented approach to covering the contests. The leadership and government of India backed Donald Trump, whereas those in Pakistan backed Hillary Clinton. Additionally, the results showed that, in contrast to the Daily Dawn, the Daily Hindustan Times favored Republican nominee Donald Trump in their coverage of the 2016 election. Everything that has been discussed so far suggests that the research provides substantial evidence in favor of the media conformity theory.



World media covered the 2018 Bangladesh legislative election, an important political event in South Asia investigated by Hasan (2020). English and Indian media presented the election differently. After the constitution eliminated parliamentary elections under the non-partisan caretaker government, it was the first election in Bangladesh to have all opposition parties under party governance. Three countries' media framing of the election is analyzed below. This research examined election coverage in Bangladesh, India, and the UK using quantitative and systematic methodologies. The election was largely reported by British and Bangladeshi media as intimidation, confrontation, and conspiracy. India's media covered gaming and economic tales instead of dangers and disputes. According to the results, media coverage of international elections focuses on policy. The framing process and journalists' nationality are linked.

Ahmad et al. (2019) conducted an exploratory research on the framing strategies employed by Pakistani media during the 2018 general elections. The study aimed to determine the impact of these approaches on the Pakistani people. Examining reporting trends and variations in print media coverage, as well as the connection between newspaper framing and the election, was the goal of the research. The methodology of the research included analyzing 400 reports from six daily newspapers using critical discourse analysis and direct content analysis. The findings revealed that compared to English media, Urdu newspapers covered a greater number of stories and had a more favorable coverage of political campaigns. This research adds to the existing body of work on framing theory by investigating the power of presentation and description to influence audience beliefs and worldviews. As a whole, the research shows how important it is to examine media framing in political campaigns and how the media affects public opinion during elections.

Research by Nizamani et al. (2019), "Pakistan's General Elections of 2018: Representation of Economic Issues and Orientation of Political News Coverage in The Elite Newspapers of Pakistan," looks at how economic issues were covered in the 2018 elections and how media bias could have affected that coverage. One way to compare and contrast the coverage of economic news in various publications is via the use of content analysis. The research emphasizes that economic considerations play a key influence in the elections of Pakistan. This work adds to our knowledge of how the media influences public discussions on economic policy by dissecting the framing of these topics.

"Correlation between Newspapers' Agenda and Public Agenda on National Issues during General Elections 2013 in Pakistan" is the title of the research by Shah et al. (2016) that delves into the 2013 elections in Pakistan and how the national press set the agenda. Their focus is on how the public's priorities align with those of publications. One way to get a better grasp on the dynamics of agenda-setting is to use public opinion polls in conjunction with content analysis of media coverage. This research dives into how the general population views important topics, going beyond a simple analysis of media coverage.

According to the research by Ahmed and Hussain (2016), "Coverage of Pakistan General Election 2008 in Leading Pakistan English Newspapers: Exploring Agenda Setting and Framing," the prominent English-language newspapers in Pakistan examined the 2008 election coverage. To comprehend the prioritization of problems and the shaping of public views by these media, they investigate agenda-setting and framing theories. This research provides a framework for understanding how the media shape public opinion by drawing on theories of agenda-setting and framing. This study explores the publications' apparent biases and positions by examining editorials.

Said's (1978) critique of Western depiction of non-Western cultures and Chakrabarty's (2002) provincializing Europe underline the significance of critically scrutinizing prevailing viewpoints and creating nuanced understandings, particularly in emerging nations like Pakistan. This research critically investigates possible downplay to assist explain the 2024 Pakistani elections and encourage more responsible and informed interaction with foreign media narratives about democratic processes abroad.

The literature on media downplay lacks extensive studies of the processes, power dynamics, and ideological impacts employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Hegemony Theory. Some research document downplay, but they seldom examine prejudice, language, or visual manipulations, which are essential to understanding the phenomena. Comparisons with other elections are possible, but there is little examination of how downplay is used in comparable circumstances, such as other underdeveloped nations, which might provide more information. While studies may examine global impacts, particular alliances, economic interests, and their effects on media editorial choices require more study. The internal Pakistani political environment, past media-state interactions, and 2024 election challenges might further improve comprehension of downplay and its repercussions. Closing these gaps in the studies will help us understand media downplay and its socio-political effects.

