

Press TV as a Counter Hegemonic Broadcast News Network

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Abstract: This case study is to compare between hegemonic and counter hegemonic news by the use of Qualitative research over Press TV News Broadcasting. To reach emersion condition of counter hegemonic news, first it is asked: "Why do they speak" and "Who are speaking". To find the answers a historical look is used. Then "Ideology" and the origin ideas of Press TV and also special linguistic and visual aspect has also been challenged in these questions: "What do they say" and "How do they speak" conceptual framework is based on hegemony by Gramsci, representation by Stuart Hall and discourse analysis by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, in order to study the concept of counter hegemonic in Press TV. This research shows that Press TV transforms what represented "Islam" and "East" as an "Inferior Otherness" in western news media by the use of reverse representation. Historic backgrounds, goals, organic intellectuals which work in Press TV and also pictorial and news literature which are used in this news network, all are evidences for Press TV's counter hegemonic function.

Key words: Counter hegemony, representation, Press TV, news discourse, otherness

INTRODUCTION

Media as a means of transmitting culture has an important role in ideology induction on public opinion. Concepts like civil society, political society and the role of hegemony and common sense, ideology and intellectual concepts are considered in Gramsci's Theory who steadfastly resists any attempt neatly to align cultural and ideological questions with class and economic ones. This is elaborated in Gramsci through his extended on the nature of state and civil society in developed capitalist societies in his discussion of 'the specificity of the political' in his research on 'national-popular 'cultures and the role and formation of intellectuals in his analysis of "common sense" as the ground on which different organized ideologies intervene in his emphasis on the practice-social role which ideologies have in organizing and mobilizing masses of people and the complex role of class alliances within a historical bloc. Gramsci brings these ideas together within the framework of the concept of 'hegemony' which has played a seminal role in Cultural Studies. According to Hall (1991), 'Hegemony 'is always the (temporary) mastery of particular theatre of struggle. It marks a shift in the dispositions of contending forces in a field of struggle and the articulation of that field into a tendency'.

In expansion and globalization of the media, there is certain understanding and interpretation of human and social status. News agencies with the understanding of human interpretation based on their intellectual ideology

are trying to shape public opinion of countries. For the political class or rather for those in the academy and the media who rationalize their situation the reigning idea is not exactly that an 'age of ideology' is over that the old oppositions have faded in the face of an emerging consensus that integrates formerly contending parties. (Levine 2003). According to Morley and Chen (2005) "Contrary to their claim of neutrality, there is a gap between reality and what is provided in the media. There seems to be a specific interest of ideological struggle with and within the media, emphasizing the relationship between the media and of social order". This necessitated the review of the international media counter-hegemonic space and especially the news media that reflect national events.

Much efforts have led to describe and explain how and why the representation is done from the world. According to Gramsci (1971) "What matters is the criticism to which such an ideological complex is subjected by the first representatives of the new historical phase. This criticism makes possible a process of differentiation and change in the relative weight that the elements of the old ideological used to possess. What was previously secondary becomes the nucleus of a new ideological and theoretical complex. The old collective will dissolve into its contradictory elements since the subordinate ones develop socially, etc".

The ideological and social ideas beyond the text should be considered in the news media and its effect on the formation of public opinion. Therefore international

news media as a powerful tool of representation of the world has a unique position. Overall, Hall and others have argued in construction measures that the media do not reflect reality but bring it to encrypt. Ideology is the naturalization of a particular historical cultural articulation. What is natural can be taken for granted; it defines 'common sense'. Ideology 'Yokes together' particular social practices and relations with particular structures of meaning, thus anchoring them in a structure in which their relations to social identity, political interests, etc., have already been defined and seem inevitable. Ideology involves the claim of cultural practices to represent reality. (Morley and Chen, 2005).

Equipped with an international news media is an opportunity to play in the global arena. Therefore, the concept of counter hegemony in the news networks like Press TV which is formed on the basis of confronting with western Medias reveals the importance of this study. In other words it is intended to study conditions of emerging Press TV versus Western news media and the representation of directional coping strategies is to briefly review.

