

CULTURAL HEGEMONY AND MEDIA FRAMING: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL NARRATIVES

HEGEMONI BUDAYA DAN PEMBINGKAIAN MEDIA: ANALISIS WACANA KRITIS TERHADAP NARASI POLITIK

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary political landscape, mass media has evolved from a mere information channel into a strategic instrument for the production of cultural hegemony. This study aims to comprehensively review the discursive strategies used by the media to naturalize political narratives into collective "common sense" by integrating Antonio Gramsci's concepts with the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Employing a narrative-thematic synthesis approach of global literature from Scopus and Web of Science databases between 2016-2026, this study analyzes the dialectical relationship between media discourse, ideology, and power. The findings reveal that ideological naturalization is executed through micro-linguistic strategies such as nominalization and passive constructions that obscure political agency, as well as the use of euphemisms and metaphors to legitimize controversial policies. At a macro level, media ownership concentration and the dominance of digital algorithms reinforce the reproduction of hegemony by creating echo chambers that marginalize alternative voices. While social media provides space for counter-publics and counter-hegemonic discourse, its effectiveness remains constrained by the technological structures of global platforms. This research concludes that modern media hegemony operates through gradual and institutionalized consensus-building, necessitating a multidimensional approach that integrates discursive and material dimensions to understand global power dynamics.

**Keywords:** Cultural Hegemony; Critical Discourse Analysis; Media Framing; Political Narrative; Common Sense.

ABSTRAK

Dalam lanskap politik kontemporer, media massa telah berevolusi dari sekadar saluran informasi menjadi instrumen strategis dalam produksi hegemoni budaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau secara komprehensif strategi diskursif yang digunakan media dalam menaturalisasi narasi politik menjadi "akal sehat" kolektif melalui integrasi pemikiran Antonio Gramsci dan kerangka Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA). Menggunakan pendekatan sintesis naratif-tematik terhadap literatur global dari basis data Scopus dan Web of Science dalam rentang waktu 2016-2026, studi ini menganalisis hubungan dialektis antara wacana media, ideologi, dan kekuasaan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa naturalisasi ideologi dilakukan melalui strategi mikro-linguistik seperti nominalisasi dan konstruksi pasif yang mengaburkan agensi politik, serta penggunaan eufemisme dan metafora untuk melegitimasi kebijakan kontroversial. Secara makro, konsentrasi kepemilikan media dan dominasi algoritma digital memperkuat reproduksi hegemoni dengan menciptakan ruang gema yang memarginalkan suara alternatif. Meskipun media sosial membuka ruang bagi counter-publics dan wacana kontra-hegemonik, efektivitasnya tetap dibatasi oleh struktur teknologis platform global. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa hegemoni media modern bekerja melalui pembentukan konsensus yang gradual dan terinstitusionalisasi, menuntut pendekatan multidimensional yang mengintegrasikan dimensi diskursif dan material dalam memahami dinamika kekuasaan global.

**Kata Kunci:** Hegemoni Budaya; Analisis Wacana Kritis; Framing Media; Narasi Politik; Akal Sehat.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary political landscape, the relationship between cultural hegemony, media framing, and political narratives is a key foundation for understanding how legitimacy,

identity, and power are constructed and negotiated in society. Mass media no longer merely function as a neutral channel for transmitting information, but have evolved into a strategic instrument in the production and reproduction of cultural hegemony. Historically, the media has been positioned as watchdog that upholds objectivity, but the transformation of sociopolitical structures shows that the media is systematically involved in the formation of asymmetrical power relations through discursive practices. From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (Critical Discourse Analysis/CDA), language in the media is not just a medium of communication, but an ideological tool used to shape social reality, normalize inequality, and direct public consensus according to the interests of dominant groups.

This transformation has intensified in the digital era, marked by the massive expansion of internet usage and the dominance of global platforms. More than 4.9 billion individuals worldwide access information through digital platforms, with approximately 64% of them obtaining news from social media (Reuters Institute, 2024). Furthermore, approximately 80% of global digital advertising revenue is concentrated in the hands of a handful of large technology companies (World Economic Forum, 2023), reflecting the consolidation of power within the information distribution ecosystem. In the Indonesian context, this phenomenon is even more intense, with more than 212 million internet users, approximately 79% of whom consume news through social media (APJII, 2024; We Are Social, 2024). This concentration strengthens the media's capacity not only to disseminate information but also to construct a social reality biased toward elite interests, shifting its informative function into an ideological mechanism for maintaining power dominance.

