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Understanding the Political Correctness Discourse in the 2016 US Presidential
Elections within the Framework of Peace Theories

Academic supervisor:

Prof. Dr Siniša Atlagić

Student:

Mariana Arroyo Osorio

ID Number: 16/2018

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Declaration of Academic Study

Name and surname of the student: Mariana Arroyo Osorio

ID number: 16/2018

Title of paper: Understanding the Political Correctness Discourse in the 2016 US Presidential Elections within the Framework of Peace Theories

Study programme: Regional Masters in Peace Studies

Academic supervisor: Siniša Atlagić

Date of handing over: _____

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC CATEGORY

I declare that in the attached work I have respected all the rules of academic honesty. This written work is the result of my personal work, it is based on my research and relies on the literature.

In Belgrade, Serbia, day_____, year_____

Signature of the Student:

Mariana Arroyo Osorio

ID Number: 16/2018

Abstract

The phenomenon of political correctness has gained attention in the past years and has become ever since a source of polarization in America. While the subject has been studied from different perspectives, especially concerning to censorship, linguistics and politics, there has not been empirical research up to date that research this type of discourse in terms of its implications for peace. The goal of the present thesis was to identify what topics, values and discursive actions of the political correctness discourse during the 2016 United States presidential elections can be classified under Peace Theory through Critical Discourse Analysis of newspaper opinion article.

The text analysis show that the themes and values promoted in the corpus correspond of a culture of peace, which are empathy, tolerance, and the rejection of bigotry and hate speech. On the other hand, the political correctness discourse also featured characteristics of direct and structural violence such as domination, indoctrination, hegemonic work and the imposition of a culture. Recognizing the different characteristics of discourse from a peace study perspective may lead to further research on the development of a discourse of peace that could effectively legitimize direct and structural peace as part of a culture of peace that replace cultural violence.

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Introduction

The political correctness phenomenon has been present in American culture since the second half of the twentieth century as a set of norms and restrictions on speech in order to promote a language that is inclusive, respectful for minorities and disadvantaged groups, and that openly fights hate speech¹. Ever since, an ongoing debate has taken place in academic works in which the role of political correctness in society, politics and public discourse, and its implications on freedom of speech has been discussed,² however little has been said regarding its implications for peace.

After the 2016 US presidential elections, the subject of political correctness (PC) has regained attention. The PC debate has resurged against the growing politically incorrect discourse that touches the edges of hate speech. Presidential candidate Donald Trump became the voice of many Americans who backlashed against the popularity of political correctness culture.³ The people's discontent regarding PC has been translated ever since into an outspoken politically incorrect discourse, that encourages xenophobia, racism, and misogyny, a discourse where hate is present and that could become a dangerous threat to peace, a weapon that can legitimize direct violence.

As exposed by Johan Galtung, one of the biggest names in peace studies, language is an important aspect of culture and it is an important element for peace since culture can be used to legitimize structural and direct violence or structural peace and direct peace.⁴ Moreover, language has a big impact in shaping society, not only the way we communicate but it also "provides the interface between ideology and social practices that impede or facilitate the achievement of peace."⁵ Political correctness is, as a form of communication and language, a great example of the importance of what we say, how we say it and its implication in society.

Despite many negative critics attributed to political correctness, many have agreed that its ultimate goal is legitimate in promoting a more tolerant speech and creating a set of

¹ Moller, "Dilemmas of Political Correctness," 1.

² Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*; LOURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of "Political Correctness" and Related Phenomena*.

³ Tumulty and Johnson, "Why Trump May Be Winning the War on 'Political Correctness'"; Hess, "How 'Political Correctness' Went From Punch Line to Panic."

⁴ Galtung, "Cultural Violence."

⁵ Schäffner and L.Wenden, *Language and Peace*, 18.

norms that discourage hate speech.⁶ According to the scholars defending the intentions of political correctness, this form of restricting speech may be promoting a peaceful discourse against a politically incorrect discourse that can hardly be identified as peaceful.⁷ On the other side, some argue that political correctness translates in a sort of “culture engineering”⁸ by censoring what is said in order to protect or not to offend minorities, racial groups, differently abled people, etc.,

Nowadays, political correctness is becoming the excuse of many far-right conservative political leaders to use a politically incorrect discourse. This can be a consequence, as some have pointed out, of the ways in which political correctness operates by excessive censorship of offensive language.⁹ Actually, research has found that the excessive use of communication restrictions of our times it has a significant impact in voters deciding to support Donald Trump as a protest against the increasing imposition of political correctness by liberals and the left.¹⁰

The PC dilemma has resurged during the United State Presidential Elections of 2016, when the then-candidate Donald Trump started a war against political correctness as a campaign strategy.¹¹ The 2016 US elections, therefore, became the ultimate political correct vs the political incorrect war in the public discourse and in the media. All sides have been considerably radicalized since the start of the elections; they have become extreme opposites with little room for dialogue.¹²

With the threat that poses the rise of white supremacist, neo-Nazis and xenophobic groups in the United States¹³ who have openly declared a war against political correctness and have used it as an important part of their agenda,¹⁴ it is imperative to analyze the political correctness phenomenon under the lenses of peace studies. It is of great importance to discuss

⁶ Moller, “Dilemmas of Political Correctness,” 8.

⁷ LOURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*; FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language.”

⁸ Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” 301.

⁹ Conway, Repke, and Houck, “Donald Trump as a Cultural Revolt against Perceived Communication Restriction: Priming Political Correctness Norms Causes More Trump Support”; LOURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*.

¹⁰ Cillizza, “The Dangerous Consequences of Trump’s All-out Assault on Political Correctness.”

¹¹ Tumulty and Johnson, “Why Trump May Be Winning the War on ‘Political Correctness.’”

¹² Tumulty and Johnson; Conway, Repke, and Houck, “Donald Trump as a Cultural Revolt against Perceived Communication Restriction: Priming Political Correctness Norms Causes More Trump Support.”

¹³ “Racism, Xenophobia Increasing Globally, Experts Tell Third Committee, amid Calls for Laws to Combat Hate Speech, Concerns over Freedom of Expression | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases.”

¹⁴ Tumulty and Johnson, “Why Trump May Be Winning the War on ‘Political Correctness.’”

how political correctness may be contributing to promoting peace or violence in order to contribute to the ongoing debate in the social sciences, and to further understand the consequences of language in peace.

Therefore, the purpose of the present thesis is to analyze the political correctness discourse during the 2016 US presidential elections using Critical Discourse Analysis to determine what aspects of it are promoting a culture of peace and which aspects of that discourse are promoting violence. Consequently, political correctness will be analyzed in the context of peace studies and critical discourse analysis to find the connection between peace, language, discourse and political correctness.

The literature review will provide the theoretical and conceptual framework to define the link between political correctness, language, and culture as means for social change and their implications for peace. In order to archive the latter, this part will address the different theories related to political correctness and peace theory. This section will firstly provide an overview of the study of political correctness until the present and secondly it will introduce us to the general concepts of peace and the role of language in a culture of peace. Consequently, it will provide an overview of the important terms and concepts necessary to assess our research questions.

The second part of the present thesis will be dedicated to our case study – the political correctness discourse during the 2016 US Presidential Elections. For this purpose, we will perform an in deep text analysis based on Critical Discourse Analysis of a journalistic paper considered to portrait the political correctness discourse during the time span set for analysis. This analysis will allow us to describe the particularities of the discourse in our sample to proceed to compare it to the theories expressed in our literature review in order to identify the elements of the political correctness discourse of our case study that are related to peace and violence.

Finally, a suggestion section will serve to address the findings of this paper and its implications in the academic realm. This section will also provide a possible connection with future research and the implications of the results presented in this paper to the fields of discourse and peace and their relationship.

1 Literature Review

1.1 Political Correctness

1.1.1 Historical development of Political Correctness

The concept of political correctness may seem as a modern notion of communication norms and restrictions that is often attributed to the millennial culture. However, historically, according to John K. Wilson in the “The Myth of Political Correctness”¹⁵ we can trace back the first use of the term political correctness to the Supreme Court case *Chisholm v. Georgia* in 1793 where it was claimed that the use of “The United states” instead of “People of the United States” was not politically correct. This was the most literal use of the term, referring to the fact that it was indeed the people of the United States to held authority and not the state.¹⁶

Despite that the phrase “politically correct” was used in the *Chisholm v. Georgia* case for the first time, it is far away from its modern use. For one side James Wilson made a very different use of the term comparing to the modern times since by then it was used literally describing that something was politically incorrect, with an emphasis on the political element of the subject in question. On the other side, this was an isolated mention of political correctness, the term did not become popular and it did not have the significance that, as we will see, has been giving to the concept since the beginning of the twentieth century until today.