This research seek to understand what the dominant ideology can be considered beyond the news and what form of speech is used to deliver in this discourse. Our goal is to find a descriptive and analytical review of this network as a counter hegemonic media in the international arena.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Cultural studies, post-colonial studies and critical review are conceptual framework of this research. It is a descriptive-analytical study. The propositions for which this news network is calling counter-hegemonic are being analyzed.

Research method in this study can be generally called combination method because different research techniques like historical and linguistic methods combines to answer questions on various parts. Qualitative data has been gathered by observation and from documents.

In order to understand the characteristics and performance of Press TV the following sub-questions have been raised:

Why do they speak?: Reviews the advent of this particular news network literature or in other words to historically refer to circumstance of formation of Press TV discourse.

Who is speaking?: A comparative study of the intellectuals in Gramsci's theory called Hegemony with

the concept of intellectual in the Press TV news. Records about Press TV's staffs have gathered from Internet (especially Wikipedia), secondary documents and Facebook.

What do they speak of?: To examine post-colonial concepts in the news such as war, race and gender. Semiotics and discourse analysis techniques have been used and have been analyzed under the concept of representation of stuart hall. How do they speak?

As the main part of this research "language" of Press TV news network has been studied. For understanding counter-hegemonic performance of Press TV, theories are needed to explain, gathered in the cluster of critical studies, cultural studies and post-colonial approach. Hegemony theory of Gramsci, representation of stuart hall and concepts of selfness and otherness are considered in this study.

Findings, analysis and interpretation: In order to study counter-hegemonic discourse of news channel Press TV, the two general categories of questions of meaning are considered: How and why?

"Who?" Is a question that thinks of Press TV's text (discourse) producers. The question includes the sender and message's controllers (for example the power of government, the political community intellectuals and Gate keepers). It includes an important part of the hegemony theory of Gramsci that deals with intellectuals.

Texts, especially news media texts are ideologically motivated. The ideology of thought owners is laid in the texts. Gramsci (1971) considered all individuals to be intellectuals, not all of them held positions or fulfilled the functions traditionally assigned to and developed by intellectuals. Most importantly for Gramsci, organic intellectuals of the working class not only resist hegemonic processes but they also attempt to displace the old hegemonic. At the same time, organic intellectuals serve as role models who open the horizons of their class or popular front to secure a more equitable system of societal organization which Gramsci believed must take the form of a socialist society that is committed to uprooting value production and breaking from capital's pernicious logic.

The role of the organic intellectual was to mediate between the good sense of subaltern groups and the formation of a counter-hegemonic consciousness that can read the contextually specific and historically conjectural contradictions inherent in society. According to Carroll and Ratner (1994), Gramsci 'believed that counter hegemonic leadership emanates from intellectuals whose organic ties to subaltern groups enable them to achieve a

unity of theory and practice and of thinking and feeling, thus mediating between the abstract and concrete in a manner foreign to traditional scholastic, ecclesiastic and political elites. For Gramsci, the role of the intellectual is that of organizer and facilitator: instead of bringing correct consciousness to the masses "from without" the organic intellectual facilitates the practical movement from "good sense" (which resistant subordinates already possess) to a broader, counter-hegemonic consciousness that is sensitive to the specific conditions of a social formation at a given conjuncture.

Press TV news network requires hiring professional crews who are fluent in English, so hired forces brought from abroad. It is clear that No media is away from influence of power and ideology. The problem is finding the common features among Press TV's producers (intellectuals). Salimi (2004) believes that the concept of organic intellectual in Gramsci idea is to show how the thought production processes is in dialectic relation with of historical evolution. Traditional intellectuals in a news network are those who are fully agree with strategies and policy positions of the same media where they work. According to Iran's constitution law, news media is under government control and in fact confirming the group's position is the same as government policy. Guests and experts who are invited to the studios of Press TV (especially Tehran

Office) on special occasions are among traditional intellectuals and their speech confirmed governmental position and ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran. There are other categories of intellectuals that from other news outlets have joined to this network. People like Glygan, Kaiser, Rithensy and Ridley who worked for other media outlets such as BBC, Al Jazeera or people (like Galway, Corbin and) as representatives of their country or in other words who have the role of leadership or responsibility of thoughts in their own communities.

