

The Paradox of Institutional Deliberation in Democratic Recovery*

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Abstract

After a democratic violation, do strong checks and balances help a country recover? Unlike typical cases of democratic backsliding, some incumbents' actions prompt democratic institutions to hold them accountable. As institutional deliberation unfolds, institutional signals that accountability is underway may inadvertently weaken pressures from citizens and the media to punish the incumbent. Meanwhile, violation-justifying narratives can gain traction and polarize public perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Leveraging South Korea's 2024–2025 martial law crisis, I find that the Constitutional Court's impeachment ruling was followed by polarization in evaluations of martial law and trust in democratic institutions. Analyses of protest dynamics—mobilization, media coverage, and online search interest—reveal that as institutional deliberation unfolded, accountability pressures weakened while countermobilization gained traction. Institutional deliberation intended to preserve legitimacy can inadvertently foster conditions that polarize perceptions of democratic legitimacy: the paradox of institutional deliberation. The very processes designed to protect democracy can also make it fragile.

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Democratic backsliding goes unconstrained when the government and citizens fail to notice or punish the incumbent’s violations of democratic rules (Druckman 2024; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019; Ingham 2026; Waldner and Lust 2018). Yet not all incumbents’ actions escape institutional or public oversight. Sometimes an incumbent’s highly visible actions trigger institutional checks from other branches of government. Recent examples include cases where elected officials’ salient actions faced institutional deliberation over their culpability, whether through judicial review or impeachment proceedings: Boris Johnson’s 5-week prorogation of Parliament in 2019, which resulted in the U.K. Supreme Court ruling that the prorogation was unlawful; Donald Trump’s 2021 impeachment proceedings in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate on a charge of inciting the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol; and Yoon Suk Yeol’s declaration of martial law in 2024, followed by South Korean National Assembly’s impeachment vote and the Constitutional Court’s ruling to uphold impeachment. When checks and balances work, do they repair the damage to democracy, or does an incumbent’s violation of democratic rules still leave lasting scars?

This study shows that even when checks and balances work, democracy may not fully recover. Even when democratic institutions ultimately determine that an incumbent’s act constitutes a violation of the law,¹ public opinion may become polarized after the recovery process. One reason is that, while a democratic violation can happen instantly, democratic recovery takes time: democratic institutions must follow constitutionally required procedures before reaching a final judgment. I refer to these deliberative procedures that unfold across and within branches of government as *institutional deliberation*, including both public deliberation (e.g., legislative sessions, court hearings) and private deliberation (e.g., judges’ deliberation outside public view). Deliberative procedures are normatively desirable and designed to preserve the legitimacy of institutional judgments (Curato and Steiner 2018;

¹Ahmed (2023) conceptualizes four types of democratic transgressions: violations of the law, democratic norms, democratic ideals, and power-consolidating institutional reforms. Compared to violations of the law, other forms of transgressions are harder to detect, but can be applied to my theory if such actions initiate institutional checks and balances.

Dryzek 2009; Smart 2024), but they may have unintended consequences. The time required for institutional deliberation and its inclusive consideration of competing viewpoints can inadvertently create time, space, and public visibility for violation-justifying narratives to spread and gain traction. Institutional deliberation, while designed to preserve democratic legitimacy, can paradoxically foster conditions that polarize public perceptions of the very legitimacy it is intended to protect: *the paradox of institutional deliberation*.

One pathway through which the paradox emerges is the interaction between accountability exercised by democratic institutions and accountability pressures exerted by civil society. I focus on protests as a key manifestation of civil society’s accountability pressures. While prior research assumes that formal institutions and civil society reinforce each other in exercising accountability (Laebens and Lührmann 2023), I highlight a previously unrecognized tension between them. Whereas the existing literature on protest mobilization primarily emphasizes that expectations about others’ participation boost collective action (Chong 2014; Ingham 2026), I argue that protest mobilization depends not only on social cues but also on institutional signals. Specifically, progress in institutional deliberation can weaken accountability pressures from civil society, especially when formal institutions signal that they are responding to public demands to hold the incumbent accountable. In such cases, citizens seeking punishment may perceive less need to participate in protests. These same signals can reassure incumbent supporters that extreme escalation has been averted while heightening their fear of the incumbent’s removal, thereby driving countermobilization. As the media amplify these competing narratives and public attention to them increases, institutional deliberation can inadvertently foster an environment in which public perceptions of democratic legitimacy become polarized. While Grillo and Prato (2023) and Ingham (2026) develop theoretical accounts of related mechanisms (fear-and-relief mechanism, seeds-of-doubt mechanism), I evaluate the proposed paradox empirically by examining changes in public opinion alongside three observable indicators of protest dynamics: protest mobilization, media coverage of protests, and public attention to protests.

South Korea’s 2024–2025 martial law crisis provides a unique opportunity to evaluate the paradox of institutional deliberation. Unlike typical cases of democratic backsliding, the episode involved an incumbent’s action that was sufficiently visible to trigger institutional checks by other branches of government. On December 3, 2024, President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law, but strong checks and balances constrained his attempt and ultimately removed him from office. While the declaration of martial law occurred instantly, democratic recovery required five months of institutional deliberation by the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court. During this period, civil society actors—including citizens and news organizations—exerted accountability pressures through impeachment protests and media coverage (Hong 2024; Rashid 2024). The case offers a rare window into how accountability pressures and public opinion evolve as institutional deliberation unfolds and in its aftermath.

Leveraging public opinion surveys, I find that that public perceptions of democratic legitimacy polarized following the Constitutional Court’s ruling. A two-wave national panel survey (Wave 1: pre-ruling; Wave 2: post-ruling; $n = 840$) shows post-ruling polarization in perceptions of martial law’s legitimacy, support for impeachment, and trust in implementing institutions, such as the Constitutional Court. Three waves of cross-sectional national surveys (pre-ruling, post-ruling, and one year after the ruling; $n \approx 1,000$ per wave) reveal similar patterns and further demonstrate that these trends persist for at least one year after the ruling. These findings point to concrete harms to democracy, because public disagreement over democratic legitimacy weakens citizens’ collective capacity to constrain future democratic transgressions (Ingham 2026; Svobik 2019). Moreover, polarization in support for unlawful acts signals serious democratic decay (Ahmed 2023). The observed polarization in institutional trust contrasts with recent cross-national evidence showing that, although trust in political institutions (e.g., legislatures) has declined, trust in implementing institutions has remained stable or even increased (Valgarðsson et al. 2025). My findings suggest that democratic recovery can come at the unexpected cost of polarizing trust in the institutions responsible for carrying it out.

Analyses of protest dynamics provide evidence that, as institutional deliberation unfolded and signaled accountability was underway, protests demanding presidential impeachment weakened while countermobilization gained traction. I find consistent patterns across three observable indicators of protests: protest mobilization (ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data) protest events; $n = 1,341$), media coverage of protests (articles from national news outlets, $n = 18,508$), and public attention to protests (search interest on Google and Naver)² from November 4, 2024, to May 4, 2025, spanning one month before the declaration of martial law through one month after the Constitutional Court’s ruling. I find that accountability pressures from citizens and the media were strongest before the National Assembly’s impeachment vote but subsided after the Assembly passed the impeachment motion and during the Constitutional Court’s deliberation. During the Court’s deliberation, media coverage of and public search interest in anti-impeachment protests increased, indicating that public disagreement became more salient. The remarkably consistent patterns across three types of data suggest that institutional deliberation can inadvertently foster an environment conducive to polarization in perceptions of democratic legitimacy.

What does this study reveal about the limits of checks and balances in democratic recovery? At the Constitutional Court hearings, Yoon and his attorneys argued that because martial law had been constrained by other branches of government, it had caused no serious harm.³ My findings show otherwise: institutions alone cannot shield a democracy from the damage of an incumbent’s violation of democratic rules. While South Korea’s recovery from the martial law crisis is celebrated as a successful defense of democracy (Lee 2026), this study identifies an overlooked vulnerability of established democracies: the very procedures designed to protect democracy can also make it fragile. Then, is a quicker institutional

²Naver is a major South Korean search engine.

³During the second hearing, Yoon’s attorneys claimed that “because nothing ultimately happened, the martial law would seem like a joke from citizens’ perspectives” (Bae 2025). In the eleventh and final hearing, Yoon defended his actions in a 67-minute statement, asking, “Is there such a thing as a two-hour insurrection?” (Hong 2025).

resolution the answer? Not necessarily. This study is not an argument against institutional deliberation. Deliberative procedures remain essential to democratic principles (Davis 2025; Dryzek 2009)—bypassing them undermines democratic legitimacy⁴ and a quick decision may deprive citizens opportunities to voice their opinions. Striking the right balance between thorough deliberation and timely action—without sacrificing civil society oversight—thus remains an open question for democratic recovery.

Accountability in the Face of Democratic Transgressions

While the literature is rich with cases of prolonged democratic backsliding (Frantz et al. 2025; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019; Orhan 2022), democracies do sometimes halt erosion through accountability mechanisms. Accountability is conceptualized as “constraints on the government’s use of political power through [...] sanctions by both citizens and oversight institutions” (Lührmann, Marquardt and Mechkova 2020, p. 812). Laebens and Lührmann (2023) distinguish among three types of accountability mechanisms: vertical (electoral competition), horizontal (parliamentary and judicial oversight), and diagonal (pressures from civil society and the media). The theoretical framework I propose focuses on non-electoral forms of accountability—horizontal and diagonal—and applies to incumbents’ actions that are sufficiently visible to trigger formal institutional deliberation over whether and how to hold the incumbent accountable within or across branches of government.⁵

In the face of a potential democratic transgression, horizontal accountability—the institutional checks and balances—takes time because most established democracies require constitutionally prescribed deliberative procedures (Ginsburg, Huq and Landau 2021). Such

⁴In Paraguay, the impeachment proceeding for the removal of Fernando Lugo in 2012 was concluded in less than 24 hours, prompting international concern that its extreme speed undermined due process (Ginsburg, Huq and Landau 2021).

⁵The theory does not apply to democratic transgressions that are difficult to detect (e.g., gradual power-consolidating changes to democratic institutions; Ahmed 2023) or to cases in which expedited procedures offer little opportunity for institutional deliberation before a final judgment (De Micheli, Sanchez-Gomez and Roberts 2022).

institutional deliberation is widely regarded as essential and desirable for democracy. Research on procedural justice shows that institutional decisions lacking transparency or established procedures can undermine the perceived legitimacy of institutional decisions (e.g., the shadow docket; Davis and Benesh 2023; Davis 2025; Smart 2024). Likewise, theories of deliberative democracy expect democratic institutions to be equipped with deliberative capacity, meaning that they consider the “full pool of perspectives” in reaching an institutional decision (Curato 2015; Dryzek 2009; Parkinson 2018).

Despite optimistic expectations, I argue that institutional deliberation may have unintended consequences. First, by ensuring that competing perspectives are represented, deliberative procedures provide even accused incumbents with high-profile opportunities to communicate with the public—not only through formal venues such as court hearings, but also by creating time for communication through informal channels. Second, when institutional deliberation signals that accountability is underway, mobilization for protest demanding punishment may weaken, while countermobilization can gain traction. In consequence, the heightened salience of disagreement can generate uncertainty and polarize public perceptions of democratic legitimacy. I term this dynamic *the paradox of institutional deliberation*: institutional deliberation, while designed to preserve democratic legitimacy, can inadvertently foster conditions that polarize perceptions of the very legitimacy it is intended to protect.

The implication of the paradox is not that institutional deliberation is itself detrimental. Rather, because institutional deliberation takes time to unfold across gradual steps, strategic actors may exploit the space and time it creates to disseminate narratives that justify the transgression. Ironically, the more deliberatively institutions assess an incumbent’s action, the more time such narratives have to gain visibility and influence. In the sections that follow, I develop theoretical expectations for the observable outcome of the paradox of institutional deliberation—public opinion—and for three observable mechanisms around protest dynamics: protest mobilization, media coverage of protests, and public attention to protests.

How Citizens Infer Democratic Legitimacy: Social Cues

Citizens evaluate political events not only based on the events themselves but also on perceptions of how fellow citizens evaluate them. Research on social influence shows that individuals rely on their perceptions of what others think when forming political judgments (e.g., descriptive social norms, second-order beliefs; Carlson and Hill 2022; Farjam and Loxbo 2024; Jost, Baldassarri and Druckman 2022; Mernyk et al. 2022). Consequently, visible expressions of collective support or opposition serve as informational cues that shape perceived credibility of a position (Wang, Chu and Huang 2023).

Perceptions of fellow citizens’ opinions also matter when individuals assess the legitimacy of a politician’s actions or democratic institutions. Ingham (2026) argues that when public opinion diverges on the legitimacy of an officeholder’s action, that observed disagreement itself can trigger the “seeds-of-doubt” mechanism. The divergent public reaction to a norm-violation “sows seeds of doubt and mistrust” in democratic institutions, thus the uncertainty of legitimacy gives transgressors the power to undermine democracy’s foundations (Ingham 2026, p.2). The seeds-of-doubt mechanism suggests that observing public disagreement can polarize citizens’ evaluations of the legitimacy of both the transgression itself and the institutions responsible for adjudicating it.

Such polarization is likely to emerge along ideological cleavages, because citizens tend to interpret political events through partisan and ideological lenses, selectively assigning responsibility to political opponents (Bisgaard 2015; Graham and Singh 2024; Kolberg-Shah and Shin 2024). Following the conclusion of institutional deliberation, citizens who are ideologically aligned with the incumbent are more likely to view the incumbent’s action as justified and to distrust the institutions responsible for holding the incumbent accountable. In contrast, those who oppose the incumbent are likely to maintain—or even strengthen—their view that the incumbent’s action was illegitimate and their trust in those institutions. Such polarization may suggest a threat to democracy, as it weakens citizens’ collective capacity to constraint future transgressions (Svolik 2019).

As indicators of public perceptions of democratic legitimacy, I focus on the following outcomes. The first is citizens’ perceptions of the legitimacy of the incumbent’s action and their support for institutional sanctions. When the incumbent’s action involves violations of the law, segments of the public supporting such an action will signal a serious concern for democracy (Ahmed 2023; Svobik 2019). The second is trust in democratic institutions, “the reservoir of goodwill” that supports democratic stability by enabling institutions to withstand political challenges (Easton 1965). Following Valgarðsson et al. (2025), I distinguish between implementing institutions (e.g., Constitutional Court, National Election Commission) and representative institutions (e.g., National Assembly). Polarization in trust in implementing institutions—which are responsible for enforcing democratic checks and balances—would be concerning given that trust in these institutions, unlike trust in representative institutions, has remained stable or increased globally. The discussion above leads to the following hypothesis:

Post-Deliberation Polarization Hypothesis: Following institutional deliberation over a potential democratic transgression, perceptions of the legitimacy of the incumbent’s action and trust in democratic institutions will diverge across ideological lines.

Protests as Signals of Public Opinion

Because citizens rarely observe others’ private opinions directly, protests provide important social cues that citizens use to infer broader public sentiment. As a major form of accountability pressure from civil society, protests reveal not only whether particular views exist but also how widespread and intense they are, thereby influencing political representatives and institutions (Gause 2022; Wouters and Walgrave 2017). Historically, protest movements have also played important roles in democratization and democratic consolidation across diverse contexts (e.g., Arab Spring, South Korea, Poland; Ekiert and Kubik 2010; Laebens and Lührmann 2023; Kolberg-Shah and Shin 2024; Magee and Massoud 2022).

In the context of accountability against a democratic violation, institutional deliberation

creates a period during which institutional decisions remain incomplete. During this period of institutional uncertainty, citizens will likely become increasingly reliant on perceptions of fellow citizens’ views when forming political judgments. As highly visible signals of public opinion, protests therefore become a key source of information through which citizens form their own views. Against this backdrop, I consider three observable manifestations of protest: protest mobilization, media coverage of protests, and public attention to protests.

Mechanism 1: Protest Mobilization

When an incumbent’s action is concerning and salient enough to initiate institutional sanctions, citizens are also likely to perceive it as threatening democracy and initially mobilize to demand punishment. As institutional deliberation proceeds, gradual institutional milestones (e.g., impeachment vote, indictment, court hearings) can signal that the transgression is being constrained and that formal institutions are responding to citizens’ demands for punishment. Adapting the “fear-and-relief” mechanism from Grillo and Prato (2023) to the context where formal institutions constrain an incumbent and prevent a full escalation of a democratic crisis, I argue that a similar psychological mechanism operates during institutional deliberation.⁶ Progress in institutional deliberation can induce relief by signaling that democratic breakdown has been averted and accountability is underway. Among citizens seeking punishment, this relief may reduce incentives for continued protest mobilization. Among incumbent supporters, the same relief may restore support for the incumbent and encourage countermobilization.

The theory I propose departs from existing theories in two respects. First, contrary to theories that expect protest participation to encourage further participation (Chong 2014; Ingham 2026), institutional deliberation can interrupt—and even reverse—those dynamics before a final institutional judgment is reached. Second, I argue that institutional deliber-

⁶In Grillo and Prato (2023)’s theory, when autocratic incumbents themselves prevent a full escalation, citizens who were initially fearful about democratic breakdown feel a sense of relief, which restores their support for the incumbent.

ation does not merely respond to accountability pressures from civil society but can itself reshape those pressures. Contrary to existing theories that view horizontal and diagonal accountability as mutually reinforcing (Laebens and Lührmann 2023), my theory suggests that the two forms of accountability can instead become substitutes.

These dynamics imply that protest mobilization will vary across stages of institutional deliberation. In legislature–court models of impeachment, citizens may perceive protest as more consequential during legislative deliberation than judicial review because legislatures are expected to be more responsive to public pressure than courts (Mueller 2024; Wouters and Walgrave 2017; Gibler and Randazzo 2011). Once the legislature has rendered its decision, citizens seeking institutional punishment may perceive that accountability is already underway and reduce further mobilization, whereas supporters of the incumbent may become more willing to countermobilize. More generally, this logic extends to other models of institutional deliberation. For example, in bicameral models of impeachment, passage in the lower chamber may similarly reduce accountability pressures from citizens while the upper chamber continues deliberation. Consequently, accountability pressures from civil society may gradually weaken and become increasingly fragmented as institutional deliberation progresses. The discussion above leads to the following expectation:

Mechanism 1 (Protest Mobilization): Does protest mobilization demanding punishment weaken as institutional deliberation progresses?

Mechanism 2: Media Coverage of Protests

The media play a central role in democratic accountability by shaping both citizens’ and formal institutions’ responses to democratic violations. Because citizens learn about political events and collective experiences that they cannot directly witness through the media (Fetzer et al. 2025; Mutz 1998), coverage of protests can shape mass mobilization and public opinion. Because politicians and governmental actors also learn about public opinion through the media, media coverage of protests demanding punishment likewise exerts pressure on

democratic institutions (Laebens and Lührmann 2023; Walgrave and Soontjens 2023).

Then how do the media cover protest mobilization over the course of institutional deliberation? The media as a “passive mirror” of society (Kovach and Rosenstiel 2014) would require coverage to reflect, to the extent possible, the relative scale of protests demanding and opposing punishment. Yet not only is the ground truth often difficult to ascertain, the media may also have incentives that lead them to under- or overrepresent particular directions of protest mobilization. Consequently, the media face at least three choices: coverage focused on (1) demands for accountability, (2) opposition to punishment, or (3) both sides.

One approach is for coverage to focus on protests demanding punishment (e.g., pro-impeachment protests), which theories such as “democracy-framed electoral coverage” (Jang and Kreiss 2025; Peterson, McGregor and Block 2025) would view as desirable if the incumbent’s action is a blatant violation of democratic rules.⁷ Yet some journalists may instead pursue balanced coverage of both sides to avoid audiences perceiving the outlet as biased or lacking credibility (Lawrence and Schafer 2012; Shin 2026), especially during periods of heightened uncertainty. However, balanced coverage can drift into conflict or game framing (Hitt and Searles 2018; Patashnik 2023), presenting a democratic violation as a matter of contested legitimacy. A third approach is to primarily cover protests opposing punishment (e.g., anti-impeachment protests). Such coverage is likely when countermobilization constitutes a novel development during the crisis, making it attractive as drama- or novelty-driven news content (Boydston 2013). Yet its risk is that protests defending democratic violations often draw on anti-democratic narratives questioning electoral integrity and legitimizing political violence—a pattern observed across countries (Lugosi-Schimpf and Thorlakson 2021; Kwak 2024; Prochaska et al. 2023).

As institutional deliberation progresses and signals that accountability is underway,

⁷Jang and Kreiss (2025) and Peterson, McGregor and Block (2025) caution that neutral media coverage of democratic norm-violations can mislead the public, and thus encourage journalists to anchor their coverage on democratic norms.

protests demanding punishment become less novel, while countermobilization may become increasingly salient. Combined with journalistic incentives to pursue balanced, conflict-oriented, or novelty-driven coverage, institutional deliberation may therefore shift media attention away from accountability demands and toward protests opposing punishment or both sides of protests. Such shifts in media coverage can weaken accountability pressures and sow doubt about the legitimacy of both the incumbent’s actions and the institutions responsible for adjudicating them. The preceding discussion leads to the following expectation:

Mechanism 2 (Protest Coverage): Does media coverage of protests demanding punishment decrease as institutional deliberation progresses?

Mechanism 3: Public Attention to Protests

Political attitudes are strongly shaped by the considerations that are most accessible and salient in citizens’ minds (Zaller 1992). As political actors and the media devote greater attention to particular aspects of politics, citizens become more likely to rely on those considerations in evaluating political actors and events (Iyengar and Kinder 2010; Tesler 2015). I argue that institutional deliberation can reshape these accessible considerations by reducing the visibility of accountability pressures. As protests demanding punishment diminish and media attention to those protests declines, citizens become less exposed to signals of broad societal condemnation. At the same time, growing countermobilization and media attention to it create opportunities for the narratives defending the incumbent to enter citizens’ information environment. The increased salience of competing narratives can activate the “seeds-of-doubt” mechanism (Ingham 2026), generating uncertainty about the legitimacy of the incumbent’s action and democratic institutions, thereby polarizing public perceptions.

One observable manifestation of the shifting considerations in citizens’ minds is public attention to protests demanding and opposing punishment. Online search behavior provides a useful proxy for public attention because it reflects salient issues in citizens’ information

environment (Chen et al. 2024; Dancy and Fariss 2024). Building on the expectation that accountability pressures from citizens and the media weaken as institutional deliberation unfolds, I expect public attention will similarly evolve as follows:

Mechanism 3 (Public Attention to Protests): Does public attention to protests demanding punishment decrease as institutional deliberation progresses?

Case Selection: The 2024-25 Martial Law Crisis in South Korea

The 2024–25 Martial Law Crisis in South Korea provides a unique opportunity to examine the paradox of institutional deliberation. On December 3, 2024, President Yoon Suk Yeol declared martial law, suspending all political activities—including National Assembly, local councils, political parties, and demonstrations, placing the media under military control, and prohibiting strikes, among other measures (Oh 2024). Beyond the official proclamation, he ordered military forces to secure the National Assembly, raid the National Election Commission, arrest prominent political figures, and cut off electricity and water to selected media organizations (Kim 2025*b*; Ng, Bicker and Marsh 2024; Yang and Lee 2024). Yoon justified these actions by claiming that election fraud and the opposition-controlled National Assembly posed an existential threat to the country. A president from the conservative People Power Party (PPP), Yoon argued that the opposition Democratic Party had abused its legislative majority to paralyze state affairs (Ji 2024). Ultimately, both the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court determined the martial law unconstitutional, making the episode an unusually clear case of a democratic violation constrained by institutional checks and balances.

