Regulating Poverty: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Media Reporting on Energy Elite

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Abstract

The current discursive development of renewable energy in news media is toward a direction of hyper-commodification, in which the process of creating a commodity is mainly subject to dominant political ideologies rather than a free market. Regarding the process of media reporting on global leaders' renewable energy policies to the global public, I utilized semantic network analysis and discourse historical analysis to explore the process of hyper-commodification in media narratives. I found that media discourse constructs an illusion when representing renewable energy as essential and affordable in people's everyday lives and indeed portrays a future without poverty. The underlying statement is that renewable energy is the future if you can afford it. Such discourses reimagine commodification by producing an emergent social class and intensifying the ongoing class warfare through the use of language. Although seeking solutions to implementing renewable energy is key to the public interest, the urgency of having a sustainable plan for energy consumption is often omitted from current media discourse. Instead, such discourses that represent the social reality retrospectively transition from reflecting public interests to only those of well-limited social groups can lead to detrimental consequences for successfully implementing sustainable goals in a timely manner.

Keywords: hyper-commodification, critical discourse analysis, semantic network analysis, media representation, renewable energy, environmental justice

1. Introduction

The Paris Agreement, acting as a legally binding global treaty on combating climate change caused by human impact, calls for limiting the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2, ideally to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to the pre-industrial levels (UNFCCC, 2015). To achieve this goal shared by a global collaborative effort, the United States' response from an influential global leadership perspective is consequential at multiple levels. In this paper, I focus on the policymaking related to climate change, particularly renewable energy, and utilize critical discourse analysis (CDA) to decipher how media reporting on these policies problematizes poverty representation in the U.S. CDA affords a sociolinguistic perspective to discuss the multilayered functions of media narratives and allows a systematic examination

upon textual, discursive, and sociocultural aspects to address the key process of language in use.

On January 27, 2021, the 46th U.S. President Joseph R. Biden took executive actions to tackle climate change issues and set "ambitious" goals to address the urgent demands outlined in the Paris Agreement (White House, 2021, para. 3). He announced that the U.S. will achieve "a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035" and "an irreversible path to a net-zero economy by 2050" (White House, 2021, para. 3). Following President Biden's goals on carbon footprint in the future U.S. economy, the current media outlets (ranging from January to April 2021), such as newspapers, televisions, and radio programs, have participated in these conversations by mainly interpreting and commenting on these environmental policies issued by the administration and how this policymaking influences people's everyday lives.

Regarding the process of media reporting on President Biden's renewable energy policies to the U.S. public, I found that media discourse constructs an illusion when representing renewable energy as essential and affordable in people's everyday lives and indeed portrays a future without poverty. The underlying statement is that renewable energy is the future if you can afford it. Such discourses reimagine the process of commodification by producing an emergent social class and intensifying the ongoing class warfare through the use of language. Consequently, in renewable energy conversations within these critical media discourses, those who lack access to secure food, livable housing, and public transportation are underrepresented, and their social presence is delegitimized.

This current discursive development of renewable energy is toward a direction of hyper-commodification, in which the process of creating a commodity is mainly subject to dominant political ideologies rather than a free market. In other words, the media coverage becomes a tool in commercializing energy solutions' values, and therefore reinventing the act of consuming and accepting these solutions through the means of hyper-commodification. When media production focuses more on representing renewable energy's economic values than ecological concerns, conceptualizing these values into purchasable packages with gas, electricity, or stock investments conflicts with

the goals outlined in the Paris Agreement and becomes distant from presidential policymaking in the U.S. Although seeking solutions to implementing renewable energy is key to the public interest, the urgency of having a sustainable plan for energy consumption is often omitted from current media discourse. Instead, such discourses that represent the social reality retrospectively transition from reflecting public interests to only reflecting well-limited social groups can lead to detrimental consequences for successfully implementing these "ambitious" goals in a timely manner.