Structurally, this dominance is reinforced by the concentration of media ownership and bias in framing practices. Globally, approximately 62% of political news content exhibits bias toward dominant actors (OECD, 2023), while approximately 70% of mainstream media in developed countries is controlled by large conglomerates (Noam, 2021). In Indonesia, more than 60% of media ownership is concentrated in the hands of groups directly linked to political interests (Nugroho et al., 2021), with press freedom ranking 108th out of 180 countries (Reporters Without Borders, 2024). This structure creates conditions in which media framing becomes a primary instrument in blurring the lines between empirical facts and ideological interests. Within a Gramscian framework, this process reflects how "common sense" (common sense) is formed through the internalization of dominant values disseminated through media institutions. Donoghue (2017) asserts that the integration of the concept of hegemony into CDA allows for an in-depth analysis of how discourse functions as an arena forward of position, where dominance is maintained through seemingly neutral language practices.

Another dimension that reinforces the reproduction of hegemony is the politics of memory integrated into media framing. Molden (2015) shows that hegemonic narratives operate not only on contemporary issues but also through the construction of representations of the past that are used to legitimize current power. Official historical narratives function as a tool of ideological stabilization by marginalizing counter-memories that could potentially disrupt domination. Thus, media framing operates multidimensionally, not only at the textual level but also through the mobilization of collective memory that strengthens political legitimacy.

This complexity is further exacerbated by the rise of information polarization and populist dynamics in the digital space. Globally, approximately 57% of internet users are regularly exposed to political misinformation (UNESCO, 2023), while political polarization in democracies has increased by 30% in the past decade (Pew Research Center, 2022). In Indonesia, approximately 60% of internet users have difficulty distinguishing factual information from hoaxes (Kominfo, 2023), with political hoaxes increasing by up to 200% during election periods (MASTEL, 2024). This situation is exacerbated by the dominance of digital algorithms, where approximately 70% of the content users consume is determined by recommendation systems (World Bank, 2023), and extreme political content has up to 40%

higher engagement rates (MIT Media Lab, 2022). With the average social media usage reaching 3 hours per day in Indonesia (We Are Social, 2024), the intensity of exposure to ideological framing is becoming increasingly high, thus accelerating the process of internalizing the dominant narrative as an unquestioned “truth.”

In this context, political framing also undergoes transformation through the practices of populism and boundary politics (border politics). Lamour and Mazzoleni (2024) show that populist narratives construct a dichotomy between “the people” and “the elite/other” through the use of spatial metaphors, symbols, and performative practices that reinforce the boundaries of collective identity. Zhang (2019) adds that these narratives are not only domestic but also circulate transnationally through digital spaces, enabling the mobilization of counter-hegemonic discourses that challenge global dominance. Zeng (2023) strengthens this argument by showing that state actors actively engage in cross-border framing contestation through digital communication strategies tailored to audience characteristics. Rogers and Zhang (2024) show that in the context of geopolitical conflicts, such as the Russia–Ukraine war, media framing experiences cross-platform amplification and recontextualization according to national interests, reflecting power dynamics in the global media ecosystem.

Furthermore, unequal access to information and the dominance of global content reinforce the reproduction of cultural hegemony. Around 37% of the world's population still lacks internet access (ITU, 2023), while in Indonesia there is a significant gap between urban (82%) and rural (62%) areas (BPS, 2024). Furthermore, the dominance of global content, which accounts for 65% of digital information flows (UNESCO, 2023), encourages cultural homogenization and the marginalization of local narratives. In this context, Çetinkaya (2020) demonstrates that popular media, such as television dramas, play a crucial role in shaping national identity and political orientation through the reproduction of hegemonic narratives. Meanwhile, Ratuva (2016) highlights how Global South perspectives are often marginalized in Western-dominated global discourse, thus opening up space for the emergence of counter-hegemonic imaginations. In the digital realm, Pepe-Oliva and Casero-Ripollés (2023) demonstrate that social media has become a strategic space for marginalized actors to construct counter-narratives that challenge the dominance of mainstream media.

