

**The Ideologies of Anti-Authoritarianism and Social Movement in  
Anti-Flag's Protest Song Lyrics: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

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**Abstract:** *The study is about Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which aimed to explore ideology in protest songs of Punk Rock music. The protest emerges due to dissatisfaction with any program or policy of the government or other organization. The musician sees these relevant parties as superior who have overused their power and ideology to control people and cause them suffered. Their music is a representation of their rejection of the condition and the system. Through their lyrics, they intent on raising people's awareness of the existing issue and persuading them to agree with their beliefs and to fight for a change. The study has to investigate two research questions such as 1) What are the dominant ideologies revealed in Anti-Flag's song lyrics? 2) How are the ideologies revealed in the songs through the use of linguistic features? The study is library research that used CDA and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as basic theories. Under three dimensional framework of CDA: social practice, discourse practice, and textual analysis the study is directed to find out the social issues inside the 15 songs lyrics of Anti Flag and analyze the text with the help of SFG. The significance of this study is that it informs two main ideologies presented in selected songs of Anti-Flag are the anti-authoritarianism: anti-capitalism and anti-nationalism and the social movement and explains how the linguistic features work to present the ideologies.*

**Keywords:** *Ideology, Protest Songs, CDA*

## INTRODUCTION

The intimacy between music and society is firm. Throughout history, it is clear that the existence of music has gained much support to a specific issue. A song by Michael Heart "We Will Not Go Down" was composed to show his sympathy with the painful of Gaza citizens. He aimed to raise sympathy, care, and the help of people who listened to his song for the people of Gaza in Palestine. It happens as the music helps modulating collective mood but however it is can bring separation as well. The role of music is not only used to support but also to protest. The protest music is seen through the lyrics which contains protest, critics, rebel, etc. about the happening issues. The protest song is used to create awareness of social problems and sometimes offers or infers a solution. The protest is done due to society's disagreement on government's policy or rules which often causing suffers to them. The music genre which is consistent to sound protest is punk rock. Anti Flag is one of the punk rock which likes to create songs that contain the protest. The music, punk rock has its ideology which originated from the working-class people who were unhappy and frustrated with the economic inequality, the bourgeois hypocrisy and neglects them and their struggles. Their ideology primarily concerns with concepts such as equality.

Anti Flag is also known as an activist which criticized issues that occurred in the United States since their first debut in 1996. Most of their albums were released in the era of three presidents like Bill

Clinton (1993-2001), George W. Bush (2001-2009), and Barack Obama (2009-2017). Among those issues, Bush's invasion of Iraq was one the most stealing attention issue. It becomes the trigger to other issues like nationalism, capitalism, social security, tax increase, unemployment, inflation, poverty, and many others. Those issues are presented in the song lyrics such as *You've Got To Die For The Government* (1996), *Kill The Rich* (1996), *Red, White And Brainwashed* (1996), *Got The Numbers* (1999), *Stars And Stripes* (2001), *This Machine Kills Fascists* (2002), *Watch The Right* (2002), *What's The Difference* (2002), *Class Plague* (2002), *Protest Song* (2002), *Tearing Down The Borders* (2003), *You Can Kill The Protestors, But You Can't Kill The Protest* (2003), *Depleted Uranium Is A War Crime* (2006), *No Borders, No Nations* (2007) And *911 For Peace* (2007).

In the lyric, "*So if the heads of the state want to end terrorism, they should go and kill themselves*" (*Class Plague* lyric, *BYO Split Series Volume IV* (Anti-Flag/Bouncing Souls, 2002), the presented issue is terrorism. Through the clause, Anti Flag gives protest to the way the head of the state handled the issue which is considered bad. The role of Anti Flag as the activist placed themselves as a powerful people to protest the government as they have their fans and supporters who shout out the same ideology.

Ideology in Anti Flag's lyrics cannot be separated from their values in Punk Rock. The ideology represents their group which tends to recognize as the opponents of the government, elites,

the rich, the corporations, and many other people which recognized as the superiors. Punk itself is recognized as a counterculture or subculture which refers to the particular group in society which has their way of life, customs, and ideas. Their unique identity can be seen through their behavior, costume, and music. The DIY (Do-It-Yourself) is the value they shared to shape who they are. It has meaning as they refuse to be controlled and to follow rules. This value shaped them to willingly fight against the superior who aim to rule them. About their music, punk rock is presented as direct and straightforward. It has a limited range of chords but a heavy rhythm. The feel of their music is much aggressive. The counterculture of punk rock is the depiction of their rebellion to any situation which are caused by policies, decisions, or regulations by the authority.

The critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a theoretical framework used in the study to reveal the two ideologies that lie in the protest song lyrics of Anti Flag. The analysis of the song lyrics is done by the use of Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG).

## **THEORETICAL SUPPORT**

### **The Notion of Ideology**

The term ideology is used to state the ideas of a particular group. Parson (1951: 39) stated that it is "a system of beliefs held in common by the members of a collectivity". Hence, the two main points of the term

is *a system of beliefs and members of a collectivity*. Besides, Fairclough (2003: 3) asserted that "Ideologies are the representation of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute, to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination, and exploitation". Thus, the ideology is not only a belief but is also practical.

Ideology in its practice can be seen through the implementation of power and domination owned by a person or a group to control others. Nazi for example has control over Germany as Adolf Hitler is the leader of the nation. Hitler's position situated him as a powerful and dominant one and the supports from the nazists, even more, strengthens his power and domination. The ideology itself could be both negative or positive. The negativity is seen when the ideology creates injustice, oppression, and disadvantages to the inferiors while the superiors obtain benefits to themselves. Positivity usually is a form of rebel o against those unexpected situations. It means another ideology emerged as the counter to the present ideology. As with nazism, it has a counter-ideology called anti-nazism. However, the spreading of the anti-ideology itself is not easy to do. A mass or a group is needed to fight against power and domination.

### **Discourse: Protest song**

A protest song becomes a way to gather people. The idea of protest is displayed in the song lyrics. Therefore, the lyrics are ideological. Punk's ideology

is presented in the lyrics (and also the music). There is an attraction, to tell the truth of a world in the sort of a language. According to Denisoff (1972), "The protest song is a socio-political statement designed to create an awareness of social problems and which offers of infers a solution which is viewed as deviant in nature". Thus, the protest song aims to gain social awareness, and support for the issue is captured.

The lyric is a part of a discourse. The discourse is the contextualization of the concept of the world through speakers' or writers' points of view. Through the lyrics, the writer tries to persuade people to have the same concept with him, to get sympathy, and to invite people for a social movement. Fairclough (1995: 73) stated that the "discourse is shaped by structures also contributes to shaping and reshaping them to reproducing and transforming them". He means that the structures are the blend of text elements such as orders of discourse, codes, and the

elements like lexical and grammatical elements, but also mediated from the structure of politics and economics concerning the market, the state, and the society.

The study between ideology and discourse also requires the elaboration of other disciplines (Van Dijk, 2020). He proposes three main points that are discourse, cognition, and society. He stated that the study about the discourse relates with the study of language use, text, and other communication, the cognition is the realizations between opinions and knowledge and the status as socially shared

representations while the society relates to the aspects of social, political, cultural, historical, group-based natures, etc. Those three points help to find out how the language use of the ideology shared by the speaker influence the listener.

### **CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis**

CDA is a textual analysis. It is about doing a detailed analysis of the discourse. There is a three-dimensional framework proposed by Fairclough (1993, 2003) namely text, discourse practice, and social practice. He argued that doing the discourse analysis is not merely analyzing linguistic elements in a text but also the social practice. He means to look closely at the people's writing or speech and understand the social effects of the discourse. In a quotation, he stated that "the discourse analysis as 'oscillating' between a focus on specific texts and ...

"order of discourse", the relatively durable social structuring of language which is itself one element of relatively durable social structuring and networking of social practices. The CDA is concerned with what happens in particular texts. The link between these two concerns is made through how texts are analyzed in critical discourse analysis". Wodak and Meyer (2001) added The CDA is an interdisciplinary study. It relates to the way language has functioned in social practices such as exercising power, organizing social institutions, or constituting and transmitting knowledge.

### **SFG: Systemic Functional Grammar**

The SFG is proposed by Halliday (1985). It helps to reveal the relationship between language (text) and social structures. There are three broad-metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational is about the natural world, the broadest sense, and how we see it so it concerns clauses as representation. The interpersonal is about the social world. It is about the relationship between speaker and hearer. The clauses as exchanges are its focus. The last, the textual is about the verbal world; the flow of information in a text. It focuses on the clauses as messages.