At the same time, some argue, such as Frank Ellis, that political correctness is actually a heritage from communism. According to “Political Correctness ideological struggle”¹⁷, political correctness was indeed used in Soviet times. By then, to be politically correct meant to agree with the communist agenda while it was considered politically incorrect those ideas

¹⁵ Wilson, *The Myth of Political Correctness*.

¹⁶ Wilson, 3.

¹⁷ Ellis, “Political Correctness and the Ideological Struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault.”

outside of the party line¹⁸. However, what it made this early form of PC similar to today's use, as Lea points out, was the sense of censorship¹⁹.

In his work, Ellis draws a comparison between the modern use of the concept of political correctness and that of Soviet times concluding that both were very similar in tactics of censorship and control.²⁰ According to Ellis, while the concept of political correctness used during communism was related to physical repression where political dissidents were forced to be in the right political side, the political correctness that is known in the twentieth first century is a form of societal restriction; it is imposed not by force but rather by social indoctrination.²¹

Moreover, Chinese communism had as well its own set of political correctness norms. "Maoism communism ideology was the only correct official ideology"²², according to Ellis, they were even worse than Lenin in terms of control and censorship. The latter was illustrated, as Koye points out, by the failure of the Great Leap Forward, a series of economic policies with the goal to increase China's industrial development which resulted in the Great Chinese Famine. As a result, Mao's government started a campaign against everyone opposed to the communist government and its politics. Consequently, the struggle was no longer between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but between right and left ideologies, and it became politically incorrect any right wing ideology²³.

Mao's Cultural Revolution transcended the Chinese borders and was borrowed by the New Left, a social movements that took place from the beginning of the 1950's until the late 1970's. These included the civil right movements, student movements in the 60's, environmentalist and feminist movements on the 70's, among others. Actually, is widely agreed, according to Richard Burt in the entry on political correctness in the book "Censorship: a words Encyclopedia" that this phenomenon "originated on the left and that it was often used ironically against other leftists as a critique of moralism and preachiness."²⁴

Furthermore, during the late 1970's and the early 1980's, as Cynthia Roper explains, "the term [politically correct] began to be used wittily by liberal politicians to refer to the

¹⁸ Ellis; Lea, "Political Correctness and Higher Education: British and American Perspectives"; Koye, "Which Theory of Communication Is 'Political Correctness'?"

¹⁹ Lea, "Political Correctness and Higher Education: British and American Perspectives," 413.

²⁰ Ellis, "Political Correctness and the Ideological Struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault," 438.

²¹ Ellis, "Political Correctness and the Ideological Struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault."

²² Ellis.

²³ Koye, "Which Theory of Communication Is 'Political Correctness'?", 63-65.

²⁴ Burt, "POLITICAL CORRECTNESS," 1901.

extremism of some left-wing issues, particularly regarding what was perceived as an emphasis on rhetoric over content,”²⁵ meaning that the way an event or issue was presented verbally was more important than the issue itself.

Later on, as Wilson points out, conservatives took over the term and used it against everyone— “who expressed radical sentiments”²⁶ for political influence. In fact, the phrase political correctness was coined by the conservatives as Wilson emphasizes: “the conservatives not only appropriated politically correct for their own attacks on the radical Left, they also transformed it into a new phrase - political correctness”.²⁷

Consequently, the right continued using political correctness against the left during the so-called Reagan-Tatcher era. In the words of Fairclough this period “was characterized by substantial cultural and discursive interventions on the part of government.”²⁸ The right condemned the left cultural politics as PC, as part of a “systematic diffusion and imposition of neo-liberal discourse through international organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD, and through the very media”²⁹.

The development of political correctness from the beginning of the twentieth century until the late eighties was under the political realm. The term or its practice (not being necessarily called PC) were used, as we have described above, in Soviet and Chinese communism, the 60’s civil right movements, the left, the conservatisms and the right. However, political correctness migrated from the political scene to the public discourse and university campuses during the nineties. Similar to previous decades, the term was used by conservatives, although, in this case “to question and oppose what they perceived as the rise of liberal left-wing curriculum and teaching methods on university and college campuses in the United States.”³⁰

While it is true that the phenomenon of political correctness goes way back to the early twentieth century, we can agree that what is now defined as PC, its modern form, has its origins inside of the universities. In fact, there are some academics such as Loury that claim that it is actually in the university campuses that political correctness was originated “over issues such abortion. Affirmative action, multicultural studies, environmentalism, feminism,

²⁵ Cynthia Roper, “Political Correctness (PC) | Britannica.Com.”

²⁶ Wilson, *The Myth of Political Correctness*, 4.

²⁷ Wilson, 4.

²⁸ FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language,” 20.

²⁹ FAIRCLOUGH, 20.

³⁰ Cynthia Roper, “Political Correctness (PC) | Britannica.Com.”

and gay rights - the PC debate spread into newsrooms, movie studios and even the halls of congress”.³¹

Therefore, we could agree that what is nowadays considered political correctness has its origins in the nineties. While in previous decades, PC was a tool of the right to radicalized the left, during the 1990’s political correctness was no longer under the domain of politicians and passed to the hands of university students.

However, regarding only the historical development of PC would reduce its study to who used political correctness and against whom in different times of history. Instead, political correctness must be analyzed in a deeper way.

For that purpose, we will proceed to take a glance at the work of academics on the study of the phenomenon of political correctness. As we will see, each of them has look at different angles of the political correctness phenomena. After reviewing the different definitions of PC made by different academics we have found that there is no consensus on a single definition, instead the authors often present their own definitions based on their work approach, as we will explore bellow.

³¹ LOURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*.

1.1.2 Reviewing the literature on Political Correctness

In the academic world, there is not a real consensus of what political correctness is as a concept. In fact, many definitions are based on the field of study of the researcher or the approach from which political correctness is analyzed.

One approach to the study of political correctness is based restraint on public expression. Under this perspective, G.C. Lounsbury understands political correctness based on political communication,³² that is to say as “an implicit social convention of restraint on public expression, operating within a given community.”³³

Lounsbury claims that the political correctness phenomenon occurs due to, first, the need of a community to confirm the adherence of its members to a certain set of beliefs and purposes and, secondly, as a way to decide whether its members adhere to these beliefs based on their public statements.³⁴

The latter, continuing with Lounsbury, has created an environment in which people restrain themselves from giving their personal opinions when those are not aligned with the “correct” ways of expression.³⁵ In consequence, those with different opinions decide, by their own will, to keep those opinions to themselves, also called self-censorship, to avoid the judgmental reactions of the receivers.

Certainly, PC is a form of restraint in public opinion and it has a great impact in freedom of speech. However, Lounsbury has ignored one of the main features of political correctness, and the probably the most evident in order to identify it, is the importance it gives to the use of a specific choice of words, or in other words, how it works as a code language³⁶.

Geoffrey Hughes has actually filled this gap and studied the phenomenon of political correctness under the realm of linguistics focusing on its origins, development, structure and

³² LOUNSBURY.

³³ LOUNSBURY, 6:430.

³⁴ LOUNSBURY, 6:430.

³⁵ LOUNSBURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*.

³⁶ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*, 15.

uses over time,³⁷ In his book “Political Correctness; a history of semantics and culture”³⁸ he analyses in detail the linguistic aspects of this discourse.

Thus, according to Hughes, political correctness manifests itself, linguistically, in two different ways: firstly, in a specific currency of keywords such as “diversity”, “multiculturalism”,³⁹ among others, secondly, in speech codes and euphemisms⁴⁰ as lookism, positive discrimination, physically challenged, and so on. Actually, continuing with Hughes, the use of euphuisms is a typical feature of political correctness that takes place when, in order to avoid offensive language, some undesirable terms are replaced by new ones, sometimes in a manner that might seem unnatural or forced.⁴¹

These characteristics of political correctness can be defined, in linguistic terms, as lexical and semantic changes.⁴² While it is natural for these changes to take place over time as part of the language evolution, in the case of political correctness they take place under mediated intervention, in an artificial manner and therefore, as Hughes stresses, it takes the form of semantic engineering⁴³.