When exploring the media discourse surrounding renewable energy policies, I analyzed a set of newspaper articles that identify various populations among different social groups as well as interpret how the government's energy plans and policies will affect people's daily lives. When covering these stories, media texts generally either represent a vaguely defined population, such as "people" or "workers," or target most of the middle-class population by using terms such as "Americans" or "residents" to address significant impacts regarding the implications of these policies and plans. The diversity of the population is an important indicator in evaluating the influence of energy policies. However, when detailing the benefits of adopting renewable energy-related policymaking, the common image depicted by media discourse often does not address concerns reflected in the underprivileged population. Nor do the media report the social responses from the underrepresented populations to these changes that will make a significant difference to these people's living conditions. Therefore, people in poverty become invisible within this public discourse. This social practice, empowered by such a media representation, is responsible for creating emergent inequalities in a future powered by renewable energies.

2. Media Texts and Conceptual Building Blocks

2.1 Selecting Texts of Media Reporting on Policymaking

The focus of data collection is on media texts (1/01/2021– 4/30/2021) covering the renewable energy policymaking in the U.S. and how these policies might influence people's daily lives. As shown in Table 1, a small sample ($N = 15$) of U.S. newspapers was selected to conduct a pilot study. These articles reported on the ongoing policymaking of renewable energy in the U.S.

under the Biden administration and described the changes that these policies may bring to the American public through full-length feature articles. Although an in-depth CDA study often benefits from a large sample of data sets, using small samples to conduct a pilot study and practice how discursive dynamics are constructed through the use of language is adequate to draw meaningful conclusions for future research.

These articles combined President Bidens' vision and his policymaking in their narratives when decoding the meaning of renewable energy in the future for American people's lives. The identification of the American population to whom these articles spoke is the key process. Finding how media texts identify different populations is important to answer how they actively represent these social groups through the means of public discourse.

Table 1. Selected U.S. Newspaper articles (01/01/2021– 04/30/2021, Accessed electronically on April 30, 2021).

Newspaper	News Headline
The New York Times	How sustainable is the rally in renewable energy stocks?
The New York Times	Biden administration announces a major offshore wind plan
The New York Times	Biden wants to slash emissions: success would mean a very different America
USA Today	Biden prioritizes climate change as national security concern, pauses oil drilling on public lands
USA Today	Yes, America can achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Here's how.
USA Today	Climate Point: Biden takes office with ambitious climate plans but minimal details
The Wall Street Journal	Biden team races to assemble new climate-change strategy
The Wall Street Journal	Biden administration to finance $8 billion in power-grid improvements
The Wall Street Journal	Biden makes new push to address climate change
The Washington Post	Biden team races to assemble new climate-change strategy
The Washington Post	Biden administration to finance $8 billion in power-grid improvements
The Washington Post	Biden makes new push to address climate change
Los Angeles Times	As Biden takes office, it's a whole new era for writing about climate change
Los Angeles Times	Oil companies lock in drilling, challenging Biden on climate change
Los Angeles Times	Biden and the climate crisis: Why this gas project matters

2.2 Situating Renewable Energy within Political Ideologies

Similar to the conceptualization of climate change, renewable energy is no longer an ecological phenomenon but a political ideology. The way people approach global climate change, treat it as an issue, and seek solutions to confront it extend the view of climate change to a political discussion because policymaking is an essential component in initiating and completing these processes. On the one hand, global organizations such as the United Nations, advocate transnational initiatives to tackle

climate change driven by human-included emissions of greenhouse gases. Bringing this alarming fact to the global public and calling for a global collaborative effort signifies the scale of facing climate change is more than merely a national challenge.

On the other hand, focusing on climate change, renewable energy in particular, is indispensable to plan for a more sustainable future. The developmental goal of sustainability essentially situates the discussion surrounding issues related to climate change as key pathways to its achievement. Without these fundamental

expectations from policies and politicians, combating climate and energy challenges becomes unrealistic. Therefore, considering energy issues as part of the political conversation is instrumental to recognize the gravity of decision-making in the process of pursuing more sustainable development goals.

2.3 Treating Language as a Political Tool in CDA

Language itself is political because it engenders a perspective of social practice. For example, John Richardson (2007) explains in journalism, "the study of the social practices of news discourse assumes a dialectical relationship between society and journalism" (p. 114). The interrelationship between journalistic practice and the outcomes generated by such a practice inevitably influences the social construction outlined in journalistic narratives. This basic function in journalistic practice reflects the critical strength in using language to achieve purposeful goals.