Study of abroad staff biographies shows the common characteristics between these special groups that diverse them from their communities and made them organic intellectuals is thinking differently. Enjoying serving the organic elements of Press TV is being Counter-hegemonic underscores. What made? them different in their communities are issues such as protection of the Palestinian, anti-war views, pro-Islam, oppose Zionism, support for refugees and etc. These are in coordinated with objectives set forth in this news network.

Counter-hegemony is an opportunity for marginalized voices to express. The only way to gain real counter hegemonic control is brought to account the interests of other groups and social forces and to find ways to make them stronger. Press TV has created an opportunity for these voices to talk.

Since, the news media is controlled by government so the ultimate gate keeping of information is under measures and policies of the government. Such withdrawals can be made after both traditional and organic intellectual consensus to serve traditional beliefs and ideology of the Islamic republic of Iran at an international level.

"Why do they speak?" is a question to study the emergence of Press TV's literature in international media.

What Gramsci called "war of situations" takes its name from a sort of dialectic in the history. Historical contradictions provide certain restrictions for social and political changes. Hall insists that although historical formations are contingent, they can be "deeply resistant to change" (Hall 1988).

In history, there are two points: Accidental or insidious: Accidental ones comments on a series of events which is formed based on a divine providence so World leaders are not able to modify or prevent them. The insidious theory that is more being right to call it "cause and effect" Theory, is what we seek for our explanatory analysis. Social and political developments in Iran are indicating that foreign domination is considered as one of the factors hindering the country's political development. Interventions of alliances are the black parts but the real history of Iran. These interventions have left behind pessimistic mentality in Iranian public opinion and political culture. These social and political factors created a great movement against the autocratic and colonialism particularly in Iran's foreign policy.

The events have reflected in the writings and poems oratory and therefore anti-colonial literature in Iranian culture created. Issues and topics such as armed peace, colonial conference, secret diplomacy world war, fourteen-point declaration of Wilson and many international issues here are found in Iranian literature. The anti-colonial literature is a new chapter created in pros and order of Iranian literature and shows the tale of Iranian's struggles against the colonial powers. History of anti-colonial literature courses initially return to warfare against Iran, Russia which is called "Jihadi literature " and then travels to the establishment of constitutional system (Zaker, 2000). The sequence of anti-colonial literature can be found in Iranian media literature, especially it can pursue in news media. What is this news media literature?

To find the roots of words against the Hegemony in Iran news literature, first the contemporary historic relations of Iran and the West should be mentioned and then should be referred to Imam Khomeini's thoughts and struggles.

During the establishment of the Islamic Republic, the media in official and political speeches continuing to

show the slogan of "Death to America" and the United States as the "Great Satan" will be addressed in Iran's political society and news media. This shows the depth of ideological conflict between Tehran and Washington more than anything.

Imam Khomeini's words to explain the role and position of the United States has religious and nationalist dimensions and on the other hand was mobilizing and humiliating too.

For consolidating and sustaining the culture and Islamic norms, Imam Khomeini as Islamic Republic founder emphasized very much on the need to combat "foreign domination". This infrastructure is also based on Iranian myths and archetypes about the role of outsiders and then would strengthen the campaign process and the anti-colonial independence movements in Iran. Words like Hegemony, arrogance, exploitation, Great Satan, Spy Nest, the Zionist Regime, Intrigue, Justice the deprived Nations, oppressed Palestinians, etc. which are finding today in news media literature of Iran has derived from the context of historical and institutional events and have shaped the media discourse and policies and goals of Press TV.

"What do they speak of?" studies the representation of the messages. Representation is a process of placing ideological abstract concepts in specific format. According to Saied (2003) many of the stereotypes of Islamic and Arabic sensuality, fatalism, cruelty degradation and splendor or to be found in writers from John Buchan to V. S. Naipaul, have also been presuppositions underlying the adjoining field of academic Orientalism.