Semantic engineering has the ultimate goal, according to Hughes, to change social attitudes, and in the case of political correctness, this process takes place in order “to remove or attempt to suppress from public discourse semantically impacted aspects of cultural difference which have become objects of prejudice or hurtful language”.⁴⁴

While Hughes recognizes that the goal of political correctness is to change social behavior through semantic engineering, he also argues on the limited scope of those changes emphasizing the fact that changing the vocabulary regarding certain issues only helps raising consciousness but not necessarily changing actual attitudes and behaviors.⁴⁵ Moreover, he does not develop further on the social and cultural implications- of the use of a politically correct language and whether or not it achieves its ultimate goal of social change.⁴⁶

³⁷ Hamp, Lyons, and Ivić, “Linguistics.”

³⁸ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

³⁹ Hughes, 3.

⁴⁰ Hughes, 3.

⁴¹ Hughes, 18.

⁴² Hughes, 26.

⁴³ Hughes, 30.

⁴⁴ Hughes, 45.

⁴⁵ Hughes, 290.

⁴⁶ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

While Hughes and other authors insist on the limited effects of language intervention over social behavior, some others such as Fairclough argue that there exists a dialectic relation between language and social change. In his paper “Political Correctness: the Politics of Culture and Language”⁴⁷ Norman Fairclough studies the phenomenon of political correctness under the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

The focus of the study of CDA is the relation between language and social change, unlike linguistics and discourse analysis that focus only on describing the use of language. CDA searches the how and why of discourses, analyzing the meanings and ideologies behind them.⁴⁸ According to Critical Discourse Analysis theory, the relationship between politics, culture, and language can be explained by viewing social life as an “interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts (economic, political, cultural, family etc.).”⁴⁹ According to Fairclough, a social practice refers to the articulation of different elements including values, activities, culture, language, and discourse⁵⁰, and social change is the change in the relationship among social practices and the elements in each of them”⁵¹.

Understanding that the different elements of social practices and discourse are related in a dialectic way and that a change in these elements or a change in the way they are related may lead to social change is of great importance for understanding political correctness. In this context, political correctness is not only a linguistic phenomenon but is also analyzed as a piece in the puzzle of social life, as a discursive element that interacts with others in different social practices.

For instance, Fairclough acknowledges the political aspect of political correctness; contrary to Hughes and Loury who claim that political correctness has little to do with politics and more to do with restraint in communication and language intervention. Fairclough, on the other hand, while agreeing on the importance of the linguistic aspect of PC, he also claims that the controversy over PC is not only about language, but it is also a political controversy⁵².

⁴⁷ FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language.”

⁴⁸ Machin, Mayr, and Machin, “How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis : A Multimodal Introduction,” 4.

⁴⁹ Fairclough, “The Dialectics of Discourse.”

⁵⁰ Fairclough, 1; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis.*; FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language.”

⁵¹ FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language,” 18–19.

⁵² FAIRCLOUGH, 18.

The relationship between political correctness and politics, as we mentioned before, can be traced back to the Reagan Thatcher era, when PC appeared in the political debate and it was used by the right to undermine the left. The latter reflected the turn of politics to cultural politics in which both sides, right and left, “engaged in a politics that is focused upon representations, values and identities.”⁵³ From one side the new right engaged in politics aimed at promoting the neo-liberal agenda and, on the other side, the left focused on the multicultural agenda that has always been linked to PC.

Moreover, political correctness, and the new right back in the eighties, are not only forms of cultural politics, but as well are forms of “cultural interventions directed at changing representations, values and identities.”⁵⁴ According to Fairclough, cultural politics such as political correctness are attempts to change discourses on the assumption that changing discourses will, or may, lead to changes in other elements of social practices through processes of “dialectical internalization.”⁵⁵

Furthermore, while critics of Political Correctness sees this phenomenon as an enforced regime of euphemisms that only change words but not the intentions behind the expressions or the weight they carry (such is the case of Hughes⁵⁶), Fairclough on the other hand stresses that discursive interventions such as PC “are not merely re-labellings but shifts to different spheres of values.”⁵⁷ This is very well illustrated by the replacement of the term mistress or lover for the term partner to refer to a couple living together outside of marriage. In this example, as Fairclough points out, changing the label also changes the perception of the people from a term that is charge with a negative connotation (mistress or lover being related to immorality), to one associated with a more economical relation such as “partner” which is related to economics and that sounds much more dignified.

This relationship between culture and language is actually disregarded by many linguistics who, as we have stated, have dedicated their endeavors to the description of language or its use and not so much on the cultural aspect of it, the reasons behind choosing a certain discourse and its relation with other spheres of social life.

⁵³ FAIRCLOUGH, 17.

⁵⁴ FAIRCLOUGH, 20.

⁵⁵ FAIRCLOUGH, 21.

⁵⁶ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

⁵⁷ FAIRCLOUGH, “‘Political Correctness’: The Politics of Culture and Language.”

Fairclough, on the other hand, brings political correctness to the context of Critical Discourse Analysis where discourse has a great impact in social life; it is value-laden and is the conduct from which we can express and /or enact representations, values, and identities, which are very important characteristics of modern society⁵⁸.

Notwithstanding that Fairclough acknowledges the importance of discourse in culture, politics and its effects in social change, he does not describes the effects of political correctness, how PC has, or has not, been a cause of social change, how it operates, what are its consequences, and many other questions that he and other scholars have not fully addressed. .

In general, after reviewing the literature on political correctness up to date we have found that there is consensus on some of the characteristics of political correctness such is the use of code words, euphemisms and its intentions to create social change through changing the way we express.

As we have shown above, the literature on political correctness is very vast and diverse, it includes works from different fields of study and it studies this phenomenon from different perspectives. Nevertheless, this consensus is not based on empirical data as some have argue⁵⁹, but rather is based on personal views and ideologies. Only few have addressed the issue in a more scientific way, still without a proper empirical research.

On the other hand, while Fairclough's work it does studies the relation between political correctness and culture, our research has found that his work and the work of the other experts in PC, while very useful and important to better understand political correctness at a linguistic and discursive level, does not addresses its implication for peace.

According to the literature review, PC is a discursive act that forms part of language, which is at the same time a part of culture, and, as we will see later on in the present thesis, culture is an important element for peace and violence. Moreover, taking into consideration the impact that political correctness is having in American society and politics nowadays, not to mention that it has been used to polarize and radicalized the American people, it is imperative to pay attentions to the consequences that this discourse could bring in the future.

⁵⁸ FAIRCLOUGH.

⁵⁹ Favreau, "Evaluating Political Correctness: Anecdotes vs. Research."

1.1.3 Defining Political Correctness

It is generally agreed that political correctness is a complex term. According to the Oxford Dictionaries, political correctness is defined as “the avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalize, or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against.” This definition is still limited in the sense that does not specify who are the disadvantaged groups, what mechanisms or practices it uses or who practices political correctness.

The political correctness discourse is characterized by the use of code words and euphemisms, as Hughes pointed out, to replace and avoid offensive language. Moreover, “politically correct language is essentially public, generally confined to official discourse and in many cases artificially polite and euphemistic.”⁶⁰

Nowadays, the notion of political correctness, according to Konye, has its roots in cultural Marxism in which the class struggle (proletariat-bourgeoisie) is replaced by a cultural class divide such as gender and race⁶¹, which is particular of a new ideological struggle between liberals and conservatism.

While past forms of PC could be categorized as political, 21st century political correctness has become a mix of moral and politics. PC in the millennial era is more ideological, it does not only comprises language codes, but the adherence to a certain set of values, beliefs and lifestyles. Susan P. Robbins illustrates very good the modern essence of political correctness in the following piece of her work “From the Editor — Sticks and Stones : Trigger Warnings, Microaggressions, and Political Correctness”⁶²

“The term political correctness (or PC) is typically used as a pejorative to describe the language, attitudes, and actions of those who value multiculturalism and attempt to portray marginalized people in respectful ways. It is also applied to policies, such as Affirmative Action, that seek redress for oppressive conditions that have placed people at a systematic disadvantage, particularly those of minority status”⁶³.

⁶⁰ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*, 90.

⁶¹ Konye, “Which Theory of Communication Is ‘ Political Correctness ’?,” 63.

⁶² Robbins, “From the Editor — Sticks and Stones : Trigger Warnings, Microaggressions, and Political Correctness.”

⁶³ Robbins, 1.