The term "discourse" also refers to what van Dijk and Fairclough call "language use" (van Dijk, 1997; Fairclough, 1993). The analytical perspective of studying "discourse" is derived from a paradigm shift in contemporary philosophy, also known as the "linguistic turn" (Carver, 2002). The conceptualization of "linguistic turn" holds the fundamental principle that "language is the one and only way through which our 'forms of life' can happen in the world; subjectivities can be created and expressed, social activities can be developed and pursued, and power-relations can be tested and consolidated" (Pleasants, 2014, p. 32). Therefore, CDA is a series of interdisciplinary approaches collectively utilized to decipher the hidden meanings behind the linguistic mask (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Fairclough contributed considerably to CDA, especially by developing a three-tier model (Fairclough, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2010), and he also extended this model to political discourses (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012). Many studies apply Fairclough's model to various domains, for example, as Listo (2018) does to the literature of energy poverty and Higgins and Coffey (2016) to three corporate sustainability reports.

3. Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical foundation of this paper centers on the social constructionist notion that "human beings rationalize their experience by creating models of the social world and then share and reify these models through language" (Zhou & Qin, 2020, p. 119798). Different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 1985). A CDA is "critical" in the sense that it aims to reveal the role of discursive practice in maintaining the social world, including those social relations that involve unequal relations of power (Jørgensen & Philips, 2002). Given the social imagination of poverty represented by media discourse, this paper applies Karl Marx's conflict theory and Michel Foucault's "power-knowledge" to discuss media texts that influence the existing social arrangements.

3.1 Conflict Theory and Class Warfare

The conceptualization of conflict theory is historically indebted to Karl Marx's theory of history, economic analysis, and his critical engagement with contemporary capitalist society (Jonathan & Leopold, 2021). Conflict theory, from a macro-level analysis of society, often draws attention to power differentials (Rummel, 1975). According to Rummel (1975), it is significant to view Marx's structure of society in relation to social classes, and the struggle between them as the "engine of change" within this structure (p. 63). For example, as Rummel explains, because of the everlasting competition for the limited resources in a society, there will always be a state of conflict (Rummel, 1975). This dynamic indicates that there is a constant struggle between the rich and the poor.

The key to understanding Marx's conflict theory is his conceptualization of class. Rummel (1975) points out that the concept of class essentially stems from property ownership. Consequently, this ownership vests an individual with the power to "exclude others from the property and to use it for personal purposes" (Rummel, 1975, p. 65). Therefore, Marx's concept of class and his conflict theory indicates a social membership that tells apart the self and others within this constant struggle. This perspective enables CDA to examine how language used by different media outlets and other institutions discursively filters the definition of membership in terms of representing a public social reality.

3.2 Power-Knowledge and Media Representation

The perspective of power-knowledge was developed by Michel Foucault (1995) that power is based on the production and utilization of knowledge. In other words, power creates and recreates its own territory of exercise through

the means of knowledge. Foucault's theorization of power-knowledge challenges the hegemonic discourse generated through the class struggle. According to Foucault (1995), there is no "absolute" knowledge about the world (p. 35). Instead, the idea of absolute knowledge, though often considered as universal and true, are historically contingent (Foucault, 1995). In this sense, the domain of knowledge becomes a convenient tool for social domination and class warfare. On the other hand, Foucault's argument indicates that we "always begin anew" regarding creating knowledge and knowledge systems (Foucault, 1995). His statement also echoes the constant social-class struggle outlined in Marx's conflict theory.

In the process of knowledge production and reproduction, the role of mass media representation has been an inevitable force in contemporary history. As Stuart Hall (2013) demonstrates that there is no single true representation of people and events in media texts but there are many different ways these can be represented. The power of representation reflects the potency of reproducing knowledge in media texts. This powerful function of media representation in fact necessitates CDA to deconstruct the process of knowledge-making. Considering the dynamic of class struggle is also involved with the knowledge infrastructure maintained by media representation, studying the social practice that governs and polices social solidarity and class warfare and focusing on the ongoing social events and practices should contribute to valuable insights in critical media analysis.