This research fills a vacuum by exploring the complex dynamics of international media coverage of the Pakistani elections, focusing on downplaying. The purpose is to carefully identify and evaluate these events to show how global political agendas and alliances affect election narratives. The study also explores how ideologies affect information selection and presentation to expose hidden biases and opinions. This study analyzes media discourse to propose different perspectives of the Pakistani elections. By doing so, it hopes to contribute to a more informed and fair discussion on this crucial election based on a deep knowledge. The work critically analyzes international media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections to see how downplay affects global knowledge and political processes.

## **Methodology**

This research examines worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections, focusing on downplaying various topics or opinions. The qualitative study will analyze worldwide news headlines. It will include headlines from Al Jazeera, The Guardian, Bloomberg, The New York Times, The Independent, Sky News, Time Magazine, France 24, India Today, CNBC, Financial Times, CBC News, Voice of America, Hindustan Times, and BBC News from different geographical and ideological views. Headlines on election outcomes and anomalies will be prioritized. Use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to discover themes, emotional tone, and source selection. Despite restrictions such outlet fluctuations and interpretation subjectivity, the research will use qualitative data analysis tools to code and analyze. This research examines worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections using a rigorous CDA-based technique to identify downplay and its effects.

## **Data Analysis**

Discourse and framing shape public comprehension, as seen by the varied media narratives of the 2024 Pakistani elections. We may critically analyze these narratives using Fairclough's CDA lens to determine how perspectives are produced and which voices are ignored. Media narratives are shaped by ideology, audience, and geopolitical interests. CDA helps us recognize biases and downplayed perspectives, promoting critical and inclusive understanding of



complicated events. By recognizing created narratives, we may actively seek various views and critically examine material we absorb. The news coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections is examined in this table using three frameworks: Fairclough's Textual Analysis, Social Practice, and Discursive Practice. Depending on the study questions, it draws attention to possible cases of minimizing some parts of the election. Meaning is shaped by language choices and framing, according to this concept. By highlighting key terms and phrases, it reveals how various news outlets cover the election. Power relations impact discourse, which this framework investigates. It sheds light on the ways in which the media portrayal of specific actors (like the military) may either reinforce or undermine their power. The linguistic strategies employed by social actors are the central emphasis of this paradigm. This allows us to examine the potential ways in which news outlets are attempting to sway their audience's opinions on the election.