The institutional response unfolded over five months through successive stages of deliberation (for detailed timelines, see Choi 2024, 2025; Jung 2025). On the night martial law was declared, the National Assembly voted (190–0) to lift the order despite military attempts to block access to the National Assembly. After an initial impeachment motion failed for lack of quorum on December 7, 2024, the National Assembly impeached Yoon

by the constitutionally required two-thirds majority (204–85) on December 14. The process then moved to the Constitutional Court, whose proceedings were initially complicated by the fact that only six of the Court’s nine seats were filled. Yoon questioned the legitimacy of the six-judge bench, while the acting president, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, refused to appoint additional justices nominated by the National Assembly (Yoon and Kim 2024; Iordache 2024). The National Assembly subsequently impeached (192-0) Han on December 27, after which two additional justices were appointed, allowing the Court to proceed with an eight-member bench.

Institutional deliberation across the legislative and judicial branches, which included constitutionally required procedures, created opportunities for Yoon to communicate with the public. During the legislative stage of the impeachment process, Yoon delivered five nationally televised public addresses defending himself. During judicial review, the president or his attorneys participated in eleven public Constitutional Court hearings, including Yoon’s 67-minute closing statement at the final hearing. Even while detained between January 19 and March 8, 2025, Yoon continued communicating with supporters through statements released by his legal team and messages disseminated on social media. In contrast, after the final Constitutional Court hearing on February 25, the Court remained publicly silent until announcing its ruling on April 4, 2025.

The case closely matches the conditions under which the paradox of institutional deliberation is expected to emerge. The alleged democratic violation was highly visible, triggered formal institutional intervention across branches of government, and unfolded through an extended period of institutional deliberation. Progress in institutional deliberation—including the legislative impeachment vote, the president’s detention, and Constitutional Court hearings—signaled that accountability was underway and that formal institutions were responding to public demand, before a final judgment was reached.

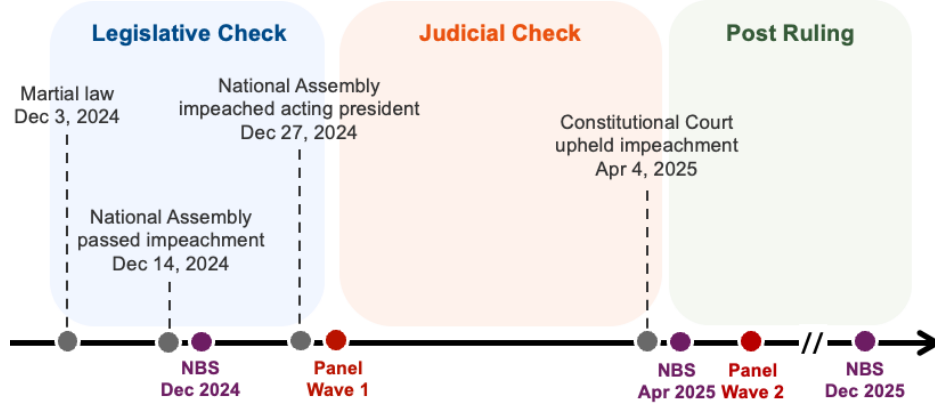
This political episode is well suited to examining how accountability pressure from civil society evolves during institutional deliberation. Protest has long served as a central mecha-

nism of democratic recovery in South Korea, from the June Democratic Struggle of 1987 to the candlelight demonstrations preceding President Park Geun-hye’s impeachment in 2017 (Hayes 2005; Kolberg-Shah and Shin 2024). Protest activity therefore provides a particularly informative measure of accountability pressure from citizens, while media coverage of protests captures the extent to which such pressure is amplified in the public sphere. The evolution of protest activity and media coverage across the stages of institutional deliberation makes the crisis a suitable setting for evaluating the paradox of institutional deliberation.

Public Opinion in the Aftermath of Institutional Deliberation

In the aftermath of institutional deliberation over an incumbent’s potential violation of democratic rules, do public perceptions of democratic legitimacy remain intact? To answer this question, I analyze two complementary sets of survey data. First, to examine within-individual changes, I designed and conducted a two-wave panel survey before and after the Constitutional Court’s impeachment ruling (Panel Waves 1 and 2; red dots in Figure 1). Second, to examine aggregate-level shifts in public opinion, I analyze three waves of the National Barometer Survey (NBS; purple dots in Figure 1) before and after the ruling (December 2024 and April 2025, respectively), as well as a year after the crisis (December 2025). The pre-ruling waves were fielded during or shortly after legislative check, whereas the post-ruling waves were fielded after judicial deliberation had concluded, by which point the public had experienced the institutional deliberation leading up to the Court’s final judgment.

Figure 1: Timeline of the Martial Law Crisis and Timing of Surveys



Note: Field dates for each survey are as follows: NBS Dec 2024 (December 16–18, 2024); Panel Wave 1 (December 30, 2024 – January 3, 2025); NBS Apr 2025 (April 7–9, 2025); Panel Wave 2 (April 17 – May 7, 2025); and NBS Dec 2025 (December 22–24, 2025).

Data and Methods

Two-Wave Panel Survey

To examine within-individual shifts in public opinion, participants were recruited through the Macromill Embrain, a survey firm widely used for research in South Korea (e.g., Kolberg-Shah and Shin 2024). The survey firm applied quotas on gender, age, and region, resulting in a sample that broadly reflects the national population, albeit without being fully nationally representative. Wave 1 was fielded from December 30, 2024 – January 3, 2025, shortly after National Assembly impeached the acting president, then-Prime Minister, for resisting the appointment of Constitutional Court judges. Additional judges were appointed shortly afterward so that the Court could begin deliberation. Thus, the timing of Wave 1 captures the transition from a legislative to a judicial check in institutional deliberation. Wave 2 was conducted on April 17 – May 7, 2025, approximately two weeks after the Constitutional Court’s ruling. Of the 1,200 respondents who participated in Wave 1, 819 respondents (68%) completed Wave 2.⁸ The distribution of demographic variables is presented in Table S1.

⁸The survey firm initially projected a recontact rate of approximately 70%. Yet the ruling came 111 days after the impeachment motion, taking longer than in previous presidential

Question wordings are provided in Sections 8.1 and 9.1 of the Supplementary Materials. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at [redacted for peer-review], and the ethics statement is provided in Section 6 of Supplementary Materials.

Analyses of attrition and attention checks support the overall quality of the sample. Attrition does not appear to be systematically related to respondents' baseline characteristics (Table S2). Comparisons of Wave 1 characteristics between respondents who completed both waves and those who did not reveal no statistically significant differences across key outcome variables. The sample also performed well on attention checks, with only 0.4% of respondents failing both checks (Table S3). Because excluding respondents based on attention checks may introduce bias (Berinsky, Margolis and Sances 2014), all observations are retained in the analysis.

In both waves, perceptions of democratic legitimacy and ideology were measured as follows. First, to measure perceptions of Yoon's declaration of martial law, respondents were asked the extent to which they agree with statements characterizing the declaration as (1) an anti-constitutional insurrection aimed at restricting the authority of the National Assembly or (2) a legitimate exercise of presidential authority as provided under the Constitution respectively, on a four-point scale ("do not agree at all" – "strongly agree") with a "don't know" option. Second, for trust in institutions, respondents indicated the degree to which they trusted: Constitutional Court, courts, National Election Commission, the military, National Assembly, and the president's office, on a five-point scale ("do not trust at all" – "trust very much"). Lastly, ideology was measured by asking respondents to place themselves on a five-point scale ranging from very conservative to very liberal, with moderate as the mid-point. Because South Korea has a multiparty system in which multiple parties can align with the same ideological camp, the analysis focuses on ideology rather than partisan identity.

impeachment cases. The interval between waves extended beyond initial expectations and likely contributed to the lower-than-projected recontact rate.

Cross-sectional Surveys

To examine aggregate-level changes in public opinion over time, I analyze the National Barometer Survey (NBS), which is a repeated cross-sectional national survey series in South Korea. NBS is conducted jointly by Embrain Public, KStat Research, Korea Research, and Hankook Research, which are among the major South Korean survey firms. Each wave includes approximately 1,000 respondents, where population benchmarks are based on the Ministry of the Interior and Safety’s monthly resident registration statistics (NBS N.d.).⁹ Samples are drawn using stratified random sampling by region, gender, and age, with proportional allocation across strata. I leverage three waves of NBS: (1) Pre-ruling, conducted two days after the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion (December 16-18, 2024, NBS Wave 137); (2) Post-ruling, conducted three days after the Court’s impeachment ruling (April 7–9, 2025, NBS Wave 150); and (3) one-year post-crisis (December 22–24, 2025; NBS Wave 171). The distributions of demographic variables are presented in Table S10, and the question wordings are provided in Sections 8.2 and 9.2 of Supplementary Materials.

The surveys included the following measures. First, to measure support for presidential impeachment, respondents in the pre-ruling wave were asked whether the National Assembly’s impeachment vote against President Yoon was “a good decision” or “a bad decision.” In the post-ruling wave, respondents were asked whether the Constitutional Court’s decision to uphold the impeachment and remove President Yoon from office was “a good decision” or “a bad decision.” These items are substantively equivalent, as both measure support for institutional decisions to impeach the president at different stages of institutional deliberation—the legislative and judicial stages. In both waves, “don’t know” responses were excluded from the analysis. Second, institutional trust is measured in the pre-ruling wave and the one-year post-crisis wave. Respondents indicated how much they trusted Constitutional Court, courts, and National Assembly on a four-point scale (“do not trust at all” – “trust very much”).

⁹The sampling frame is based on mobile phone virtual numbers provided by the three major telecommunications companies, ensuring near-universal population coverage.

Lastly, ideology was measured by asking respondents to place themselves on a five-point scale ranging from very conservative to very liberal, with moderate as the midpoint.

Results

Within-Individual Changes Before and After the Ruling

To examine whether within-individual changes following the conclusion of institutional deliberation varied by ideology, I follow the two-wave fixed-effects framework of Bøggild and Jensen (2025) and the Factorial Difference-in-Differences (FDiD) design proposed by Xu, Zhao and Ding (2026). Unlike a typical event-based difference-in-differences (DiD) design, where both treatment and control groups exist, these studies consider contexts in which everyone is exposed to a common treatment—COVID in Bøggild and Jensen (2025) and famine in Xu, Zhao and Ding (2026)—and instead estimate differences in effects across groups. Following this approach, I treat the impeachment ruling as a common event experienced by the South Korean public and examine heterogeneous changes across ideological groups.

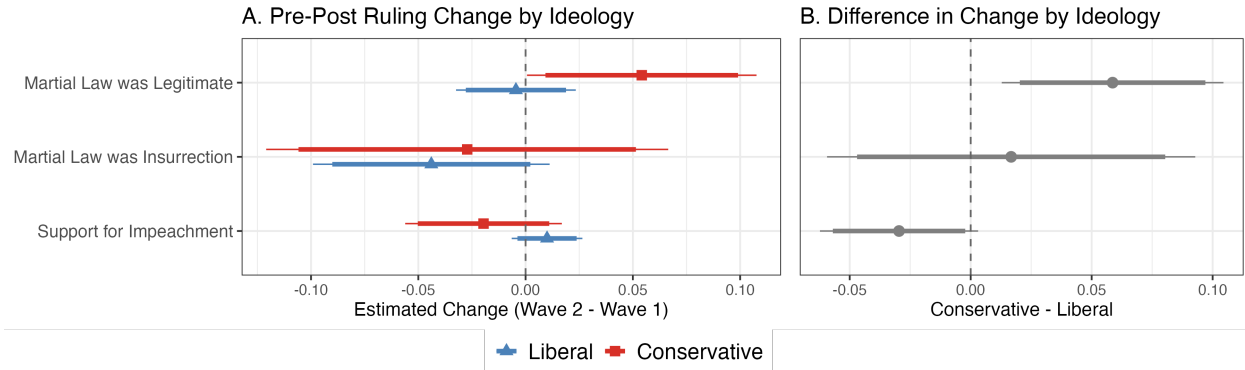
I use two-way fixed-effects estimation that controls for time-invariant within-individual factors through individual fixed effects and society-wide time-varying factors through wave fixed effects, with standard errors clustered at the individual level (Bøggild and Jensen 2025). The key estimand is the interaction between the post-ruling indicator and group indicator, capturing the differential within-person change across groups following the ruling. In the FDiD design, this interaction term between the treatment (i.e., the event) and the factor (i.e., group indicator) captures how the effect of the treatment varies across subgroups under assumptions analogous to no anticipation and parallel trends in the canonical DiD design (Xu, Zhao and Ding 2026). While these assumptions cannot be directly tested with only two waves, the institutional context provides some theoretical support for their plausibility. Following the final hearing on February 25, 2025, the Constitutional Court ceased public communication and isolated itself from outside contact, both physically and virtually, generating considerable uncertainty about both the timing and outcome of the decision (Heo

2025; Song 2025). Uncertainty was further heightened as the Court’s deliberation lasted longer than expected¹⁰ and when the Court dismissed Prime Minister Han’s impeachment on March 24, 2025, in a divided decision, raising concerns that the justices might also be divided over Yoon’s case and that the Court could become paralyzed with two justices approaching retirement in mid-April (Cha 2025; Kim 2025a; Park 2025). These circumstances make anticipation of the ruling less likely and provide no clear reason to expect systematically diverging trends across ideological groups prior to the decision, lending theoretical plausibility to the no-anticipation and parallel-trends assumptions.

The results reveal substantial ideological differences in shifts in perceptions of democratic legitimacy following the Court’s impeachment ruling, as shown in Figure 2. Panel A displays within-group changes for descriptive purposes, whereas Panel B shows the key estimand—the differential pre-post ruling change between conservatives and liberals. Compared to liberals, conservatives indicate relatively greater increases in the belief that martial law was legitimate ($p < .05$). Additionally, conservatives show a relatively greater shift toward opposing the presidential impeachment compared to liberals ($p < .10$).

¹⁰The Court’s deliberation was substantially longer than in prior presidential impeachment cases. The Court ultimately took 111 days to uphold Yoon’s impeachment, compared with 63 days to reject the impeachment motion against Roh Moo-hyun in 2004 and 91 days to uphold Park Geun-hye’s impeachment in 2017. Notably, in Yoon’s case, the Court deliberated for 39 days after the final hearing before announcing its ruling, compared with 14 and 11 days between the final hearings and rulings in the Roh and Park cases, respectively.

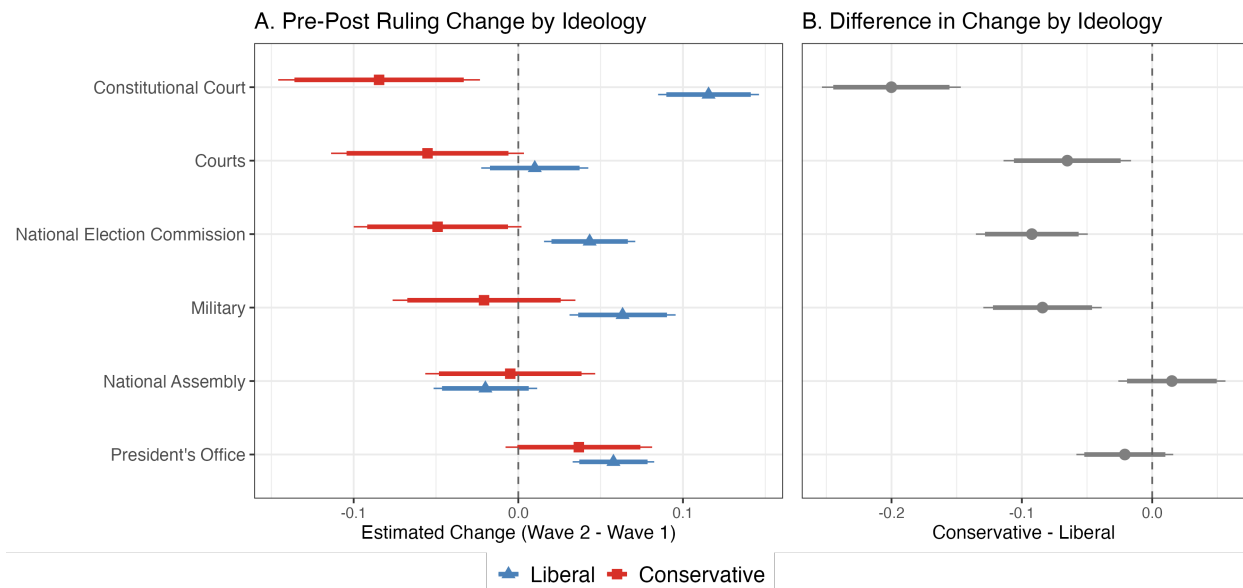
Figure 2: Pre-Post Ruling Democratic Legitimacy Perceptions by Ideology



Note: Panel A displays the within-individual pre-to-post ruling change in democratic legitimacy perceptions. Panel B displays the difference-in-differences estimate (difference the pre-to-post change between conservatives and liberals, capturing the differential change between ideological groups). Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S4 presents these results in tabular form.

As for institutional trust, the Court's impeachment ruling was associated with different shifts among liberals and conservatives, as shown in Figure 3. Patterns of findings differed across implementing and representative institutions. Conservatives exhibited greater decreases in trust compared to liberals for implementing institutions such as Constitutional Court, the military, and the National Election Commission ($ps < .01$) and for the courts ($p < .05$). In contrast, there were weaker ideological differences in pre-post changes in trust toward representative institutions—the National Assembly and the president's office—suggesting more muted divergence across ideological cleavages.

Figure 3: Pre- and Post-Ruling Institutional Trust by Ideology



Note: Panel A displays the within-individual pre-to-post ruling change in democratic legitimacy perceptions. Panel B displays the difference-in-differences estimate. Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S5 presents these results in tabular form.

The findings indicate that public opinion did not uniformly evolve before and after the Court's decision. Instead, perceptions of the legitimacy of the president's action and trust in implementing institutions diverged across ideological lines rather than converging following the ruling. The results are robust to the inclusion of demographic controls. As shown in Figure S1, the estimated differences in pre-to-post changes between conservatives and liberals remain substantively similar across specifications that separately control for differential changes by age, gender, education, and income. The observed patterns also contrast with the global trend, where trust in implementing institutions has remained stable or increased (Valgarðsson et al. 2025). The martial law crisis and subsequent institutional deliberation instead polarized trust precisely in those institutions tasked with upholding constitutional order, thereby weakening the bipartisan foundation for democratic stability.

Because media environments play an important role in shaping political attitudes, I

additionally examine whether within-individual shifts differ by respondents' consumption of conservative and liberal media (Figures S2–S3 and Tables S6–S7). The results closely mirror those by ideology, with similar polarization observed between consumers and non-consumers of both conservative and liberal media. Conservative media users became more likely than non-users to believe that martial law was not an insurrection and to distrust the Constitutional Court and National Election Commission, whereas liberal media users became more likely than non-users to trust the Constitutional Court, courts, and military.

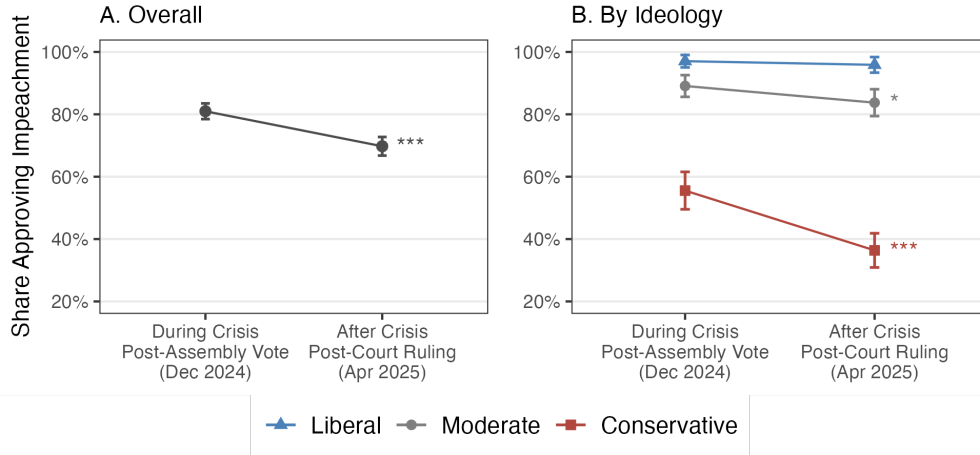
While the main analyses focus on differences between liberals and conservatives because prior theories of selective blame attribution most directly apply to these groups (e.g., Bisgaard 2015), I also estimate models using moderates as the reference category. As shown in Figures S4–S5 and Tables S8–S9, the results are consistent with the main analyses: liberals and conservatives exhibit the patterns consistent with those reported above, whereas moderates show minimal change before and after the Court's ruling for most outcomes, consistent with the lack of clear theoretical expectations for this group.

Aggregate-Level Changes Before and After the Ruling

For aggregate-level public opinion, I test whether support for impeachment and institutional trust changed significantly across waves using weighted independent-samples t-tests, applying survey weights with the `weights` package in R (Pasek et al. 2025). The analyses compare (1) the pre-ruling wave (December 2024) with the post-ruling wave (April 2025), and (2) the same pre-ruling wave with the wave collected one year after the crisis (December 2025).

The results from the pre- and post-ruling waves of the NBS reinforce the patterns found in the panel survey, showing that perceived legitimacy of the president's action and trust in implementing institutions polarized after the Court's ruling, as shown in Figure 4. While almost all liberals supported the impeachment both pre- and post-ruling, the share of respondents supporting the impeachment decreased after the ruling among independents ($p < .10$) and conservatives ($p < .01$). The increased ideological gap indicates polarization in public perceptions of the legitimacy of the president's imposition of martial law.

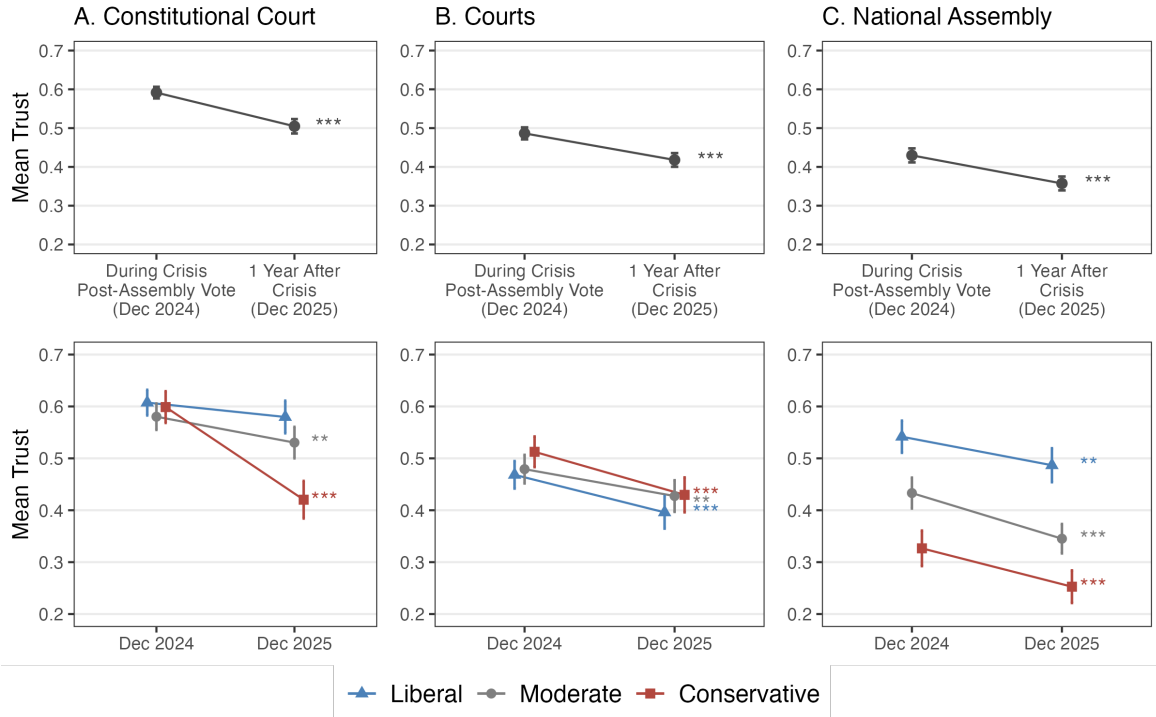
Figure 4: Support for Presidential Impeachment Before and After the Ruling



Note: Estimates represent weighted averages and error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between the two waves in a weighted independent-samples t-test. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. Table S11 presents the results in tabular form.

