

**MEDIA FRAMING ANALYSIS IN CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL ISSUES**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The media plays a central role in shaping public perceptions of contemporary political issues. Through the process of framing, the media not only conveys facts, but also determines which aspects are emphasized, obscured, or omitted. This study aims to analyze how the mass media frames current political issues and to reveal the implications of such discourse construction on public perceptions. Using a qualitative approach through literature review, this study examines academic literature on framing theory, media politics, and the dynamics of political reporting in Indonesia. The analysis reveals that media framing is significantly influenced by political interests, editorial ideology, and market pressures. Issues such as corruption, elite conflicts, or elections are often reported with biased, simplistic, and sometimes fragmented narratives. The discussion emphasizes that framing is not merely a technical editorial choice but an ideological practice that significantly shapes the socio-political reality of society. The conclusion of this study is that framing analysis needs to be developed critically as a tool to uncover biases in political news representation and as a foundation for enhancing media literacy among the public in the age of information overload.*

*Keywords: media framing; political issues; representation; public discourse; media literacy.*

## INTRODUCTION

Amidst the rapid flow of information and the increasing complexity of contemporary political issues, the mass media plays an important role in shaping the public's view of socio-political realities. Through the practice of framing, the media not only acts as a channel for conveying information but also as an agent of meaning construction that determines the focus of public attention, the perspective of discourse, and the interpretation of a political event. In a democratic context, this makes the media a symbolic force capable of reproducing ideological dominance or systematically intervening in collective perceptions.

The urgency of this study is reinforced by the tendency toward bias in political reporting, which has recently often led to polarization of public opinion. Phenomena such as coverage of elite conflicts, corruption issues, and electoral campaigns are often framed in an disproportionate and reductive manner, either due to the media's political affiliations or market pressures and engagement algorithms. Media framing in Indonesia often presents narratives of conflict and figures, rather than providing structural analysis of the issues reported, (Meilisa & Julianto, 2025; Pandiangan et al., 2025). This results in the formation of shallow, reactive, and easily manipulated public opinion.

The rationale for this research lies in the need to deconstruct the structure of media representation so that the public is not trapped in the illusion of journalistic objectivity, (Karlsson, 2020). By analyzing how the media frames political issues, the public can understand that news is not a mirror of reality but a social construction influenced by ideological, economic, and editorial factors. This study is also important as an academic contribution to expanding critical understanding of the politics of representation and its influence on democracy.

This study aims to identify and analyze the framing strategies used by the media in framing contemporary political issues, as well as to evaluate the implications of this discourse on public perception. The focus of the study is directed at the construction of media messages related to political issues such as power conflicts, legislative dynamics, elections, and public policy narratives. In this context, framing is not only understood as a reporting technique but also as an ideological practice that influences the structure of public consciousness.

As an effort to solve this problem, this study uses a qualitative approach based on a literature review of works discussing framing theory, political media studies, and ideological criticism in discourse representation, (Java Simamora & Pohan, 2023). Through this method, it is hoped that dominant narrative patterns and framing tendencies at work in shaping public perceptions of political issues can be identified.

Based on preliminary studies, it is assumed that media framing of political issues is not neutral and objective, but is greatly influenced by political affiliations, media commercialization, and ideological dynamics. Therefore, the hypothesis developed in this study is that media framing is a tool of power representation that can reinforce or negate certain political meanings, depending on the narrative construction presented.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This article is written using a qualitative approach based on literature review as the main foundation, (Muhajirin et al., 2024). This approach was chosen because it is able to capture the diversity of theoretical perspectives and relevant empirical findings in analyzing how media framing works in constructing current political issues. The reflective nature of this approach allows researchers to not only quote but also critically interpret media constructions in the contemporary political discourse field.

The design of this study is interpretive, with a scope that covers media representations of national political events such as power conflicts, electoral dynamics, and strategic policy issues. The object of study is not a specific media outlet, but rather the narratives and structures of political discourse formed through framing in mainstream media news.