**Table 1:** Nalyzing Media Coverage through Fairclough's Model.

News Source	Textual Analysis (Fairclough)	Discursive Practice	Social Practice	Potential Downplaying
The Guardian	"Victory for democracy" frames Pakistan's move away from military rule.	Positive portrayal of anti-military outcome.	Focuses on democratic ideals, potentially aligning with Western interests.	Potential downplaying of complexities or other actors' roles.
Bloomberg	Focuses on Imran Khan's success despite challenges.	May downplay the influence of external factors on the election.	Potentially reinforces a narrative of a strong individual overcoming obstacles.	Downplaying potential factors behind Khan's win.
The New York Times	"Chaos" emphasizes instability after opposition win.	Creates a sense of uncertainty about Pakistan's future.	May reflect concerns about regional stability or potential for conflict.	Downplays potential for peaceful transition and Khan's platform.
The Independent	Highlights internet blackout and slow count, questioning credibility.	Raises concerns about fairness of the election process.	May suggest anxieties about democratic legitimacy in Pakistan.	Downplaying transparency efforts or potential for fair results.
Sky News	"Political limbo" emphasizes uncertainty.	Downplays the significance of the election outcome.	May suggest a power struggle between different factions.	Downplaying potential for smooth power transition.
Time Magazine	"Military used every trick" positions the military as the antagonist.	Frames the election as a contest against military influence.	Challenges potential hegemony of the military in Pakistan.	Downplaying other factors that might have contributed to Khan's win.
France 24	"Generals' elections" emphasizes military's involvement.	Downplays the civilian aspect of the election.	Raises questions about the role of the military in Pakistani democracy.	Downplaying role of other political actors or Khan's policies.
India Today	"Jailed Imran Khan steals the show" focuses on individual.	Downplays the role of political parties and broader movements.	May reinforce personality-driven politics over institutional structures.	Downplaying role of Khan's party or potential for future governance.
CNBC	Focuses on competing claims of victory and vote-rigging.	Creates a sense of confusion and potential conflict.	Highlights potential for instability and challenges to legitimacy.	Downplaying efforts to address allegations or ensure transparency.
Financial Times	"Shock victory" emphasizes unexpected outcome.	Downplays pre-election predictions or downplays the strength of Khan's party.	May suggest a disconnect between media expectations and reality.	Downplaying reasons behind Khan's support or potential for policy changes.
CBC News	"Defied the odds" emphasizes Khan's party's success.	Positive portrayal of Khan's party's performance.	May align with narratives of overcoming adversity.	Downplaying potential role of external factors or other parties.
Voice of America	"Results delayed" emphasizes logistical issues.	Downplays the significance of the election outcome for the time being.	May suggest broader concerns about the efficiency of Pakistani institutions.	Downplaying efforts to ensure accurate results or potential impact on legitimacy.
Hindustan Times	"Police fire tear gas" focuses on violence by Khan supporters.	May downplay the legitimacy of Khan's movement or paint his supporters negatively.	May reflect anxieties about potential unrest in Pakistan.	Downplaying peaceful aspects of the elections or reasons behind
BBC News	Polls close in vote marred by mobile shutdown" - Raises concerns about transparency and potential manipulation. Highlights mobile data suspension during voting. No clear winner yet"	Raises concerns about potential for manipulation or voter disenfranchisement.	Questions the fairness and transparency of the election process.	Downplays the potential of other factors impacting transparency and the agency of Pakistani authorities in ensuring a fair election.
Al Jazeera	"Coalition gov't will be weak" implies instability. - "Analyst: Army 'big loser'" positions the military as negatively impacted. Focuses on uncertainty, coalition talks, and allegations.	Avoids clear conclusions, highlighting ongoing developments.	Suggests a complex political landscape with various competing interests.	Downplays potential agency of civilian actors in forming a stable government

The media's influence on public understanding of the election and its tendency to gloss over some details is at the heart of the study topics. It appears that some sources gloss over or ignore other political players, institutions, or outside forces that may have had an impact on the result in favor of focusing on certain individuals or parties (in this case, Khan's party). (CBC News, Bloomberg, and India Today). Without addressing concerns about openness or charges of vote-rigging, several publications just cite the results or Khan's victory. (Financial Times, CNBC, and The Guardian). Some publications emphasize the role of the military (France 24), while others minimize their possible ongoing impact even after Khan's victory (The Times).

By concentrating on disorder and unpredictability, media outlets like Sky News and The New York Times diminish the likelihood of a peaceful transfer and Khan's capacity to establish a stable administration. (e.g., Al Jazeera).

Aligning with possible Western goals, the Guardian frames the election as a "victory for democracy" (positive representation of anti-military outcome), which may downplay the intricacies of the issue or the actions of other actors. Concerns over regional stability inform the New York Times' coverage of "chaos" (downplays prospects for peaceful transition), which in turn ignores Khan's program and the likelihood of a seamless transition. This research emphasizes the power of media coverage to influence public perception of the election by portraying some features in a more favorable manner. A more sophisticated comprehension of the offered information may be achieved by investigating the framing strategies and language choices.

The analysis shows that certain sources prefer to ignore or minimize the impact of larger political movements, institutions, and outside forces on the election result in favor of focusing on specific individuals or parties, such as Imran Khan or his party. This narrowing of attention to characters risks simplifying the story to one hero triumphing over adversity while ignoring the complicated web of relationships between those factors (CBC News and India Today). Accusations of vote-rigging and concerns about the process's impartiality go unreported since many outlets focus on the outcomes or Khan's triumph. By focusing on certain aspects, we may cast doubt on the veracity of the election and bring up worries about possible manipulation. (Financial Times, CNBC, and The Guardian)

Although some publications do recognize the role of the military (France 24), others minimize their possible ongoing impact even after Khan's victory (Time Magazine). This discrepancy indicates that the military's influence in Pakistani politics has not been adequately evaluated. News outlets like Sky News and The New York Times that focus on the unpredictability of the situation minimize the likelihood of a peaceful transfer and Khan's capacity to establish a stable administration. This may be a reflection of biases against Pakistan's political scene and an unwillingness to consider the possibility of good leadership in the country (Al Jazeera).

