

UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

Faculty of Political Science

Belgrade, August 2019

At the meeting of the Department of Journalism and Communication, held on 16 May 2019, the Master Thesis Defense Commission (hereby the Commission) for the candidate Mariana Arroyo Osorio was formed with the following members: prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović, asist. dr Lidija Mirkov and prof. dr Siniša Atlagić. The Council for the Second and Third Cycle of Studies has accepted the proposal made by the Department.

Having read the master thesis, the Commission is submitting the following

#### REPORT

Mariana Arroyo Osorio's thesis „Understanding the Political Correctness Discourse in the 2016 US Presidential Elections Within the Framework of Peace Theories“ as part of the Regional Master's Program in Peace Studies taught at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade, is completed under mentorship of prof. Siniša Atlagić. The thesis 73 pages long consists of Introduction, five chapters (Literature review, Methodology, Political correctness discourse during the 2016 US president elections, The interpretation of research results in the light of Peace theory, Suggestions), Conclusion and List of references.

Introduction (pag. 1) highlights the return of political correctness in public and political discourse after the 2016 US presidential elections. This chapter also points out the importance of language for peace as an element of culture that can justify direct and structural violence and the need to study discursive practices such a political correctness which have a significant impact in political life, as in the case of 2016 US presidential elections, and in culture in a broader sense.

Literature review (pag. 4) analyses the phenomenon of political correctness and Galtung's Peace theory which constitute the theoretical framework of the present Master's thesis. Firstly, this chapter explores the evolution of political correctness in the United States through history with a

focus on the twentieth century. It also features the different approaches in which this subject has been studied including political communication, sociolinguistics and critical discourse analysis. These fields of study helped to develop a holistic definition of political correctness that not only emphasizes its effects on language as linguistic engineering but also on its consequences in society and politics. The second part of this chapter presents Galtung's peace theory and its typology of violence identifying the themes, values and actions that are present in culture of violence as well as in culture of peace.

Methodology and research design (pag. 21) rely on critical discourse analysis and functional grammar to identify the most important themes and key words of the political correctness discourse and the underlying ideologies based on grammatical and semantic choices of a newspaper's opinion article that serves as corpus. This chapter demonstrates that according to critical discourse analysis, discourse does not only reflect a particular way to use language as a means to describe the world, but it is in fact a social practice in which language also performs discursive actions in which we can find power and hegemonic work imposing a particular ideology or view of the world.

The interpretation of research results in the light of peace theory (pag.54) identifies the elements of the political correctness discourse that are characteristic of culture of peace or culture of violence. The main themes and keywords present in the corpus correspond to the idea of the culture of peace which are tolerance, empathy, morality, caring and awareness. Moreover, the political correctness discourse also rejects values that are considered to be of cultural and structural violence such as hate speech, conservative ideology, bigotry, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, violence, abuse, misogyny, sexism, racism, and nationalism, meaning that that the discourse in question is categorically against direct and structural violence. However, on the basis of text analysis, political correctness while promoting a culture of peace, does so with acts of hegemony and domination, which is categorized as direct and structural violence in peace theory.

Suggestions (pag. 58) is the chapter that, based on the text analysis and its interpretation within the framework of peace studies, addresses the issues that discourses such as political correctness

may encounter by trying to promote a culture of peace. This chapter also points out the lack of up-to-date research in terms of language as a means to promote a culture of peace and, on the other hand, it also encourages the use of Critical Discourse Analysis in the field to understand the role of language and discourse in peace.

Conclusion (pag. 60) outlines that the political correctness discourse represented in the text “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored“ features topics and values of a culture of peace. Nevertheless, it also stresses that the very same discourse carried attitudes and speech acts that are considered, by the literature of peace and violence, as direct and structural violence. These results show the complexity of political correctness and highlight the elements that have caused the failure of political correctness to be a culture of peace. The chapter concludes that research on such a specific topic may contribute to further exploration of the discourse of peace.

The Commission is convinced that the candidate has approached the development of the thesis very studiously. The thesis is methodologically grounded, with clearly defined basic concepts, precise hypotheses and concrete conclusions deriving from the theoretical part of the paper and the results of empirical research. Based on this, the Commission positively assesses the thesis „Understanding the Political Correctness Discourse in the 2016 US Presidential Elections Within the Framework of Peace Theories“ and finds that master's candidate Mariana Arroyo Osorio has fulfilled all formal as well as professional and scientific requests for its defense.

In Belgrade,  
20th of August 2019

The Commission:

prof. dr Nemanja Džuverović

asist. dr Lidiya Mirkov

prof. dr Siniša Atlagić