Nevertheless, the literature reveals conceptual tensions regarding the primary sources of power and the effectiveness of counter-hegemonic discourse. Some studies emphasize the importance of material bases in maintaining hegemony, while others highlight discursive dominance as a key factor in shaping “common sense.” Donoghue (2017) attempts to bridge this debate by integrating the material and discursive dimensions within a CDA framework. Furthermore, the effectiveness of counter-narratives has been questioned, as in some cases they actually reproduce the dominant elements they are intended to challenge (Saber & Webber, 2016). Another tension arises between local and global contexts, where framing is contextual yet influenced by global media dynamics that enable cross-border contestation (Rogers & Zhang, 2024; Zeng, 2023).

Based on this complexity, this study aims to comprehensively review the global literature on the discursive strategies used by the media to naturalize political narratives into collective “common sense.” By integrating empirical findings related to media ownership concentration, algorithm dominance, low media literacy, information polarization, and transnational framing dynamics, this study seeks to identify universal patterns in the reproduction of cultural hegemony.

Theoretically, this research integrates Antonio Gramsci's thinking on cultural hegemony with the CDA framework developed by Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk, complemented by the perspective of memory studies and multimodal analysis. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of the dialectical relationship between media discourse, ideology, and power, while contributing to broadening the understanding of how political

narratives are produced, circulated, and contested in an increasingly complex global media landscape.

## **2. METHODS**

This section outlines the systematic procedures used to rigorously collect, select, and analyze the literature to ensure depth of analysis of discursive strategies and the naturalization processes of ideology in the media.

### **2.1. Search Strategy**

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using three major bibliographic databases: Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), and Google Scholar. These databases were selected based on their extensive indexing coverage of highly reputable journals in communication science, sociology, and critical media studies. The search strategy was systematically designed, utilizing Boolean operators to increase the precision and relevance of search results.

The keywords used include the following combinations: ("Discursive Strategies" OR "Discursive Tactics") AND ("Naturalization" OR "Common Sense" OR "Hegemony") AND ("Media Framing" OR "Political Narrative") AND ("Critical Discourse Analysis" OR "CDA").

The search process was conducted iteratively to ensure the inclusiveness of relevant literature, taking into account the variations in terminology used in previous studies. In addition, the technique backward and forward citation tracking applied to identify additional articles that have significant contributions but were not captured in the initial search.

### **2.2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Literature selection was carried out by applying strict inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological quality and conceptual relevance to the research focus.

Inclusion criteria include journal articles that have gone through the review process, peer-reviewed and published within the last ten years (2016–2026) to ensure the analysis's currency. Selected articles must explicitly address the mechanisms of ideological naturalization or discursive strategies in a political context and employ a theoretical approach relevant to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework. Furthermore, only articles written in English or Indonesian with recognized academic standards were included in the analysis.

In contrast, exclusion criteria included articles that relied solely on descriptive quantitative analysis without critical exploration of the discourse dimensions. Non-journal publications such as conference papers, book chapters, popular reports, and opinion pieces that did not undergo a peer-reviewed review process were excluded. Studies that did not integrate the CDA framework or did not have direct relevance to the issues of media framing and cultural hegemony were also eliminated from the analysis corpus.

### **2.3. Synthesis Approach**

The literature analysis was conducted using a narrative-thematic synthesis approach, which aimed to identify, categorize, and integrate the main findings from the selected studies. This process began with open coding of key concepts related to discursive strategies, followed by grouping the codes into broader analytical themes.

Key themes identified include linguistic strategies in media framing, the role of cognitive structures in the internalization of ideology, and power dynamics in sociocultural practices. This approach allows for analysis that goes beyond mere literary description, constructing a conceptual synthesis that explains how political narratives are naturalized into "common sense" through repeated and institutionalized discursive practices.