The possible biases and agendas are congruent with the focal point on certain tales. Sources like The Guardian that frame the election as a democratic triumph may appeal to Western interests that harbor mistrust of the Pakistani military. But it's easy to lose sight of the complexity of Pakistani politics and the role that ordinary folks play when this happens. Publications like The New York Times that focus on possible instability or turmoil in Pakistan may be reflecting regional security concerns and ignoring chances for constructive development within the country. Media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections does not provide an unbiased account of events. Understanding the information presentation better is possible via critical analysis of the language choices, framing tactics, and any biases. When we

are aware of this, we are better able to critically interact with the news, looking for other points of view and challenging the told stories.

The narratives constructed by worldwide media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections reflect and perhaps challenge existing power systems. This paper explores how these narratives work. Our research confirms what Fairclough (1989) found in his critical discourse analysis framework: media sources influence public perceptions of events via language and framing (see Table 1). It is consistent with Fairclough's (1989) idea of occlusion, when parts are left out of speech, to minimize the ongoing impact of the military. This may benefit the military by reducing opposition to their supremacy. Western fears about the Pakistani military are reflected in media narratives that present the election as a triumph for democracy against the military (e.g., *The Guardian*). This fits well with the idea of intertextuality put forward by Fairclough (1989), according to which one text may influence the construction of another's meaning. Such narratives, however, risk ignoring the complexity of Pakistani politics and the agency of its people, as Ahmad (2012) warns. Roy (2014) calls out the overemphasis on individual leaders in Pakistani political studies, and this tendency is mirrored in the marginalization of political parties and institutions. Vocabulary and framing choices, according to Fairclough (1989), downplay the significance of these players. Hassan claimed that media coverage of regional stability issues may fail to give Pakistanis a voice (2016). This is in line with Fairclough's (1989) idea of power, according to which powerful entities may silence dissenting opinions (e.g., the Western media).

Analyzing the media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections through the prism of Gramsci's theory of hegemony provides a potent perspective. Demonstrating the importance of good leadership via the example of individuals like Imran Khan might help move the conversation forward. This might be done to benefit powerful groups who are in favor of the status quo by diminishing the importance of institutions and collective action. These tales may show some sincere interest in democracy, but they might also appease Western interests who have a negative impression of the Pakistani military. This has the effect of strengthening one ideological position in Pakistan while simultaneously eroding support for others. Weakening of threats to the military's dominance is the omission of their possible continuous impact notwithstanding Khan's victory. This story line is in line with what the military wants, which might be to keep their grip on Pakistani politics.

The legitimacy of the current power system is called into question when concerns are raised about vote-rigging and the fairness of the process. Citizens will be able to demand accountability and democratic improvements may be possible as a result of this. Although this coverage may have some bias, it also poses a threat to the power of the Pakistani elite, who stand to gain from keeping things as they are. Bringing attention to the state of affairs compels us to discuss the need of reform and a more equitable political framework. Refraining from highlighting these figures undermines stories that question the authority of strong people or organizations. In order to paint a complex picture of Pakistani politics, it is essential to understand the function of various factions. The Pakistani people's agency and capacity to design their own future may be downplayed by media outlets focusing on regional stability. This perpetuates an arrogant storyline while ignoring the opinions of ordinary Pakistanis.

Power and ideology in Pakistan are always being contested, and this is reflected in the media coverage. Accounts that support Khan pose a threat to the power structure inside the military. Many are beginning to doubt the existing system's efficacy due to worries over its legality and durability. By using Gramsci's paradigm, we may see how speech and language are used to mold

perspectives and uphold or subvert power systems. Recognize possible prejudices in news reports. The marginalization of certain narratives should be acknowledged. Gain an appreciation for the linguistic, ideological, and power dynamics at work in Pakistani politics. According to Hegemony Theory, the media's portrayal of the 2024 Pakistani elections goes beyond basic factual reporting. At this battleground, powerful factions use narratives to try to keep their grip on power, while marginalized groups fight for other futures for Pakistan.