Complementing the panel survey findings, the long-term trends shown in Figure 5 reveal that institutional trust had not recovered one year after the martial law crisis. Instead, overall trust significantly decreased for the Constitutional Court, courts, and National Assembly ($ps < .01$). The pattern of ideological divergence also persisted over the longer term, although it varied across institutions. One year after the crisis, polarization was most pronounced for the Constitutional Court—the institution that directly held the president accountable—where trust decreased among conservatives ($p < .01$) and moderates ($p < .05$) but remained relatively stable among liberals. On the other hand, trust in the National Assembly and courts decreased across ideological groups ($ps < .05$). Although these long-term trends cannot be attributed solely to the Court’s ruling, trust across institutions remained below levels observed during the crisis, suggesting that the passage of time alone did not restore institutional trust.

Figure 5: Institutional Trust During and One Year After the Crisis



Note: Estimates represent weighted averages and error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference between the two waves in a weighted independent-samples t-test. * $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$. Table S12 presents the results in tabular form.

While pre-crisis trends immediately preceding the crisis cannot be fully examined, I leverage NBS waves collected one and two years before the crisis (December 12-14, 2022, NBS Wave 86; December 4-6, 2023, NBS Wave 111) that included measures of trust in the courts and the National Assembly.¹¹ Figure S6 shows that trust in the courts and the National Assembly remained stable between December 2022 and December 2023, increased in December 2024 following the National Assembly's impeachment vote against Yoon, and then declined by December 2025, after the period of institutional deliberation culminating in Yoon's impeachment. Although only suggestive, the stability of institutional trust during the two years preceding the crisis and its subsequent deviation from prior trends suggest that the martial law crisis and subsequent institutional deliberation constituted an exogenous shock.

¹¹Trust in the Constitutional Court was not measured by NBS prior to December 2024.

How Accountability Pressures Evolve During Democratic Recovery

Having shown that public perceptions of democratic legitimacy polarized following institutional deliberation, I turn to the mechanisms underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation. Specifically, I examine whether, as theorized, accountability pressures from civil society decrease as institutional deliberation proceeds, as manifested in three observable indicators of protest dynamics. First, I examine protest mobilization by analyzing the magnitude of mobilization for pro- and anti-impeachment protests. Second, I examine media coverage of protests by documenting how South Korean national media (broadcast, liberal, and conservative outlets) covered protests demanding or opposing impeachment. Third, I examine public attention to protests by analyzing online search interest on Google and Naver, the latter being South Korea’s dominant domestic search engine. For all three mechanisms, I collected and analyzed data from November 4, 2024, one month before martial law, to May 4, 2025, one month after the Constitutional Court’s impeachment ruling.

To examine how accountability pressures from citizens and the media evolve as institutional deliberation progresses, each analysis compares two stages of institutional checks and balances—legislative and judicial checks. Based on the timeline discussed in the case selection section, the legislative check period spans December 4 through December 28, 2024, whereas the judicial check period spans December 29, 2024, through April 4, 2025.

Mechanism 1: Protest Mobilization

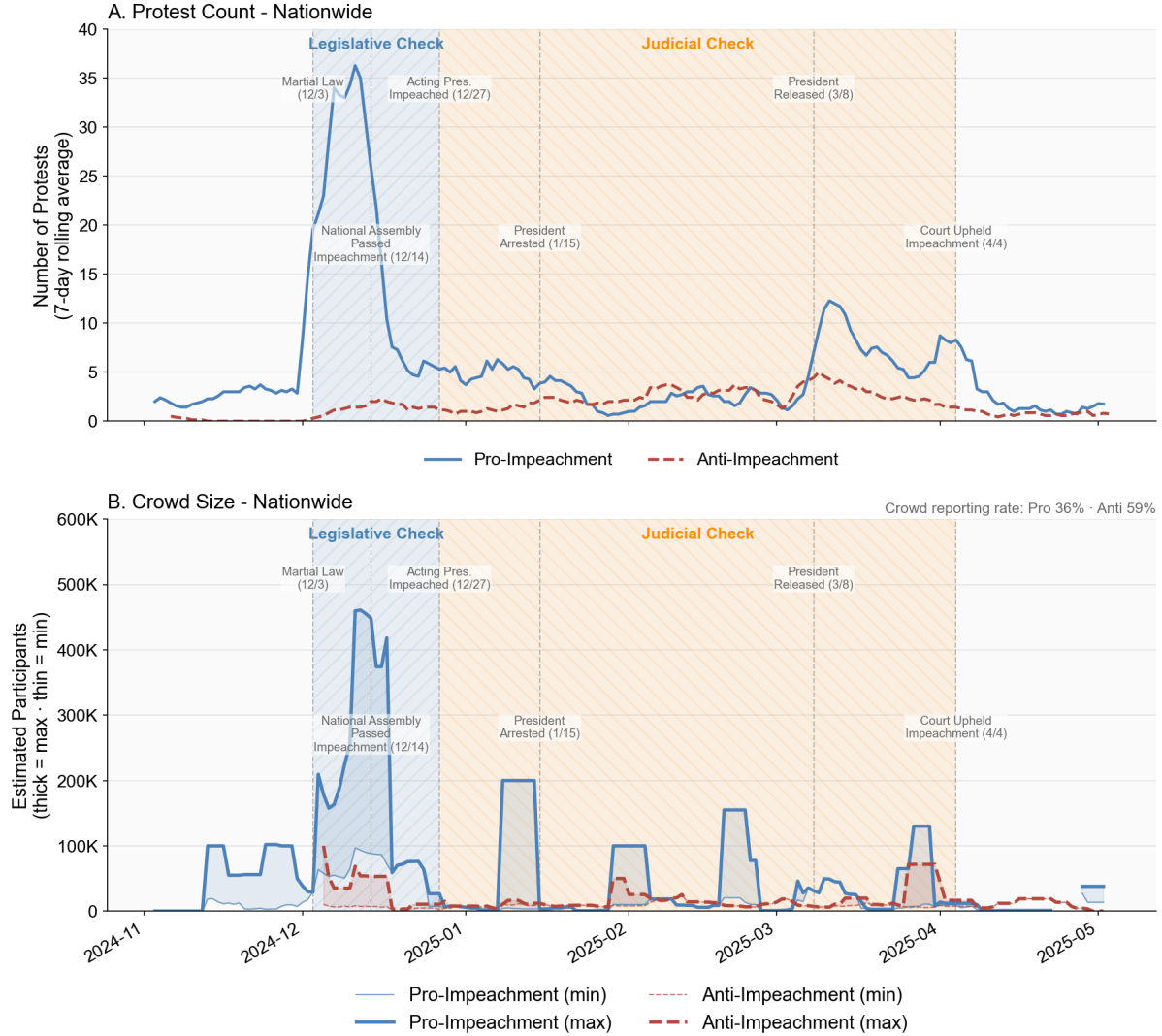
Protest mobilization data were collected from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED; Raleigh et al. 2010). The data were restricted to events coded as “protest” occurring between November 4, 2024 and May 4, 2025. Geographic location and actors were restricted to ‘Republic of Korea,’ resulting in a total of 3,562 protest events during the specified period. These observations are unique protest events with distinct combination of date and location at the city or district level. To classify protests as pro-impeachment or anti-impeachment, I text-annotated the event descriptions using LLM, verified by human

expert coding by two research assistants, both native Korean speakers. The LLM-human validation achieved reliable inter-coder reliability (percent agreement = .95; Cohen’s κ = .87) (Törnberg 2024; O’Connor and Joffe 2020). After applying the validated LLM prompt (GPT 4o-mini, temperature set to 0 to ensure deterministic outputs) and keeping only the protests by South Korean participants demanding or opposing Yoon’s impeachment, the data identified a total of 1,341 protests, among which 1,045 were pro-impeachment and 296 were anti-impeachment.¹² Prompt language and validation details are available in Sections 3 and 7.1 of Supplementary Materials.

Crowd size estimates were extracted when available and parsed into lower- and upper-bound values when reported as ranges (see Section 3 of the Supplementary Materials for parsing details). The gap between the lower- and upper-bound estimates typically reflects the divergence between police and organizer estimates. The median for this min-max ratio is 2.0, whereas the mean is 4.2, with an extreme outlier of 78.9 (Figure S7). To prevent this outlier from distorting the results, it is excluded from the upper-bound estimate.

¹²According to ACLED’s categorization, 1,332 were ‘peaceful protests’ whereas only 9 were ‘protest with intervention.’

Figure 6: Mobilization for Impeachment Protest



Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. In Panel A, lines represent centered 7-day moving averages of daily protest counts. In Panel B, lines represent centered 7-day moving averages of daily crowd size estimates, based on events for which participant estimates were reported (reporting rates noted in the upper right corner). Shaded bands indicate the range between the reported minimum and maximum crowd size estimates. When only a single estimate was reported, the minimum and maximum coincide and no shaded band is visible. One event with an extreme ratio of 78.9 is excluded from the maximum crowd size estimate.

The results are consistent with the theoretical expectation that protest mobilization would decrease as institutional deliberation proceeds. In Figure 6, daily protest counts and crowd-size estimates are visualized as centered 7-day moving averages to smooth day-of-week fluctuations, as protests were heavily concentrated on Saturdays. Protest counts indicate

that accountability pressure was strong during the legislative check but substantially decreased during the judicial check, as shown in Figure 6A. Pro-impeachment protests peaked at approximately 35 events per day prior to the National Assembly’s impeachment vote and declined sharply as the crisis entered the judicial-check phase, consistent with the theoretical expectation that progress in institutional deliberation would reduce accountability pressure from citizens. Anti-impeachment protests became somewhat more frequent during the legislative check and again after the president’s detention, suggesting that institutional deliberation can create space for countermobilization. Pro-impeachment protests increased again following the president’s release, which occurred during the Constitutional Court’s prolonged silence after the final hearing, but did not recover to the level observed during the legislative-check period. This renewed mobilization is consistent with the theoretical expectation that citizens’ accountability pressure subsides when institutions appear to be constraining the incumbent but can reemerge when institutional developments cast doubt on whether accountability will ultimately be enforced.¹³

Crowd size exhibits a similar pattern, with pro-impeachment mobilization peaking during the legislative check phase but declining during judicial deliberation, as illustrated in Figure 6B. Although pro-impeachment protests substantially exceeded anti-impeachment protests in crowd size during the legislative-check phase, as institutional deliberation proceeded, the size of pro-impeachment protests subsided, while anti-impeachment protests sometimes became more comparable in size. Despite the caveat that crowd-size estimates were available for 36% of pro-impeachment and 59% of anti-impeachment protest events, the pattern largely mirrors the protest-count results in Figure 6A.

I additionally examine protests in the Seoul Metropolitan Area, where major impeachment-related protests were concentrated, particularly near key national political institutions (e.g.,

¹³Notably, Figure 6 shows that pro-impeachment protests existed even before the martial law declaration. Calls for Yoon’s resignation or impeachment had already emerged under his administration, including criticism of media and labor suppression and alleged abuses of executive power (Lee 2024; Nord et al. 2024).

National Assembly during the legislative check; Constitutional Court during the judicial check). The patterns remain broadly similar, as shown in Figure S8. Overall, the results support the protest-mobilization mechanism underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation: accountability pressure through protest mobilization weakened as institutional deliberation proceeded.

Mechanism 2: News Coverage of Protests

I next examine whether accountability pressure from the media subsides as institutional deliberation proceeds, as theoretically expected. The media coverage data were collected from the Korea Press Foundation’s BigKinds archive. To identify news articles covering protests for or against the presidential impeachment during the martial law crisis, I retrieved articles using the search query “impeachment”¹⁴ from November 3, 2024 to May 4, 2025. The outlets of interest included national news outlets: broadcast networks (KBS, MBC, SBS), liberal partisan newspapers (Hankyoreh, Kyunghyang Shinmun), conservative partisan newspapers (Dong-A Ilbo, JoongAng Ilbo). The search result included a total of 18,508 articles. Using the URLs provided by BigKinds, I scraped the full text with the `newspaper3k` Python library.¹⁵

Using LLM-based text annotation, I then classified articles into three categories: coverage of (1) pro-impeachment protest only, (2) anti-impeachment protest only, or (3) both. Each article was also classified based on whether it referenced anti-democratic narratives, such as election fraud claims or political violence.¹⁶ In doing so, I followed a systematic prompt development and refinement procedure based on established best practices (Halterman and

¹⁴Search term in Korean: 탄핵

¹⁵Chosun Ilbo, a major conservative outlet, was initially included in the corpus of interest, but was excluded because the article text could not be reliably scraped due to its website configuration (details in Section 4 of the Supplementary Materials).

¹⁶Yoon cited alleged irregularities at the National Election Commission as a justification for declaring martial law. Political violence was particularly salient when the Seoul Western District Court riot happened on January 19, 2025, involving pro-Yoon protesters after the court issued a warrant.

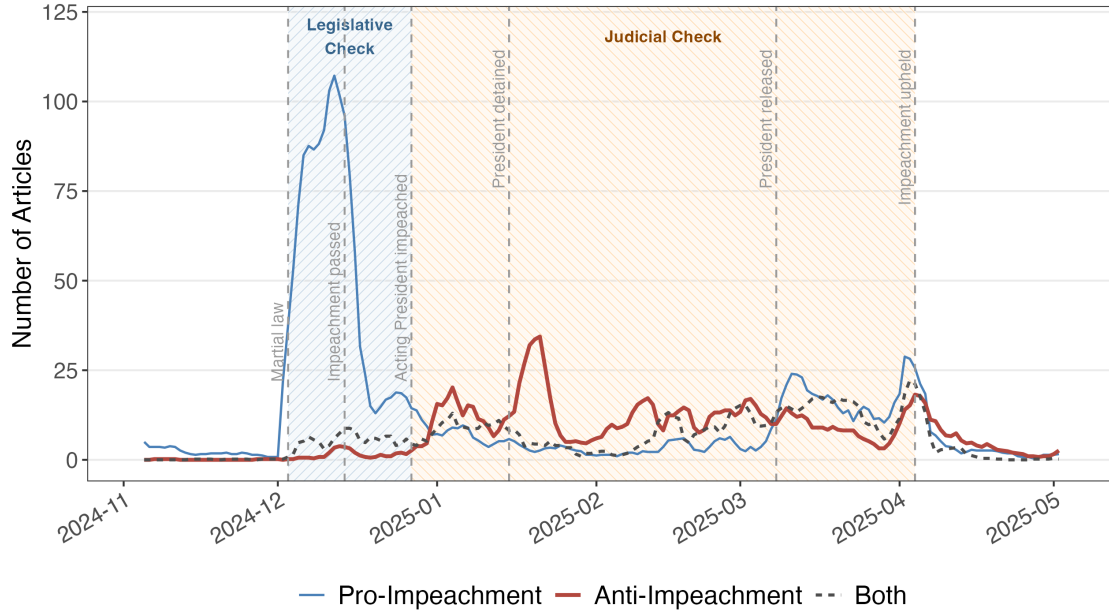
Keith 2025; Törnberg 2024; Lavigne et al. 2026). The coding prompt was refined through multiple iterations of coding with two research assistants, both native Korean speakers. I compared human annotations with LLM-based classifications generated by GPT-4o and GPT-4o-mini (with temperature set to 0), and also assessed consistency across the two LLM models. At each stage, I conducted intercoder reliability checks and refined the prompt until acceptable levels of agreement were achieved (percent agreement, Cohen’s κ ; Hila and Hauser 2025; Lavigne et al. 2026; O’Connor and Joffe 2020). The final analysis on the full sample was conducted using GPT-4o, because it demonstrated higher agreement with human coding than GPT-4o-mini. The final prompt and validation details are available in Tables S13–S20 and Section 7.2 of Supplementary Materials.¹⁷ The finalized LLM prompt revealed that, out of 18,508 articles mentioning impeachment, 4,784 (25.8%) covered impeachment-related protests (the full list of media outlets and article counts are reported in Table S21).

The results are consistent with the theoretical expectation for the protest-coverage mechanism underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation: media attention to pro-impeachment protests declines as institutional deliberation proceeds. Because news coverage tends to be similarly distributed across days, Figure 7 presents the number of articles using 5-day moving averages (Hart, Chinn and Soroka 2020). Accountability pressure from the media—through coverage of pro-impeachment protests—was strongest during the legislative check phase, with a notable peak during the week in which the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion. During the judicial check period, the overall volume of protest coverage declined, while the proportion of coverage focusing exclusively on anti-impeachment protests or covering both sides increased. During the president’s detention, anti-impeachment protests received relatively greater media attention. After the president’s release, media attention to pro-impeachment protests increased but did not return to the levels observed during the

¹⁷Final prompt also identified both-sided coverage outside protest context. Such case was not prevalent, as shown in Figure S9.

early stage of the crisis, while coverage of both sides remained relatively high.¹⁸

Figure 7: Over-Time Media Coverage of Impeachment Protest



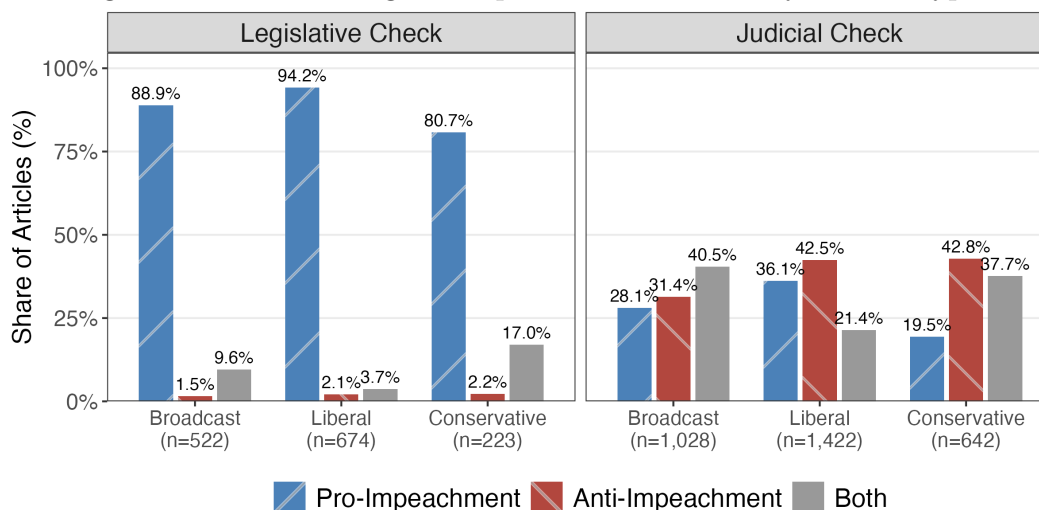
Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. Lines represent centered 5-day moving averages. Each line represents coverage of pro-impeachment protests only, anti-impeachment protests only, or both sides of the protests. The analysis includes national media outlets: broadcast (MBC, KBS, SBS), conservative (Donga, JoongAng), and liberal (Hankyoreh, Kyunghyang).

The composition of protest coverage, illustrated in Figure 8, reveals that accountability pressure was initially uniformly strong across media types but became more fractured as institutional deliberation proceeded—again consistent with the theoretical expectation underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation. During the legislative check period, about 80-95% of articles on impeachment protests covered pro-impeachment protests only, signaling strong accountability pressure even among conservative outlets. Yet during the judicial check period, protest coverage became more fractured and accountability pressure weakened. The proportion of articles covering pro-impeachment protests only decreased to about 20-36%,

¹⁸I additionally examine protest coverage over time by outlet type in Figure S10. Conservative media devoted less coverage to pro-impeachment protests than broadcast and liberal media, a pattern consistent with the partisan coverage bias, given that the incumbent was from a conservative party (Haselmayer, Wagner and Meyer 2017).

whereas coverage of anti-impeachment protests or both sides increased, together accounting for 64–80% of coverage across outlet types.¹⁹

Figure 8: News Coverage of Impeachment Protest By Outlet Types

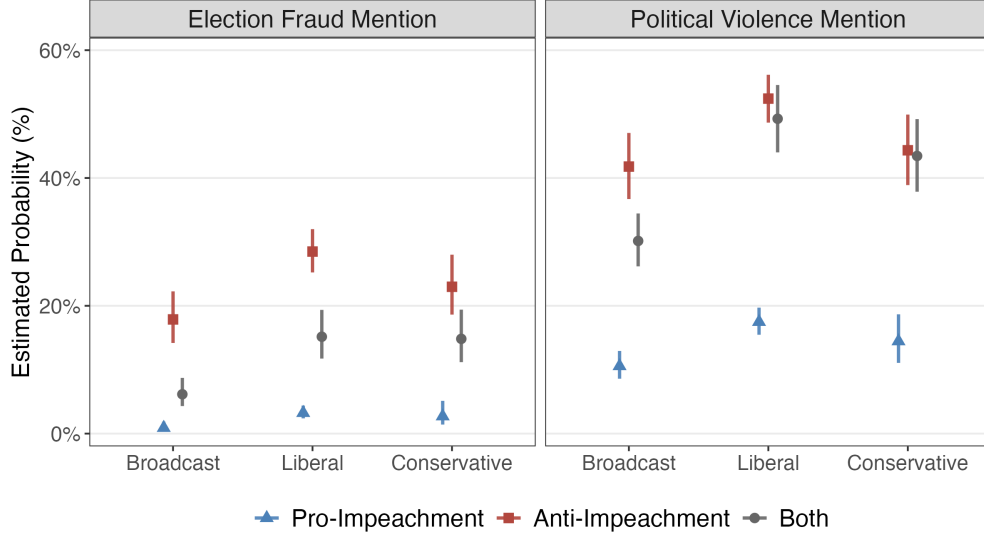


Note: Bars represent coverage of pro-impeachment protests only, anti-impeachment protests only, or both sides of the protests. The analysis includes national media outlets: broadcast (MBC, KBS, SBS), conservative (Donga, JoongAng), and liberal (Hankyoreh, Kyunghyang).

The results on coverage of election fraud and political violence, shown in Figure 9, reveal that these anti-democratic narratives were more prevalent in anti-impeachment protest coverage across outlet types. Election fraud was mentioned most frequently in articles covering only anti-impeachment protests, followed by articles covering both sides, whereas articles covering only pro-impeachment protests rarely referred to election fraud claims. Political violence exhibited a similar pattern, with mentions concentrated in anti-impeachment-only and both-sided coverage. Because coverage focusing on anti-impeachment protests or both sides became more prevalent during judicial deliberation, the media environment increasingly contained coverage featuring these anti-democratic narratives. To the extent that protest coverage conveyed such narratives, they likely became more accessible and salient in citizens' minds through the media as institutional deliberation proceeded.