Through the integration of various theoretical perspectives, this approach produces a coherent analytical framework in explaining the dialectical relationship between language, power, and ideology in the context of contemporary global media.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1. The Nexus of Power and Language: The Construction of Political Reality

The literature analyzed demonstrates a strong consensus that language cannot be positioned as a neutral medium, but rather as an arena of contestation where meaning is produced, negotiated, and stabilized within hegemonic power structures. In this perspective, discourse functions as a primary mechanism in shaping social and political realities through the relationship between macrostructures—such as institutions, media, and dominant actors—and microlanguage practices. Several studies explicitly link the Gramscian concept of hegemony to the role of language as an instrument of power reproduction, where discourse becomes a means to maintain ideological domination through the naturalization of certain meanings as something “normal” or unquestioned (Hafizh, 2018; Tomaselli, 2015; RĂDOIU, 2024; Velasco-Puffleau, 2021; Tran et al., 2025; Haber, 2015; Xia, 2022; 2016, المهيري; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). Thus, language not only represents political reality, but actively constructs and maintains that reality through repeated and institutionalized discursive processes.

Furthermore, the literature synthesis shows that macro-level power actors, such as political institutions and media owners, have the capacity to shape the microstructure of language to define the boundaries of social normality and naturalize certain ideologies. This process reflects how control over language directly implicates control over the public mind, as definitions legitimized in public discourse will shape collective perceptions of political reality (Hafizh, 2018; RĂDOIU, 2024; Tran et al., 2025; Haber, 2015; Xia, 2022). Within this framework, language becomes a primary locus in hegemonic struggles, where initially contested meanings are gradually stabilized into a seemingly natural social consensus.

In the context of hegemony, discourse also functions as a space of contestation where various actors seek to vie for the dominance of meaning. Several studies emphasize that discursive struggle is at the heart of the hegemonic process, where control over meaning becomes a key instrument for gaining social approval and challenging existing power structures (RĂDOIU, 2024; Xia, 2022; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). RĂDOIU (2024), in a Gramsci-based analysis, demonstrates that everyday language and “common sense” play a crucial role in stabilizing hegemony, as discourses internalized in everyday practice tend to be accepted without critical reflection. However, the literature also underlines that this domination is never absolute, as there is always the potential for the emergence of counter-hegemonic discourses that seek to destabilize the dominant structure through the reconstruction of alternative meanings (Colombo, 2025; Velasco-Puffleau, 2021; Tran et al., 2025; 2016, المهيري).

Furthermore, the concepts of social imaginary and discourse are understood as symbolic battlegrounds where various social orders compete to define reality. The literature shows that social imagination not only reflects existing conditions but also guides future political action through the construction of normative meaning (Colombo, 2025; Tran et al., 2025; Houston, 2020). In this context, linguistic framing plays a strategic role in determining how an issue is perceived, interpreted, and responded to by the public. Velasco-Puffleau (2021) adds that socio-technical dimensions, including the use of sound and language in the media, also strengthen the process of constructing political reality, thus demonstrating that power operates through a complex interaction between discourse, technology, and social practices.

Theoretically, the literature consistently draws on the conceptual frameworks of Gramsci, Hall, Fairclough, and Mouffe to explain the relationship between language, ideology, and power. Gramsci provides a foundation for cultural hegemony and the construction of consensus, while Hall emphasizes the processes of representation and encoding/decoding mechanisms in media communication. Fairclough offers an analytical approach through CDA that connects language structures with social practices, while Mouffe highlights the antagonistic nature of the public sphere as an arena for ideological struggle. This convergence

of theoretical frameworks strengthens the argument that language and discourse are central elements in the production of political meaning and the reproduction of power (Hafizh, 2018; Tomaselli, 2015; RĂDOIU, 2024; Saber & Webber, 2016; Tran et al., 2025; Haber, 2015; Xia, 2022; Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011).

However, there are important nuances in the literature that suggest that language does not merely function as a tool of domination, but also as a medium of resistance. Several studies highlight how counter-hegemonic discourse can be used to challenge power structures and create space for social emancipation (Hafizh, 2018; Tomaselli, 2015; RĂDOIU, 2024; Tran et al., 2025; Haber, 2015; Xia, 2022). In this context, language becomes an ambivalent instrument that can either strengthen or weaken hegemony, depending on how it is used in discursive practices.

On the other hand, the literature also identifies the limitations of the discursive approach in comprehensively explaining political reality. Several studies emphasize that although discourse plays a significant role in shaping reality, external factors such as economic conditions, political dynamics, and technological developments also contribute to limiting or directing discursive processes (Velasco-Puffleau, 2021; Tran et al., 2025; Haber, 2015; Xia, 2022). This suggests that analyzing cultural hegemony and media framing requires a multidimensional approach that focuses not only on language but also considers the broader structural context.