4. Research Methods

4.1 Semantic Network Analysis

Media texts enable the formation of power dynamics through narratives. Analysis at the textual level, according to Richardson (2007), becomes an essential component of exploring the media discourse (p. 46). Centering resonance analysis (CRA), proposed and developed by Steven Corman et al. (2002), is an innovative text-and-network-based as well as computer-assisted analytical method for locating and representing the centrality of linking concepts (p. 159). This encompasses large quantities of written texts and transcribed conversations, including mass media productions, interpersonal conversations, group discussions, interaction in large organizations,

and other mass media, as well as even larger social groups (Corman et al., 2002, p. 157.) According to Corman et al. (2002), CRA identifies units of analysis and their relation within texts compared to other computerized word-network representation methods (p. 157). Corman et al. explains:

While other similar methods make use of the word's co-occurrence in the visualization window of a given software to identify these units, CRA unitizes and links the words based on a linguistic theory that considers the way in which texts are produced. Thus, CRA analysis is not based on arbitrary software window sizes but, rather, on a consistent theoretical perspective (2012, p. 157).

Specifically, CRA is based on centering theory, which posits, "human beings bring coherence to discourses by using 'centers'" (Freitas et al., 2018, p. 462). These centers, as Jonathan Freitas et al. point out, are primarily nouns and adjectives (i.e., noun phrases) that work as the subject or object of a sentence (2018, p. 463). Therefore, according to Freitas et al. (2018), the more these centers refer to each other (both retrospectively and prospectively), the more a discourse becomes coherent (p. 463). Through graphic networked representation, CRA does not capture the frequency of texts because the frequency of a particular word is not regarded indicative of its importance but outlines a relational structure that combines interdependent semantic units (e.g., words) within the context (Song & Lee, 2017, p. 1466).

As McPhee et al. (2002) point out, these semantic units and concepts could be interpreted as "relative to their place in the overall network of relation among the most influential terms" (p. 274). A word's influence through quantification becomes an indicator of betweenness centrality, a key principle conceptualized by Corman et al. (2002) to bridge words in a document (p. 157). This first-level analysis could help identify the semantic connection and structure in the news coverage and provide directions in examining strategic implications and discursive development related to the representation and commemoration of the specific news events. Compared to traditional textual analysis, CRA utilizes network theory as its foundational basis and includes a specific linguistic framework (i.e., centering theory) to visualize networks of centering words.

4.2 Discourse Historical Analysis

While quantitative-oriented textual analysis builds the groundwork for connecting semantic structures in the news coverage, this paper also applies Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer's (2001) discourse historical approach (DHA) to identify a systematic set of discursive strategies. Wodak and Meyer's DHA introduced a set of discourse-analytical tools that include referential/ nomination, predication, and argumentation. These discursive strategies work coherently to construct the media representation. As Wodak and Meyer (2001) demonstrated, nomination identifies the specific social identities by outlining membership rules; predication accordingly provides more in-depth social evaluations to these identities categorized in nomination; argumentation supplies thematic evidence to support social evaluations completed by predication.

These analytical frameworks help identify and describe discursive strategies that envelop particular social, political, psychological, or linguistic aims (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). The "strategy" in this case refers to a more or less

intentional plan of journalistic practices (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 72). As Song and Lee (2017) demonstrate, the purpose of DHA serves to inform the particular social, political, and linguistic goals (p. 1466). These goals essentially influence "how the events reported were referred to linguistically, what traits and features were attributed to the terms employed, and what argumentation schemes were used to justify the attributions" (Song & Lee, 2017, p. 1466). As a second-level analysis, DHA advances from identifying manifest semantic structures to extracting social practice from semantic units.