¹⁹Figure S11 further shows that, although the overall volume of impeachment coverage was comparable across outlet types, conservative media devoted a substantially smaller share of their impeachment coverage to protests than broadcast and liberal media.

Figure 9: Coverage of Anti-democratic Narratives by Protest Coverage



Note: Estimated probabilities of mentioning election fraud and political violence in news articles, by media outlet type and protest coverage. Estimates are derived from logistic regression models with an interaction term between protest coverage type and media outlet type. Error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals. Table S22 presents the results in tabular form.

Mechanism 3: Public Attention to Protests

Having shown that accountability pressure from citizen mobilization and the media weakened as institutional deliberation proceeded, I now turn to public attention to protests, the third mechanism theorized to underlie the paradox of institutional deliberation. This mechanism concerns whether public attention to protests demanding punishment decreases as institutional deliberation proceeds. To assess public attention, I examine online search interest, which captures public information seeking and salient public concerns (Chen et al. 2024; Dancy and Fariss 2024). Online search interest is also closely associated with political engagement, including protest mobilization (Timoneda and Wibbels 2022).

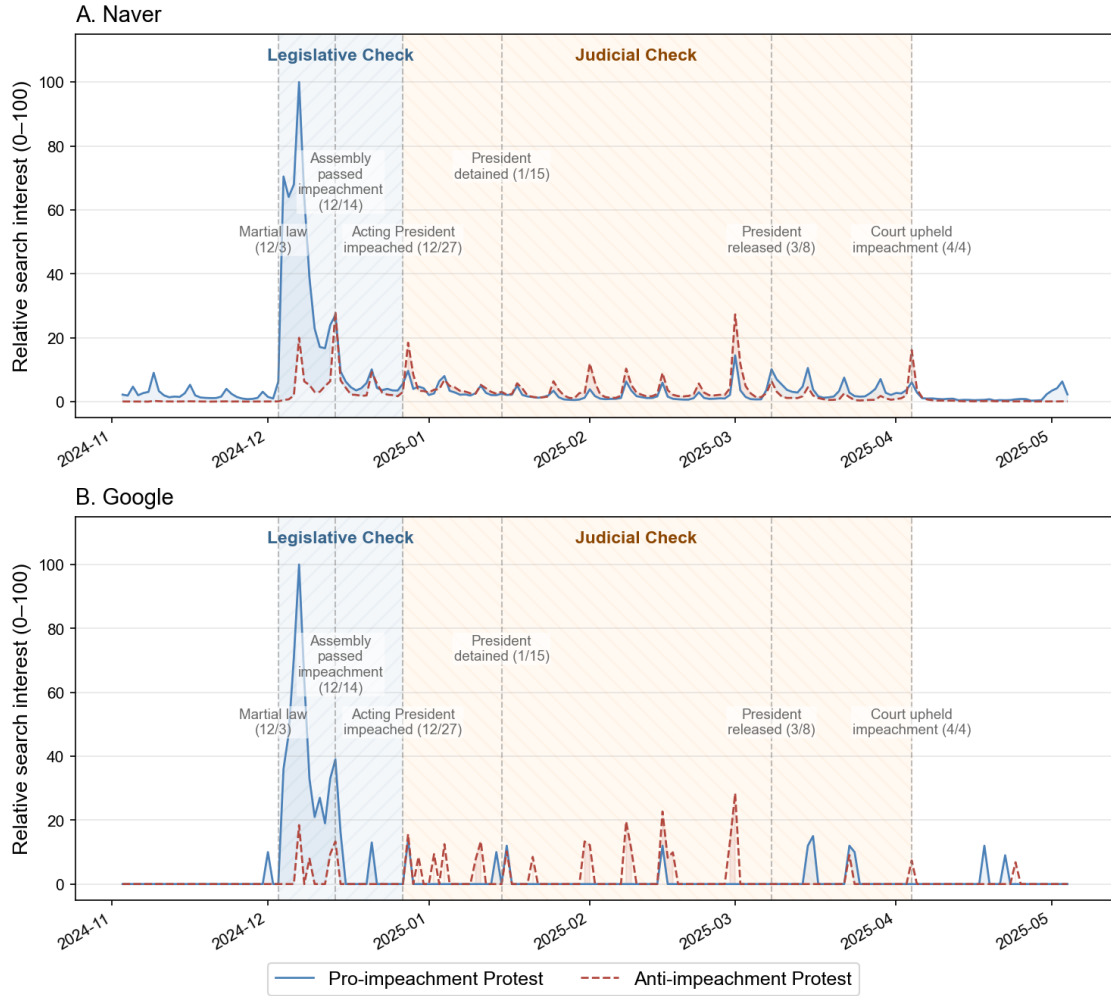
To examine public search interest in protests, I collected search interest data from Google Trends and Naver DataLab spanning from November 3, 2024 to May 4, 2025. All search data were geographically restricted to search activity within South Korea. Because Naver is a dominant search engine in South Korea, using Naver DataLab alongside Google Trends allows me to assess whether similar patterns emerge across two major search platforms, strength-

ening confidence in the observed pattern. Search interest in pro-impeachment protests was measured using the keywords “pro-impeachment protest,” “pro-impeachment rally,” and “candlelight protest,” while search interest in anti-impeachment protests was measured using the keywords “anti-impeachment protest,” “anti-impeachment rally,” and “Taegukgi (national flag) protest.”²⁰ To enable comparison on a common scale, both groups of keywords were submitted in a single query alongside a shared anchor keyword pair, with the resulting scores rescaled proportionally based on the aggregate ratio between the anchor keywords and their respective groups.

The results are consistent with the theoretical expectation for the public-attention mechanism underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation: public attention to pro-impeachment protests declined as institutional deliberation proceeded. As shown in Figure 10, across Naver and Google, interest in pro-impeachment protests peaked during the legislative check phase, but declined sharply during judicial deliberation, whereas interest in anti-impeachment protests increased. Although overall protest-related search activity diminished during judicial deliberation, search interest in anti-impeachment protests remained relatively elevated, particularly during the president’s detention. As with the protest-mobilization and protest-coverage mechanisms, institutional signals about the trajectory of accountability appear to matter: following the president’s release, public attention shifted back toward pro-impeachment protests, although overall search activity remained substantially lower than during the early phase of the crisis.

²⁰The search terms in Korean are: 탄핵찬성집회, 탄핵찬성시위, 촛불집회 (Pro-impeachment), 탄핵반대집회, 탄핵반대시위, 태극기집회 (Anti-impeachment). From a wider pool of potential keywords, terms for pro- and anti-impeachment protests that had non-zero search volume during the analysis period were selected while ensuring comparability between the two sets (Table S23).

Figure 10: Search Interest in Pro- and Anti-Impeachment Protest



Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. Keywords for pro-impeachment included “pro-impeachment protest,” “pro-impeachment rally,” and “candlelight protest”; keywords for anti-impeachment included “anti-impeachment protest,” “anti-impeachment rally,” and “Taegukgi protest.” Anchor terms were used to enable cross-group comparisons on a common scale. Values are normalized to a peak of 100 within Google Trends and Naver DataLab respectively, allowing comparison between pro- and anti-impeachment search interest within each platform. Cross-platform comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

These findings suggest that, as institutional deliberation progressed, particularly when institutional developments signaled that accountability was underway, citizens became less attentive to protests demanding impeachment while becoming more attentive to protests defending the incumbent. The results further suggest that the existence of citizens defending Yoon—and potentially the narratives they advanced—became more salient as institutional

deliberation progressed. To assess the generalizability of this pattern, I additionally examine parallel data of online search interest in protests during the preceding presidential impeachment of Park Geun-hye in 2016–2017. Figure S12 reveals a similar pattern: public attention to pro-impeachment protests peaked before the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion and then declined during judicial deliberation, while attention to anti-impeachment protests increased.

Across the three mechanisms, and despite the distinct nature of the data used to examine each, the patterns are remarkably consistent: accountability pressure from citizens and the media, as well as public attention to such pressure, weakened as institutional deliberation proceeded, particularly when institutional developments signaled that accountability was underway. Combined with the psychological mechanisms theorized earlier, these patterns help explain why public perceptions of democratic legitimacy may become polarized following institutional deliberation, even when strong checks and balances ultimately constrain and punish an incumbent’s democratic violation.

Discussion

This study highlights a fundamental dilemma in how democratic institutions defend democracy against violations of democratic rules. While institutional deliberation is essential for safeguarding the legitimacy of institutional decisions, it can inadvertently foster conditions in which accountability pressure subsides and transgression-justifying narratives gain traction. Consequently, even when institutions ultimately rule an incumbent’s action unlawful, the public may become polarized over the legitimacy of both the incumbent’s action and the institutions responsible for adjudicating it. The very process through which democratic institutions achieve democratic recovery can simultaneously weaken the societal pressures that hold the incumbent accountable and ultimately leave the public more divided over democratic legitimacy, a dynamic I term the paradox of institutional deliberation.

To explain the mechanisms underlying the paradox of institutional deliberation, I high-

light a previously underappreciated tension between two forms of democratic accountability. Horizontal accountability exercised by formal institutions and diagonal accountability exercised by citizens and the media may not always reinforce each other but can instead operate as substitutes. When progress in institutional deliberation signals that accountability is underway, it can create a sense of relief among citizens as democratic breakdown appears to have been averted and accountability is underway. This relief may inadvertently reduce citizens' incentives to sustain accountability pressure while creating space for countermobilization and competing narratives to gain traction.

In the context of South Korea's 2024–2025 martial law crisis, I find empirical evidence consistent with both the predicted consequences and the proposed mechanisms of this paradox. Panel and cross-sectional surveys indicate that perceptions of the legitimacy of martial law, support for impeachment, and trust in democratic institutions became polarized following the Court's impeachment ruling. Three observable indicators of protest dynamics—protest mobilization, media coverage, and public attention—show a remarkably consistent pattern. Accountability pressure was strongest during the early stage of the crisis but weakened after the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion. As institutional deliberation continued at the Constitutional Court, countermobilization and narratives defending the incumbent became more salient.

The results indicate that institutional checks and balances, even when they undergird democratic recovery, may not produce a shared understanding of democratic legitimacy. In the aftermath of institutional deliberation, segments of the public endorsed a violation of the law, signaling a serious challenge to democratic commitments (Ahmed 2023). Trust in institutions likewise became polarized, particularly for institutions such as the Constitutional Court that are responsible for enforcing constitutional rules. Such divergence in public perceptions may threaten democratic stability: polarized perceptions of democratic legitimacy may weaken citizens' collective capacity to protect democracy from future transgressions, while polarized trust in non-electoral institutions may undermine the institutional goodwill

that enables democratic institutions to endure despite disagreements over specific outcomes (Gibson, Caldeira and Spence 2003; Svolik 2019).

Like any study, this research has limitations. Although I examine the predicted consequences and proposed mechanisms using multiple sources of evidence—including panel and cross-sectional surveys, protest mobilization, media coverage, and public attention—the relationship between these mechanisms and changes in public opinion remains correlational. Future research could strengthen causal inference through experimental or quasi-experimental designs when opportunities arise in comparable episodes. Still, the convergence of evidence across multiple data sources provides support for the proposed theoretical framework.

For the literature on democratic backsliding, this study offers both a theoretical framework and an empirical strategy for identifying democratic transgressions and examining accountability mechanisms. While prior research emphasizes that democratic backsliding often unfolds gradually without clear breakpoints and often go unnoticed (e.g., Waldner and Lust 2018; Druckman 2024), my theory applies to incumbent actions that are sufficiently visible to trigger accountability pressures from both formal institutions and civil society actors. The framework specifies the onset and institutional resolution of democratic transgressions, as well as the sequence of institutional milestones that structure accountability dynamics. By doing so, this study provides researchers with a common set of temporal markers for identifying, coding, and comparing democratic transgressions across cases.

The polarized perceptions of democratic legitimacy following institutional deliberation suggest that checks and balances alone do not fully safeguard democracy. Yet the alternative is not straightforward: accelerating institutional decisions may undermine their legitimacy by bypassing constitutional procedures and limiting opportunities for citizens to express their demands. A key lesson, therefore, is that an incumbent’s violation of democratic rules can leave lasting scars even when institutional safeguards ultimately succeed. Institutions alone cannot fully repair the damage, because their deliberative processes unfold alongside—and interact with—the responses of citizens and the media.

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Supplementary Materials for
The Paradox of Institutional Deliberation in Democratic Recovery

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1 Two-wave Panel Survey

Table S1: Distribution of Demographic Variables: Two-wave Panel Survey

	N	%
<i>Age</i>		
20–29	113	13.8%
30–39	146	17.8%
40–49	165	20.1%
50–59	208	25.4%
60–79	187	22.8%
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	381	46.5%
Male	438	53.5%
<i>Education</i>		
College or above	517	63.1%
High school or below	302	36.9%
<i>Ideology</i>		
Liberal	225	27.5%
Moderate	390	47.6%
Conservative	204	24.9%
<i>Party Identification</i>		
Democratic Party of Korea (DPK)	331	40.4%
People Power Party (PPP)	185	22.6%
Rebuilding Korea Party (RKP)	55	6.7%
Other minor parties	74	9.0%
Independent	174	21.2%
N	819	

Note: Respondents who completed both Wave 1 (pre-decision) and Wave 2 (post-decision).
“Other minor parties” includes the Reform Party (RP), Progressive Party (PP), Basic Income Party (BIP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), and Other.

Table S2: Attrition Balance: Wave 1 Characteristics by Panel Retention

Variable	Attrited (N=381)	Retained (N=819)	Difference	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Attitudes toward Martial Law (Wave 1)</i>				
Support for Impeachment	4.26	4.16	-0.10	0.18
Martial Law Legitimacy	1.87	1.79	-0.08	0.27
Martial Law as Insurrection	3.25	3.24	-0.02	0.81
<i>Institutional Trust (Wave 1)</i>				
Trust: Constitutional Court	3.24	3.34	0.10	0.10
Trust: Courts	2.95	2.94	0.00	0.94
Trust: Military	2.77	2.80	0.04	0.56
Trust: National Assembly	2.35	2.38	0.04	0.56
Trust: President's Office	1.96	1.93	-0.03	0.68
Trust: National Election Commission	2.97	3.06	0.10	0.18
<i>Demographics</i>				
Age	43.97	47.06	3.09	<0.001
Female (%)	0.55	0.47	-0.09	0.01
College (%)	0.51	0.63	0.12	<0.001
Income	6.23	6.59	0.36	0.04

Note: Wave 1 respondents who did not complete Wave 2 (Attrited, $N = 381$) are compared to those who completed both waves (Retained, $N = 819$). Differences are Retained – Attrited. Trust and attitude variables are on their original scales. *p*-values are from two-sample *t*-tests.

Table S3: Wave 2 Attention Check Performance

	<i>N</i>	%
Passed all (0 incorrect)	757	92.4%
Failed 1	59	7.2%
Failed 2	3	0.4%
Total	819	100.0%

Table S4: Change in Democratic Attitudes after Impeachment Ruling, by Ideology (Post – Pre-ruling)

	Martial Law was Legitimate	Martial Law was Insurrection	Support for Impeachment
<i>Panel A: Post-Pre Change by Group</i>			
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-
Liberal: Post (Wave 2)	-0.005 (0.014)	-0.044 (0.028)	0.01 (0.008)
Conservative: Post (Wave 2)	0.054** (0.027)	-0.027 (0.048)	-0.02 (0.019)
<i>Panel B: Difference in Change (Conservative – Liberal)</i>			
Liberal (ref.)	-	-	-
Post × Conservative	0.059** (0.023)	0.017 (0.039)	-0.03* (0.017)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	846	846	846
Participants	429	429	429

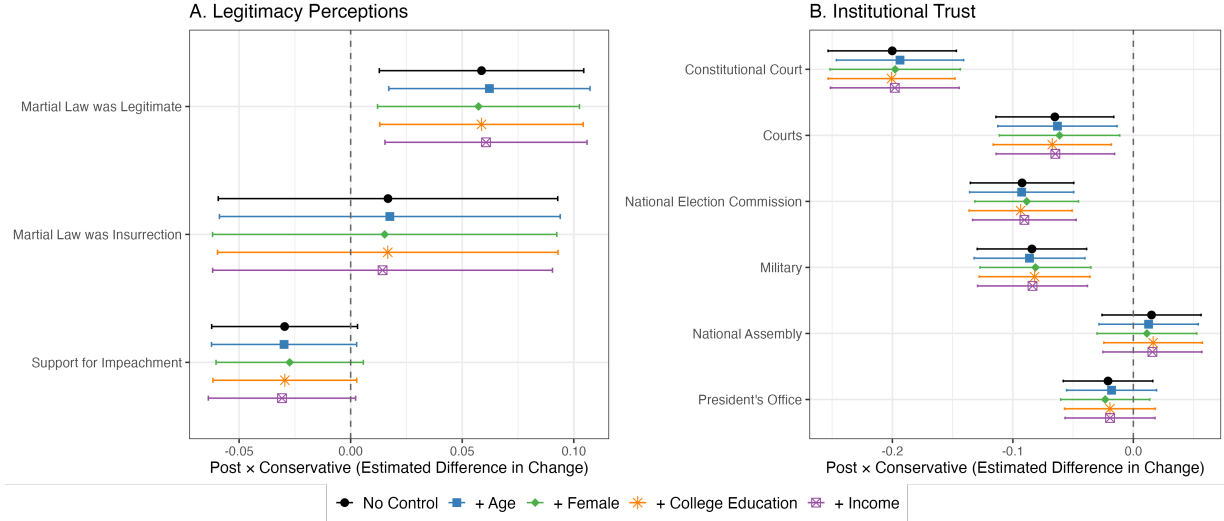
Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Sample excludes moderates. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table S5: Change in Institutional Trust after Impeachment Ruling, by Ideology (Post – Pre-ruling)

	Constitutional Court	Courts	National Election Commission	Military	National Assembly	President's Office
<i>Panel A: Post-Pre Change by Group</i>						
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberal: Post (Wave 2)	0.116*** (0.016)	0.01 (0.017)	0.043*** (0.014)	0.063*** (0.016)	-0.02 (0.016)	0.058*** (0.013)
Conservative: Post (Wave 2)	-0.085*** (0.031)	-0.055* (0.03)	-0.049* (0.026)	-0.021 (0.028)	-0.005 (0.026)	0.037 (0.023)
<i>Panel B: Difference in Change (Conservative – Liberal)</i>						
Liberal (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post × Conservative	-0.2*** (0.027)	-0.065*** (0.025)	-0.092*** (0.022)	-0.084*** (0.023)	0.015 (0.021)	-0.021 (0.019)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	858	858	858	858	858	858
Participants	429	429	429	429	429	429

Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Sample excludes moderates. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure S1: Robustness Check: Pre-Post Ruling DiD with Controls

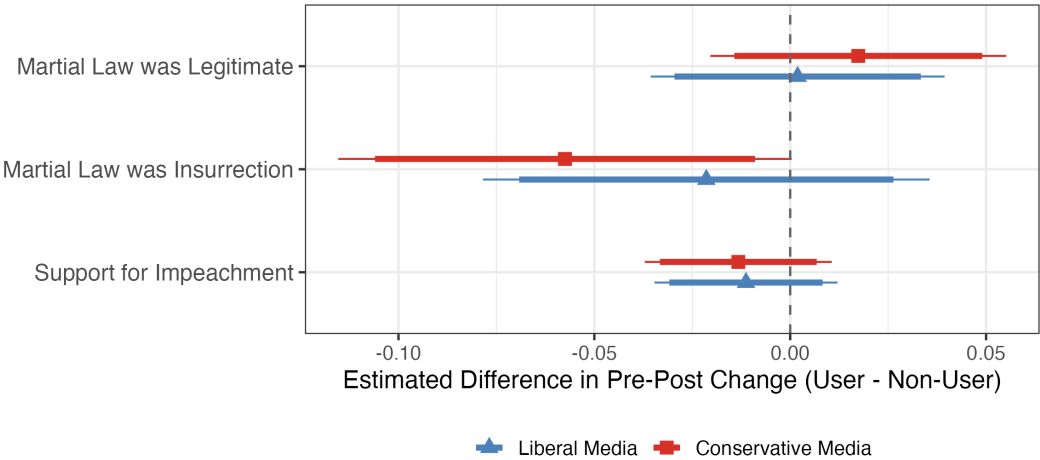


Note: Points represent difference-in-differences estimates, capturing differences between conservatives and liberals in pre-to-post changes following the ruling. Estimates are based on individual fixed-effects OLS regression models with standard errors clustered at the individual level. Each adjusted specification controls separately for age, gender, education, or income by interacting the respective covariate with the post-ruling indicator. Moderates are excluded from the analysis. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Horizontal lines represent 95

Partisan media usage is measured based on respondents' self-reported frequency of exposure to 1) conservative-leaning news outlets (e.g., Chosun Ilbo, Dong-A Ilbo) or 2) liberal-leaning news outlets (e.g., Kyunghyang Shinmun, Hankyoreh) over the past week. Responses are recorded on a four-point scale ranging from "not at all" to "daily." For analysis, these measures are dichotomized such that respondents who report any usage (once or more) are coded as 1, and those who report no usage are coded as 0.

The difference in within-individual changes (pre-to-post ruling) by partisan media use shown in Figure S2 reveal a pattern of divergent updating depending on media diets. Conservative media users, compared to non-users, exhibit relatively greater shifts toward believing that martial law was not an insurrection ($p < .10$). This pattern suggests the possibility that conservative media were more likely to highlight narratives that justified the breach. These findings suggest that media environments can be associated with how individuals update their beliefs over time. Rather than converging following the Constitutional Court's ruling, individuals appear to interpret the same political event through distinct informational lenses, leading to increasing divergence in their evaluations of the president's breach.

Figure S2: Pre–Post Ruling Democratic Legitimacy Perceptions by Partisan Media Use



Note: Estimates are the difference-in-differences estimate (difference in pre-to-post attitude change between users and non-users), capturing the differential change between media diets. Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S8 presents these results in tabular form.

Table S6: Change in Democratic Attitudes after Impeachment Ruling, by Media Use (Post – Pre-ruling)

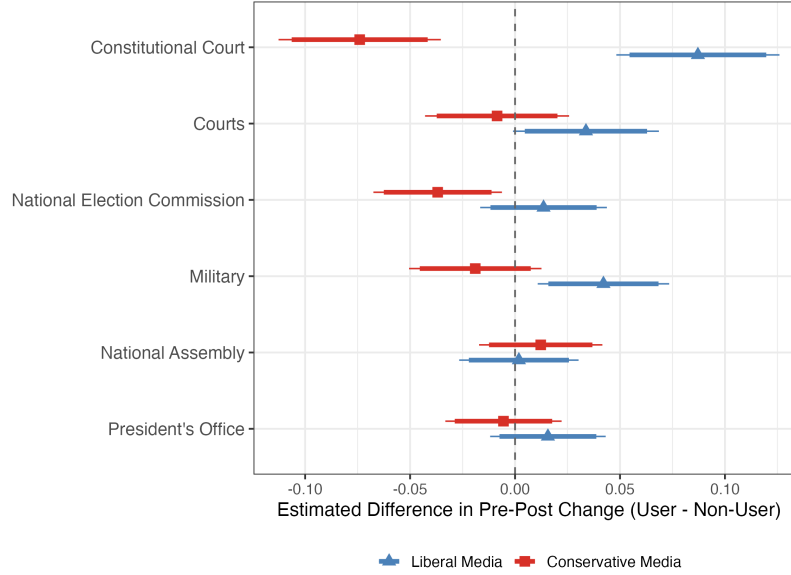
	Martial Law was Legitimate	Martial Law was Insurrection	Support for Impeachment
<i>Conservative Media</i>			
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	0.006 (0.011)	-0.031 (0.019)	0.004 (0.007)
Non-User (ref.)	-	-	-
Post × Conservative Media	0.017 (0.019)	-0.057* (0.029)	-0.013 (0.012)
<i>Liberal Media</i>			
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	0.013 (0.015)	-0.045** (0.02)	0.004 (0.009)
Non-User (ref.)	-	-	-
Post × Liberal Media	0.002 (0.019)	-0.021 (0.029)	-0.011 (0.012)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1592	1592	1592
Participants	819	819	819

Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Conservative and Liberal media models are estimated separately.