This research uses Gramsci's (1971) Hegemony Theory as a prism through which to analyze the media's portrayal of the Pakistani elections of 2024. The results show how stories in the media may either support or undermine the control of influential people and ideas in a complicated political system. Our findings show that media coverage often favors charismatic leaders (like Khan) (see Table 1), which is similar to what (McCauley & Littler 2009) found when they investigated the media's role in maintaining elite control in developing countries. This may benefit existing power structures by downplaying the significance of larger movements and organizations. Furthermore, this tone is consistent with Ali's (2008) arguments for a more complex view of the military's function in Pakistani politics, which seek to minimize the lasting impact of the military.

The Guardian and similar outlets have contributed to Western fears about the Pakistani military by framing the election as a triumph of democracy against the military. Such narratives, however, risk ignoring the complexity of Pakistani politics and the agency of its people, as Ahmad (2012) warns. Furthermore, we find cases when news reports question established norms. Hameed (2017), who stresses the need of fair elections in bolstering Pakistani democracy, reflects our worries regarding vote-rigging and lack of transparency. Media portrayals of impending unrest may also be seen as an attack on the power of Pakistani elites who stand to gain from business as usual. Talbot (2020) contends that political changes are necessary to solve structural difficulties in Pakistan, and this is in line with his work.

Additionally, the research highlights underrepresented narratives in the media. Roy (2014) notes a broader tendency in Pakistani political studies, where the focus is too often on individual leaders, and this trend is mirrored in the undervaluing of political parties and institutions. According to Hassan (2016), who stresses the need of knowing Pakistan independently, media attention to regional stability issues may also obscure the agency of the Pakistani people. We may see that the media's coverage of the 2024 elections in Pakistan goes beyond conventional impartial reporting by adopting Hegemony Theory. At this battleground, powerful factions use narratives to try to keep their grip on power, while marginalized groups fight for other futures for Pakistan. The intricate relationship between ideology, language, and power in Pakistani politics can only be understood by keeping a critical eye on these processes.

Media coverage in Pakistan shapes narratives that either uphold or question preexisting power systems, as may be seen through the lens of Fairclough's (1989) paradigm. According to Hegemony Theory, stories show how power is contested. Language, framing, and marginalization all play a role in shaping media coverage, and Fairclough's approach sheds light on this. By applying these models to the news reports, we may find examples of possible bias or omission of key details of the election and assess them more thoroughly.

## Discussion

Media outlets throughout the world aren't only reporting the facts when it comes to the 2024 Pakistani elections. Through theoretical frameworks like Hegemony Theory and Fairclough's

Textual Analysis, global political objectives and alliances greatly influence the narratives that are conveyed. Media outlets throughout the world aren't only reporting the facts when it comes to the 2024 Pakistani elections. Through theoretical frameworks like Hegemony Theory and Fairclough's Textual Analysis, global political objectives and alliances greatly influence the narratives that are conveyed. Examples of media sources that may portray the election as a "victory for democracy" include The Guardian and others from nations that have tense ties with Pakistan's military (Table 1). This supports a story that questions the hegemony of the military, which is in line with Western concerns about the military's impact. Ahmad (2012) warns that simplistic accounts risk ignoring the nuanced nature of Pakistani politics and the influence of ordinary people.

The New York Times and Sky News, two media organizations based in nations with significant regional interests, may provide more airtime to stories that emphasize the possibility of instability (Table 1). This minimizes Khan's leadership abilities and the likelihood of a smooth transition. While these nations' interests are best served by concentrating on regional stability, doing so risks ignoring Pakistan's own opportunities for improvement. Even though Khan won, certain media sources (France 24 vs. Time Magazine) minimize the military's ongoing impact (Table 1). Ali (2008) contends for a more complex view of the military's function, and this is in line with his work. But it may help those who gain from the current system and it undermines efforts to contest their domination.

The significance of larger political movements and institutions is diminished when specific individuals, such as Imran Khan, are emphasized (India Today, CBC News, Table 1). This might benefit powerful factions in Pakistan by reinforcing the view that decisive leadership is crucial. Scholarly work on Pakistani politics, however, tends to focus on specific personalities rather than the vital role of political parties (Roy, 2014). The Pakistani people's agency and capacity to design their own future may be downplayed by media outlets focusing on regional stability. This perpetuates an arrogant storyline while ignoring the opinions of ordinary Pakistanis. Hassan (2016) stresses the need of defining Pakistan independently.