Overall, these findings confirm that language and discourse are strategic arenas in the production and contestation of power. Hegemony is not only constructed through material domination, but also through control over the meanings internalized in everyday communication practices. However, the contestative nature of discourse ensures that hegemony is always open to challenge, thus making language a dynamic terrain in ongoing ideological struggles.

### **3.2. Discursive Strategies for Naturalization**

The literature shows that linguistic strategies at the micro level play a central role in the reproduction of hegemony through media framing and political narratives. Specifically, the use of nominalization and passive constructions has been identified as effective discursive mechanisms in obscuring agency and naturalizing policies as inevitable. In this context, Lafta and Mustafa (2022) assert that ideological manipulation strategies in policy discourse operate by eliminating or disguising the actors responsible for an action, so that policy outcomes appear as natural phenomena independent of political decisions. This approach aligns with van Dijk's framework on ideological polarization, where positive self-representations and negative others are reinforced through selective discourse management, including through the obscuration of agency (Lafta & Mustafa, 2022).

Furthermore, the use of nominalizations and passive forms contributes to the depersonalization of responsibility in political discourse, thus minimizing the potential for public accountability. Literature on euphemisms, presuppositions, and metaphors implicitly supports this argument, demonstrating that these linguistic structures serve to shift the focus from actors to outcomes, and from processes to naturalized consequences (Lafta & Mustafa, 2022; 2023, الخزرجي). In practice, the use of terms such as "reform project" in policy discourse demonstrates how lexical choices can reconstruct controversial actions into more neutral or even positive narratives, thereby reducing public resistance and strengthening policy legitimacy (Lafta & Mustafa, 2022).

Furthermore, lexical choices such as euphemisms, metaphors, and framing-based language have been shown to be strategic instruments in shaping public perceptions of political reality. Lafta and Mustafa (2022) demonstrate that these strategies are used to highlight or conceal certain socio-political attributes to encourage acceptance of particular policy positions. The use of euphemisms and metaphors, in particular, allows political actors to soften complex or controversial realities, while creating a sense of urgency that justifies extraordinary actions.

These findings are reinforced by the analysis in the study by 2023) الخزرجي), which positions euphemisms, presuppositions, and metaphors as key tools in CDA to naturalize and legitimize political action.

A similar approach is also found in the study of Fyjis-Walker (2024), who asserts that euphemisms and metaphors function not only as rhetorical tools but also as persuasive mechanisms that construct political legitimacy by obscuring the reality being debated. More broadly, Amernic and Craig (2022) demonstrate that the use of metaphors and framing in corporate leadership discourse has a function analogous to political discourse, namely shaping audience interpretations of actions and decisions taken, as well as creating certain perceptions of legitimacy and ethics. This suggests that linguistic mechanisms in framing are not limited to the political domain, but also apply in various contexts of power.

Besides euphemisms and metaphors, presupposition is a discursive strategy that plays a significant role in shaping the audience's interpretive orientation. Presupposition allows the insertion of ideological assumptions into discourse without the need for explicit statements, thus limiting the scope for alternative interpretations. Within the CDA framework, this technique is often used to embed certain premises—such as the assumption that market liberalization is a desirable policy—into seemingly neutral language structures (2023, الخزرجي). Ibrahim (2023) adds that the use of presuppositions in political speeches serves to direct arguments and strengthen power relations by framing issues in a framework that benefits dominant actors.

While there is broad consensus regarding the strategic function of these linguistic devices, the literature also demonstrates variations in the contexts in which they are applied. Some studies highlight similarities in mechanisms between political and corporate discourse, particularly in the use of metaphor and framing to shape perceptions of legitimacy (Amernic & Craig, 2022). These differences do not represent conceptual contradictions, but rather broaden the scope of analysis by emphasizing that discursive strategies are cross-domain and operate in diverse power contexts.

Synthesizing, literature findings confirm that nominalization and passive constructions serve to obscure agency and present policy outcomes as natural and inevitable (Lafta & Mustafa, 2023). Euphemisms and metaphors play a role in reconstructing reality to justify political action and limit potential resistance through strategic framing (Lafta & Mustafa, 2022; Fyjis-Walker, 2024; Amernic & Craig, 2022). Meanwhile, presuppositions function as implicit mechanisms that embed ideological assumptions in discourse, thereby influencing audience interpretations and limiting the space for critique (Ibrahim, 2023).