Data sources were collected through a selection of academic literature, including journal articles, scientific books, and media studies documents published between 2019 and 2025. The selection of sources was conducted purposively based on credibility, issue relevance, and the strength of arguments. Reference management was carried out with the help of software such as Zotero and Mendeley to ensure the accuracy of citations and data integrity.

In this study, framing is operationalized as a media strategy in constructing narrative structures that include the selection of facts, emphasis on certain aspects, and obscuring of other information, thereby producing a particular perspective on the issues presented. Contemporary political issues

are interpreted as actual power issues that have an impact on the public sphere and the direction of state policy.

The analysis was conducted using a thematic content analysis approach, which enabled the mapping of narrative patterns and media representational agendas. The researcher interpreted the main themes, identified biases or partisanship, and formulated the ideological consequences of the framing created by the media on public perception.

### **Narrative Analysis in Media Framing**

Narrative analysis in media framing is a very important approach to understanding how the media shapes and presents contemporary political issues to the public. In the context of framing, narrative is not merely a chronological sequence of facts, but rather a constructed story that is selected, organized, (Sugiyono, 2014) and given meaning by the media to guide the audience's interpretation of a political event.

Media use narrative techniques to organize information in a way that shapes certain patterns of thought, highlights specific actors and events, and directs public emotions and opinions in line with their political interests or affiliations.

In practice, narrative analysis examines how media select fragments of political events deemed important and overlook other aspects that do not support the main narrative, (Takahashi et al., 2020). For example, in reporting on legislative revisions or elections, the media often highlights conflicts among political elites as the core of the story, while the broader socio-economic context receives less attention.

This selection process is part of restorying, which is the reconstruction of a story that transforms raw facts into a coherent and meaningful narrative for the audience. In this case, the chronology of events is often rearranged to emphasize certain cause-and-effect relationships that align with the media's perspective, thereby guiding readers toward a specific interpretation.

Additionally, narrative analysis examines how the media shapes the characterization of political figures through the use of specific diction and symbolism. Political figures can be portrayed as heroes, victims, or antagonists, depending on the framing desired by the media, (Dian Pratama et al., 2024; Pitono & Dharmawan, 2025).

For example, in the 2024 election coverage, some media outlets portrayed certain candidates as “populist” figures who were close to the people, while other candidates may have been positioned as ‘elitist’ or “conservative.” This characterization not only influences the public's image of these figures but also reinforces broader political narratives, such as the struggle between change and conservatism.

The use of metaphors in political narratives is also a key element in media framing. Metaphors such as “battle,” “war,” or “disaster” are often used to describe political dynamics as dramatic and conflict-ridden.

These metaphors not only reinforce the emotional aspect of the news but also shape how audiences understand and respond to political issues. For example, framing politics as a “battle” (Wulandari & Setiawan, 2022) tends to create the perception that politics is an arena of uncompromising competition, which can reinforce polarization in society.

Furthermore, narrative analysis also examines intertextuality, which is how the media links contemporary political narratives to existing references or collective memories. Media often use historical or symbolic references to give more weight to their narratives, such as linking current policies to controversial past regimes. This technique reinforces the legitimacy of certain political issues and figures by leveraging a broader socio-cultural context.

Integrating narrative analysis with framing models, such as those developed by Entman and Pan-Kosicki, allows this research to not only identify textual elements of framing but also understand how these narratives are produced and received in complex socio-political contexts, (Afifah & Erwan Efendi, 2024; Laily et al., 2022).

This approach opens up space to view media framing as a dynamic and multidimensional process, where narrative structure, language choices, and media production contexts interact to shape public political perceptions comprehensively.

### Restorying as a Framing Mechanism

The process of restorying in political reporting is explored through four stages, namely:

#### 1. Selection of Event Fragments

The media selects critical moments (such as coalition conflicts or corruption scandals) that fit the larger narrative it wants to construct, often ignoring the systemic context, (Anas et al., 2025; Ilham et al., 2024). For example, news coverage of the revision of the KPK Law emphasized internal conflicts within the House of Representatives rather than analyzing the systemic impact on corruption eradication, (Laily et al., 2022).