The narratives produced in worldwide media coverage are heavily influenced by global political objectives and alliances. Often including selective framing and downplaying of specific parts, these narratives may either strengthen or challenge existing power systems. The media's, power and ideologies' intricate role in molding public view of the Pakistani elections necessitates critical knowledge of these factors.

This research delves at the ways in which specific events, claims, or political figures were minimized in the foreign media's coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections. We may learn about the shaping of narratives and the disclosure of possible biases by analyzing these cases critically using Hegemony Theory and Fairclough's Textual Analysis. A number of media outlets, such as The Guardian, CNBC, and the Financial Times, focus mostly on covering the results or Khan's triumph and fail to address important concerns, such as claims of vote-rigging or worries about the process's impartiality (Table 1). Disregarding concerns about transparency undermines efforts to question the legitimacy of the current power system and may actually help those who are already in power.

Although the military was involved, some publications (like France 24) have downplayed their impact, even after Khan's victory (like Time Magazine). The narratives that oppose the supremacy of the military in Pakistan are undermined and an important player in Pakistani politics is downplayed as a result. Some media portrayals of the military's participation minimize



its complexity. Media outlets that have focused on individuals, such as Imran Khan, have neglected the potential influence of political parties, institutions, and activists on the election result (India Today, CBC News). That strong leadership is necessary is bolstered by this, which may benefit Pakistan's established elites. These other players play an essential but sometimes overlooked role in Pakistani politics, which tends to focus too much on individual leaders.

The media's emphasis on regional stability risks diminishing the power and ambitions of the Pakistani people. By doing so, a condescending narrative is reinforced while the voices of Pakistani residents are marginalized. It is essential to understand Pakistan in its unique context, and to do so without ignoring the viewpoints of its people. Some events, accusations, and political figures in the 2024 Pakistani elections are minimized in the international media's coverage of the elections. Based on Fairclough's textual analysis and Hegemony Theory, we can make sense of this downplaying. A more complex knowledge of the shaping of media narratives and the disclosure of possible biases may be achieved by carefully analyzing these cases.

The 2024 Pakistani elections as reported by international media outlets do not provide an unbiased view of the events. By using Hegemony Theory and Fairclough's Textual Analysis, we can see how global politics and ideologies have a hand in downplaying particular events, characters, and stories. Implications for international opinion and the credibility of the elections might be substantial if this is downplayed. India Today is one of many outlets that focuses on individual politicians rather than larger political movements and institutions, such as Imran Khan. In line with the notion that progress can only be achieved via strong leadership, this might be used to forward the agenda of powerful organizations.

Time Magazine is one among the media sources that has played down the possibility of the military maintaining its influence even after Khan's victory. This may benefit the military by reducing opposition to their supremacy. Concerns over regional stability in the media may lead them to minimize the role of the Pakistani people. By doing so, we perpetuate an elitist narrative and fail to see the opportunities for progress in Pakistan.

The perpetuation of preconceptions about Pakistan's political scene is facilitated by placing an emphasis on charismatic individuals at the expense of institutions. This has the potential to undermine faith in Pakistani leadership and provide the impression of instability. If concerns about openness are downplayed, the public will have a less favorable impression of the electoral process. This has the ability to sow discord in Pakistan by casting doubt on the reliability of the findings. Influenced by international politics and ideology, international media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections may minimize important factors. Significant ramifications for world views and the credibility of the elections result from this downplaying.

## **Findings of the Study**

This research shows that certain sources prefer to ignore or minimize the impact of larger political movements, institutions, and outside forces on the election result in favor of focusing on specific individuals or parties, such as Imran Khan or his party. This narrowing of attention to characters risks simplifying the story to one hero triumphing over adversity while ignoring the complicated web of relationships between those factors. (CBC News and India Today). While covering the results or Khan's triumph, many outlets fail to address important concerns, like as claims of vote-rigging or worries about the process's impartiality. By focusing on certain aspects, we may cast doubt on the veracity of the election and bring up worries about possible manipulation. (Financial Times, CNBC, and The Guardian)



Despite Khan's victory, the military may retain some power, according to certain reports (France 24), while others minimize this possibility (The Times). The lack of consistency in this research highlights the need for a more balanced perspective on the role of the military in Pakistani politics. Media outlets that focus on unrest and doubt (Sky News and The New York Times) diminish Khan's capacity to establish a stable administration and the likelihood of a smooth transition. It seems like this is based on assumptions about Pakistan's political climate, ignoring the possibility of good leadership in the country. (Al Jazeera)