Thus, linguistic strategies at the micro level cannot be separated from the dynamics of hegemony at the macro level, because through these linguistic devices, political reality is not only represented, but also constructed, naturalized, and legitimized in the collective consciousness of society.

### **3.3. The Role of Media Framing in Constructing 'Common Sense'**

The literature shows that the formation of hegemony in modern society does not rely primarily on coercive mechanisms, but rather through a gradual process of consensus-building through discursive practices, particularly media framing. Within this framework, the media plays a primary role in disseminating narratives repeatedly and uniformly, so that these narratives are internalized as collective "common sense," while alternative perspectives are marginalized as radical or irrational. This concept is rooted in Gramsci's thinking on the role of civil society in building hegemonic consensus, which was later developed in neo-Gramscian and CDA approaches as a process of naturalizing meaning through repeated and institutionalized discourse (Donoghue, 2017; Tussie & Ramos, 2022; Leggett, 2013). The literature also emphasizes that media framing widely circulated in the public sphere contributes to the

formation of a social reality that is considered normal, thereby strengthening the legitimacy of the status quo (Donoghue, 2017; Maccaferri, 2022; Pass, 2018).

In this context, the concept of common sense in Gramsci's thought is a key element in understanding how hegemony is produced and maintained. Common sense is understood as a fragmentary, historical, and constantly changing set of beliefs that can be naturalized through discursive reproduction in everyday life. Donoghue (2017) emphasizes that this concept, along with the notion of the war of position, is a crucial analytical tool in CDA for explaining how power relations are reproduced and challenged through discourse. The literature also shows that common sense is not monolithic, but rather contains the potential for good sense that can form the basis for the emergence of counter-hegemonic projects (Maccaferri, 2022; Hesketh, 2019; Chun, 2020). Thus, common sense functions as a dynamic arena in which both the stabilization and transformation of hegemony can occur, depending on how actors in civil society articulate and intervene in the discourse (Donoghue, 2017; Pass, 2018).

The role of the media in this process is significant as the primary space for the production, distribution, and reification of common sense. From a neo-Gramscian perspective, the media is seen as an integral part of civil society, functioning to shape and manage consensus through discursive framing. Obamamoye (2023) points out that common sense is produced and reproduced through discourse circulating in the media and other social institutions, thereby reinforcing the existing hegemonic order. Pass (2018) adds that common sense functions as a form of soft power that allows the legitimacy of hegemonic blocs without the need for direct violence. Within the CDA framework, Donoghue (2017) emphasizes that Gramscian concepts such as common sense and the war of position are crucial to understanding how media discourse maintains asymmetrical power relations. Thus, the media plays a role not only as a transmitter of information but also as an active agent in shaping public perception and eliminating counter-discourses (Obamamoye, 2023; Donoghue, 2017; Pass, 2018).

Nevertheless, the literature reveals theoretical nuances regarding how hegemony is understood within the Gramscian and neo-Gramscian traditions. Some studies highlight that the neo-Gramscian approach tends to emphasize ideological and discursive dimensions, potentially overlooking the role of material structures and class dynamics in the formation of hegemony (Küçük, 2025; Obamamoye, 2023; Maccaferri, 2022; May et al., 2024). In this context, some researchers propose reintegrating the material dimension into the analysis of hegemony by emphasizing the importance of historical blocs and relations of production in shaping the global order (May et al., 2024). Pass (2018) and el-Ojeili (2021) also emphasize the importance of reading hegemony as a combination of consensus and coercion, as well as between discursive and material power. Thus, there is an ongoing debate regarding the extent to which hegemony should be understood as an ideological or material phenomenon, demonstrating the conceptual complexity of this study.

Furthermore, the concepts of civil society and the integral state in Gramsci's thought are key in explaining how hegemony is constructed and maintained. Civil society is seen as the primary arena where common sense is constructed through education, media, and intellectual leadership, as well as a space where counter-hegemonic ideas can develop. Several studies emphasize that hegemony is not solely produced by the state, but through the interaction between the state and civil society within what is known as the integral state (Hesketh, 2019; Caterina, 2021; Agustín & Jørgensen, 2024; Murray & Worth, 2012). Empirically, Agustín and Jørgensen (2024) demonstrate how the issue of immigration becomes an arena where common sense and counter-hegemony are produced through the dynamics of civil society. This finding confirms that common sense functions not only as a tool for stabilizing hegemony but also as a potential locus of resistance to domination.