In matters of what is considered offensive or subject of language intervention under political correctness is important. From one side, Lounsbury addresses very vaguely, on what are the topics of restraint, giving examples of the “regime” (as he called it) of political correctness that are mostly related to race and gender⁶⁴. While these topics are still under the PC radar, they are not the only ones, especially since PC is in constant evolution. Hence, the Political Correctness agenda has broadened, “now covers a whole range of individual, social, cultural, and political issues, and topics as diverse as fatness, appearance, stupidity, diet, crime, prostitution, race, homosexuality, disability, animal rights, the environment, and still others”⁶⁵

The political correctness agenda also seems to be loaded with multicultural ideology, as Favreau stresses “The basic principles behind political correctness appear to be essentially prosocial: to remove traditional barriers to diversity, to discourage discrimination, disparagement, and harassment, and to broaden curriculum and research by including new material and points of view”.⁶⁶ Hughes also places PC under the multiculturalism ideology stating that political correctness is an attempt to promote the multicultural agenda and canon.⁶⁷

In line with the multicultural agenda, political correctness it is also attributed to liberal politics and the left.”⁶⁸ Since its origins, political correctness started “to be associated with ideas emanating from the cultural left in the US, including restrictions on speech, the promotion of multicultural educational curricula, and the support of affirmative action in the recruitment of students to colleges and universities.”⁶⁹

This phenomenon has also been characterized by an ongoing debate regarding its aims and methods. The debate started in university campus where many considered that political correctness was interfering in higher education by controlling its curricula. In this context, many writers such as Robbins believe that PC was obstructing higher education using trigger warnings and censoring university syllabus.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ LOUNSBURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*.

⁶⁵ »Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*, 284.

⁶⁶ Favreau, “Evaluating Political Correctness: Anecdotes vs. Research,” 214.

⁶⁷ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

⁶⁸ Ellis, “Political Correctness and the Ideological Struggle: From Lenin and Mao to Marcuse and Foucault,” 438.

⁶⁹ Lea, “Political Correctness and Higher Education: British and American Perspectives,” 23.

⁷⁰ Robbins, “From the Editor — Sticks and Stones : Trigger Warnings, Microaggressions, and Political Correctness.”

The literature dedicated to criticize PC has also claimed that political correctness is a form of self-censorship as we have illustrated before by the work of Loury based on communication theories.⁷¹ It has also been accused of semantic engineering, an attempt to change and alter language in an artificial imposed way.⁷²

Even though there is a growing list of works aimed at criticizing political correctness, there are some works that advocate for its intentions. Even some of its critics have also defended political correctness as a tactic based on good intentions. As Moller points out, “political correctness thus represents the evolution of public standards with the praiseworthy tendency to protect and promote the interests of historically oppressed groups.”⁷³

Another scholar defending political correctness is Favreau who has discredited the critics towards political correctness that are, in her opinion, based on anecdotes. She also stresses the fact that conservatives have used political correctness as an attack, a way of discredit opposition.⁷⁴ This is a view shared also by Wilson, who has claimed that political correctness is a tool used by conservatives whenever they feel fitting.⁷⁵

Some others have advocated the positive cultural role of political correctness; “In place of cultural nationalism it advocates tolerance, and in place of a cultural national identity it values allegiance to the universal values of liberal cosmopolitanism.”⁷⁶ Even some critics of political correctness such as Hughes, have acknowledged the goals of political correctness, suggesting that “is concerned with changing ingrained attitudes and language based on offensive stereotypes deriving from collective prejudices, folklore, and ignorance.”⁷⁷

Based on the literature review on political correctness we can conclude with the following definition that incorporates characteristics of the different definitions and approaches described above. In this sense, political correctness is understood in the present thesis under a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective and is defined as a form of cultural intervention that uses discourse to change representation, values, and identities in order to achieve social change.

⁷¹ LOURY, *Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of “Political Correctness” and Related Phenomena*.

⁷² Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

⁷³ Moller, “Dilemmas of Political Correctness,” 7.

⁷⁴ Favreau, “Evaluating Political Correctness: Anecdotes vs. Research.,” 219.

⁷⁵ Wilson, *The Myth of Political Correctness*, 15.

⁷⁶ Spencer, “Multiculturalism, ‘Political Correctness,’ and the Politics of Identity,” 562.

⁷⁷ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*, 40.

1.2 Language and Peace Theory

In the realm of peace research, Johan Galtung has been the most prominent scholar. He is considered, indeed, “the father of peace research” being the first one to notice the lack of research on peace in contrast to the amount of work targeted at the study of war and conflict. Moreover, for a long time, peace was defined as the absence of violence in what has been called “negative peace”⁷⁸. As consequence, Johan Galtung developed an extensive work on peace and violence theory, focusing on creating a positive definition of peace⁷⁹. According to Galtung, positive peace “is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation.”⁸⁰

Galtung’s theory proposed a classification of violence, which included not only the “intended by individuals acting singly or inside collectivities”⁸¹ that he classified as direct violence, but also structural and cultural violence. According to his theory, “Structural or indirect violence is defined as built into the person, social and world spaces and is unintended.”⁸²

On the other hand, he defines cultural violence as a culture that, intentionally or not, legitimizes direct and structural violence.⁸³ In the words of Johan Galtung:

“Cultural violence makes direct and structural violence look, even feel, right - or at least not wrong. The study of cultural violence highlights the way in which the act of direct violence and the fact of structural violence are legitimized and thus rendered acceptable in society.”⁸⁴

Furthermore, continuing with Galtung’s theory, cultural violence legitimized violence through religion, ideology, science, deep culture (cosmology) and language. Some examples of cultural violence are “Stars, crosses and crescents: flags, anthems and military parades; the ubiquitous portrait of the Leader; inflammatory speeches and posters.”⁸⁵

Not surprisingly, a culture of peace represents the direct opposite of a culture of violence.⁸⁶ In this sense, the culture of peace’s goal is to justify direct and structural peace,

⁷⁸ Galtung and Fischer, *Johan Galtung, Pioneer of Peace Research*, 9.

⁷⁹ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

⁸⁰ Galtung, 9.

⁸¹ Galtung, 31.

⁸² Galtung, 31.

⁸³ Galtung, 31.

⁸⁴ Galtung, 196.

⁸⁵ Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” 291.

⁸⁶ De Rivera, “Assessing the Basis for a Culture of Peace in Contemporary Societies,” 536.

meaning “building a positive peace culture (...) open for several human inclinations and capabilities, not repressing,”⁸⁷

However, as Galtung points out, not everything is dichotomies good and evil, but there could be a ying-yang approach, we could find violence in peace and peace in violence⁸⁸ which makes this task even more difficult. In the words of Johan Galtung

“A major task of peace research and the peace movement in general, is that never-ending search for a peace culture - problematic, because of the temptation to institutionalize that culture, making it obligatory, with the hope of internalizing it everywhere. And that would already be direct violence, imposing a culture.”⁸⁹

Focusing on language and peace, Galtung points out the ways in which a language may contribute to the legitimization of violence. It is important to notice that according to his theory, a language as a whole is not violent, however, aspects of it may be.⁹⁰ For instance, some languages, most specifically Romance languages such Spanish, French, Portuguese, help legitimize structural violence and direct violence relate to gender.⁹¹ In this case, the use of the masculine gender in generalizations and for plural makes women invisible not only perpetuating a patriarchal system, but also justifying direct violence since it reduces women to objects. “Patriarchy is then seen as an institutionalization of male dominance in vertical structures, with very high correlations between position and gender, legitimized by the culture”⁹² in this case prioritizing terms in its masculine form.

Whereas the latter is a difficult case since changing the grammatical structure of a language is a challenge, there is still room to transform cultural violence related to gender into cultural peace. Galtung stresses the contribution of the feminist movement in promoting non-sexist writing in what he considered, in his own words, “a good example of deliberate cultural transformation away from cultural violence.”⁹³

Galtung also mentions in his study the concept of sanitation of language, although this topic is not looked in deep and he does not specify what he actually understands by sanitation

⁸⁷ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 32.

⁸⁸ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

⁸⁹ Galtung, 196.

⁹⁰ Galtung, 196.

⁹¹ Galtung, 204.

⁹² Galtung, 40.

⁹³ Galtung, 205.

of language. Looking at the literature, we might relate this term to the concept of verbal hygiene⁹⁴ coined by Deborah Cameron and refers to “the motley collection of discourses and practices through which people attempt to ‘clean up’ language and make its structure or its use conform more closely to their ideals of beauty, truth, efficiency, logic, correctness and civility.”⁹⁵ According to Galtung. Sanitation of language is indeed cultural violence,⁹⁶ however he does not develop further this idea.

The concept of sanitation of language is very similar to political correctness in the sense that implies a restriction in the use of language according to a set of norms and values. Cameron actually includes the political correctness discourse under the umbrella of verbal hygiene discourses.⁹⁷ This is the only occasion in which we can relate PC and peace in the literature related to peace studies, unfortunately, this is only mentioned once and there is not further study on this phenomenon and peace.