One of the methods used in the representation is narration. News stories follow a specific description. This section reviews representation of post-colonial concepts like race, sex, religion. It has been tried to discuss these concepts under shadow of Hegemonic and counter hegemonic discourse.

The representation of news about the war can be divided in two categories: News about the war (whether war was taking place or situation in a country after the war): news with value of geographic proximity (Iran's neighbors or Middle East countries), or cultural proximity (Islamic countries) are considered.

*Reflections of news about the Iraq war as war under the pretext of "bringing democracy" and the Afghan war as "war against terror" is justified in the Western media leaving a face of militant Islam. The news represented in Western media ignored the aggressive performance against these two countries and is going to show war events serving to humanity. The Press TV news highlighting insecurity, bomb explosions, U.S. military casualties, rape, inhumane behavior to show inability of

America and Europe in achieving the stated objectives. Other items of war coverage can be named of 22-day war in Gaza and the 33-day war in Lebanon. Unlike the Western media that introduce the leaders of resistance movements as terrorists, Press TV highlights those people sacred or martyred. It can be noted the details of the Hamas commander's assassination, Al-Mabhouh.

The network also reports from people around the world to reflect ideas opposing settlements and killing defenseless people of Palestine and to show anti-Zionism in the perspective of world public opinion. The background image of this news is being seen bombarding Gaza and defenseless people especially children and women.

Representation of war tools, technological advances and military maneuvers that happens in order to boast internal power. The remarkable point is the name of scientific achievements or military maneuvers that supports ideological goals. These names which are being described by experts help to create an ideological literature and are being repeatedly emphasized in news.

Selected names for the war instruments are usually religious and derived from Quran so the description about these names is considered as a kind of the introduction of Islamic beliefs. This is while the Zionist regime has chosen names that are usually Burdon mythological roots especially Greek myth that is familiar for western audiences or return to the religious beliefs of Judaism.

The representation of news about Great religions (included Celebrations and rituals) is not oriented in Press TV unless a ban on Baha'i religion news. Events can be represented in three general categories of religious occasions: ideological neutral and sacred Ramadan, Hajj and the Ashura are sacred Islamic occasions which have extensive coverage in Press TV. Ramadan and fasting ritual reflects manifestation of the "Solidarity with the Poor and Deprived people", Hajj is manifestation of "Islamic unity and Muslim power" and Ashura is manifestation of "The struggle against tyranny".

Christian New Year is universal events and generally is being considered neutral. Of ideological-political occasions we can name: Al-Qods Day, 22th Bahman Celebration (The overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchist regime on February 11, 1979 (22 Bahman 1357) the anniversary of the attack American warship to Iranian passenger plane, anniversary of Spy Nest capturing and etc. Recounting these events by media is to remind and narrate ideological history of Islamic Republic of Iran to international audiences. This method is being used by media to tell again "The Legend of outsiders" (Mahdizadeh, 2008). How the media in support of policy decisions?

The “Other” who counts his culture “the best” will allow himself to name the colonized people and even defines their territory. Naming the world means having a control over it. West media represent Islam and Muslims as the Risk and threat to Western societies and portrait them as retrogressive and extremist and militant fundamentalists. They name Islamic revivalism and movements as terrorist and fundamentalist. The research findings show Press TV news is to deal against this new cultural racism that is called “Islam phobia”. Hence Press TV is trying to replace the attitude of western media with a more positive picture of Islam rather than other religions and cultures.

The representation of Gender through the mass media discourse is more based on weakness and delicacy of female. This Gender stereotypes is useful in creating a feeling of weakness, sorrow and pity in the audience while seeing images of war. Representation images of the Gaza war emphasizing on the defenseless women and children and try to exasperate feelings against the cruel brutality and demonstrate against war.

Press TV’s application of gender stereotypes is noteworthy not just as an emotional motivating image but also as religious tool or better to say as the stereotypical portrait of “Muslim woman”. For that reason all the news reporters and broadcasters using the Hijab as the logo of Islamic news net and it can count a counter-hegemonic act.

Yvonne Ridley and Lauren Booth can be named as news figures of Press TV who has change their religion to Islam. Marwa al-Sherbini fate like the fate of many women in Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza was another issue that the main subject was a woman as a victim of discrimination.