5. Analyzing Media Reporting on Renewable Energy Policies

The focal point of analyzing media texts when interpreting how renewable energy policymaking influences people's daily lives lies in how media identify specific populations in their narratives. In the visualized semantic network (See Figure 1), the central themes surrounding population identification when interpreting renewable energy policymaking's impact in the selected media texts are *American, people, consumer, and civilian*.
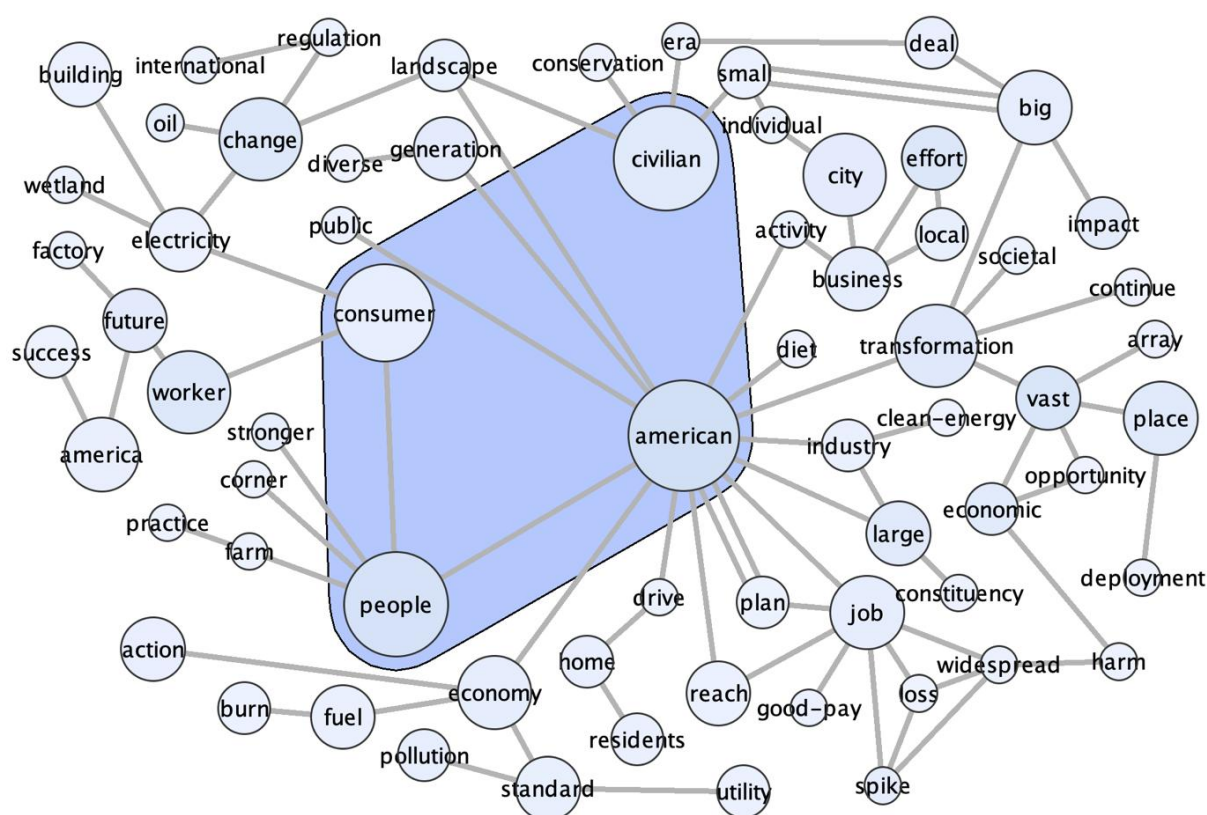

Figure 1. The semantic network of selected media texts on renewable energy policymaking

Similarly, in a more detailed categorization of

discursive strategies in media texts (See Table 2),

both predication and argumentation are also in support of the nomination when mainly referencing the public as "American," "people," and "consumers."

Table 2. Discursive strategies in selected media texts on renewable energy policymaking

Strategies	Extracts from media texts
Nomination	American (s), people, consumer (market), residents, workers, individuals, United States, audience,
Predication	confident, resilience, advancing, better, stronger, standard,
Argumentation	investment (s), promises, energy-efficient economy, transformations, doable, improvement, future,

From this multilayered linguistic-based analytical perspective, there are three main themes that emerged surrounding the media texts when representing population. These themes, namely, American as new elite, American as new client, and American as new norm, discursively constructed through the media texts problematize the media representation of population by oversimplification. This media practice virtually fails to represent the underprivileged, especially those in poverty.