Moreover, most of the literature on language and peace outside of Galtung’s work as Schöffner and Wenden,⁹⁸ focuses its attention on propaganda, hate speech, war language, and in a more positive approach, in language and education.⁹⁹ What a language or a discourse of peace should look like in practice is omitted. While hate speech has been studied as a discourse against peace, little has been studied about discourses that promote peace and whether or not these discourses have successfully build a culture of peace.

Due to the lack of guidelines on what a discourse of peace should look like, we will proceed to identify the attitudes, values and themes that can be particular of a discourse of peace and a discourse of violence based on the existing literature.

According to Galtung’s typology of violence based on Basic Human Needs (survival needs, well-being needs, identity needs, freedom needs)¹⁰⁰, a culture of violence is a culture that justifies different types of direct violence such as killing, maiming, sieges, sanctions and

⁹⁴ Cameron, “Verbal Hygiene.”

⁹⁵ Cameron, vii.

⁹⁶ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 200.

⁹⁷ Cameron, “Verbal Hygiene,” 116.

⁹⁸ Schöffner and L.Wenden, *Language and Peace*.

⁹⁹ Schöffner and L.Wenden; UNESCO, *From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace*.

¹⁰⁰ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 197; Rubenstein, “Basic Human Needs: The next Steps in Theory Development.”

misery; desocialization, resocialization and second class citizen treatment; repression detention, and expulsion.¹⁰¹

Cultural violence would also justify structural violence such as Exploitation A (starvation), exploitation B (malnutrition, illness); penetration and segmentation and finally marginalization and fragmentation.¹⁰²

As opposite of cultural violence, cultural peace seeks to justify direct and structural peace based on basic human needs. It would justify actions of direct peace such as “verbal and physical kindness, good to the body, mind and spirit of Self and Other; addressed to all basic needs, survival, well-being, freedom and identity. Love is the epitome of this: a union of bodies, minds and spirits.”¹⁰³

Moreover, cultural peace would also substitute structural violence for structural peace in the form of freedom, equity, dialogue, integration, solidarity and participation.¹⁰⁴ In the words of Galtung, “make the structure horizontal from early age on, as a stage for participation, solidarity, cooperation; and make the culture less exclusive, without steep Self-Other gradients, more inclusive, able to see Self in Other and Other in Self.”¹⁰⁵

Johan Galtung also stresses the importance of values for a peace discourse considering that there must be a minimum of values “A minimum is needed to establish a discourse for thought, speech, and action; and not only among the practitioners in the field, but among everybody concerned.”¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, he points out that a maximum of values in such discourse is not recommended in order to not cross the fine line existing between education and indoctrination.¹⁰⁷

In “Positive and negative peace”, Galtung and Fischer sustained that in order to build structural peace such structure should be based on values of “reciprocity, equal rights, benefits and dignity.”¹⁰⁸ In addition, in his most recent work Galtung incorporates to the

¹⁰¹ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

¹⁰² Galtung, 197.

¹⁰³ Galtung, 32.

¹⁰⁴ Galtung, 32.

¹⁰⁵ Galtung, 46.

¹⁰⁶ Galtung, 14.

¹⁰⁷ Galtung, 14.

¹⁰⁸ Galtung and Fischer, “Positive and Negative Peace,” 172.

theory some new values of violence and peace: polarization and hatred for cultural violence, and depolarization and empathy for cultural peace.¹⁰⁹

The list concerning the themes related to direct, structural and cultural violence and peace is extensive. Galtung classified them in the categories of Nature, Person, Social, World, Culture and Time.¹¹⁰ Since in the present paper we are studying political correctness as a social and cultural phenomenon, we are only focusing on the social and cultural categories.

Therefore, some of the themes related to direct and structural violence are: violence across fault lines, culturocide, patriarchy, racism, class, and cultural imperialism.¹¹¹ In contrast, some of the themes belonging to direct and structural peace are: peace as nonviolent; liberation and cultural liberation, development, parity and equity, and cultural coexistence.¹¹²

In terms of cultural violence, Galtung points out the following themes: universalist, singularist ideology, sexist and racist language, militarization in education and war-violence journalism.¹¹³ On the other hand, themes of cultural peace include pluralist ideology, humanist/non-speciesist language, peace education and peace journalism.¹¹⁴

Taking into consideration the importance of language not only as a tool for peace and violence legitimization as Galtung has point out,¹¹⁵ but also as a medium for social change as Fairclough has stressed,¹¹⁶ it is of great importance to give more attention to the role of language and discourse on peace. The literature on peace studies, and more particularly the peace theory of Johan Galtung will help us to to analyze the political correctness discourse during the 2016 US presidential election and identify the elements that are indicators of the promotion or legitimization of peace and/or violence.

¹⁰⁹ Galtung, *A Theory of Peace: Building Direct Structural Cultural Peace*; cited in Galtung, "Cultures of War, Cultures of Peace."

¹¹⁰ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 31.

¹¹¹ Galtung, 33.

¹¹² Galtung, 33.

¹¹³ Galtung, 33.

¹¹⁴ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

¹¹⁵ Galtung, "Cultural Violence"; Galtung and Fischer, "Violence: Direct, Structural and Cultural"; Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

¹¹⁶ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Method

An analysis of the political correctness discourse in the media under the Critical Discourse Analysis and peace theory approach will serve first to determine what the characteristics of this discourse are, and secondly to determine if the political correctness discourse has features of peace or violence. In order to answer these questions, the 2016 US presidential elections will be our case study. Based on the literature review, we considered that our case study represents the resurgence of the debate on political correctness in the media.

We will use political correctness literature and Peace Theory as our theoretical framework and Critical Discourse Analysis as our conceptual framework.

Due to the complexity of our subject of study and of the nature of the research questions, a mixed method will be carried. First, a quantitative content analysis, carried with the online tool English Sketch,¹¹⁷ will serve to overview the recurrent topics and themes used in the discourse of our case study.

Secondly, since political correctness is understood not only as a particular way of using language but also as using language as a social practice, it is considered that Critical Discourse Analysis is the adequate method for the purpose of this study. The result of this analysis will provide a representation of the political correctness discourse in the United States that will be compared to peace theories in our final section. Both deductive and inductive methods will be used in the different processes of research

In terms of sampling, journalistic articles from the United States media during the 2016 US general presidential debates will serve as a unit of analysis. The timeframe selected for data collection is from the 26th September (the first general presidential debate) to the 19th October (the third general presidential debate)¹¹⁸. The first general presidential debate has been chosen as the timeline parameter for its relevance in the controversy of political correctness.

Critical Discourse Analysis is a complex method that requires a deep analysis of text, for this reason, we will analyze an opinion article that will serve as our corpus. Since the

¹¹⁷ "Sketch Engine | Language Corpus Management and Query System."

¹¹⁸ "2016 United States Presidential Debates."

collection of data will be based on theoretical sampling, selection of the text will take place after an extensive review of the literature on political correctness. The latter will provide the necessary information to select the newspapers and articles with the necessary characteristics to conduct or research method.

In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data collection and avoid issues related to random selection of data, we will use a well-structured CDA, “a rigid and well-structured CDA can minimize or even eliminate potential bias in data selection”¹¹⁹. As well, to ensure the trust wordiness of the data analysis, the process and methodology will be described in detail to ensure transparency in the process.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Sriwimon and Zilli, “Applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a Conceptual Framework for Investigating Gender Stereotypes in Political Media Discourse,” 136.

¹²⁰ Sriwimon and Zilli, 137.

2.2 Selection of the corpus

The selection of our corpus was carried using Internet research engines as well as newspaper's online research engines, which allowed us to narrow down our search in terms of timeframe and key words. We focused on opinion pieces since they are less restricted in the neutrality of the content. The latter will allow us to recognize opinions, ideologies and points of view of the writer and therefore, to recognize discourses and ideologies.¹²¹

According to our literature review, political correctness is attributed to liberal ideas and the left politics. For this reason, the focal point of the search for our corpus was on liberal media, that is newspapers considered to be on the liberal side of the political landscape such as The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, the HuffPost, among others.¹²²

Moreover, key words were used to filter our options. The Keywords were chosen according to the literature review and they included the following: political correctness, political incorrectness, politically incorrect, politically correct, PC and anti-PC.

Once the options of opinion articles were narrowed down, the content of the chosen articles were analyzed favoring the ones with characteristics of political correctness in terms of topics and style, and pieces that openly expressed affinity with that discourse.

It is worth noticing that while the period between presidential debates in 2016 brought back the PC debate to the media, the majority of the articles had a critical position towards this phenomenon. In fact, in some instances where the pieces had characteristics of political correctness, the authors would distance themselves from the label.