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Patterns of divergence across implementing and representative institutions are also associated with media usage, as illustrated in Figure S3. The results indicate that institutional trust is updated in ways that are conditional on media diets, particularly for implementing institutions. Among conservative media users, there were relatively greater trust decreases in the Constitutional Court and the National Election Commission ($ps < .05$). Among liberal media users, there were relatively greater increases in trust in the Constitutional Court, military ($ps < .05$), and the courts ($p < .10$) compared to non-users. Consistent with the findings on ideological divides, the differential change by media diets was less pronounced for representative institutions such as National Assembly and President’s Office.

Figure S3: Pre-Post Ruling Institutional Trust by Partisan Media Use



Note: Estimates are the difference-in-differences estimate (difference in pre-to-post attitude change between users and non-users), capturing the differential change between media diets. Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S9 presents these results in tabular form.

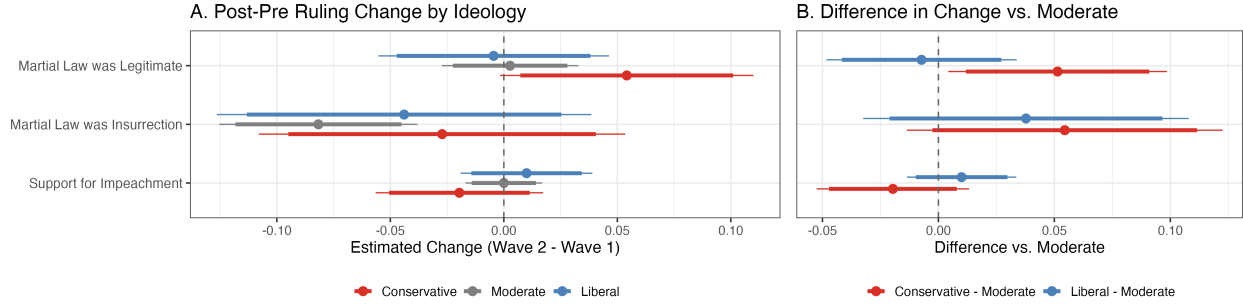
Table S7: Change in Institutional Trust after Ruling, by Media Use (Post – Pre-ruling)

	Constitutional Court	Courts	National Election Commission	Military	National Assembly	President's Office
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	0.051*** (0.013)	-0.007 (0.012)	0.017* (0.01)	0.017 (0.011)	-0.018* (0.009)	0.053*** (0.009)
Non-User (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post × Conservative Media	-0.074*** (0.02)	-0.009 (0.017)	-0.037** (0.016)	-0.019 (0.016)	0.012 (0.015)	-0.006 (0.014)
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	-0.031** (0.015)	-0.03** (0.014)	-0.007 (0.011)	-0.015 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.009)	0.041*** (0.011)
Non-User (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post × Liberal Media	0.087*** (0.02)	0.034* (0.018)	0.014 (0.015)	0.042*** (0.016)	0.002 (0.014)	0.016 (0.014)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638
Participants	819	819	819	819	819	819

Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Conservative and Liberal media models are estimated separately.

* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure S4: Pre-Post Ruling Democratic Legitimacy Perceptions by Ideology, Moderates as Reference



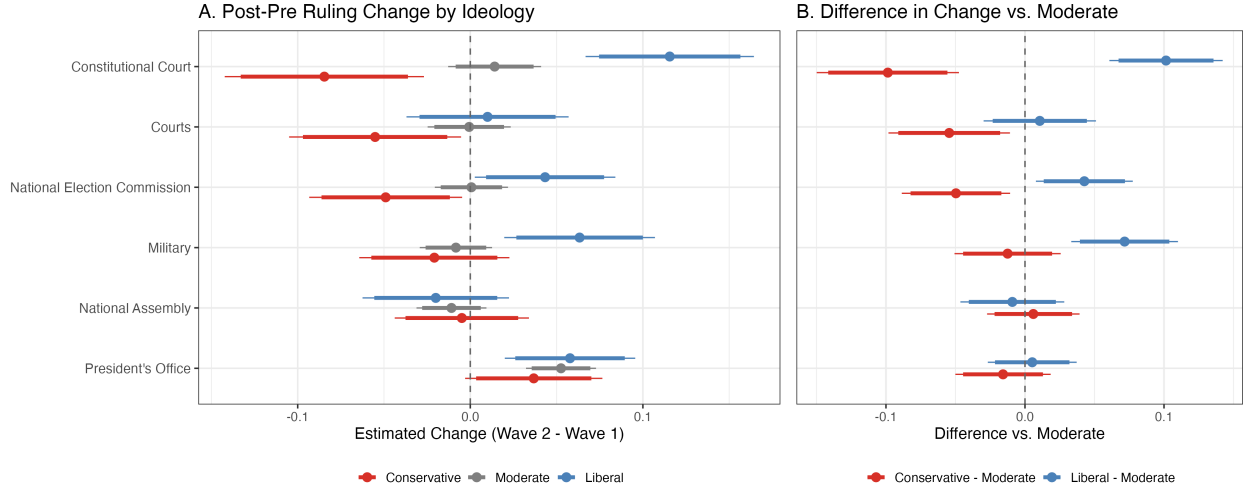
Note: Estimates are the difference-in-differences estimate (difference in pre-to-post attitude change between users and non-users), capturing the differential change between media diets. Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S8 presents these results in tabular form.

Table S8: Change in Democratic Attitudes after Impeachment Ruling, Moderates as Reference (Post – Pre-ruling)

	Martial Law was Legitimate	Martial Law was Insurrection	Support for Impeachment
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	0.003 (0.015)	-0.082*** (0.022)	0 (0.009)
Moderate (ref.)	-	-	-
Post × Conservative	0.051** (0.024)	0.054 (0.035)	-0.02 (0.017)
Post × Liberal	-0.007 (0.021)	0.038 (0.036)	0.01 (0.012)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1592	1592	1592
Participants	819	819	819

Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Moderates are the reference category. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure S5: Pre-Post Ruling Institutional Trust by Ideology, Moderates as Reference



Note: Estimates are the difference-in-differences estimate (difference in pre-to-post attitude change between users and non-users), capturing the differential change between media diets. Estimates are based on two-way fixed effects OLS regression models with individual fixed effects and clustered standard errors at the individual level. All variables are scaled to range from 0 to 1. Thick and thin horizontal lines represent 90% and 95% confidence intervals, respectively. Table S8 presents these results in tabular form.

Table S9: Change in Institutional Trust after Impeachment Ruling, Moderates as Reference (Post – Pre-ruling)

	Constitutional Court	Courts	National Election Commission	Military	National Assembly	President's Office
Pre-ruling wave (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post (Wave 2)	0.014 (0.014)	-0.001 (0.012)	0.001 (0.011)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.011 (0.01)	0.053*** (0.01)
Moderate (ref.)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Post × Conservative	-0.099*** (0.026)	-0.055** (0.022)	-0.05** (0.02)	-0.013 (0.019)	0.006 (0.017)	-0.016 (0.017)
Post × Liberal	0.101*** (0.021)	0.011 (0.021)	0.043** (0.018)	0.072*** (0.02)	-0.009 (0.019)	0.005 (0.016)
Individual FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Observations	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638	1638
Participants	819	819	819	819	819	819

Note: Coefficients from fixed effects OLS regression models with participant-level clustered standard errors in parentheses. Moderates are the reference category. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

2 Cross-sectional Surveys

Table S10: Distribution of Demographic Variables

	Dec 2022 (2 Yrs Before)	Dec 2023 (1 Yr Before)	Dec 2024 (During Crisis)	Apr 2025 (Post-Ruling)	Dec 2025 (1 Yr After)
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	50.7%	50.7%	50.1%	50.2%	50.1%
Female	49.3%	49.3%	49.9%	49.8%	49.9%
<i>Age</i>					
18–29	17.2%	15.9%	14.6%	14.5%	14.5%
30–39	14.0%	14.3%	15.0%	14.8%	15.9%
40–49	18.3%	17.1%	17.8%	16.8%	16.1%
50–59	19.6%	20.7%	19.8%	20.0%	19.7%
60–69	16.8%	17.8%	17.8%	17.9%	17.7%
70 and above	14.1%	14.2%	15.2%	16.1%	16.2%
<i>Education</i>					
College or above	60.9%	59.0%	58.2%	63.0%	60.5%
High school or below	37.7%	40.2%	40.7%	36.4%	38.8%
Missing/DK	1.4%	0.8%	1.1%	0.6%	0.7%
<i>Party Identification</i>					
Democratic Party of Korea (DPK)	29.4%	30.9%	38.4%	33.7%	41.9%
People Power Party (PPP)	36.3%	34.1%	26.0%	34.2%	20.2%
Rebuilding Korea Party (RKP)	5.3%	3.0%	8.1%	6.3%	3.3%
Other minor parties	2.5%	2.9%	4.2%	6.3%	5.6%
Independent	26.2%	27.8%	21.4%	19.1%	27.7%
Missing/DK	0.3%	1.3%	1.9%	0.5%	1.3%
<i>Ideology</i>					
Liberal	24.3%	24.0%	28.6%	25.0%	28.5%
Moderate	36.4%	35.2%	33.0%	30.6%	33.8%
Conservative	29.8%	31.0%	27.8%	32.7%	27.7%
Missing/DK	9.5%	9.8%	10.5%	11.8%	10.0%
N	1,000	1,006	1,002	1,001	1,003

Note: Each column reports cross-sectional percentages within that wave (not a panel). Wave timing: Dec 2022 (2 years before crisis); Dec 2023 (1 year before crisis); Dec 2024 (during crisis, post-Assembly impeachment vote); Apr 2025 (post-Constitutional Court ruling); Dec 2025 (1 year after crisis). “Other minor parties” includes the Reform Party (RP), Progressive Party (PP), and Other.

Table S11: Change in Support for Impeachment: During Crisis vs. After Crisis

	Overall	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
During Crisis (Dec 2024)	0.81 (0.013)	0.97 (0.01)	0.891 (0.018)	0.555 (0.031)
After Crisis (Apr 2025)	0.698 (0.015)	0.959 (0.013)	0.837 (0.022)	0.364 (0.028)
Change (After – During)	–0.112***	–0.012	–0.053*	–0.192***

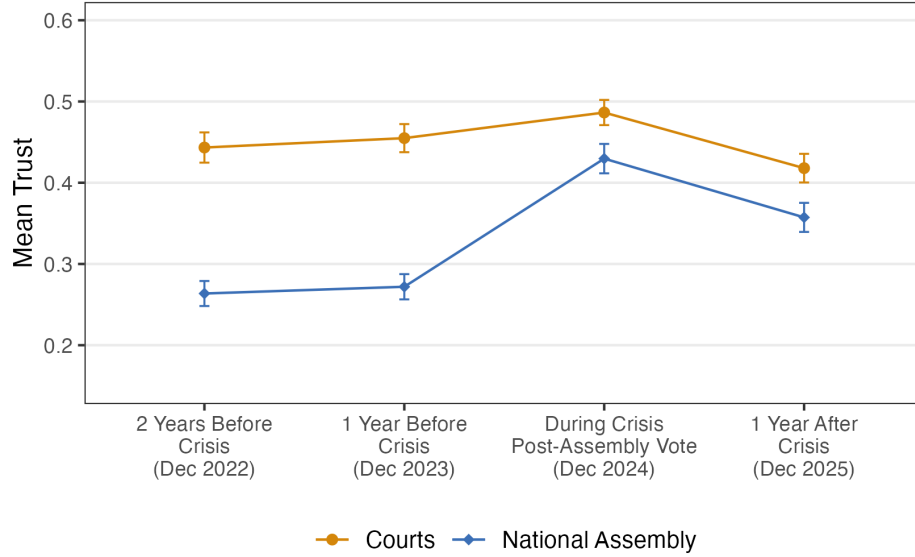
Note: Cell entries are weighted means with weighted standard errors in parentheses. Change row reports the weighted difference-in-means with significance from a weighted t-test. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Table S12: Change in Institutional Trust: During Crisis vs. One Year After

	Overall	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Constitutional Court				
During Crisis (Dec 2024)	0.592 (0.008)	0.607 (0.013)	0.58 (0.013)	0.599 (0.016)
1 Year After (Dec 2025)	0.505 (0.009)	0.58 (0.016)	0.53 (0.015)	0.42 (0.018)
Change (1yr After – During)	–0.087***	–0.028	–0.05**	–0.178***
Courts				
During Crisis (Dec 2024)	0.486 (0.008)	0.468 (0.014)	0.479 (0.014)	0.513 (0.015)
1 Year After (Dec 2025)	0.418 (0.009)	0.396 (0.016)	0.427 (0.016)	0.43 (0.017)
Change (1yr After – During)	–0.068***	–0.072***	–0.052**	–0.083***
National Assembly				
During Crisis (Dec 2024)	0.43 (0.009)	0.542 (0.016)	0.433 (0.015)	0.327 (0.017)
1 Year After (Dec 2025)	0.357 (0.009)	0.487 (0.017)	0.345 (0.014)	0.253 (0.016)
Change (1yr After – During)	–0.072***	–0.055**	–0.088***	–0.074***

Note: Cell entries are weighted means with weighted standard errors in parentheses. Change row reports the weighted difference-in-means with significance from a weighted t-test. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure S6: Long-term Trends of Institutional Trust: Pre-, During, and Post-Crisis



Note: Estimates represent weighted averages and error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals.

3 Protest Mobilization

Protest event data were obtained from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED). The following filters were applied: (1) event type: Protests; (2) date range: November 3, 2024 to May 4, 2025; (3) country: South Korea. This yielded 3,562 protest events, where each observation corresponds to a unique combination of date and location at the city or district level.

To categorize each protest event into pro-impeachment, anti-impeachment, or unclear, I developed a structured LLM prompt. Based on the “notes” field in the ACLED data, using GPT-4o-mini, with temperature set to 0, the prompt instructs the model to classify the stance of protests based on whether protesters supported or opposed President Yoon’s impeachment, removal, arrest, or prosecution, or conversely opposed impeachment and called for his release or reinstatement. To validate the LLM classification, two research assistants independently coded a random sample of 100 events, achieving an inter-coder Cohen’s Kappa of .84 and agreement rate of 94%. Disagreements between coders were reconciled through discussion, and the reconciled labels were compared against the LLM classification, yielding 95% agreement and Cohen’s κ of .87, indicating that LLM is performing reliably (O’Connor and Joffe 2020; Lavigne et al. 2026). The validated prompt was applied to 1,654 protest events related to Yoon’s impeachment (i.e., “note” field mentions the texts “yoon,” “president,” or “impeach”), among which 1,045 were pro-impeachment, 313 were anti-impeachment, and

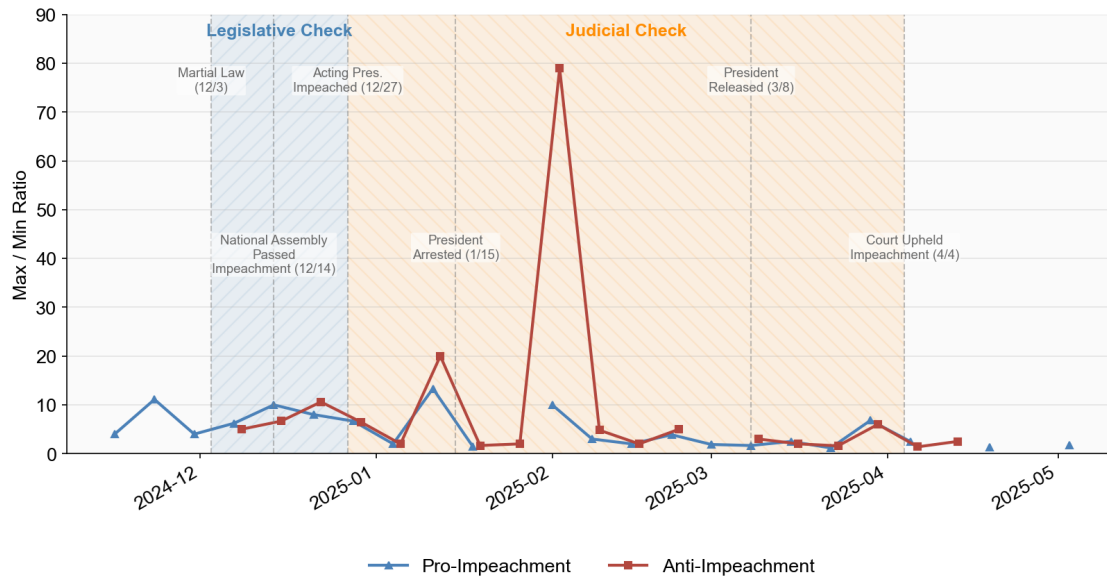
296 were unclassified. Excluding the unclassified cases, 1,358 protest events demanding or opposing Yoon’s impeachment were used for the main analyses.

Crowd size estimates were extracted from ACLED’s “tags” field, which records reporters’ or coders’ estimates of participant numbers. Events with no estimate (“no report”) were treated as missing. Numeric ranges were parsed into lower- and upper-bound values. Single-point estimates were assigned to both bounds. I manually reviewed every case with a non-numeric description and converted text-based quantifiers (e.g., “dozens,” “hundreds”) to representative values (36 and 300, respectively), while treating vague quantifiers (e.g., “some”) and vehicle counts (e.g., “30 tractors”) as missing. Parenthetical qualifiers (e.g., “police estimate”, “organizer estimate”) were removed prior to parsing.

Events were grouped into four periods: Pre-Crisis (November 3–December 2, 2024), Legislative Check (December 3–27, 2024, from the martial law declaration to the impeachment of the Acting President), Judicial Check (December 28, 2024–April 4, 2025, the Constitutional Court deliberation period), and Post-Ruling (April 5–May 4, 2025).

In Figure S7, lines show the weekly maximum ratio of the upper-bound (organizer/highest) to lower-bound (police/lowest) crowd size estimate among events with a reported range. A ratio of 1 indicates no divergence between the two estimates, whereas higher values indicate greater overestimation by organizer estimates compared to police estimates. The largest observed ratio ($78.9\times$, recorded for a Pro-Impeachment protest event on February 1, 2025) was an outstanding outlier compared to other observations. To avoid misleading the trends, this outlier was excluded in the upper-bound crowd size estimates in the main text.

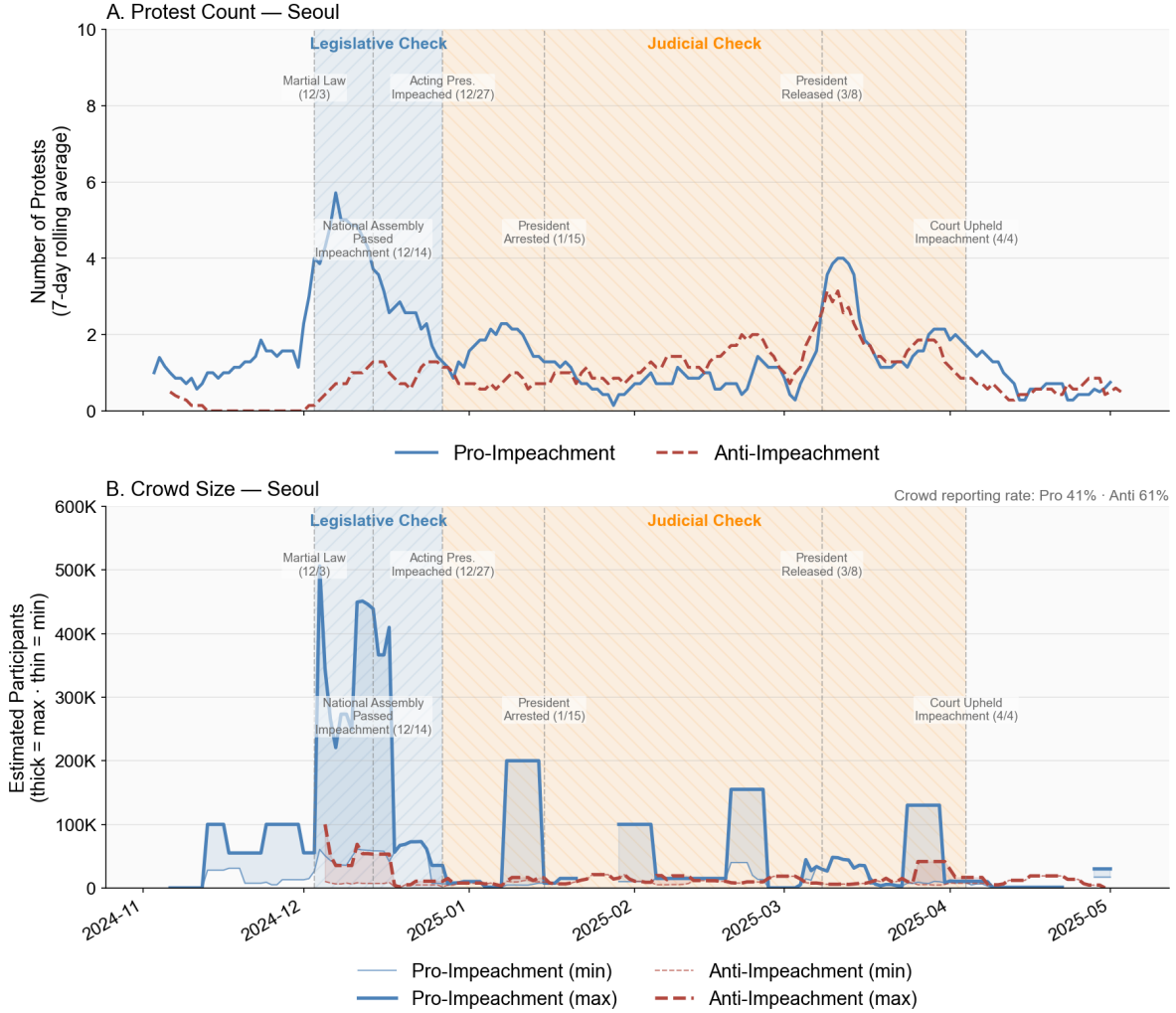
Figure S7: Weekly Maximum Ratio of Min-Max Crowd Size Estimates: Organizer vs. Police Estimate Gap



Notes: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format.

Given the central role of capital area for protest mobilization in South Korea, Figure S8 shows how the impeachment protests evolved in the Seoul Metropolitan area (Seoul, Incheon, and Gyeonggi-do). Trends are roughly similar to the nation-wide trends presented in the manuscript: Pro-impeachment protests were most intense during the legislative check and subsided during the judicial check period, and anti-impeachment protests grew in frequency while President Yoon was detained.