The ideational function is analyzed by using a transitivity system. It is to identify the participants or things that are involved, the actions and events taking place, and any relevant surrounding circumstances (Moley cited in Wang 2010). There are 6 processes used to do the identification. They are (1) material processes, (2) mental processes, (3) relational processes, (4) behavioral processes, (5) verbal processes, and (6) existential processes.

The interpersonal function is about expressing the attitudes and judgments of the speaker/writer (Gerrot and Wignell, 1994). It can be seen in modalization and modulation. The modalization is about the degree of validity of a being presented information (probability) and the degree of frequency of the information truth (usuality) while modulation deals with the degree of the obligation of a person to carry out the command (obligation) and the

willingness of the speaker to do the offer (inclination or willingness). Halliday, (1985) said that the degree of probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination is also divided into some ranks/scales, namely high, medium, and low.

The textual function relates to theme and cohesion. It sees what has been said or written before (co-text) and the non-verbal situational environment (context).

The pronoun analysis becomes one of the focuses in this study since it is significantly helpful to reveal the ideology. The use of pronoun helps to find out the position of the speaker and the person/people they mentioned whether they are the part of the society, or they stand as punkers, whether they see people as the subject or the object.

### **METHOD**

As the major focus of this study is to understand, analyze and interpret the protest song lyrics of Anti-Flag on a detailed, deeper, and substantial level with specific emphasis on ideologies carried by the band, it was necessary to incorporate a relatable methodology, therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was adopted. CDA has a three-dimensional framework of social practice, discourse

practice, and textual analysis. The social practice is a reality. It is about the issues which become the background of the song made. The discourse practice is the re-contextualization of the social practice. It is about how the reality (the issue) is described through the lyrics. The textual analysis is the use of Halliday's approach, a Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) to analyze the linguistic features applied in the texts.

### **Research Design**

The design of the research is library research. It is done by consulting some related theories such as ideology, CDA, SFG, and other references such as books, articles, dictionaries to collect information about theories and the main data is the lyrics of Anti Flag's punk rock songs. The result of the analysis of the main data with the help of theories then described by the use of the descriptive qualitative method. As its name, the library research is done in the library with all the literature that is suitable with the objective and problem of the analysis.

### **Data Collecting**

The main data is taken from the Anti Flag's Album as many as 15 songs. The reasons for choosing those songs as they are lyrics contain interesting issues which are significant to be revealed. The writer downloaded the lyrics from *metrolyrics.com*. Then the writer used the CDA theory by Fairclough (1995) and to find out the ideologies with the help of Halliday's systemic functional grammar: transitivity and modality and also the use of pronoun to analyze the linguistic features.

### **Data Analysis**

The descriptive method is used to analyze the data. The following procedures were followed to carry out this analysis of CDA to the song lyrics:

1. Searching the lyrics from the whole Album of Anti Flag which carried specific issues and contained ideology. The 15 lyrics were selected.
2. Breaking the lyrics into clauses by using a systemic functional grammar of Halliday transitivity analysis: material processes, relational processes, mental processes, verbal processes, and existential processes, and modality analysis;

probability, ability, obligation, usuality, inclination, and pronoun types.

a. Transitivity analysis

- 1) The material process is about the actor, the doing, or the happening to whom. The process focuses on the action verbs.

For e.g. *The bourgeoisie* (Actor) *has signed* (Process) *the war decree* (Goal) *with the proletariat blood* (Circumstance).

*A-money-making scheme* (Goal) *led* (Process) *by war profiteering whores* (Actor).

- 2) The relational process is about the relationship between two participants: token-value; the value depicts who or what the token is and carrier-attribute presents how the person, thing, or state is. The words present in this process are the adjectives or nouns which present or explains someone or something.

For e.g. *Big business* (Token) *is the pimps* (Value) *and the governments'* (Token) *are their whores* (Value).

*The rich* (Carrier) *are rich* (Attribute) *because they* (Carrier) *are smarter than me* (Attribute).

- 3) The mental process shows the actor's sensing; a) feeling (affective); *feel, like, love, miss, etc.* b) thinking (cognitive); *think, assume, guess, etc.* and perceptive (perceiving through five senses); *see, smell, taste, touch, hear etc.*

e.g. *A greedy gang of liars, yeah we* (Sensor) *have seen* (Process) *it all*

(Phenomenon) *before* (Circumstance).