Taking into consideration all the measures described above, we have selected as our corpus an opinion piece from the online newspaper HuffPost. The article is titled "America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored"¹²³ written by Eric Yaverbaum and it contains many of the characteristics of political correctness.

First of all, the title in itself can be considered highly politically correct. It is denouncing the problem of bigotry and hate speech in the United States. As we have shown

¹²¹ Van Dijk, "Opinions and Ideologies in the Press."

¹²² Groseclose and Milyo, "A Measure of Media Bias."; Budak, Goel, and Rao, "Fair and Balanced? Quantifying Media Bias through Crowdsourced Content Analysis."

¹²³ Yaverbaum, "America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored."

in the literature review, political correctness stands against discrimination and language that is offensive for minority groups and that is exactly what the title is doing.

The rest of the text is filled with complains about hate speech and stands against attacks towards victims of social injustice in the social media. It also, at a very first glance, denounces many of the behaviors that PC is against such as homophobia, sexism, racism and so on.

More importantly, as a whole the article defends the use of political correct language and its main goal seems to denounce those being politically incorrect on the media. The above is only a very superficial analysis of the text, it is only taking into consideration the main idea and topics that can easily be identified at first glance. This first analysis help us to choose this article as our main corpus for a more in deep text analysis since it is a good representation of what political correctness looked like during the 2016 presidential elections in the United States.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a qualitative research method with its roots in Discourse Analysis. Its focus of study is the relationship between language and social change, unlike linguistics and Discourse Analysis which focus only on describing the use of language. Interdisciplinary in nature, CDA comprises a mix of fields, from linguistics and pragmatics to sociology and history.¹²⁴

There are three main approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis; 1) Norman Fairclough's discourse as social practice approach, 2) Teud Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model approach, and 3) Ruth Wodak's sociological and historical approach.¹²⁵ For the purpose of the present thesis, Fairclough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis will be employed as our conceptual framework. This version of CDA understands language as an aspect of social life and acknowledges the importance of the study of language in social sciences.¹²⁶

According to Critical Discourse Analysis theory, language has a dialectic relationship with social life since both language and aspects of social life (such as identities, beliefs and knowledge) are shaped by each other.¹²⁷ According to this theory, the relationship between language and other aspect of social life can be explained by viewing the latter as an "interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts (economic, political, cultural, family etc.)."¹²⁸

In Fairclough approach, a social practice is the articulation of different elements including values, activities, culture, language and discourse¹²⁹, and social change is the change in the relationship among social practices and the elements in each of them"¹³⁰. Under this framework, discourse is view "as a form of social practice, rather than a purely individual activity or a reflex of situational variables."¹³¹

The discursive aspects of networks of social practices are called "orders of discourse," these are the choices we make when using language which are socially constructed. In other

¹²⁴ Ahmadvand, "Critical Discourse Analysis An Introduction to Major Approaches."

¹²⁵ Ahmadvand.

¹²⁶ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 2.

¹²⁷ Ahmadvand, "Critical Discourse Analysis An Introduction to Major Approaches," 3–4.

¹²⁸ Fairclough, "The Dialectics of Discourse."

¹²⁹ Fairclough, 1; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*.; FAIRCLOUGH, "'Political Correctness': The Politics of Culture and Language."

¹³⁰ FAIRCLOUGH, "'Political Correctness': The Politics of Culture and Language," 18–19.

¹³¹ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 63.

words, orders of discourse are the social aspect of language.¹³² The elements of orders of discourse are Genres (ways of acting) Discourses (ways of representing) Styles (ways of being)¹³³ and they are combined in a particular way, handpicked and excluding linguistic possibilities¹³⁴

Critical Discourse Analysis's goal is to uncover the ideologies existing in text, understanding texts as particular linguistic choices.¹³⁵ With this in mind, Critical Discourse Analysis claims that ideologies and relations of power and dominance can take place in language, under speech acts and representations.¹³⁶ Therefore, CDA "involves looking at choices of words and grammar in texts in order to discover the underlying discourse(s) and ideologies. A text's linguistic structure functions, as discourse, to highlight certain ideologies, while downplaying or concealing others."¹³⁷

As noted before, according to CDA "discursive practices are ideologically invested in so far as they incorporate significations which contribute to sustaining or restructuring power relations."¹³⁸ Ideologies contribute to maintain relations of powers and domination by representation the world in certain ways.¹³⁹

Power, in this case, is viewed as hegemony¹⁴⁰, a form of power and dominations that is not imposed but rather a form of leadership, which uses ideology to achieve consent, without force, in order to exercise dominance over society.¹⁴¹ Hegemony is present in discourse, in this case in text understanding text as "language in use,"¹⁴² through ideological work; this means by universalizing meanings¹⁴³ including word meanings but also other types of meanings hidden in text such as representations, actions and identification.¹⁴⁴

¹³² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 220.

¹³³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

¹³⁴ Fairclough, 220.

¹³⁵ Machin, Mayr, and Machin, "How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis : A Multimodal Introduction"; Van Dijk, "From Text Grammar to Critical Discourse Analysis"; cited in: Sriwimon and Zilli, "Applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a Conceptual Framework for Investigating Gender Stereotypes in Political Media Discourse," 137.

¹³⁶ Sriwimon and Zilli, "Applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a Conceptual Framework for Investigating Gender Stereotypes in Political Media Discourse," cited in: Gosse, *The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975*.

¹³⁷ Machin, Mayr, and Machin, "How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis : A Multimodal Introduction."

¹³⁸ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 91.

¹³⁹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 9.

¹⁴⁰ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 86.

¹⁴¹ Fairclough, 92.

¹⁴² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 3.

¹⁴³ Fairclough, 58.

¹⁴⁴ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 89; Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

In order to uncover ideologies, meanings and relations of power in discourse, Text Analysis is of great importance when carrying a Critical Discourse Analysis.¹⁴⁵ Text Analysis can be done with the help of Systemic Functional Grammar with Halliday as his most prominent precursor. According to Wodak, “in most studies there is reference to Hallidayan systemic functional grammar. This indicates that an understanding of the basic claims of Halliday’s grammar and his approach to linguistic analysis is essential for proper understanding of CDA.”¹⁴⁶ Systemic Functional Grammar studies text in terms of linguistic analysis with an approach to its social features.¹⁴⁷

Considering everything we have mentioned above, we will carry a text analysis under Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Therefore, the analysis will focused on the study of “Genres (ways of acting), Discourses (ways of representing) Styles (ways of being)”¹⁴⁸ in order to uncover the ideologies and relations of power in the political correctness discourse.

¹⁴⁵ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 3.

¹⁴⁶ Wodak, “What CDA Is about—a Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments.,” 8.

¹⁴⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Fairclough, 26.

3 The Political Correctness discourse during the 2016 US Presidential Elections

3.1 Context: the 2016 US presidential elections.

The 2016 race for the presidency of the United States has been one of the most surprising, covered and polarizing of the modern times. This was not only the first time that a presidential candidate had no prior elective office or military experience, the billionaire businessman and reality-TV star Donald Trump,¹⁴⁹ but it was also the first time a woman was nominated as presidential candidate in American history, Hillary Clinton.

The candidate for the Republican Party, Donald Trump officially accepted the nomination on July 21,¹⁵⁰ 2016 against all the odds and even without the support of a big part of the party.¹⁵¹ Trump's campaign focused on appealing the white middle class American from the mid-west,¹⁵² a demographic often forgotten by the Hillary campaign.¹⁵³ He gathered a significant constituency who saw Trump, according to Sabato, as "heroic" and many attributed this devotion as part of his victory.¹⁵⁴ Part of Donald Trump's discourse consisted on attacking the Establishment, in which he attributed Clinton as its representation, for several issues including "[its] intervention in foreign conflicts, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, stagnant real wages, excessive political correctness, and failure to enforce immigration laws."¹⁵⁵

On the other hand, Hilary Clinton officially accepted the nomination for the presidency under the Democratic Party on 28th of July 2016. She was, in comparison to Donald Trump, a more conservative and experienced candidate who tried to follow the lines of the Obama administration, which was especially evident in her support to Obama care.¹⁵⁶ Clinton also took a different direction from Trump in terms of demographics focusing on

¹⁴⁹ Sabato, "The 2016 Election That Broke All, or at Least Most, of the Rules."

¹⁵⁰ Healy and Martin, "His Tone Dark , Donald Trump Takes G.O.P Mantle."

¹⁵¹ Francia, "Free Media and Twitter in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Unconventional Campaign of Donald Trump," 4–5.

¹⁵² Beckwith, "United States Presidential Election of 2016."