#### 2. Reorganization of Chronology

Rewriting the timeline of events to create a biased impression of cause and effect. The case of Prabowo Subianto's candidacy in 2024, for example, is often presented by placing his military background at the beginning of the narrative to reinforce the “firmness” frame, (Afan Faizin, 2020)

#### 3. Character Framing

The use of terms such as “underdog,” “reformist,” or ‘oligarchy’ to create a symbolic identity for political figures. An analysis of 45 articles showed that 72% of the coverage of Ganjar Pranowo used the lexicon “populist,” which was contrasted with the term “elitist” for certain figures, (Perdana & Muslih, 2023; Purba et al., 2024).

#### 4. Narrative Closure

Ending the story with a partial solution or rhetorical question that directs public opinion. A total of 68% of articles about the Criminal Code Bill ended the coverage with quotes from officials without critical analysis of the substance of the articles, (Rakhmaniar, 2024).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented in the form of a thematic synthesis of scientific literature related to the dynamics of digital political communication, which has been classified into three main themes: political mediatization, algorithms and polarization, and digital participation. These findings are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1. Media Framing Patterns in Political Reporting**

Key Framing Findings
Focus on conflicts between elites, which tend to highlight polarization and political dramatization, without addressing the structural roots of the problem.
The emphasis on figures (personalization), not the issue or substance of policy, makes politics a figurative stage rather than an ideological space.
The use of dualistic narratives (us vs them), which narrows the space for dialogue and reinforces the segregation of opinion in society.
Obscuring alternative information or minority voices that do not conform to the editorial line or the interests of media owners.
Symbolic representations of certain groups often give rise to stereotypes that direct public perception emotionally.

Each framing pattern has significant representational consequences. For example, framing that emphasizes elite conflict tends to shift public attention from the substance of the issue to interpersonal drama. In this case, the media creates a kind of entertaining but less educational “spectacle politics”, (Purnama, 2022). Such framing, as noted by (Handayani, 2024), reinforces a sensationalist political culture that lacks policy analysis.

Meanwhile, the personalization of figures in news reporting often ignores structural contexts, leading to a superficial understanding of the political system that is figure-oriented rather than agenda-oriented. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the media's exploitation of dualistic narratives, which create the impression that politics consists only of two antagonistic poles: government vs. opposition, nationalist vs. religious, pro-people vs. anti-people, (Parinduri & Pujiati, 2023). These narratives simplify the complexity of political reality and have the potential to muddy the climate of deliberative democracy.

In addition, mainstream media often frames discourse by ignoring alternative voices, especially from marginalized groups, civil society organizations, or critical academics. When the media only

accommodates dominant narratives, the public sphere ceases to be an inclusive arena for discussion and instead becomes a field of symbolic hegemony controlled by certain powers. In this context, framing is not merely a strategy for presenting news but an ideological practice that reproduces symbolic power behind the scenes of information.

The interpretation of these findings reinforces the assumption that media framing is political, not neutral. It shapes, limits, and even misleads the public's understanding of political reality. Therefore, framing analysis should not be understood merely as a journalistic technique but should be treated as an instrument for analyzing media ideology that touches on the root of the problem: who is speaking, for whom, and with what interests.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This study shows that media framing of contemporary political issues is not only a strategy for conveying information, but also a form of discourse construction that is laden with interests. Framing works by selecting, highlighting, and obscuring certain aspects of an issue, thereby shaping the public's specific perspective on political events. The results of the study show that the dominant framing patterns in political reporting include an emphasis on elite conflict, the personalization of figures, the use of binary opposition narratives, and the neglect of alternative voices. This type of framing has implications for the formation of a reductive, emotional, and less critical public understanding of complex political dynamics. The media no longer merely conveys facts, but also determines the boundaries of political discourse that can and cannot be expressed in the public sphere. Therefore, framing analysis needs to be positioned as a critical approach that can uncover representational bias in news production, as well as a reflective tool to increase media literacy awareness amid the dominance of politicized information.

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