Figure S8: Protest Mobilization in Seoul Metropolitan Area



Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. In Panel A, lines represent centered 7-day moving averages of daily protest counts. In Panel B, lines represent centered 7-day moving averages of daily crowd size estimates, based on events for which participant estimates were reported (reporting rates noted in the upper right corner). Shaded bands indicate the range between the reported minimum and maximum crowd size estimates. When only a single estimate was reported, the minimum and maximum coincide and no shaded band is visible. One event with an extreme ratio of 78.9 is excluded from the maximum crowd size estimate.

4 News Coverage of Protests

Initial Corpus of Media Coverage for LLM Prompt Validation: The media coverage data was collected from BigKinds, the South Korean news archive run by the Korea Press Foundation (<https://www.bigkinds.or.kr/>). To collect the news articles that covered protests for or against the presidential impeachment during the martial law crisis in 2024 – 2025, I

downloaded the news articles using the following search term: [impeachment AND (protest OR rally)]¹ between the onset of the crisis, December 3, 2024, until one week after the resolution of the crisis, April 13, 2025. The outlets of interest were national partisan media: major conservative outlets (*Donga*, *Chosun*, *JoongAng*) and major liberal outlets (*Kyunghyang*, *Hankyoreh*).²

Using the URLs for news articles, I scraped the full text of the articles using the `newspaper3k` Python library. Full texts were successfully retrieved for four of the five outlets of interest: Hankyoreh, Kyunghyang, JoongAng, and Donga. For Chosun, both `newspaper3k` and `BeautifulSoup` failed to extract the content because the outlet’s webpages use a dynamically rendered (JavaScript-based) structure. Thus, Chosun was excluded from the article scraping process. Prior to scraping, the duplicate articles were also excluded from the raw data.³ Through this process, I collected the full text content of 3,521 unique articles for the following outlets: Hankyoreh (n=1,077), Kyunghyang (n=1,058), JoongAng (n=865), and Donga (n=521).

Prior to text annotation, I cleaned article text—both the title and content—by removing advertisements, embedded media artifacts, journalist identifiers, outlet credits, promotional text, and URLs using regular expressions. The resulting text retained only the substantive content of each article and is saved as cleaned versions of the title and body text variables.

Coding procedures and validation: In developing the LLM coding prompt, I rigorously followed the recommended best practices in prior research (Halterman and Keith 2025; Törnberg 2024; Lavigne et al. 2026). I used the following binary categories to code for each article:

1) Impeachment Protest Coverage: Whether the article covered protests *for* or *against* President Yoon’s impeachment.

1. *Pro_Protest*: Whether the article covers pro-impeachment protest(s).
2. *Anti_Protest*: Whether the article covers anti-impeachment protest(s).

¹The search terms in Korean: (집회 OR 시위) AND 탄핵

²Download date: January 3, 2026. I record the download date for raw datasets because news outlets may delete or revise article content—titles, text, or URLs—after publication, and search engine indices (e.g., BigKinds) may return different results for the same query at different points in time.

³The raw data from BidKinds has the column “exclusion” (“분석제외 여부”). The ones that are indicated as “duplicate” (“중복”) or “exception” (“예외”) were excluded, following their instructions (link): Duplicate: cases where articles are repeatedly collected due to high similarity; Exception: cases such as personnel announcements, obituaries, social notes, photos, etc., where meaningful analytical results are unlikely.

3. *Both_Protest*: Whether the article covers both pro- and anti-impeachment protests.

2) Coverage of Political violence and Election Fraud: Whether the article covered the incidents of political violence or election fraud claims.

1. *Violence*: Whether the article covers incidents of political violence.

2. *Election Fraud*: Whether the article covers election fraud claims.

I developed an original coding scheme readable by both machines and humans (Halterman and Keith 2025) and refined the coding prompt following the iterative procedure proposed by Törnberg (2024). Across four rounds of prompt development, two human coders independently annotated random samples of news articles, documenting supporting evidence for each coding decision. Disagreements were reconciled through discussion under my moderation, and the reconciled decisions served as the gold standard. GPT-4o-mini was then evaluated on the same articles using chain-of-thought-style justifications that cited supporting evidence. Disagreements between the reconciled human decisions and GPT-4o-mini were used to iteratively revise the coding instructions and examples. Each round evaluated a new random sample of 20 articles (five per outlet), resulting in a total of 80 manually coded articles.

Prompt revisions focused on improving conceptual clarity rather than expanding the coding scheme. Specifically, I clarified the scope of protest mentions (e.g., excluding unrelated protests while including politicians’ participation in protests), distinguished contemporary political violence from abstract or historical references, excluded non-journalistic texts such as full transcripts of speeches and court rulings, and added the `both_frame` variable to capture articles presenting both sides of the impeachment debate without explicit references to protests. During prompt development, I also identified source-identifying information embedded in article texts, motivating the text-cleaning procedure described above. Additional examples were incorporated to improve GPT’s recognition of protest-related language, political violence, and election fraud.

After four rounds of refinement, intercoder agreement between the reconciled human decisions and GPT-4o-mini ranged from .85 to .95 across variables, while agreement between the two human coders ranged from .85 to 1.00. Agreement between GPT-4o and GPT-4o-mini also ranged from .90 to .95, indicating that the coding outcomes were robust across LLM variants (Table S13).

Introducing the `both_frame` variable initially reduced agreement when all variables were coded using a single prompt. To reduce prompt complexity, I divided the coding task into two separate API calls. As shown in Table S14, the split-prompt strategy restored agreement

Table S13: Intercoder Agreement across Coding Pairs: Fourth Iteration ($n = 20$)

Variable	RA-Gold vs. GPT4o-mini	RA1 vs. RA2	GPT4o-mini vs. GPT4o
pro_mention	0.95	1.00	0.95
anti_mention	0.85	0.90	0.90
both_mention	0.95	0.85	0.95
viol_mention	0.85	1.00	0.95
fraud_mention	0.95	0.95	0.95

Note: Entries indicate the proportion of agreement (0.00–1.00). “RA-Gold” refers to the reconciled human decisions.

for the key protest variables while improving agreement for **anti_mention**, suggesting that reducing cognitive load improved coding performance.

Table S14: Prompt Optimization: Comparison between Unified and Split Prompt (post-Fourth iteration)

Variable	Baseline	Updated Prompt (balance_frame added)	
		Unified Prompt	Split Prompt
pro_mention	0.95	0.90	0.95
anti_mention	0.85	0.90	0.95
both_mention	0.95	0.90	0.95
viol_mention	0.85	0.90	0.85
fraud_mention	0.95	1.00	1.00

Note: All entries represent the proportion of agreement between the reconciled human decisions (RA-Gold) and GPT-4o-mini. *Baseline* reflects the agreement before the inclusion of the **balance_frame** variable. *Unified Prompt* denotes a single-call execution including all variables, while *Split Prompt* indicates the prompt where the coding task is divided into two separate API calls.

Coding validation

The final coding prompt was validated on a new random sample of 100 articles (25 per outlet) drawn from the full article pool, excluding pre-test articles ($n = 80$) and full speech transcripts by the president or the Constitutional Court ($n = 7$),⁴ which overlapped by one article, yielding 86 excluded articles. The validation sample was thus drawn from the remaining 3,435 articles.

⁴Articles containing the full text of the president’s trial statement or the Constitutional Court ruling were identified by manually examining articles with word counts exceeding 2,000 ($n = 33$). For reference, the median word count was 325 and the 75th percentile was 440, prior to excluding these “full text” articles.

Using the final coding prompt, the intercoder agreement between the two human RAs were very high across all metrics—percent agreement, Cohen’s kappa, and F1 score (Table S15). The coding prompt performed stably across the two GPT models, GPT-4o-mini and GPT-4o (Table S16). According to O’Connor and Joffe (2020); Miles and Huberman (1994); Neuendorf (2017), the intercoder reliability values above .8 is acceptable and those above .6 is considered substantial. Following conventional interpretations of Cohen’s κ , values between 0.61 and 0.80 indicate substantial agreement, while values above 0.80 indicate almost perfect agreement (Hila and Hauser 2025; O’Connor and Joffe 2020). In light of these standards, the results indicate acceptable intercoder reliability across categories.

Table S15: Inter-coder Reliability between RA1 and RA2 (n=100)

Variable	Percent Agreement	Cohen’s κ	F1 Score
pro_mention	0.94	0.88	0.94
anti_mention	0.95	0.89	0.94
both_mention	0.98	0.94	0.95
viol_mention	0.93	0.72	0.76
fraud_mention	0.97	0.88	0.90

Table S16: Inter-coder Reliability between GPT-4o-mini and GPT-4o (n=100)

Variable	Percent Agreement	Cohen’s κ	F1 Score
pro_mention	0.94	0.88	0.94
anti_mention	0.95	0.89	0.94
both_mention	0.98	0.94	0.95
viol_mention	0.93	0.72	0.76
fraud_mention	0.97	0.88	0.90

After the two human coders reconciled the cases where their coding was different, the reconciled human coding was compared to the GPT’s coding. Table S17 presents the inter-coder reliability metrics between the consensus human coder judgments and the LLM model judgments (GPT-4o-mini, GPT-4o). GPT-4o performs better than GPT-4o-mini on four out of five variables.

Table S17: Inter-coder Reliability between Human Coding with LLM (n=100)

Variable	GPT-4o			GPT-4o-mini		
	Agreement	κ	F1	Agreement	κ	F1
pro_mention	0.90	0.80	0.90	0.82	0.64	0.84
anti_mention	0.83	0.65	0.79	0.87	0.73	0.84
both_mention	0.95	0.84	0.87	0.93	0.81	0.85
viol_mention	0.81	0.52	0.63	0.74	0.40	0.54
fraud_mention	0.97	0.89	0.90	0.94	0.79	0.82

To additionally examine whether the article presents both pro- and anti-impeachment positions in a broader sense, outside the protest context, the `balance_frame` was included. To impose the rule specified in the prompt, I post-process the coding so that `balance_frame=0` whenever `both_mention=1`.⁵ That is, if (`pro_mention=1` or `anti_mention=1`) or `both_mention=1`, then `balance_frame` is coded to 0. The resulting coding scheme for the analysis consists of three mutually exclusive categories (pro-protest, anti-protest, both-protest) and one additional category (both-broad):

- *Pro-protest*: The article mentions only protest(s) that support President Yoon’s impeachment; Coding: `pro_mention=1`, `anti_mention=0`, `both_mention=0`
- *Anti-protest*: The article mentions only protest(s) that oppose President Yoon’s impeachment; Coding: `pro_mention=0`, `anti_mention=1`, `both_mention=0`
- *Both-protest*: The article mentions both pro- and anti-impeachment protest(s); Coding: `pro_mention=0`, `anti_mention=0`, `both_mention=1`
- *Both-broad*: The article covers both pro- and anti-impeachment perspectives, either through explicit protest mentions or broader balanced framing; Coding: `both_mention=1` OR `balance_frame=1`

⁵Manual inspection of the results in the fourth pre-coding iteration revealed that GPT-4o-mini often missed this skipping rule.

Intercoder reliability between the reconciled human judgments and GPT models was satisfactory after the post-processing, as shown in Table S18. The results indicate that GPT-4o outperforms GPT-4o-mini on three of the four variables. Based on these results, I use GPT-4o for the main analysis and employ GPT-4o-mini as a robustness check to assess whether the findings are consistent across different LLM models.

Table S18: Agreement between Human Coding and GPT Models (Post-processed, n=100)

Variable	GPT-4o			GPT-4o-mini		
	Agreement	κ	F1	Agreement	κ	F1
pro_mention	0.90	0.76	0.83	0.85	0.67	0.79
anti_mention	0.87	0.57	0.65	0.90	0.68	0.74
both_protest	0.94	0.85	0.89	0.92	0.79	0.85
both_broad	0.90	0.78	0.86	0.83	0.62	0.74

Full-scale coding and validation

The finalized prompt was used for the full sample of 3,514 articles (Kyunghyang: 1,076, Hankyoreh: 1,054, Jungang: 865, Donga: 519). The average word count was 399.7 and the median was 324.0. Intermodel reliability between GPT-4o and GPT-4o-mini was satisfactory across all variables.

Table S19: Agreement between GPT-4o and GPT-4o-mini (Post-processed, n=3,514)

Variable	Agreement	κ	F1
pro_mention	0.88	0.75	0.83
anti_mention	0.90	0.71	0.77
both_mention	0.91	0.71	0.76
both_broad	0.90	0.71	0.77
viol_mention	0.88	0.75	0.84
fraud_mention	0.93	0.75	0.79

Post-coding validation

With the fully coded dataset, I drew a random sample of 2% of articles per news outlet (Kyunghyang: 22, Hankyoreh: 21, Jungang: 17, Donga: 10; total N = 70).⁶ Two human coders hand-coded this random sample. The reconciled human coders' judgments on these

⁶Deng (2026) coded 1% of the full sample for the post-coding validation.

random sample were compared to the GPT results. The validation results presented in Table S8 confirms that the accuracy of coding was satisfactory.

Table S20: Agreement between Human Coding and GPT Models (Post-procseed; n=70)

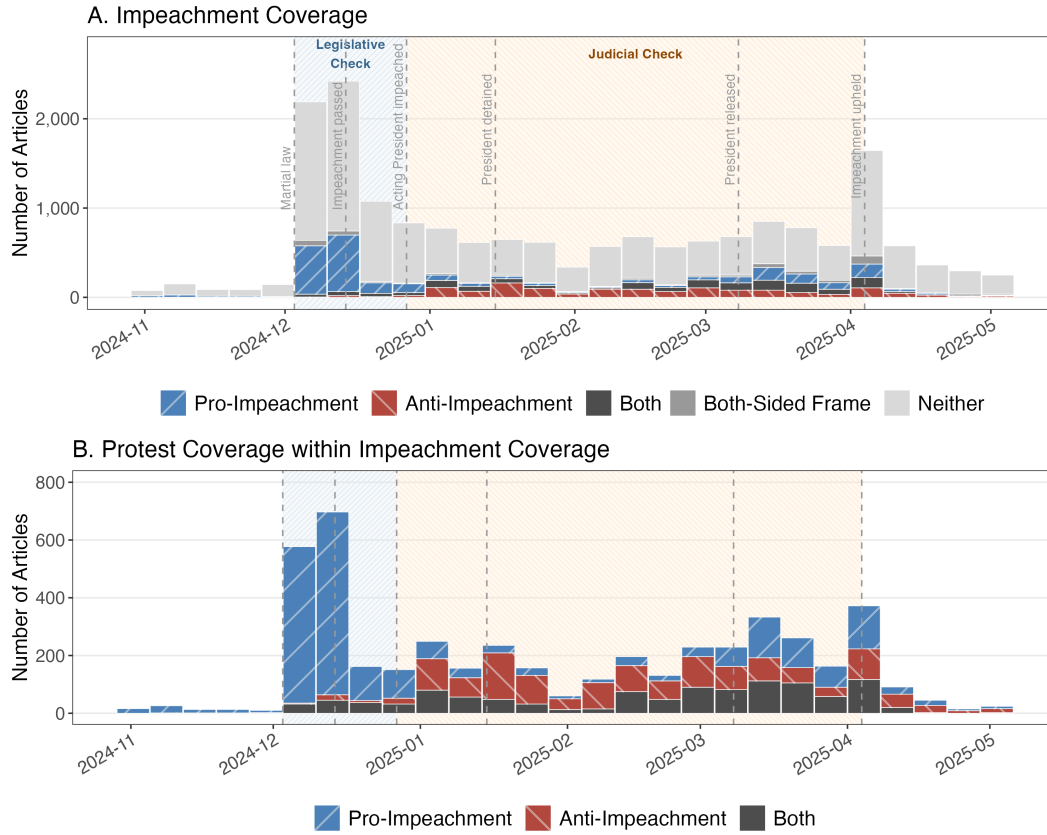
Variable	GPT-4o			GPT-4o-mini		
	Agreement	κ	F1	Agreement	κ	F1
pro_mention	0.89	0.76	0.85	0.90	0.79	0.88
anti_mention	0.97	0.88	0.90	0.90	0.57	0.63
both_mention	0.91	0.77	0.82	0.89	0.70	0.78
balance_frame	0.90	-0.05	0.00	0.94	0.00	0.00
viol_mention	0.86	0.59	0.67	0.74	0.40	0.53
fraud_mention	0.97	0.79	0.80	0.91	0.52	0.57

Main Analysis of Media Coverage

For main analyses, I applied the validated prompt to the broader corpus of media coverage. On Bigkinds, the search term and dates were broadened to “impeachment” and November 3, 2024 to May 4, 2025. The outlets of interest were broadened to major national media: broadcast outlets (MBC, KBS, SBS), conservative media (Donga, Jungang), and liberal media (Kyunghyang, Hankyereh), resulting in a total of 18,508 articles.⁷

⁷Download date: May 6, 2026.

Figure S9: News Coverage of Impeachment Protest by Content

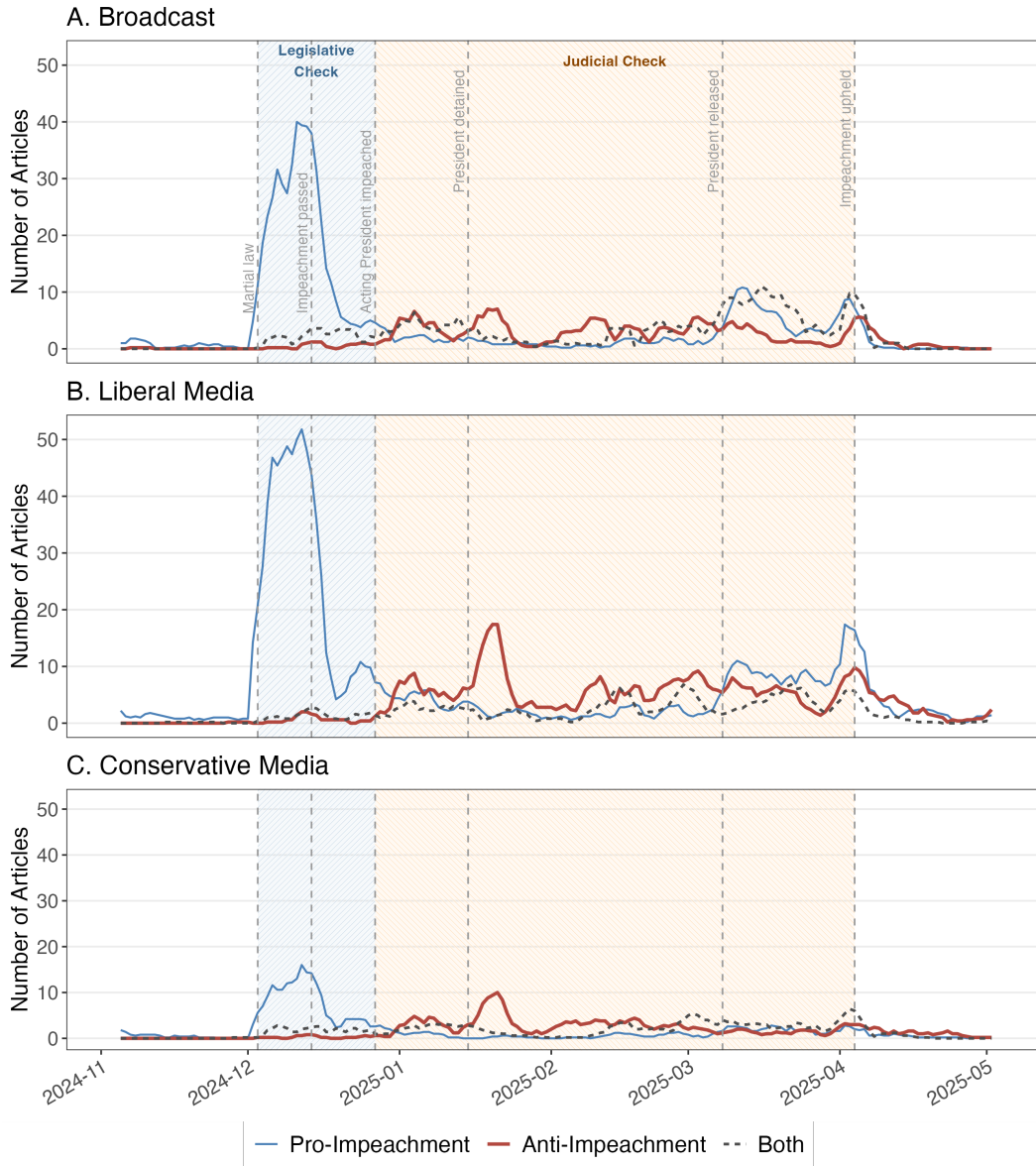


Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. Pro-impeachment articles cover the pro-impeachment protests but not the anti-impeachment protests. Anti-impeachment covers the anti-impeachment protests but not the pro-impeachment protests. Both includes articles that mention both sides of the protests. Neither covers neither side of the protests. The outlets included are national media: broadcast (MBC, KBS, SBS), conservative (Donga, JoongAng), and liberal (Hankyoreh, Kyunghyang) outlets.

Table S21: Impeachment Coverage by Media Type and Outlet

Outlet	Total Articles	Articles Mentioning Protest	Share of Protest Coverage (%)
Broadcast			
KBS	2114	797	37.7
MBC	1567	518	33.1
SBS	1173	279	23.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	4854	1594	32.8
Liberal Media			
Kyunghyang Shinmun	4222	1122	26.6
Hankyoreh	3636	1137	31.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	7858	2259	28.7
Conservative Media			
JoongAng Ilbo	3346	678	20.3
Dong-A Ilbo	2450	253	10.3
<i>Subtotal</i>	5796	931	16.1
Total	18508	4784	25.8

Figure S10: Media Coverage of Impeachment Protests by Media Type



Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. Pro-impeachment articles cover the pro-impeachment protests but not the anti-impeachment protests. Anti-impeachment covers the anti-impeachment protests but not the pro-impeachment protests. Both includes articles that mention both sides of the protests. Neither covers neither side of the protests.

Not only the relative volume of coverage, but also the absolute volume of protest coverage varied across institutional stages and outlet types. In Figure S11A, the weekly volume of coverage on impeachment was almost negligible prior to the martial law crisis, increased to almost 600-800 per week during the legislative check, but decreased to 200-300 per week during the judicial check. While the volume of coverage of protests itself was comparable across media types, Figure S11B reveals that conservative media outlets allocated much smaller portion of coverage to impeachment protests, around 10 to 20%, whereas broadcast and liberal media allocated 30-40% of their impeachment coverage to protests during legislative and judicial check periods. Figure S11 reveals that the volume of impeachment coverage itself was comparable across outlets throughout the stages, but that conservative media were most reluctant to allocate coverage to impeachment protests. This pattern suggests that conservative media placed less emphasis on protest mobilization in their impeachment coverage, exerting weaker accountability signals against an ideologically aligned incumbent.