¹⁵³ Beckwith.

¹⁵⁴ Sabato, "The 2016 Election That Broke All, or at Least Most, of the Rules."

¹⁵⁵ Beckwith, "United States Presidential Election of 2016."

¹⁵⁶ Beckwith.

minorities and young people¹⁵⁷ and neglecting, as some have pointed out, the white collar American.¹⁵⁸ Her political agenda “was based on traditional Democratic goals, notably tax increases on the wealthy, an increase to the minimum wage, and immigration reform.”¹⁵⁹ Clinton also included the issues of climate change in her discourse, which has been one of the most important topics of debate in the past years.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, her campaign was based on her performances as a secretary of state during the Obama administration using it as an example of her capabilities in terms of international relations and foreign policy.¹⁶¹

One of the most important elements of the 2016 elections was the role of the Internet and the social media in the race. While the use of this form of communication was nothing new (it was used in the past, especially by the campaign of Barack Obama in 2014).¹⁶² This time its impact in the 2016 elections was unprecedented and many have claimed that it was actually one of the biggest determiners in the success of Donald Trump’s campaign.¹⁶³

Until recently, the traditional media was the main information source during election times being cable television, printed newspapers and even the radio the most common ways of mass communication. However, studies have shown the increasingly high shift in the consumption of mainstream media through the internet.¹⁶⁴ Actually the most used format to get access to news and articles related to the elections was social media, through platforms such as Twitter and Facebook where they could not only have access to different newspapers, online magazines and blogs, but they also had the possibility to share those articles that represented their political views with other users.¹⁶⁵

Nevertheless, this overwhelming access to political content that was never seen before came with some disadvantages. The use of bots and the rise of fake news shaped the 2016 presidential elections significantly. From one side, bots, which “can spread information or misinformation, and can cause topics to “trend” online through the automated promotion of

¹⁵⁷ Owen, “Twitter Rants, Press Bashing, and Fake News. The Shameful Legacy of Media in the 2016 Election.”

¹⁵⁸ MacManus and Cilluffo, “Ten Takeaways from Campaign 2016 and a Look Forward.”

¹⁵⁹ Boyd Caroli, “Hillary Clinton.”

¹⁶⁰ Boyd Caroli.

¹⁶¹ Boyd Caroli.

¹⁶² Francia, “Free Media and Twitter in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Unconventional Campaign of Donald Trump.”

¹⁶³ Persily, “The 2016 U.S. Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?”; Francia, “Free Media and Twitter in the 2016 Presidential Election: The Unconventional Campaign of Donald Trump.”

¹⁶⁴ Persily, “The 2016 U.S. Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?,” 69.

¹⁶⁵ Owen, “Twitter Rants, Press Bashing, and Fake News. The Shameful Legacy of Media in the 2016 Election.”

hashtags, stories, and the like¹⁶⁶ was proved to be used by both candidates, at a larger scale by Trump, and it is highly possible that they were used by foreign countries to sabotage the elections.¹⁶⁷ Hand to hand with bots, fake news also became a problem, and in the case of Donald Trump, it became part of his a strategy during the elections.¹⁶⁸

The use of fake news and its spread used in social media contributed as well to the polarization of the voters. As some have stressed out, those behind the creation of fake news took advantages of the ideological stand of the voters to create content appealing and conforming to their ideals.¹⁶⁹ These articles were very often confused with real legitimate news and many even became viral all over the internet.¹⁷⁰

Moreover, the social media created an environment of ideological bubbles. Bakshy, Messing and Adamic¹⁷¹ researched the political polarization online during the elections and found that internet users have in overall 5 friends with similar political ideas against 1 friend with opposite ideologies making them more likely to be exposed to content similar to preconceived ideas and less to contesting ones.¹⁷² These bubbles worked in Trumps favor, as Persily pointed out, “His candidacy triggered new strategies and promoted established Internet forces. Some of these (such as the ‘alt-right’) were moved by ideological affinity, while others sought to profit financially or to further a geopolitical agenda.”¹⁷³

A significant part of the ideological polarization that took place during the elections was the division between those supporting political correctness and those against it. The subject entered the race directly by the voice of Donald Trump who stated at a Republican debate the following: “I think the big problem this country has is being politically correct, [...] I’ve been challenged by so many people and I don’t, frankly, have time for total political correctness.”¹⁷⁴ Donald Trump was expressing what many Americans have been thinking for

¹⁶⁶ Persily, “The 2016 U.S. Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?,” 70.

¹⁶⁷ Persily, 70.

¹⁶⁸ Owen, “Twitter Rants, Press Bashing, and Fake News. The Shameful Legacy of Media in the 2016 Election.”

¹⁶⁹ Owen.

¹⁷⁰ Persily, “The 2016 U.S. Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?,” 69.

¹⁷¹ Bakshy, Messing, and Adamic, “Supporting Materials for Exposure to Ideologically Diverse News and Opinion on Facebook.”

¹⁷² Owen, “Twitter Rants, Press Bashing, and Fake News. The Shameful Legacy of Media in the 2016 Election.”

¹⁷³ Persily, “The 2016 U.S. Election: Can Democracy Survive the Internet?,” 67.

¹⁷⁴ Guo, “The Real Reasons Donald Trump’s so Popular — for People Totally Confused by It.”

a long time¹⁷⁵ since the crusade for political correctness started in the 90's and that have permeated the American society.

Subsequently, political correctness became an essential part of Trump's campaign. He continuously made inappropriate remarks during his rallies attacked minorities groups including calling Mexicans rapist, making fall claims regarding Muslims cheering after 9/11 and making sexist remarks to several women among other outrageous statements.¹⁷⁶ This attitude instead of damaging its campaign it actually served as a strategy and it was rather applauded among his supporters. In fact, research papers have shown that there is direct correlations between people who have claimed to be tired of communication restrictions such political correctness and their support for Donald Trump.¹⁷⁷

As consequence, the 2016 presidential race became an ideological war zone divided among political correctness and its adversaries. From one side conservative Trump followers blamed on political correctness every issue in the country (immigration, economy, trade and so on¹⁷⁸ and, on the other side, liberals claimed that the right was using it to excuse offensive behavior, "they say it has emboldened too many to express racism, sexism and intolerance, which endure even as the country grows more diverse."¹⁷⁹ Political correctness impacted significantly the elections and at the same time the elections had also an impact on political correctness; it brought back to debate the issues with this form of communication restriction and it contributed to the polarization of the United States.

¹⁷⁵ Tumulty and Johnson, "Why Trump May Be Winning the War on 'Political Correctness.'"

¹⁷⁶ Heilpern, "Trump Campaign: 11 Outrageous Quotes"; Guo, "The Real Reasons Donald Trump's so Popular — for People Totally Confused by It."

¹⁷⁷ Conway, Repke, and Houck, "Donald Trump as a Cultural Revolt against Perceived Communication Restriction: Priming Political Correctness Norms Causes More Trump Support."

¹⁷⁸ Tumulty and Johnson, "Why Trump May Be Winning the War on 'Political Correctness.'"

¹⁷⁹ Tumulty and Johnson.

3.2 Text analysis

3.2.1 Social practice

We are analyzing a text that forms part of the social practice of opinionative genre of journalism¹⁸⁰ in the mass media. Opinion pieces are articles in newspapers or magazines that have the characteristic to express points of view and interpret an event or phenomenon. These articles convey could be signed either by an external figure or in behalf of the newspaper in the case of editorials.¹⁸¹

Opinion articles, as any discursive practices, are part of the network of social practices that constitutes structures of social life. As we have pointed out, social practices are formed by different elements including actors, activities, subjects, discourse time and place.¹⁸² Therefore, we can see journalism as a social practice that has a dialectical relationship with other areas of social life such as economics, politics, and health, among others. This means that these areas of social life and its practices influence the practice of journalism which, at the same time, also influences them.¹⁸³

According to Critical Discourse Analysis theory, discourse is an element of social practices that sometimes is more prominent in some social practices than in others.¹⁸⁴ In the particular case of opinion pieces discourse is a very important since is the main activity exercise and, therefore, its text is of great importance to reveal its discursive work.

Our unit of analysis is an opinion article from the HuffPost, also known as The Huffington Post, an online news outlet characterized for its liberal content.¹⁸⁵ The article was written by Eric Yaverbaum and titled “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored”¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁰ de Melo and de Assis, “Gêneros e Formatos Jornalísticos: Um Modelo Classificatório,” 48.

¹⁸¹ Errami, *Guidebook of the Professional Journalist Journalistic Genres Keys To Professional Journalism*.