5.1 American as New Elite

Centering "American" as a public ideology to indicate the public essentially reconfigures the class typology dominated by the traditional economic infrastructure. As the selected media texts focus on discussing how policymaking transforms the way "Americans drive to work, heat their homes, and operate their factories," an elite lifestyle is popularized as a public life in the future with renewable energies. This public life image is different from the economy driven by the traditional fossil and oil fuels. Instead, renewable energy signifies a more sustainable economic landscape that affords people with an "organic" and "healthier" way of living instead of relying on the primary forms of energies such as coal.

Because of the commodification and hyper-commodification of renewable energy, media narratives become mostly interested in these potential clients as wealthy individuals, groups, and institutions. For example, all the changes that the media predict will happen following the renewable energy policymaking target the new way of consumption. Thus, the current predication and argumentation strategies in the form of narratives engender the formation of a new social class: the energy elite.

This class is "confident" to bear all the transformations led by such policymaking and ready to create the standard fashion of emergent lifestyle. If media contents cover the universal interests by highlighting affordability for the "Americans", but without considering the underprivileged population, the ideological mindset behind such behaviors is under suspicion. In other words, this media presentation is problematic because it ignores the social existence of people in poverty and fosters exceptionalism that limits the capacity for these people to enter a future with renewable energy based on their wealth levels.

The new membership of social class prevents people who cannot afford living an American way of sustainability from entering the future with renewable energy. In this sense, media discourse contributes to constructing social orders by advertising the environmental cost mainly through a fundamental economic viewpoint. However, environmental justice issues are detached from media exposure and left to polarized political leadership. People in different social classes based on their financial status are kept invisible among these media discourses. Through the device of depersonalizing the detailed classification and reorganization of the domestic population in the U.S., these media narratives not only fail to represent people in poverty but also escalate their leverages to become ingroups as energy elite.

5.2 American as New Client

The uses of "American" and "consumer" transform the role of the audience into an emergent client population through hyper-commodification. Similar to the way that media emphasize the energy consumption in policymaking to people's daily lives, by

transforming their audience into clients, these media outlets also consolidate their values of providing insights about these prescribed purchasable packages. As energy solutions transform from polluting to sustainable, media's social practice remains mostly unchanged because of its revenue-driven business model. This model requires media production and promotion to keep in close contact with their audience and connect individually. Therefore, most news articles' punchlines speak directly to their audience by reflecting on more common issues. Consumerism inevitably influences and supports the discursive construct of media discourse to convince audiences to treat themselves as qualified clients in energy consumption and regard media as credible sources.

As the media discourse is price-centered when reporting and commenting on renewable energy, their selling point would be only targeted to these wealthy potential clients. Again, connecting to the idea of creating a new class, the current framing strategies in the form of narratives engender the formation of the energy elite. In this sense, media discourse contributes to constructing social orders by advertising the environmental cost mainly through a fundamental economic viewpoint. However, environmental justice issues are detached from the duties of media exposure and left to polarized political leadership.

Furthermore, the hyper-commodification of renewable energy is often limited to seeking business models that relate to most of the population (potential clients) of the Americans. That's why state-level infrastructures are appropriate for implementing renewable energy. The consequence of commodifying people's access to renewable energy is diminishing biodiversity through the use of "American" or "United States." The consideration of governing affordability is in the hands of people in powerful positions along with the secure ownership of properties and suggests a top-down approach based on the public's hegemonic views. In contrast, promoting diversity in understanding and consuming renewable energy requires a bottom-up perspective to address the community need rather than state-oriented demand. By suggesting the Americans as clients, this media representation deepens the social struggles outlined in Marx' conflict theory by providing

the new access to membership based on the rhetorical and discursive privileges of creating rules, "knowledge" in Foucault's term. In this manner, the elite class reinforces its power structure by renewing the knowledge system and censoring the public discourse of Americans who are always leading the lifestyle of being capable of adapting to future sustainable policies.

5.3 American as New Norm

Containerizing the diversity of the domestic population into a homogenous concept of being "American" generates a normativity by hegemonizing the representation of American elites and consumers as the majority. The iconic figure of American living in a more sustainable future hence becomes a standardized image in the audience's eyes through media discursive strategies. This normative representation sets limitations to embracing a diverse and inclusive definition of Americanness in the public discourse because it systematically correlates with economic structure, social arrangements, and capitalistic markets.