While there is consensus that media framing plays a crucial role in shaping common sense, the literature also reveals conceptual and methodological tensions. Some

post-structuralist and post-Marxist approaches, such as those developed by Laclau and Mouffe, have been criticized for their tendency to decompose hegemony into merely fragmented discursive contestations, thus neglecting its historical and material dimensions (Leggett, 2013; Ateed & ÖZCAN, 2023; Murray & Worth, 2012). In contrast, classical Gramscian approaches emphasize the importance of maintaining an analysis of historical blocs, class relations, and the logic of consensus in understanding hegemony. Furthermore, several studies highlight the importance of regional and historical context in understanding how the concepts of common sense and hegemony operate, suggesting that both concepts are contextual and negotiated through local dynamics within civil society (Hesketh, 2019; Caterina, 2021; Chun, 2020).

Overall, the literature synthesis suggests that media framing is a key mechanism in shaping common sense as the basis for hegemonic consensus. However, this process is neither static nor absolute, but rather the result of a complex interaction between discursive practices, material structures, and socio-historical dynamics. Therefore, the analysis of cultural hegemony requires an approach capable of simultaneously integrating the discursive and material dimensions to comprehensively understand how power is produced, maintained, and contested in modern society.

#### **3.4. Counter-Hegemonic Challenges: Deconstructing Alternative Media**

The literature shows that despite the significant dominance of mainstream media in shaping hegemonic narratives, counter-hegemonic spaces continue to emerge and thrive, particularly through alternative media and digital platforms. The transformation of the digital communication ecosystem has enabled actors outside traditional power structures to produce and distribute counter-discourses without resorting to conventional gatekeeping mechanisms. In this context, Moyo and Ndhlovu (2023) assert that social media functions as an open space that allows for a plurality of responses to normative narratives, particularly on sensitive issues such as national identity and sexuality. This finding suggests that digital spaces not only reproduce dominant discourses but also provide opportunities for the emergence of alternative interpretations that challenge hegemony.

Furthermore, studies on alternative media show that digital platforms can function as counter-publics, namely discursive spaces that enable marginalized groups to articulate perspectives not represented in mainstream media. Bulck and Hyzen (2019) show how alternative media outlets like Infowars leverage interactions with mainstream media and platform algorithms to widely disseminate counter-hegemonic messages. Meanwhile, Molina (2020) examines the dynamics of Twitter-based counterpublics in the Ayotzinapa case, demonstrating that decentralized discourse on social media is capable of deconstructing power relations and sustaining counter-narratives over time. These findings strengthen the argument that digital spaces enable the formation of alternative publics that serve as arenas of resistance to hegemonic framing.

From a broader perspective, alternative media also plays a role in elevating subaltern perspectives that have been marginalized within global information structures. Masiero (2022) emphasizes the importance of a decolonial approach to information systems to uncover how subaltern perspectives can enrich counter-hegemonic discourse within the digital ecosystem. Furthermore, Toepfl and Piwoni (2015) demonstrate that even within mainstream media platforms, such as comment sections on news sites, counterpublic spaces can emerge that allow audiences to challenge dominant narratives. Sujon and Dyer (2020) add that social dynamics in the digital era, including platform and algorithm governance, play a crucial role in shaping the structure and visibility of counter-discourses in contemporary digital culture.

However, the literature also highlights that the existence of counter-hegemonic spaces on digital platforms is inseparable from the influence of algorithms, which have the potential to strengthen or limit the reach of alternative discourses. Bulck and Hyzen (2019) assert that platform algorithms play a significant role in determining content visibility, including in

amplifying certain counter-hegemonic messages. Molina (2020) also shows that the sustainability of counterpublics on social media is highly dependent on digital amplification mechanisms that enable counter-narratives to reach a wider audience. Ünal (2022) and Sujon and Dyer (2020) highlight that digital platforms are not merely neutral media but also actors that actively modulate the form and direction of resistance through their technological structures. Thus, while digital platforms open up opportunities for resistance, they also create structural constraints that influence the dynamics of discourse.