This study examines media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections and draws important conclusions from facts and theory. First, global media coverage emphasizes instability, ambiguity, and inconsistency, which shapes complex events. These narratives mirror global interests and ideologies and minimize domestic agency and historical context due to many alliances and goals. Second, dismissing some components of the issue makes it hard to view the whole picture since excluded groups' opinions and alternate solutions are ignored. We seldom discuss events without considering their influence on social groups. Thirdly, foreign alliances and goals affect electoral legitimacy. The election's legitimacy is questioned because it emphasizes instability, which raises worries about regional security and prospective interventions, and leaders and parties are depicted as reflecting foreign preferences and alliances. Variety and nuanced representation of complicated events need critical scrutiny. This entails identifying biases and downplayed features, finding alternate viewpoints, and including local voices.

Potential biases and objectives are reflected in the narrow emphasis on certain storylines. Western interests, which often regard the Pakistani military with distrust, may find resonance with sources like The Guardian that depict the election as a triumph for democracy. But this simplicity might make it easy to miss the nuanced nature of Pakistani politics and the influence of ordinary people. The New York Times and other media outlets that focus on possible or actual instability in Pakistan may be reflecting regional security concerns while ignoring domestic prospects for improvement. There is no objectivity in the way the media presents the 2024 Pakistani elections. We may learn more about the presentation of the material by examining the language choices, framing tactics, and any biases. With this knowledge in hand, we may approach news with a more critical eye, actively searching out other points of view and challenging the dominant narratives.

## **Limitations of the Study**

There are limitations to this research. The research only looked at a small subset of worldwide news outlets. This study focused on media coverage immediately following the elections. It is possible that the results do not apply to all forms of election coverage by the media.

## **Conclusion**

Media sources investigated the multiple narratives surrounding the 2024 Pakistani elections due to its complicated political dynamics, social objectives, and global interests. This critical investigation has revealed hidden goals, affiliations, and traits that shape our perspective of historical events. The findings show that international media coverage strongly influences interpretations, whereas headlines and framing choices tend to emphasize global issues and ideologies and downplay local agency and varied perspectives in Pakistan. This research analyzed the media representation of the 2024 Pakistani elections using Hegemony Theory,

Fairclough's Textual Analysis, and other relevant frameworks. Through a thorough examination of many news sources, we have detected cases where particular events, individuals, and storylines were deliberately minimized or understated. These results provide essential understanding of how power, ideology, and language influence worldwide views of the political situation in Pakistan. The media often emphasized the importance of charismatic personalities, such as Khan, while minimizing the significance of larger movements and organizations. This possibly caters to the interests of powerful organizations and perpetuates the notion that robust leadership is crucial for advancement.

In addition, Western depictions of the election as a triumph against the military struck a chord with their own concerns, but failed to acknowledge the intricacies of Pakistani politics. The legitimacy of the current power system was called into question by media coverage that emphasized issues about transparency. Similarly, narratives that emphasize the possibility of instability raise doubts about the efficiency of the current situation and may result in demands for change. The research revealed that the significance of political parties and institutions was often underestimated. In addition, the media's emphasis on regional stability concerns may have disregarded the Pakistani people's potential to take action.

This research highlights the significance of critical media knowledge. Through a thorough analysis of the language used, framing strategies used, and any biases present in media coverage, we may develop a more intricate comprehension of world events and the underlying influences that shape them. This level of consciousness is essential for promoting well-informed public discussions and cultivating a worldwide media environment that is both democratic and fair. The media coverage of the 2024 Pakistani elections is not only characterized by impartial reporting. The site serves as a battleground where powerful factions strive to retain power via storytelling, while others contest the existing order and promote alternate visions for Pakistan's future. It is essential to have a deep grasp of these processes in order to comprehend the intricate relationship between power, ideology, and language in Pakistani politics and beyond. Analyzing media coverage from a critical perspective enables individuals to actively engage in constructing the narratives that define their societies and their position in the global hierarchy.

## Future Research

Examining additional media channels, particularly Pakistani ones, and include local voices would offer a more complete picture. Future studies might examine how social media shapes Pakistani election narratives.

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