Consequently, access to renewable energy is inherently indebted to U.S. lawmakers. Expanding the legal eligibility for the implementation and regulating the price are key topics in terms of granting access to renewable energy to the public. Although the capitalistic free market opens the door for private entities, media coverage still puts a lot of pressure on legislation and administration; for example, former Vice President Al Gore and his environmental campaign in combating global warming address the increasing "planetary emergency" (2007, p. 23). Given the lack of coordinated national climate policy in the U.S., state-level and regional renewable energy and climate change policies have been fundamental to its deployment. This situation ultimately leaves more space for public creativity in reducing carbon emissions. However, the power relations woven by media discourse limit the audience's role in playing the client who writes the check rather than actively engaging with the social change.

Furthermore, discursive strategies such as legitimation and argumentation are typically coupled with lexicon-grammatical analysis and provide the depth of interpretation and various perspectives on certain topics (Achugar, 2017). These strategies could also explore how

discourse plays in producing, reproducing, or resisting social inequalities from a perspective of social practice. For example, there is a growing discussion of affordability in media coverage to advertise numerous renewable energy plans. By all means, these discourses all indicate a unified U.S. identity as a foundational basis for this transformation in buying renewable energy for people who can afford these plans. This becomes a crucial problem in current media discourse. Media outlets make energy transformation into a private concern surrounding affordability rather than centering its role at the core of public interest. In other words, the discussion of whether people can afford renewable energy or not should not be the primary concern because environmental issues are first and foremost dealing with surviving human conditions. The market of renewable energy may be promising given current governance and industrial trends. Still, the human future depends not on a totality of economic entities but more like a material space. When the media discourse mistargets the critical aspect of presenting the current social events, it fails its job to serve the public interest.

Analyzing these themes and how they were developed through CDA reveals the role of media being manipulative rather than informative. This gatekeeping process of creating new knowledge to afford social imagination is a critical social practice in relation to everyone's daily lives. Specific discursive strategies identified in these media texts also help to demonstrate the power dynamic happening during the media practice. From both theoretical and methodological perspectives, CDA serves its purpose to deconstruct the hegemonic representation produced regarding critical social issues and persistently challenges the way the audience interacts with the media texts and the media representations behind them. Thus, CDA itself is a solution to social struggles that resonate with inequalities, discrimination, and other anti-social issues involved in public discourses in everyday culture. The revolutionist perspective embedded in CDA is essentially optimistic in terms of overcoming the ongoing pitfalls.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

By focusing on interpreting the renewable energy policymaking and identifying specific populations in this context, a CDA-based study contributes to the visibility of the process for the media to regulate poverty through narratives on

examining the media representation. Through the process of regulating people who cannot afford the future of renewable energy and merely emphasizing building the dominant image of "American" reinforces the ideology of American superiority. Maintaining this image of "Great American" by using media discourse also runs parallel with the political campaign slogan "Make America Great Again." Both claims mobilize social solidarity by focusing on the elite aspect of American culture that reflects the primary white population included in the positive representation for the American future. Therefore, American eventually becomes coded language in the media to represent the public and symbolize the most elite class.

On the other hand, this elite-oriented representation of an ideal expectation of Americans indicates that the current media discourse centralizes the discussion of economic interests surrounding decarbonization. It transforms the values of renewable energy into a unified marketable product. The focal point of media production lies in renewable energy's economic values and conceptualizes these values into purchasable packages with gas, electricity, or stock investments. However, questions such as why we need to adopt renewable energy and how urgent it is to implement sustainable policies and actions are neglected from media narratives. Consequently, this misrepresentation of environmental issues and policymaking is responsible for holding back the collective effort to create a more sustainable future with renewable energy infrastructures. The material foundations of developing these policies surrounding renewable energy and achieving the goals set by the Paris Agreement and President Biden can also be subject to the detrimental effects caused by such a media representation from making any progress.