Press TV illustrated Marwa al-Sherbini martyrdom with an emphasis on her pictures with hijab, her photo in the family and the stress on her education back ground to elaborate ignoring Muslims and minority rights in the West.

Documentary about “Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani is another program in Press TV that a woman is the main subject.” “Woman” in this program has been used as a political weapon to challenge “women and human rights” in Iran vs. the global level.

“How do they speak?” is a question of fact to understand the features and functions Press TV as Counter-hegemonic news network. Language is one of the tools of logic and reasoning. Naturally the choice of language and concepts to deliver the best intentions in diplomatic relations is an important factor in this territory. Thoughts are interpreted and exPRESSED in a common

language of every culture and public understanding is obtained in that way. Press TV language is in kind of journalistic language

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section reviews the linguistic theory of Saussure, Laclau and Mouffe, Gramsci and its application in Press TV. Press TV news directors discern the best manner to stand against the hegemony of Western media is to speak and write on behalf of deprived nations but the colonial language (English) is used to reach the end. This usage is not limited to the language and structure but also covers techniques. It can be justified by this point that in the aspect of post-colonial theory, colony narrates his identity by colonial language in order to start dialogue with him.

Laclau and Mouffe would, however, agree that in the context of a particularly entrenched hegemonic project, the possibilities for subversive interventions and re-articulations in a given social formation would in fact be limited. They do not hold that politics has become a game in which everything is equally possible and every position has equal value. They speak extensively about the ways in which political strategies must always be deployed in specific contexts and recognize that relations of domination may prevail in those contexts.

Laclau said: “We now have all the necessary analytical elements to specify the concept of articulation. Since all identity is relational-even if the system of relations does not reach the point of being fixed as a stable system of differences- since, too, all discourse is subverted by a field of discursively which overflows it, the transition from ‘elements’ to ‘moments’ can never be complete. The status of the ‘elements’ is that of floating signifiers incapable of being wholly articulated to the discursive chain. And this floating character finally penetrates every discursive (i.e., social) identity.” Any sign within a particular discourse in a way meant to be temporary, however, achieves a fixed meaning. Signifiers such as “America”, “England” in Literature of Press TV news means colonialist and imperialist powers. But in the west news discourse of “America” and “Britain” means the First World countries, civilized, sophisticated. Political discourses attempt to give new meaning to key signifiers such as “freedom” or “democracy” as they struggle to become the interpretative frameworks through which we live our structural positioning. In Laclau and Mouffe argue that these struggles over meaning take the form of articulation.” floating signifiers” the political concepts that are open to redefinition are given new meaning

Table 1: Press TV news terms vs. western media news terms (like BBC and CNN)

How does Press TV speak? (Counter hegemonic discourse words)	(How does western media speak? (Hegemonic discourse words)
Zionist regime	Israel
Capture of Spy Nest	American embassy attack
English sailors detainees	Hostages
Persian Gulf	Gulf
Usurper, occupier	Israelis
Jihad	Terror, war
Martyrdom	Slaughter, massacre
Martyrdom operations, suicide attack	Terroristic act
perish , spoil , die	Murder, kill, slay
impoverished, oppressed country	Terrorist
Globalism	Globalization
Invade, attack	War explanation: in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan
War under pretext of democracy	War to bring democracy
The supreme leader of Iran, leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei	Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
So called intellectual, pseudo-intellectual	Intellectual
Women's right in Islam, women's cover, Hijab	Liberty for women, women's right equality between men and women,
Myth of Holocaust	Holocaust denial
Great Satan	United States of America
Baytal-Muqaddas, Al-Qods, Urshalim, occupied territory	Jerusalem
Protesters, anarchists	rebels, rioters, demonstrators
Puppet, American agent, stooge	political activist
Hooligans, sensationalists	oppositions
Landslide victory	Deception in election
Control	Crack-down, suppression, crash
Westernization	Modernization
Unrest, chaos, Fitna	demonstration, riot, conflict, political turmoil, revolt, insurgency
Fitna	to protest election result
Homosexuality! (Opposing)	(Supporting) gay rights
Ethics, against Abortion	Support Abortion
Sacred defense	Iran-Iraq war
Islam	Terror
Patriotism	Internationalism
Intifada	terrorism
Resistance movement	terrorist groups
Theocracy, religious regime, devine regime, islamic republic	Secularism
Patriotic	Nationalist
OpPressed nations	Backward nations
Protection of human rights claim	Supporting Human rights
Accordance with Sharia principles	Human rights Violations
Peaceful use of Nuclear Power	Use of nuclear energy for terrorist purposes