Concrete manifestations of counterpublics in digital spaces can be observed through hashtag-based movements and the mobilization of discourse on social media. Molina (2020) shows how the use of hashtags like #PaseDeLista1a143 can build sustainable discursive communities that challenge official government narratives while strengthening collective identities based on resistance. Belek (2022) provides another example through the design of community spaces like Autscape, which demonstrates how spatial rules and structures can be used to create counter-narratives that reject hegemonic norms. More broadly, Sujon and Dyer (2020) assert that the dynamics of the digital era, including algorithmic governance, shape how these communities operate and survive in a complex media environment.

Methodologically, studies of counterpublics and counter-hegemonic media demonstrate the need for analytical approaches capable of capturing the interplay between discourse, technology, and social structures. Toepfl and Piwoni (2015) offer an analytical framework for understanding the interplay between dominant public spheres and counterpublics on digital platforms, while Jacobs and Townsley (2017) highlight the role of meta-commentary and expert discourse in shaping reflexivity in media culture. Boland (2013) and Hier (2018) provide an epistemological foundation by emphasizing the importance of critique and unmasking practices in uncovering hidden power structures within discourse. This approach demonstrates that counter-hegemonic analysis focuses not only on message content but also on the conditions of production, distribution, and reception of discourse within the digital ecosystem.

While there is consensus that alternative media and digital platforms can function as counter-hegemonic spaces, the literature also highlights the ambivalence surrounding the emancipatory potential of digital spaces. Ossewaarde and Reijers (2017) point out that the digital commons does not always generate critical awareness, but can also reinforce cynicism or even create forms of false consciousness that actually hinder social transformation. Furthermore, the relationship between mainstream and alternative media is not always antagonistic, but in some cases synergistic, with mainstream media content being used for amplification in digital spaces (Bulck & Hyzen, 2019). The literature also warns against the risk of essentializing counterpublics, given the complex dynamics of digital communities that cannot always be reduced to homogeneous categories (Molina, 2020; Masiero, 2022; Toepfl & Piwoni, 2015).

Overall, these findings suggest that counter-hegemonic spaces in digital media are dynamic and complex arenas, where opportunities for resistance to hegemonic domination are ever-present, yet subject to structural constraints imposed by technology, algorithms, and broader power relations. Thus, analyses of media framing and cultural hegemony need to simultaneously consider the emancipatory and restrictive dimensions of digital spaces in shaping contemporary political discourse.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

##### 4.1. Summary of Key Findings

This study concludes that the naturalization of political narratives into collective "common sense" in contemporary media is achieved through the systematic integration of discursive strategies at the micro and macro levels. The most dominant micro strategies include the use of nominalization And **passive construction to** obscure political agency, as well as the

use of euphemism And metaphor to soften the reality of controversial policies. Structurally, this hegemony is reinforced by concentrated media ownership and framing biases that consistently marginalize alternative voices. In the digital age, this process is amplified through the dominance of algorithms that create echo chambers (echo chambers), where the dominant narrative is replicated massively until it reaches the status of unquestioned truth. Although alternative media emerges as a spacecounter-publics, its effectiveness is often limited by the technological structure of global platforms.

#### 4.2. Theoretical Contribution

Theoretically, This review makes a significant contribution to the study of political communication by synthesizing a framework Hegemonic Gramscian with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in the context of an asymmetric digital media ecosystem. This review broadens understanding of the concept sense (common sense) not only as a product of language, but as a result of interaction in eclectic relationship between discursive practices, material power (media ownership), and technological mediation. By bridging the debate between material and discursive dimensions, this research offers a multidimensional framework for analyzing how power is constructed and negotiated in an increasingly fragmented yet digitally concentrated global information landscape.

#### 4.3. Future Research Directions

Based on the analysis conducted, future research needs to explore more deeply regarding social media algorithms as agents of new hegemony which works automatically to guide public consensus. There is a significant literature gap regarding how artificial intelligence (AI) in content moderation can reproduce ideological bias covertly. Furthermore, cross-cultural empirical studies of digital resistance in the region are needed. Global South to understand the extent to which counter-hegemonic narratives can survive digital censorship and polarization driven by global platforms. Finally, a deeper integration of multimodal analysis of digital-visual content will be crucial in dissecting the strategies of ideological naturalization on image-based and short-video platforms.

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