Figure S11: Coverage Volume of Impeachment and Coverage Share of Impeachment Protest

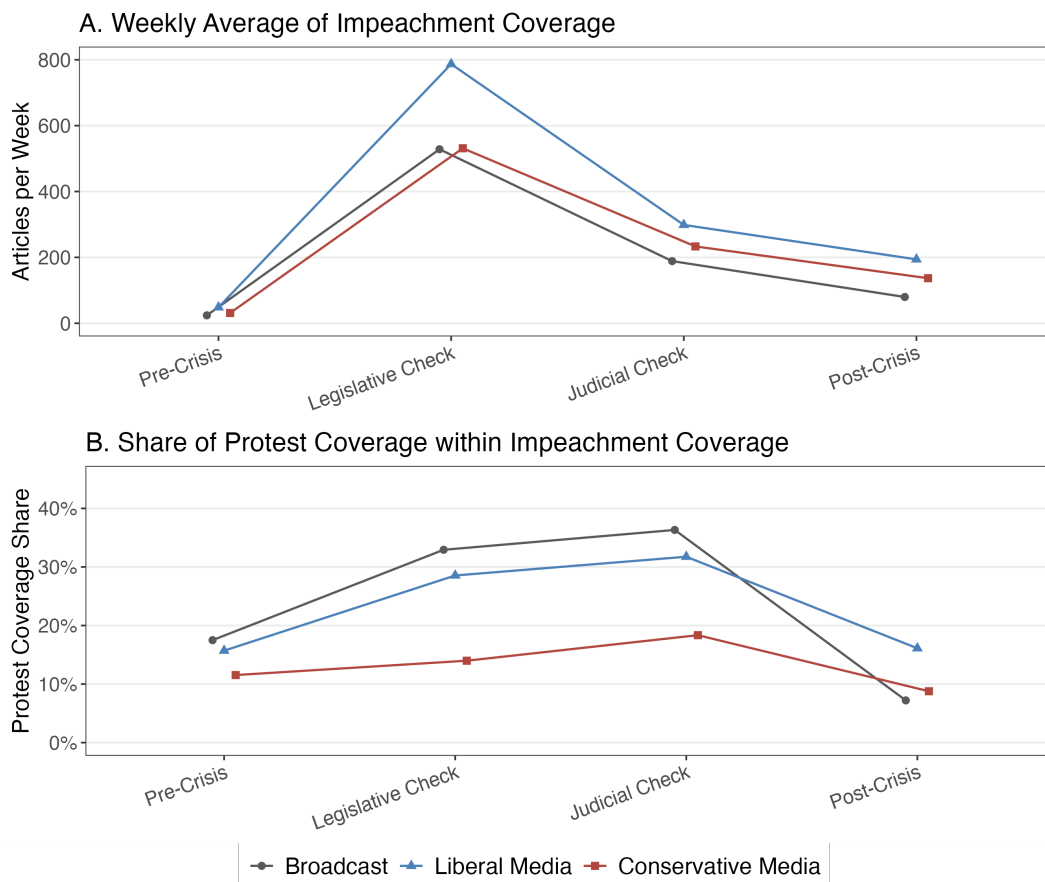


Table S22: Coverage of Anti-Democratic Narratives by Media Type

	Election Fraud Mention	Political Violence Mention
Anti-Impeachment (ref: Pro)	3.174*** (0.405)	1.804*** (0.160)
Both (ref: Pro)	1.975*** (0.425)	1.296*** (0.154)
Liberal Media (ref: Broadcast)	1.302** (0.412)	0.585*** (0.139)
Conservative Media (ref: Broadcast)	1.119* (0.508)	0.358. (0.195)
Anti-Impeachment $\times$ Liberal	-0.697 (0.444)	-0.156 (0.192)
Both $\times$ Liberal	-0.300 (0.479)	0.227 (0.203)
Anti-Impeachment $\times$ Conservative	-0.803 (0.544)	-0.254 (0.251)
Both $\times$ Conservative	-0.143 (0.568)	0.219 (0.249)
Intercept	-4.699*** (0.380)	-2.136*** (0.117)
Observations	4784	4784
AIC	2759.4	5248.5

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Outcome variables are binary indicators of whether articles mention political violence and election fraud, respectively. $*p < .10$, $**p < .05$, $***p < .01$.

5 Public Attention to Protests

To examine public interest in pro- versus anti-impeachment protests, I collected search interest data from Google Trends and Naver DataLab from November 3, 2024 to May 4, 2025, focusing on search activity within South Korea.

To ensure that only keywords with meaningful search volume were included, I examined the Google Trends for each keyword over the Yoon Suk-yeol impeachment period (November 2024 – May 2025) and the weekly relative search interest in those keywords. I initially compiled a broad set of candidate keywords related to pro- and anti-impeachment rallies based on common expressions used in Korean political discourse.

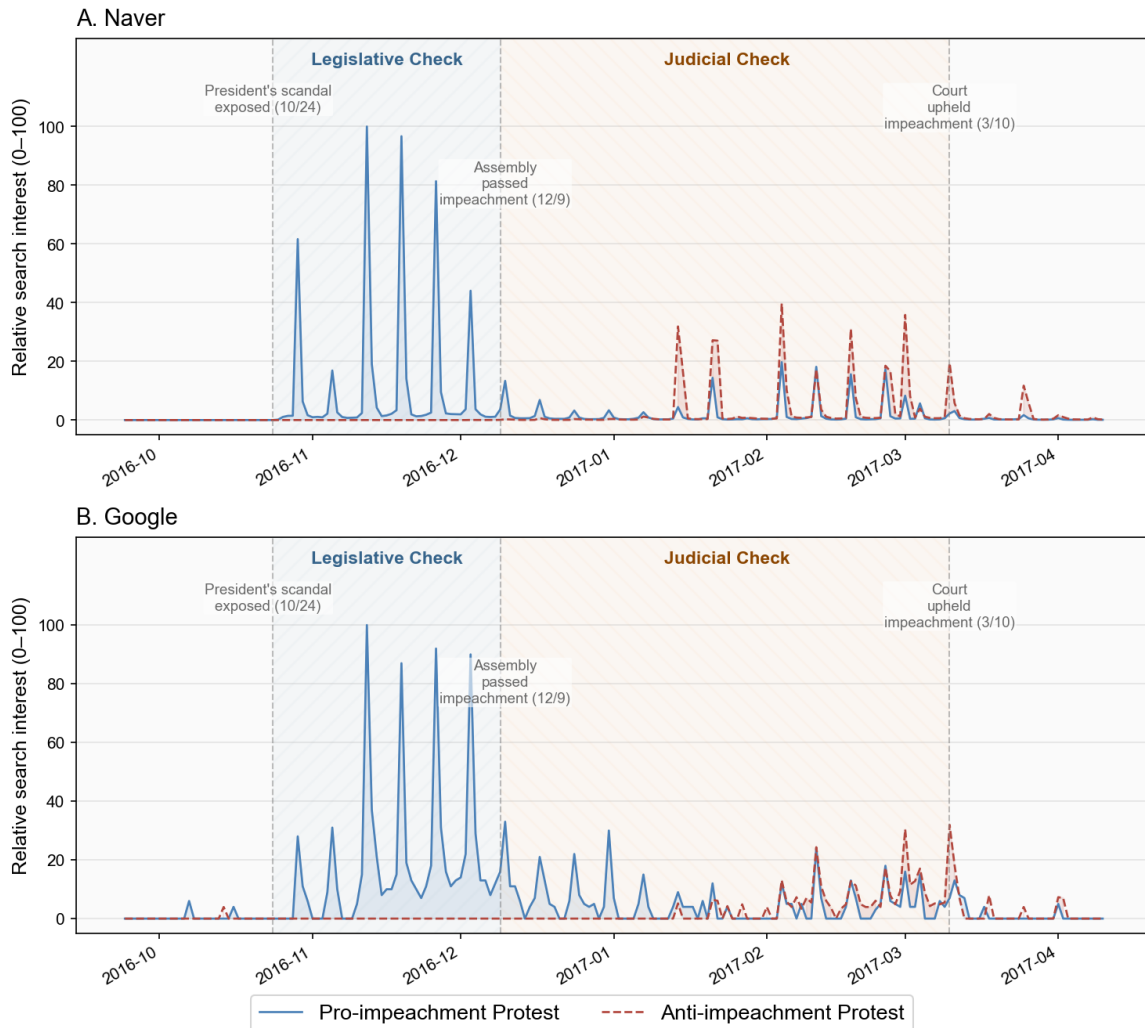
From the initial set of keywords, keywords with a maximum value of 0 across the entire period were excluded, as they indicated negligible public search activity. Following this diagnostic, three pro-impeachment keywords (탄핵촉구집회, 탄핵촉구시위, 퇴진요구집회)

and five anti-impeachment keywords (대통령지지집회, 탄핵무효집회, 탄핵무효시위, 태극기시위, 탄핵반대국민대회) were removed. Among the remaining keywords, the following sets of keywords were included in the analyses for parallel comparison: Pro-impeachment protest (탄핵찬성시위, 탄핵찬성집회, 촛불집회), Anti-impeachment protest (탄핵반대시위, 탄핵반대집회, 태극기집회).

Table S23: Keyword Selection for Online Search Interest in Impeachment Protests

	Initial Candidates	Final Keywords
Pro-impeachment	탄핵찬성집회, 탄핵찬성시위, 탄핵촉구집회, 탄핵촉구시위, 퇴진요구집회, 촛불시위, 촛불집회, 촛불행동	탄핵찬성시위, 탄핵찬성집회, 촛불집회
Anti-impeachment	탄핵반대시위, 탄핵반대집회, 대통령지지집회, 탄핵무효집회, 탄핵무효시위, 태극기시위, 태극기집회, 탄핵반대국민대회	탄핵반대시위, 탄핵반대집회, 태극기집회

Figure S12: Search Interest in Pro- and Anti-Impeachment Protest: Park Geun-hye (2016-17)



Note: Dates on the horizontal axis are shown in year-month format. Keywords for pro-impeachment included “pro-impeachment protest,” “pro-impeachment rally,” and “candlelight protest”; keywords for anti-impeachment included “anti-impeachment protest,” “anti-impeachment rally,” and “Taegukgi protest.” Anchor terms were used to enable cross-group comparisons on a common scale. Values are normalized to a peak of 100 within Google Trends and Naver DataLab respectively, allowing comparison between pro- and anti-impeachment search interest within each platform. Cross-platform comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

6 Ethics Statement

The two-wave panel survey was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of [the university name redacted for peer review] prior to data collection (IRB Number: [redacted]) as an exempt study. I affirm that the study adheres to APSA’s Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were informed that they were taking part in a research study involving minimal risk and that participation was voluntary. The data were anonymous, and potentially identifying information, such as IP addresses and geographic coordinates, was not collected. The survey involved no deception. At the end of each survey, participants were debriefed about the purpose of the study. Participants were compensated KRW 2,900 for an estimated 8-minute survey in Wave 1 and KRW 2,800 for an estimated 7-minute survey in Wave 2. Compensation was set by the survey firm and corresponded to hourly rates above the prevailing minimum wage in both years (KRW 9,860 per hour in 2024 and KRW 10,030 per hour in 2025; Minimum Wage Council 2026). This study was funded by Dartmouth College’s Rockefeller Center for Public Policy.

Quantitative data and related code necessary to produce the results will be made publicly available on the APSR Dataverse upon the publication of this paper.

7 LLM Prompts and Specifications

7.1 Protest Mobilization

The prompt for protest mobilization analyses is shown below.

```
You classify ACLED protest/event notes about South Korea’s 2024-2025 Yoon impeachment crisis.

Return exactly one label and nothing else:
pro_impeachment
anti_impeachment
unclear

Definitions:
pro_impeachment = protesters support impeachment, removal, resignation, arrest, punishment, or prosecution
of Yoon (President Yoon Suk-yeol, referred to as "the president" or "the president’s office" in some notes);
or condemn martial law as unconstitutional/criminal/insurrectionary.
anti_impeachment = protesters oppose impeachment, support Yoon, demand Yoon’s release/acquittal/reinstatement,
or claim impeachment/arrest is unfair, illegal, invalid, or politically motivated.
unclear = stance cannot be determined from the note, OR the note does not concern President Yoon Suk-yeol
at all.

Rules:
- "oppose impeachment" = anti_impeachment.
- "support impeachment" = pro_impeachment.
- "release Yoon" = anti_impeachment.
- "arrest Yoon", "Yoon out", "step down", "resign" = pro_impeachment.
- Do not infer stance from party names alone.
- If both sides appear or the note is ambiguous, choose unclear.
- "president" in the note may refer to someone other than President Yoon Suk-yeol (e.g., a university
```

president, a sports federation president, a labor union president, a former president of an organization). If the note clearly concerns a different kind of "president" and not the President of South Korea, return unclear.

7.2 Media Coverage Analyses

The final prompt for media coverage analyses is shown below. The English version was translated by GPT-5.2, with the original Korean version provided below.

The above refinements resulted in the final prompt shown below. The English version was translated by GPT-5.2, with the original Korean version provided below.

You are a research assistant analyzing media coverage during the 2024-25 period of martial law and the impeachment trial of President Yoon Suk Yeol in South Korea.

Prompt 1: Protest Orientation and Pro-/Anti-Impeachment Position Conflict Prompt

=====
[1] Protest Orientation (each independently 0 or 1)
=====

Analysis Steps and Rules:

Mechanically determine whether the article mentions "collective action related to the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol." Base your judgment only on words/sentences that literally appear in the article.

[Important Principles]

- Do not ignore the article even if most of its content is unrelated to impeachment.
- Including the **last sentence** of the text, if impeachment-related collective action appears even once, determine the orientation of that collective action.

Step 1: Scan all sentences in the article one line at a time from beginning to end in order.

- From the <title> or <body> of the target article, collect all sentences that mention "collective action related to the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol (e.g., rallies, protests)."

- Treat expressions semantically similar to the examples below as "collective action." (e.g., rally, protest, march, candlelight vigil, cultural event, sit-in, intrusion, clash, protest, gathering, participation, attendance, gathered, flocked together, took to the streets, large crowd, thousands gathered, crowd, denunciation rally, resolution rally, national rally, outdoor rally, impeachment concert, impeachment cultural event, impeachment performance, impeachment event)

- Regardless of whether an actual protest was held, only examine whether it is mentioned.
 - Be sure to collect all 'descriptive/indirect description sentences' related to protests as collective action sentences.
 - For example, even if they appear in police security situations (e.g., "a buffer zone between pro- and anti-protests," "protest control/security/deployment") or background description sentences (e.g., "announcing a rally for the president's impeachment," "donations for rally participants," "an instructor who led an anti-impeachment rally participated in campaigning," "a post about an incident that occurred at a rally calling for impeachment"), or future prediction sentences

("while a large anti-impeachment rally is scheduled in Yeouido"), collect those sentences because they explicitly indicate the existence of citizens' collective action.

- Rules related to politicians:

- If a politician engages in collective action together with citizens at a rally, such as "participating/joining/attending/marching together/standing on stage" → treat it as collective action.
- Events involving only politicians are also included if they are public rallies, protests, marches, or other collective actions (e.g., lawmakers' relay protest calling for dismissal of impeachment → treated as collective action).
- Politicians' statements, reporters' commentary, and the claims or evaluations in editorials are not treated as collective action.

- Detect only cases where the target of the collective action is related to "the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol." If the target of the collective action is unrelated (e.g., performance/concert/event/policy/individual), do not consider it.

Step 2: Make judgments based only on the sentences collected in Step 1. If no sentences are collected, all values are 0.

① pro_mention

If rallies/protests/marches/actions supporting impeachment, calling for removal, or demanding resignation are mentioned, 1; otherwise 0 (e.g., calls for impeachment, demands to uphold impeachment, calls for removal, demands for resignation/step-down/withdrawal, candlelight vigils calling for impeachment, impeachment concerts, etc.)

② anti_mention

If rallies/protests/intrusions/protest actions opposing impeachment, calling for dismissal, demanding the president's return, or supporting the president are mentioned, 1; otherwise 0 (e.g., opposition to impeachment, calls to dismiss impeachment, impeachment invalid/nullification/dismissal, calls for the president's return, support for the president, protests/intrusions/protest actions by supporters opposing impeachment, detention, or the impeachment trial, etc.)

③ both_mention

- Code 1 only when both pro-impeachment and anti-impeachment rallies are mentioned within the same sentence (e.g., "the site of pro- and anti-impeachment rallies," "pro- and anti-rallies," counter-rallies, "a pro-impeachment rally and an anti-impeachment rally," "rallies by both sides," "protests by both sides," etc.)

- If they appear separately in different sentences, both_mention = 0

- If expressions such as "pro- and anti-rallies," "pro- and anti-protests," or "counter-rallies" appear in the text, classify as 1 unconditionally.

=====

[2] Simultaneous Mention of Pro- and Anti-Impeachment Positions (excluding rally/protest context)

=====

Determine whether both pro- and anti-impeachment positions are mentioned simultaneously in the target article.

This variable is intended to supplement the variables related to rallies/protests.

[Important Principles]

- If both a pro-impeachment rally and an anti-impeachment rally are mentioned in the article (that is, if both_mention = 1, or if pro_mention = 1 and anti_mention = 1), balance_frame must be set to 0, and skip this step.

④ balance_frame

If both pro- and anti-impeachment positions regarding "the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol" are mentioned simultaneously in the <title> or <body> of the target article, code 1. The pro and anti positions do not need to appear simultaneously within the same sentence. General descriptions of confrontation or tension between the two sides surrounding the impeachment, such as pro-/anti-impeachment conflict, conflict between both sides, or camp polarization, are also included even without specific substantive claims. Conflicts over unrelated issues (e.g., budget bills, legislation, personnel appointments, policies, etc.) are not included.

Examples:

- "Tensions between the pro- and anti-impeachment sides are escalating."
- "Tensions between the pro-impeachment and anti-impeachment camps are rising."
- "'Pro- vs. anti-impeachment' clash"
- "Conservatives: 'Serial impeachments have gone too far' vs. Progressives: 'Storming the court was wrong'"
- "Escalating tensions in front of President Yoon Suk Yeol's residence: 'Arrest him immediately' vs. 'Impeachment is invalid'"
- "The decisive events that led conservatives and progressives into opposition to and support for impeachment were different."

Examples (Caution)

- "Citizens gathered in Gwanghwamun Square, holding candles and marching while shouting for impeachment to be upheld." → pro_mention = 1
- "Singer A directly participated in and performed at a candlelight vigil calling for President Yoon's impeachment." → pro_mention = 1
- "Singer B handed out snacks to participants in a rally calling for impeachment." → pro_mention = 1 ("a rally calling for impeachment" is explicitly stated in the text)
- "Looking at the crowd that filled the streets, they cheer and exult, saying that more citizens than at the pro-impeachment rally came out to support us." → pro_mention = 1, ("pro-impeachment rally" is explicitly mentioned)
- "A national rally declaring President Yoon's impeachment invalid was held in downtown Seoul." → anti_mention = 1
- "Legislator B participated in an outdoor anti-impeachment rally and marched together with citizens." → anti_mention = 1
- "Some People Power Party lawmakers made appearances at anti-impeachment rallies or actively participated in rallies hosted by Pastor Jeon Kwang-hoon." → anti_mention = 1
- "Police established a buffer zone at the site of pro- and anti-impeachment rallies." → both_mention = 1
- "A pro-impeachment rally and a counter-protest were held simultaneously in downtown at the same time." → both_mention = 1
- "Setting up a 'buffer zone' between the sites of pro- and anti-impeachment rallies also had the effect of preventing clashes between the two sides. A police official said, 'The airtight security plan for major facilities including the Constitutional Court area was completed safely.'" → both_mention = 1 (this is a context of preparing for rallies, but both pro- and anti-impeachment rallies are explicitly mentioned)
- "Legislator A argued that the president should step down immediately." → pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (an individual's statement)
- "A local civic group held a protest rally opposing a concert." → pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (the target of the rally is not impeachment)
- "Debate over impeachment for and against continues in political circles." pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (politicians' statements)

```

- "Pastor B argued for dismantling the National Election Commission and claimed election fraud from the
stage of an anti-impeachment rally." → anti_mention = 1

- "In Gwanghwamun, tens of thousands of citizens marched holding candles and calling for impeachment
to be upheld. Participants demanded the president's removal. The rally continued late into the night.
Meanwhile, in Jongno, a national rally declaring President Yoon's impeachment invalid was also held."
→ pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1
- "Participants in the Taegeukgi rally staged a large march demanding the president's return. Speeches
calling for the impeachment to be dismissed continued. Counter-protests also continued throughout
downtown. Meanwhile, some citizens held a candlelight rally in the square and demanded that
impeachment be upheld."
→ pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1, , both_mention = 1
- "Citizens held candles in front of the Constitutional Court and shouted for the president's
resignation.
Many of the participants attended as families. The participants continued marching. After the rally
ended, a national rally declaring the impeachment invalid was additionally held in Jongno."
→ pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1

- "As the Constitutional Court's impeachment ruling approaches, tensions between the pro-impeachment and
anti-impeachment camps are also rising." → balance_frame = 1
- "Conservatives argued that serial impeachments had gone too far, while progressives criticized the
storming of the court." → balance_frame = 1
- "A pro-impeachment rally and an anti-impeachment rally were held simultaneously." → both_mention = 1,
balance_frame = 0 (because both_mention = 1, skip the balance_frame step)

### Additional Examples (Extreme edge cases)
The types below must be classified as collective action regardless of the main topic of the article.

Example (the article is mostly about donations + only the last sentence mentions a rally)
"Actor A donated 1 billion won for underprivileged groups. It was delivered to welfare organizations and
hospitals. At the end of the year,
the actor practiced warm-hearted sharing. During the martial law crisis, the actor also provided meals to
participants in rallies calling for President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment."
→ pro_mention = 1
→ evidence_pro = "During the martial law crisis, the actor also provided meals to participants in rallies
calling for President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment."

Example (classify only impeachment-related collective action)
"Singer C performed at an 'impeachment concert' in Seoul the day before the vote on the impeachment motion.
Conservative groups responded by holding a rally in front of Gumi City Hall at around 2 p.m. on the 19th
opposing Lee Seung-hwan's concert in Gumi."
→ pro_mention = 1
→ evidence_pro = "Singer C performed at an 'impeachment concert' in Seoul the day before the vote on the
impeachment motion."
→ anti_mention = 0 (a rally opposing a concert is not an anti-impeachment rally, so it is not anti)

=====
[3] Evidence Rules
=====
- Select only one sentence that most directly supports the judgment.
- Do not summarize or modify the sentence; copy it exactly.
- If multiple sentences apply, select the first one.
- If none, use "" (empty string)

```

```
# -----
# Prompt 2: Additional Events (Violence/Election Fraud)
# -----

=====
[1] Mention of Additional Events (each 0 or 1)
=====

⑤ viol_mention
If expressions related to political violence, physical harm, or property damage appear in the <title> or
<body> of the article, code 1
(e.g., riot, self-immolation, intrusion, attack, terrorism, damage, clash, assault, property destruction,
property damage, egg throwing, violence, "violence by a specific group", etc.)
- Exclude cases where "violence" is used only as a claim (e.g., "violence must end") or as a descriptive
reference to past events.

⑥ fraud_mention
If expressions related to election fraud, election manipulation, interference claims, or vote rigging
appear, code 1
(e.g., election fraud, election manipulation, interference claims, vote rigging, dismantling the National
Election Commission, claims that the election is invalid, "the National Election Commission should be
abolished", "the National Election Commission should be smashed", "election fairness is not being upheld",
etc.)

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[2] Evidence Rules
=====
- Same rule as above

### Examples (Caution)
- "Pastor B argued for dismantling the National Election Commission and claimed election fraud from the
stage of an anti-impeachment rally." → fraud_mention: 1
- "Above all, as the violence of the far-right conservative forces is becoming more intense, activists
and citizens are protecting the square through their own strength." → viol_mention = 1
- "In a situation where the public had suffered indescribable shock from the Seoul Western District
Court riot, Legislator C said, 'The Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials, the
National Election Commission, and the Constitutional Court must be smashed.'"
→ viol_mention = 1, fraud_mention = 1
```

당신은 2024-25년 대한민국 비상계엄 및 윤석열 대통령 탄핵 심판 기간 동안의 언론 보도를 분석하는 연구조교입니다.

```
# -----
# Prompt 1: 집회 방향성 및 찬반 입장 대립 프롬프트
# -----

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[1] 집회 방향성 (각각 독립적으로 0 또는 1)
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### 분석 단계 및 규칙:
대상 기사에서 "윤석열 대통령 탄핵과 관련된 집단행동" 언급 여부를 기계적으로 판단하세요.
오직 기사에 문자 그대로 등장하는 단어/문장만 근거로 판단하십시오.
```

[중요 원칙]

- 기사의 내용 대부분이 탄핵과 무관한 주제여도 절대 무시하지 마십시오.
- 본문의 ****마지막 문장****까지 포함하여, 탄핵 관련 집단행동이 단 한 번이라도 등장하면 해당 집단행동의 방향성을 판단합니다.