Regarding the challenges posed by the current discursive construct of renewable energy, both audience fragmentation and segmentation are key issues in producing the social identity and solidarity to reach a consensus. In comparison, both phenomena described in fragmentation and segmentation are framed as in-group vs. out-group. Renewable energy should not be only applied to certain social groups and automatically eliminate other populations. These media discourses are powerful in transforming media outlets' designated

audience segmentation into clear-cut categorifications based on their socio-economic status. By doing so, the already detrimental inequalities would be getting worse and cause more profound social turbulence when fighting for renewable but limited resources. The audience segmentation may also shape the exceptionalism based on the accessibility and affordability of renewable energy and deepen the social conflicts.

These narratives through the mass media can discourage some social groups, especially for those who have been underrepresented in the public discourse, from taking actions and participating in the climate change movement. Since each individual is relevant to combating all kinds of challenges posed by climate change, a consensus and action at a collective is the ideal to forge an effective strategy to make the change happen not only at a regional or national level but also at a global scale. Thus, it is essential and urgent for media outlets to utilize the potency of public discourse to navigate the social solidarity by prioritizing the shared environmental consciousness against climate change rather than against each other from different social classes. The United States has historically witnessed how political polarization could lead to useless argument and distracting public debates concerning shared issues to foster unity in Americanness. Learning lessons from these political practices is valuable to prevent these failures in public communication happening to climate actions.

When media discourse fails to address the alarming fact of adopting a more sustainable energy consumption and underestimates the urgency of developing sustainability solutions, the audience might be more fragmented with various interpretations of "How much is enough to afford a sustainable lifestyle?" The debate on having more affordable and renewable plans also lowers the expectation of public participation. It provides a supply-and-buyer presumption to the audience where people take more passive actions to wait to produce these renewable energies. Only when these commodities are available in the market can people participate in reducing carbon emissions. Thus, the media discourse of renewable energy is always environmentally economic but hardly ecologically conscientious. The media are not ready to embrace renewable energy or are at least reluctant to do so. After all, these

discourses have not explained why we need renewable energy but treat it as a new asset, and its economic values are what should ultimately matter the most.

The purpose of conducting CDA research on renewable energy policymaking not only deals with critiques of the ongoing practice of media outlets and public content creators but also enlightens critical and effective solutions to overcome the downsides revealed by CDA-based evaluations. In this paper, by utilizing Marx's conflict theory and Foucault's power-knowledge, I bridge the connection between social struggles and media representation. Marx's conflict theory allows me to outline the dynamic of class warfare from a macro perspective. Foucault's power-knowledge framework details the knowledge production system and its relation to power structures within a micro-perceived society. Both critical perspectives are in line with Stuart Hall's conceptualization of media representation and reflect the importance of social imagination in relation to the orientational function of public discourse.

7. Future Research

For future CDA research, the recontextualization focusing on the interdisciplinary nature of CDA itself is important to seek exciting conclusions in terms of examining divergent aspects of social imaginaries with public discourse. This entanglement of CDA-based perspective to scrutinize social struggles also necessitates transnationally collaborative efforts to address globally shared issues. Some of the key concepts such as intertextuality are essential to seek solutions to combat climate change and other global issues within transnational contexts. Even with a specific cultural context, such as the U.S. culture, it is also important to address the diverse nature based on different community cultures. Comparative analysis within the CDA spectrum can also lead to fruitful discussions. For example, the comparison between the representation of "American" in ongoing media discourse and former U.S. President's use of "Make America Great Again." Although both are coded languages, the encoding processes may vary according to specific sociocultural contexts.

The focus of sociocultural contexts demonstrated in Fairclough (1995)'s "Dialectical–Relational Approach" also requires

innovative critical ethnographic research. The occurrence of communication survives in a sustainable dialectical relationship. Thus, the fundamental process of encoding and decoding (Hall, 1973) is not one-way traffic. Instead, the interpretation and critique reflecting upon such hermeneutics engenders the inexhaustible depth to study people's lived experience through discourse mediation and posits significant issues to represent our everyday culture in a critical manner. The critical perspective of CDA essentially enables researchers to notice pivotal moments in social lives and bring public attention to these critical issues in order to enkindle positive social changes.

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