as they are combined with other concepts in novel ways. Every articulation is always partial such that the meaning of these signifiers is never fixed once and for all. However, even when the effects of past articulations are weekend, they are never totally lost; every signifier bears the traces of past articulations. (Smith, 1998)

Sometimes a different signifier takes different signified: For example, referring to the "Zionist regime" in Press TV these exPressions (signified) are being used: "The Zionist regime" or "Al-Qods occupying regime" is used while the Western media to recognize Israel as a nation is using the word of "Israel". The "Palestine" for the Press TV is "OpPressed Palestinians" but for western media it is "Arabs" or "Palestine".

We have to consider that the meanings are not only understood within a discourse but also through a comparison with other discourse are possible. Hegemonic discourse is not possible without understanding the meanings in Counter-hegemonic discourse (Table 1).

CONCLUSION

Ideological factors and personal attitudes or insights (Text producers) and thoughts owners are efficient factors in production and perception of texts. In order to better understand the counter hegemonic discourse of Press TV the background of foreign news network staffs was studied.

The findings suggest that common feature among these staffs is their special thoughts that made them different from their communities and turn them to organic intellectuals. Enjoying serving the organic elements of news network Press TV is being counter-hegemonic underscores.

Both traditional and organic intellectual consensus to serve beliefs and ideology of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the international level because the news media in Iran are under government control and the ultimate gatekeepers of information on policies of the government entity takes place.

“Why do they talk?” is a question that in its response, the emerging field of counter-hegemonic discourse is being considered. Iranian history is indicating that the intervention of alien domination has left behind in public opinion and political culture of Iran. Press TV news media discourse is understandable within the discourse of the Islamic Republic of Iran. To find the roots of words used in Iran’s news literature against the Hegemony should also mention the recent historic relations between Iran and the West and also should be referred to Imam Khomeini’s thoughts and struggles.

Words like hegemony, arrogance, exploitation, Great Satan, spy nest, the Zionist regime, Intrigue, Justice, The poor, oppressed Palestinians which find in Iran’s media literature has been constitute from the historical remarks in the context of historical events and these shaped Media discourse and the policies and goals of news networks like Press TV.

“What do they speak of?” is a question in which the Message is in attention. This section reviews representations of the concepts of interest in post colonialism like war, race, sex, religion to compare the hegemonic and counter hegemonic concepts were discussed in the media discourse. Polar-building strategy is one of the overall strategies which a group shared attitudes and ideologies through the mental models described as positive inter-group and negative others.

In “How do they speak?” Linguistic practices (based on the concept of contradictions and dual system) are being considered. In order to resist against the hegemony of Western news media and as an advocate for deprived nations in Press TV, English as colonial language is used. This use is not limited to the language but structures and also covers techniques.

In words of the post-colonial theory, colony narrates his identity in the colonizer language thereby be talking with him (It should be mentioned, Iran has never been a real colony but since historically it was under invasions of other countries it cause the emersion of special kind of literature that can be studied under post colonial model). Language of Press TV is a kind of journalistic language. East-West differences in ideology create two systems of

different words that their representation can be found in news texts. Any sign within a particular discourse meant to be temporary, however, achieves a fixed meaning. Signifiers such as “America”, “England” in Literature of Press TV news means colonialist and imperialist powers while these countries in the West’s news discourse means the first world, civilized and developed countries.

No social structure and no identity in society is predetermined and fixed. In fact articulation of the hegemonic or counter-hegemonic discourse is what forms the structures and allow you to have a meaningful reality.

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