- 4) The verbal process refers to who is the sayer and what the saying is. The verbs of say, tell, talk, etc. which contain a saying are the concern of this process. e.g. *The government* (Sayer) *says*

(Process) *they are working for us just as long as we increase their pay* (Verbiage).

- 5) The existential process is the existence of a phenomenon of any kind.

e.g. *The bill of rights* (Existent) *does not exist* (Existential)

b. Modality analysis

1) Probability

It is to find out the level of possibility of something happening or being true. The words which show probability are like



*gonna* and *gotta*

e.g They are *gonna* give you nothing.

You *gotta* sacrificed if you want to stay safe!

## 2) Ability

In this type of modality, the competence or strength of the actor to act is analyzed. The words present ability are such as can, could, may, might (It also can present inability if the modal is negative) e.g *Can't* you realize that the big

business just talks, talk, talk, talkin'...

## 3) Obligation

The obligation is about the level of a matter that does do and do not do. The words that present obligation are like the words that show probability. To distinguish both of them we have to

understand the clause.

e.g You have *gotta* die for your government, die for your country?

## 4) Usuality

This delivers the frequency or regularity of human in doing the process. The words that contain usuality are never, often, always, etc.

e.g You *never* think to question what you're told.

## 5) Inclination

The inclination represents the determination of whether or not the action will be done by the actor or the sayer or not.

e.g I *will not* sign my blind to an unjust leader of the unjust police state.

## Pronoun Analysis

The pronoun helps to see whom the speakers focus their attention to and whom the speakers represent themselves as.

e.g We know their game, *they* are corrupt. *You* push a people, what are *they* do?

3. Grouping each clause into the ideologies: anti-authoritarianism (capitalism or nationalism) and social movement. Based on the analysis above, the transitivity analysis, for example, material process in a clause;



*A-money-making scheme (Goal) led (Process)  
 by war profiteering whores (Actor),*

it employs the ideology of anti-authoritarian capitalism. It is also supported by the choice of words used in the lyric such as 'War profiteering whores' and 'a-money-making schemes'. The Actor represents the capitalists, in this case, the war profiteer (a person or organization) who gain profits from wars by selling weapons. Halliburton company one of the American multinational companies that provided depleted uranium (DU). US fired the DU to Iraq in 2003. It is clear that capitalists only seek profit regardless of its impact on the people of Iraq and the environment.

4. After that, the result of the analysis is described.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

### 1. DATA ANALYSIS

Three data were analyzed by using SFG (Systemic Functional Grammar). They are transitivity analysis which is used to find the representation of the actors, modality analysis which helps to display the speaker's (Anti Flag) judgment, and pronoun analysis which revealed the focus of protest and the position of the speaker.

To calculate the numbers of data of each analysis, the formula used in excel is as below:

$$M = \frac{\sum x}{n} \times 100 \text{ rumus}$$

Note:

M = The mean of all processes emerge in each ideology.

$$\sum n = \text{Sum of the numbers of all processes in an ideology } (n = x1 + x2 + x3)$$

$$\sum m = \text{Number of all processes in all ideologies } (m = y1 + y2 + y3)$$

#### a. Transitivity analysis

Table 1. The Distribution of Transitivity Processes in the Ideologies

No	Processes	Anti-Authoritarianism			Total
		Capitalism	Nationalism	Social Movement	
1.	Material	63	51	52	166
2.	Relational	17	38	22	77
3.	Mental	6	8	8	22
4.	Verbal	4	5	0	9
5.	Behavioral	0	0	0	0
6.	Existential	0	7	8	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>90</b> 31.14%	<b>109</b> 38.11%	<b>90</b> 31.14%	<b>289</b> 100%

Based on the data, the formula is applied as presented below:

$$M = \frac{\sum n}{\sum m} \times 100\%$$

The  $\sum n$  refers to the sum of of all processes found in capitalism ideology which is 90 and the  $\sum m$  refers to the numbers of all the processes in all the ideologies is 289.

Therefore, the calculation is

$$M = \frac{\sum 90}{289} \times 100\%$$

$$M = 31.14\%$$

Thus, the mean of all processes that appear in capitalism ideology is as much as 31.14%

The formula is also used to calculate the data in modality and pronoun analysis.