1단계: 기사의 모든 문장을 한 줄씩 처음부터 끝까지 순서대로 스캔하십시오.

- 분석 대상 기사의 <제목> 또는 <본문>에서 "윤석열 대통령 탄핵과 관련된 집단행동 (예: 집회, 시위)"을 언급한 문장을 모두 수집하세요.
- 아래의 예시와 의미적으로 유사한 표현을 "집단행동"으로 간주합니다.
(예: 집회, 시위, 행진, 촛불, 문화제, 농성, 난입, 총돌, 항의, 집결, 참가, 참여, 참석, 모였다, 모여들었다, 거리로 나섰다, 대규모 인파, 수천 명이 모였다, 군중, 규탄대회, 결의대회, 국민대회, 장외집회, 탄핵 콘서트, 탄핵 문화행사, 탄핵 공연, 탄핵 행사)
- 실제 집회가 열렸는지 여부와 ****무관하게**** 언급 여부만 살피세요.
 - 집회와 관련된 '설명/간접 묘사 문장'도 모두 집단행동 문장으로 반드시 수집하십시오.
 - 예를 들어, 경찰의 경비 상황(예: \찬반 시위 사이의 완충구역", \집회 통제/경비/배치")이나 배경 설명 문장 (예: "대통령 탄핵을 위한 집회를 예고", \집회 참가자들을 위한 기부", "탄핵반대 집회를 이끈 강사가 유세에 참여", "탄핵을 촉구하는 집회에서 발생한 일에 관한 계시글"), 향후 예측 문장 ("여의도에서 대규모 탄핵 반대 집회가 예정된 가운데")에 포함되어 있더라도, 시민들의 집단행동이 존재함을 명시하는 것이므로 해당 문장을 수집합니다.
- 정치인 관련 규칙:
 - 정치인이 집회에 "참여/동참/참석/함께 행진/연단에 섬" 등 시민들과 함께 집단행동을 한 경우 → 집단행동으로 간주합니다.
 - 정치인만 참여한 행사도 공개적인 집회·시위·행진 등 집단행동이면 포함합니다 (예: 국회의원들의 릴레이 탄핵 각하 시위 → 집단행동으로 간주).
 - 정치인의 주장, 기자의 논평, 사설의 주장 및 평가 문장은 집단행동으로 간주하지 않습니다.
- 단체행동의 대상이 "윤석열 대통령 탄핵"과 관련된 경우만 탐지합니다. 단체행동의 대상이 공연/콘서트/행사/정책/개인 등 윤석열 대통령 탄핵과 직접적인 관련이 없으면 고려하지 않습니다.

2단계: 1단계에서 수집한 문장들만 근거로 판단하십시오. 수집된 문장이 하나도 없으면 모든 값은 0입니다.

① pro_mention

탄핵 찬성, 파면 촉구, 퇴진 요구 집회·시위·행진·행동이 언급되면 1, 아니면 0

(예: 탄핵 촉구, 탄핵 인용 요구, 파면 촉구, 퇴진/하야/사퇴 요구, 탄핵 촉구 촛불문화제, 탄핵 콘서트 등)

② anti_mention

탄핵 반대, 기각 요구, 대통령 복귀 요구, 대통령 지지 집회·시위·난입·항의 행동이 언급되면 1, 아니면 0

(예: 탄핵 반대, 탄핵 기각, 탄핵 무효/각하/기각, 대통령 복귀 촉구, 대통령 지지, 탄핵·구속·탄핵심판에 반발한 대통령 지지자들의 시위/난입/항의 등)

③ both_mention

- 동일한 하나의 문장 안에 찬성 집회와 반대 집회가 동시에 언급될 때만 1 (예: "탄핵 찬성·반대 집회 현장", "찬반 집회", 맞불집회, "찬성 집회와 반대 집회", "양측 집회", "양측 시위" 등)

- 서로 다른 문장에 따로 등장하면 both_mention = 0

- 본문 내에 "찬성·반대 집회", "찬반 시위", "맞불" 등의 표현이 등장하면 무조건 1로 분류하십시오.

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[2] 찬반 양측 입장 동시 언급 (집회/시위 맥락 제외)

=====

대상 기사에서 찬반 양측 입장이 동시에 언급하는지 판단하세요.

이 변수는 집회/시위 관련 변수를 보완하기 위한 변수입니다.

[중요 원칙]

- 기사에서 탄핵 찬성 집회와 탄핵 반대 집회가 모두 언급된 경우

(즉, both_mention = 1 이거나, pro_mention = 1 그리고 anti_mention = 1 인 경우),
balance_frame은 반드시 0으로 설정하고 이 단계는 건너뛰니다.

④ balance_frame

분석 대상 기사의 <제목> 또는 <본문>에서 \윤석열 대통령 탄핵에 대한" 찬성과 반대 양측의 입장이 동시에 언급되면 1

하나의 문장 안에서 찬성과 반대 입장이 동시에 등장할 필요는 없습니다. 찬반 갈등, 양측 갈등, 진영 대립 등과 같이 구
체적인 주장 내용 없이도 탄핵을 둘러싼 양측의 대립 또는 긴장을 일반적으로 설명하는 표현도 포함합니다.
탄핵과 무관한 사안(예: 예산안, 법안, 인사, 정책 등)에 대한 찬반 갈등은 포함하지 않습니다.

예시:

- "탄핵 찬반 양측간의 긴장이 고조되고 있다."
- "찬탄과 반탄 진영의 긴장감이 높아지고 있다."
- "'탄핵 찬반' 격돌"
- "보수 \줄탄핵 도 넘어" vs 진보 \법원 난입 잘못"
- "윤석열 대통령 관저 앞 긴장 고조 \즉각 체포" vs \탄핵 무효"
- "보수와 진보를 탄핵 반대와 찬성으로 이끈 결정적 사건은 달랐다."

예시 (주의)

- "광화문 광장에 모인 시민들이 촛불을 들고 탄핵 인용을 외치며 행진했다." → pro_mention = 1
- "가수 A가 윤 대통령 탄핵 촉구 촛불문화제에 직접 참여해 공연했다." → pro_mention = 1
- "가수 B가 탄핵 촉구 집회 참가자들에게 간식을 나누어 주었다." → pro_mention = 1 ("탄핵 촉구 집회"가 본문
에 명시됨)

- "거리를 메운 군중을 보고 탄핵 찬성 집회보다 많은 시민이 몰려나와 우리를 지지한다며 환호작약한
다." → pro_mention = 1, ("탄핵 찬성 집회"가 명시적으로 언급됨)

- "윤 대통령 탄핵무효 국민대회가 서울 도심에서 열렸다." → anti_mention = 1
- "B 의원이 탄핵반대 장외집회에 참여해 시민들과 함께 행진했다." → anti_mention = 1
- "국민의힘 의원들 중 일부는 탄핵반대 집회에 얼굴을 비추거나 전광훈 목사 주최 집회 등에도 적극적으로 참여했
다." → anti_mention = 1

- "탄핵 찬성·반대 집회 현장에서 경찰이 완충구역을 설정했다." → both_mention = 1
- "탄핵 찬성 집회와 맞불 시위가 같은 시간대 도심에서 동시에 열렸다." → both_mention = 1
- "탄핵 찬성·반대 집회 현장 사이에 '완충구역'을 설정한 것도 양측의 충돌을 막는 효과가 있었다. 경찰 관계자는 "
현재 주변 등 주요 시설에 대한 진공 대책 계획이 안전하게 마무리됐다"고 말했다."
→ both_mention = 1 (집회에 대한 대비를 하는 맥락이지만, 탄핵 찬성-반대 양측 집회가 명시적으로 언급되었
다)

- "A 의원이 대통령은 즉각 퇴진해야 한다고 주장했다." → pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (개
인의 주장)
- "지역 시민단체가 콘서트를 반대하며 항의 집회를 열었다." → pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (집
회의 대상이 탄핵이 아님)
- "정치권에서 탄핵 찬반 논쟁이 이어지고 있다." pro_mention = 0, anti_mention = 0, both_mention = 0 (정치
인들의 주장)

- "B 목사가 탄핵 반대 집회 단상에서 선관위 해체와 부정선거를 주장했다." → anti_mention = 1
- "광화문에서 수만 명의 시민들이 촛불을 들고 탄핵 인용을 촉구하며 행진했다. 참가자들은 대통령 파면을 요구했
다. 집회는 밤늦게까지 이어졌다. 한편 종로에서는 윤 대통령 탄핵무효 국민대회도 열렸다."
→ pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1
- "태극기 집회 참가자들이 대통령 복귀를 요구하며 대규모 행진을 벌였다. 탄핵 기각을 촉구하는 연설이 이어졌
다. 도심 곳곳에서 맞불 시위도 이어졌다. 한편 일부 시민들은 광장에서 촛불집회를 열고 탄핵 인용을 요구했다."
→ pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1, , both_mention = 1
- "시민들이 현재 앞에서 촛불을 들고 대통령 퇴진을 외쳤다. 집회에는 가족 단위 참가자들도 많았다. 참가자들은 행

진을 이어갔다. 집회를 마친 뒤 종로에서는 탄핵무효 국민대회가 추가로 개최됐다."

→ `pro_mention = 1, anti_mention = 1`

- "현재의 탄핵심판 선고가 임박하면서 찬탄과 반탄 진영의 긴장감도 높아지고 있다." → `balance_frame = 1`
- "보수는 출탄핵이 도를 넘었다고 주장했고 진보는 법원 난입을 비판했다." → `balance_frame = 1`
- "탄핵 찬성 집회와 반대 집회가 동시에 열렸다." → `both_mention = 1, balance_frame = 0` (`both_mention = 1` 이므로 `balance_frame` 단계 건너뛰)

추가 예시 (Extreme edge cases)

아래 유형은 기사 주제와 무관하게 반드시 집단행동으로 분류해야 합니다.

예시 (기사 대부분 기부 관련 내용 + 마지막 1문장만 집회 언급)

"배우 A가 소외계층을 위해 10억원을 기부했다. 복지단체와 병원에 전달했다. 연말을 맞아 따뜻한 나눔을 실천했다. 비상계엄 경국에는 윤석열 대통령 탄핵 촉구 집회 참가자들에게 식사를 제공했다."

→ `pro_mention = 1`

→ `evidence_pro = "윤석열 대통령 탄핵 촉구 집회 참가자들에게 식사를 제공했다."`

예시 (탄핵 관련 집단행동만 분류)

"가수 C가 탄핵소추안 표결 하루 전 서울 '탄핵 콘서트'에서 공연했다."

보수단체는 이에 반발해 19일 오후 2시경 구미시청 앞에서 이승환의 구미 공연을 반대하는 집회를 개최했다."

→ `pro_mention = 1`

→ `evidence_pro = "서울 탄핵 콘서트에서 공연했다."`

→ `anti_mention = 0` (공연 반대 집회는 탄핵 반대 집회가 아니므로 `anti`가 아님)

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[3] Evidence 규칙

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- `evidence_*`에는 해당 판단을 가장 직접적으로 뒷받침하는 단 하나의 문장만 선택하세요.
- 문장을 요약하거나 수정하지 말고 그대로 복사하세요.
- 여러 문장이 해당되면 첫 번째 문장만 선택하세요.
- 해당 내용이 없으면 "" (빈 문자열)

Prompt 2: 추가 사건 (폭력/부정선거)

=====

[1] 추가 사건 언급 (각각 0 또는 1)

=====

분석 규칙:

대상 기사에서 정치적 폭력 사건 또는 부정선거 의혹 언급 여부를 판단하세요.

⑤ `viol_mention`

분석 대상 기사의 <제목> 또는 <본문>에서 정치적 폭력 사건 등 정치적 폭력, 신체 상해, 기물 피해 관련 표현이 등장하면 1

(예: 폭동, 분신, 난입, 공격, 테러, 파손, 충돌, 폭행, 테러, 파손, 서부지법 난입 사태, 신체 상해, 시위 현장에서 차로 치고 달아남, 기물 파괴, 기물 피해, 계란 투척, 폭력, '특정 세력의 폭력' 등)

- 단어 "폭력"이 주장(예: 폭력은 종식되어야 한다) 또는 과거 사건 설명(예: 폭력 시위 진압하는 목적의 부대)으로 등장한 경우는 포함하지 마십시오.

⑥ `fraud_mention`

분석 대상 기사의 <제목> 또는 <본문>에서 부정선거, 선거 조작, 개입설, 투표 조작 등 부정선거 의혹 관련 표현이 등장하면 1

(예: 부정선거, 선거 조작, 개입설, 투표 조작, 선관위 해체, 선거 무효 주장, ‘선관위를 없애야 한다’, ‘선거관리위원회를 때려부숴야 한다’, ‘선거 공정성이 지켜지지 않고 있다’ 등)

=====
[2] Evidence 규칙
=====

- `evidence_*`에는 해당 판단을 가장 직접적으로 뒷받침하는 단 하나의 문장만 선택하세요.
- 문장을 요약하거나 수정하지 말고 그대로 복사하세요.
- 여러 문장이 해당되면 첫 번째 문장만 선택하세요.
- 해당 내용이 없으면 "" (빈 문자열)

예시 (주의)

- "B 목사가 탄핵 반대 집회 단상에서 선관위 해체와 부정선거를 주장했다." → `fraud_mention: 1`
- "무엇보다 극우 보수 세력의 폭력이 점점 거세지는 상황에서 활동가와 시민의 힘으로 광장을 지켜내고 있다." → `viol_mention = 1`
- "서울서부지법 폭동 사태로 국민들이 이루 말할 수 없는 충격을 받은 상황에서, 의원 C가 ‘고위공직자범죄수사처, 선거관리위원회, 헌법재판소를 때려 부숴야 한다’고 발언했다." → `viol_mention = 1, fraud_mention = 1`

8 Survey Questionnaire: Korean (Original)

8.1 Two-wave Panel Survey

Media Use (Wave 1)

귀하는 지난 한 주 동안 정치 관련 뉴스와 정보를 얻기 위해 다음의 출처를 얼마나 자주 이용하셨습니까?

	이용하지 않음	한 번	여러 번	매일
보수 성향 언론사 (조선일보, 동아일보 등)	1	2	3	4
진보 성향 언론사 (경향신문, 한겨레 등)	1	2	3	4
SNS (트위터, 페이스북, 인스타그램 등)	1	2	3	4
주변 지인과 가족	1	2	3	4
유튜브 정치/시사 채널	1	2	3	4

[PROG: 속성 랜덤제시]

Institutional Trust (Waves 1, 2)

귀하는 다음 기관들을 얼마나 신뢰하십니까?

	전혀 신뢰하지 않는다	별로 신뢰하지 않는다	보통이다	약간 신뢰한다	매우 신뢰한다
국회	1	2	3	4	5
헌법재판소	1	2	3	4	5
법원	1	2	3	4	5
군대	1	2	3	4	5
대통령실	1	2	3	4	5
선거관리위원회	1	2	3	4	5

[PROG: 속성 랜덤제시]

Support for Impeachment (Waves 1, 2)

귀하는 윤석열 대통령을 탄핵하는 것에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까?

1. 전혀 동의하지 않는다.
2. 별로 동의하지 않는다.
3. 동의도 반대도 하지 않는다.
4. 약간 동의한다.
5. 매우 동의한다.

Perception that Martial Law is a Legitimate Exercise of Presidential Power (Waves 1, 2)

대통령의 비상계엄 선포는 헌법에 규정된 대통령의 권한을 행사한 정당한 통치 행위라는 주장에 대해 얼마나 공감하십니까, 아니면 공감하지 않으십니까?

1. 전혀 공감하지 않는다.
2. 별로 공감하지 않는다.
3. 어느 정도 공감한다.
4. 매우 공감한다.
5. 모르겠다.

Perception that Martial Law is an Insurrection (Waves 1, 2)

귀하는 대통령의 비상계엄 선포는 국회의 권한 제한을 시도한 반국가적 내란행위라는 주장에 대해 얼마나 공감하십니까, 아니면 공감하지 않으십니까?

1. 전혀 공감하지 않는다.
2. 별로 공감하지 않는다.
3. 어느 정도 공감한다.
4. 매우 공감한다.
5. 모르겠다.

Partisan Identity (Waves 1, 2)

귀하는 다음 중 어느 정당을 지지하십니까?

1. 더불어민주당
2. 국민의힘
3. 조국혁신당
4. 개혁신당
5. 진보당
6. 기본소득당
7. 사회민주당
8. 기타 정당 (직접 작성: _____)
9. 없다

[PROG: Q2 = 9(없다) 응답자만] 그렇다면 본인 성향은 어느 정당에 조금이라도 더 가깝습니까?

1. 더불어민주당
2. 국민의힘
3. 조국혁신당
4. 개혁신당
5. 진보당
6. 기본소득당
7. 사회민주당
8. 기타 정당 (직접 작성: _____)
9. 없다

Attention Check (Wave 2)

다음의 문장을 읽고 본인을 가장 잘 설명하는 선택지를 골라 주세요.

“나는 1920년 이전에 태어났다.”

1. 전혀 해당되지 않는다
2. 조금 해당된다
3. 어느 정도 해당된다
4. 많이 해당된다
5. 완전히 해당된다

귀하가 이 문항을 읽었음을 표시하기 위해 ‘약간 동의한다’를 선택해 주십시오.

1. 전혀 동의하지 않는다
2. 별로 동의하지 않는다
3. 동의도 반대도 하지 않는다
4. 약간 동의한다
5. 매우 동의한다

8.2 Cross-sectional Surveys

Institutional Trust

선생님께서서는 평소에 다음의 각 국가기관을 어느 정도 신뢰하십니까?

[헌법재판소⁸ / 법원 / 국회]

1. 매우 신뢰한다
2. 신뢰하는 편이다
3. 신뢰하지 않는 편이다
4. 전혀 신뢰하지 않는다
9. (읽지 마시오) 모름/무응답

선생님께서 헌법재판소의 윤석열 대통령 탄핵 심판 과정을 어느 정도 신뢰하십니까?

1. 매우 신뢰한다
2. 신뢰하는 편이다
3. 신뢰하지 않는 편이다
4. 전혀 신뢰하지 않는다
9. (읽지 마시오) 모름/무응답

Support for Yoon's Impeachment

Pre-ruling: 지난 14일 국회에서 윤 대통령에 대한 탄핵소추안이 가결되었습니다. 이에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까? (보기 1-2 Rotation)

1. 잘된 결정이다
2. 잘못된 결정이다
9. (읽지 마시오) 모름/무응답

Post-ruling: 지난 4일 헌법재판소가 윤석열 대통령 탄핵안을 인용하여 파면하였습니다. 선생님께서 이번 헌법재판소의 결정에 대해 어떻게 생각하십니까? (보기 1-2 Rotation)

1. 잘된 결정이다
2. 잘못된 결정이다
9. (읽지 마시오) 모름/무응답

Ideology 귀하의 이념적 성향은 어떻다고 생각하십니까?

1. 매우 보수적
2. 다소 보수적
3. 중도적
4. 다소 진보적
5. 매우 진보적

⁸2024년 12월부터 조사 항목에 추가됨

9 Survey Questionnaire: English (Translated)

9.1 Two-wave Panel Survey

Media Use (Wave 1)

How often did you use the following sources to get political news and information over the past week?

	Never	Once	Several times	Every day
Conservative media outlets (e.g., Chosun, Donga)	1	2	3	4
Liberal media outlets (e.g., Kyunghyang, Hankyoreh)	1	2	3	4
Social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)	1	2	3	4
Friends and family	1	2	3	4
YouTube political/current affairs channels	1	2	3	4

[*PROG: Randomize item order*]

Institutional Trust (Waves 1, 2)

How much do you trust the following institutions?

	Strongly distrust	Somewhat distrust	Neutral	Somewhat trust	Strongly trust
National Assembly	1	2	3	4	5
Constitutional Court	1	2	3	4	5
Courts	1	2	3	4	5
Military	1	2	3	4	5
Presidential Office	1	2	3	4	5
National Election Commission	1	2	3	4	5

[*PROG: Randomize item order*]

Support for Impeachment (Waves 1, 2)

What do you think about impeaching President Yoon Suk-yeol?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree

Perception that Martial Law is a Legitimate Exercise of Presidential Power (Waves 1, 2)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the claim that the President's declaration

of emergency martial law was a legitimate act of governance exercising the constitutionally granted presidential authority?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree
5. Don't know

Perception that Martial Law is an Insurrection (Waves 1, 2)

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the claim that the President's declaration of emergency martial law was an anti-state insurrection that attempted to restrict the authority of the National Assembly?

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Somewhat agree
4. Strongly agree
5. Don't know

Partisan Identity (Waves 1, 2)

Which of the following political parties do you support?

1. Democratic Party of Korea
2. People Power Party
3. Rebuilding Korea Party
4. Reform Party
5. Progressive Party
6. Basic Income Party
7. Social Democratic Party
8. Other (please specify: _____)
9. None

[PROG: Only for respondents with Q2 = 9 (None)] Then which party do you feel even slightly closer to?

1. Democratic Party of Korea
2. People Power Party
3. Rebuilding Korea Party
4. Reform Party
5. Progressive Party
6. Basic Income Party
7. Social Democratic Party
8. Other (please specify: _____)
9. None

Attention Check (Wave 2)

Please read the following statement and select the option that best describes you.

“I was born before 1920.”

1. Does not apply at all
2. Applies a little
3. Applies somewhat
4. Applies a lot
5. Applies completely

To indicate that you have read this item, please select “Somewhat agree.”

1. Strongly disagree
2. Somewhat disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Somewhat agree
5. Strongly agree

9.2 Cross-sectional Surveys

Institutional Trust

How much do you trust the following institutions?

[Constitutional Court⁹ / Courts / National Assembly]

1. Strongly trust
2. Somewhat trust
3. Somewhat distrust
4. Strongly distrust
9. (Do not read) Don’t know/No response

Support for Impeachment

Pre-ruling: On the 14th, the National Assembly passed the impeachment motion against President Yoon. What do you think about this decision? (Response options 1–2 rotated)

1. It was a right decision.
2. It was a wrong decision.
9. (DO NOT READ) Don’t know/No response

Post-ruling: On the 4th, the Constitutional Court upheld the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol and removed him from office. What do you think about the Constitutional Court’s decision? (Response options 1–2 rotated)

1. It was the right decision.

⁹This item was first included in December 2024.

2. It was the wrong decision.
9. (DO NOT READ) Don't know/No response

Ideology

How would you describe your ideological orientation?

1. Very conservative
2. Somewhat conservative
3. Moderate
4. Somewhat liberal
5. Very liberal

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