#### b. Modality analysis

Table 2. The Distribution of Modals in the Ideologies

No	Types of Modality	Anti-Authoritarian		Social Movement	Total
		Capitalism	Nationalism		
1.	Probability	2	7	7	16
2.	Usuality	0	2	0	2
3.	Obligation	0	6	6	12
4.	Inclination	0	1	5	6
5.	Ability	1	0	10	11
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b> 6.38%	<b>16</b> 34.04%	<b>28</b> 59.57%	<b>47</b> 100%

#### c. Pronoun analysis

Table 3. The Distribution of Pronoun in the Ideologies

No	Pronouns	Anti-Authoritarian		Social Movement	Total
		Capitalism	Nationalism		
1.	I (Anti-Flag)	0	15	7	22
2.	You (Gov.)	1	9	9	19
3.	You (Soc.)	19	14	6	39
4.	We (Gov.)	0	1	1	2
5.	We (AF & Soc.)	4	1	29	34
6.	We (Anti-Flag)	0	0	0	0
7.	They (Gov.)	17	12	0	29
8.	They (Soc.)	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b> 28.08%	<b>53</b> 36.30%	<b>52</b> 35.61%	<b>146</b> 100%

## 2. FINDING

The findings are based on the linguistic analysis presented in the three tables before. In transitivity analysis, it is found that the selected song lyrics employed two main processes such as material processes and relational processes. In modality analysis, the probability is mostly used but overall the use of modality is little. In pronoun analysis the use of the specific pronoun is varied in each ideology however, the pronoun *you* is mostly used.

From the analysis, the two ideologies attained are anti-authoritarianism which is subdivided into anti-authoritarian capitalism and anti-authoritarian nationalism, and the social movement. Anti-authoritarianism is associated with society's opposition towards the powerful

ruler. Specifically, anti-authoritarianism capitalism deals with the protest at some issues such as NAFTA, taxation, and war profiteering while anti-authoritarian nationalism is about the protest against human experimentation and war as the national security. The social movement is more about the revolution call. The call states the society's power to fight against the power imbalance.

In line with capitalism, the material processes presented the actors and the action of government, the rich, and the private ownership companies which are considered as capitalists. In line with nationalism, the material processes show the actions of the government which limited and even take over the right and freedom of the citizens. Different from the two ideologies.

The material processes in the ideology of social movement showed that society is a powerful figure. The actions displayed their resistance towards the sovereignty.

Moreover, the relational showed anti-capitalism through the capitalists' identities and characters which are depicted as the profit-making figure. Also, the relational process presents the ideology of anti-nationalism through the character of the government as the fascists; the very powerful leaders. Compared to those two

ideologies, the social movement ideology is described in the relational process through the identity and character of the protestors which somewhat anarchists.

In modality analysis, The probability in anti-authoritarian capitalism expresses the certainty since it has a high degree. The certainty talk about the speakers is no doubt about the existence of capitalism and the work of capitalists in America which emphasizes profit-making. In anti-authoritarian nationalism, probability carries the mid-degree. It means that the speaker is enough sure to take the issue of nationalism that the leader of the nation uses nationalism as his power control. Yet, in anti-authoritarian nationalism, the high obligation presents the power of the leader to have citizens obey their command. On the other side, it also shows the strong wish of Anti-Flag to reject nationalism. In a social movement, the ability indicates that the society can execute society resistance. It shows the power of society.

The use of pronoun analysis has revealed the speakers' focus of protest and the speakers' position in protest. The result of the anti-authoritarianism analysis shows that the society is the most protested party followed by the government. It is shown by the use of the pronoun, *you*, and *they*, which are related to them. The position of the speaker is out-group; as the outer part of society. Another pronoun, *we*, is found mostly in the social movement ideology. It sets Anti-Flag position as the in-group. It is used by

Anti-Flag as the speakers to refer them and the society considered together. The fact shows that Anti-Flag is serious to protest against the issues of nationalism and capitalism and serious in doing the revolution.

## CONCLUSION

After describing the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2003) through Halliday's (1994) Systemic Functional Grammar, then analyzing them into the 15 selected song lyrics of Anti Flag, it can be concluded Anti Flag in their songs speak straightforwardly to protest. They directly mentioned the actors and their characteristics. Also, they mentioned their belief on the issues as truly happened. On one side, they take a position as part of the society but on the other side, they stand alone but still, they aim to protest the superiority.

The writer hopes that more research about CDA needs to be conducted to make further analysis in other kinds of fields, to get a better understanding of CDA analysis because the writer feels that his research is not enough yet to fulfill human's needs in further studying of CDA.

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