¹⁸² Fairclough, “The Dialectics of Discourse.”

¹⁸³ Fairclough; Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*.

¹⁸⁴ Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard, *Texts and Practices*; Machin, Mayr, and Machin, “How To Do Critical Discourse Analysis : A Multimodal Introduction.”

¹⁸⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “HuffPost.”

¹⁸⁶ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

In the particular case of this article, the social practice is part of a network of social practices that include communication in the social media, free speech, US politics and education.

The piece is as well part of a chain of social events¹⁸⁷ related to cases of abuse and hate speech on twitter. The events included the scandal of British journalist Milo Yiannopoulos and his sexist and racist statements over the American actress Leslie Jones and his followed ban from Twitter,¹⁸⁸ Colin Kaepernick's online hate after raising awareness on racism in the United States,¹⁸⁹ Malia Obama backlash regarding her admission to Harvard University, among other events that detonated racist, sexist, and xenophobic comments in the social media.¹⁹⁰

Other events that are part of the discourse of the HuffPost article are the debates regarding freedom of speech and hate speech in the social media and the 2016 presidential elections¹⁹¹, which represent the main issue in the case of the former, and the political context on the latter.

3.2.2 Intertextuality

We will start by analyzing the texts in terms of intertextuality, meaning the external texts that are being incorporated within a discursive practice, which reveals which voices have been included and which ones have been excluded by the writer of the piece.¹⁹²

The text under analysis presents different degrees of intertextuality. The most prominent is the voice of Twitter, which is included in the text at a high level of intertextuality meaning that the voice of Twitter is directly portrayed in the text in the forms of quotations. In paragraph 11 (see appendix) for example, we see the voice of Twitter incorporated in the form of quotations¹⁹³ in the sentence "Twitter, which considers itself the 'free speech wing of the free speech party', has come under fire from both ends of the

¹⁸⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 31.

¹⁸⁸ Romano, "Milo Yiannopoulos's Twitter Ban, Explained."

¹⁸⁹ Parks, "Why Do People Hate Colin Kaepernick So Much?"

¹⁹⁰ Carrejo, "Malia Obama Moves into Harvard Twitter Reactions."

¹⁹¹ Yaverbaum, "America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored."

¹⁹² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 47.

¹⁹³ Fairclough, 39.

political spectrum (for simultaneously doing too much and too little to police hate speech on its platform)”¹⁹⁴. Another example of the representation of the voice of twitter is reflected in paragraph 3 (see appendix) where the author quotes a fragment of the rules stipulated by the Twitter for its users concerning the regulation of abuse in the platform.

Intertextuality often comes in subtle ways by using reported speech or summarizing other texts.¹⁹⁵ For instance in the sentence “Twitter has said that it is committed to updating its software to both detect abuse and make reporting it easier”¹⁹⁶ reported speech is used marked by “has said” and does not use the exact words of the voice, in this case the spoken person of the platform.

Another example of reported speech in the text can be found in the following sentence in paragraph 2:

“While the alt-right rally behind those like Yiannopoulos – decrying that Twitter is no longer a beacon of free speech - most decent human beings plead with Twitter to do more to combat the pervasive and overtly racist and misogynistic hate speech that runs rampant on its platform.”¹⁹⁷

In the sentence above the voices of both the alt-right and “decent human beings” (which we can assume are those against hate speech, or in other words politically correct people) are included in the text through the reporting verbs “decry” and “plead”.

On the other hand, one particular voice that is excluded from the text is the voice of the victims of social injustice. The people included in such group more than participants with a voice in the debate are only the objects of bigotry and hate speech. In the first paragraph, for example, victims of social injustice are just “those” “berated with slurs, insults, and threats”¹⁹⁸ or “marred by disturbingly racist, xenophobic, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic attacks”¹⁹⁹. Even though the victims of social justice are the ones being the object of those attacks (they are the most affected and probably the ones that should concern the most about the issue of hate speech), their voice is not included in the text; there is no

¹⁹⁴ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

¹⁹⁵ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 40; Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar.”

¹⁹⁶ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

¹⁹⁷ Yaverbaum.

¹⁹⁸ Yaverbaum.

¹⁹⁹ Yaverbaum.

reference to their point of view or stands in the issue, neither a quotation or any direct or indirect reporting speech.

There are as well some voices that are not attributed to anyone in particular that are included through assumptions, this is, the “relation between this text and what has been said or written or thought elsewhere, with the ‘elsewhere’ left vague.”²⁰⁰ In functional linguistics this feature is called presuppositions.²⁰¹

In the first line of the HuffPost opinion piece, the author assumes that “being politically correct and standing up for social justice are seen as weaknesses,”²⁰² However, this statement is not attributed to any group of people, entity or individuals in particular as it would be the case with intertextuality.²⁰³ We, the readers, can assume that the author is referring to those against political correctness, but whom in particular? The conservatives? Twitter users? Politicians? The alt-right?, the reader must assume this with the information provided in the text. We might assume that the author refers to the alt-right in the social media, but it is only an assumption.

When a text incorporates other voices in the form of intertextuality reflects an openness to difference, to the dialogue between voices to put it in other way. On the other hand, when the voices are not included or they do in the form of assumptions the author may be reducing this dialogue or diminishing it.²⁰⁴ Assumptions are less dialogical since there is no presence of reported speech.²⁰⁵ They do not include other voices and take things for granted.²⁰⁶ Actually, a no dialogical text is seen as authoritative.²⁰⁷

Even when a text includes other voices it may not be open to difference but this voices are rather used as “an accentuation of difference, conflict, polemic, a struggle over meaning, norms, power.”²⁰⁸ The voices of the tenants of free speech and the voice of those against hate speech are included in an antagonist way. The voice of the alt-right (as the author assumes are the ones defending freedom of speech in Twitter) is framed as “hateful”, “an

²⁰⁰ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 40.

²⁰¹ Halliday and Matthiessen, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*; Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²⁰² Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

²⁰³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 40.

²⁰⁴ Fairclough, 41.

²⁰⁵ Fairclough, 50.

²⁰⁶ Fairclough, 47.

²⁰⁷ Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World*, 427.

²⁰⁸ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 42.

aggressive group of conservative racist nationalists.”²⁰⁹ In contrast, the voice of those against hate speech is framed as “most decent people.”²¹⁰ The alt-right and the tenants of free speech, as we can see, are framed by value assumptions, their views are assumed as desirable or undesirable based on the adjectives they are framed with.

Regarding the latter, Fairclough points out that “when the voice of another is incorporated into a text, there are always choices about how to ‘frame’ it, how to contextualize it, in terms of other parts of the text – about relations between report and authorial account.”²¹¹ We can then observe in the article an “antagonist-protagonist” framing of voices, the antagonist being the “hateful army of the alt-right (the bad ones), and the protagonist (the good ones) the tenants of political correctness or “most decent people” in the words of the author.²¹²

Assumptions not only serve to bring unattributed voices to the text, it can as well show the ideological map of the author.²¹³ In pragmatics, presuppositions are the equivalent of assumptions.²¹⁴ “Presuppositions are propositions which are taken by the producer of the text as already established or ‘given’.”²¹⁵ So for instance texts can be seen as doing ideological work in assuming, taking as an unquestioned and unavoidable certain versions or interpretations of reality.²¹⁶ In the text, the author makes a series of assumptions about what is truth, what is the case and what can be.

Starting with the title, the text asserts that there is a problem of bigotry and hate speech in America. This problem, according to the text, has taken place on Twitter, an assertion that is assumed to be shared by both defenders of freedom of speech and those against hate speech in the line “[Twitter] has come under fire from both ends of the political spectrum (for simultaneously doing too much and too little to police hate speech on its platform).”²¹⁷

The author assumptions of “what is the case” is that Twitter hasn’t done enough to fight this attitudes and it has actually “prioritized hateful abuse over those actually being

²⁰⁹ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

²¹⁰ Yaverbaum.

²¹¹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 53.

²¹² Fairclough, 54.

²¹³ Fairclough, 58.

²¹⁴ Fairclough, 59; Mey, *Pragmatics, An Introduction*.

²¹⁵ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 120.

²¹⁶ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 58.

²¹⁷ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

abused (for simply trying to express their ideas).”²¹⁸ Moreover, the author claims that Donald Trump is part of the problem (his name is not mentioned but he refers to him implicitly as he is the candidate who fits in the description of “real estate tycoon”) as he is leading “a campaign on hate.”²¹⁹

Other important assumption that the text makes is that hate speech is not only an issue in the social media, in this case Twitter, but it is also an issue in the country where it is asserted, “hatred underlies the prevailing attitudes of millions of Americans.”²²⁰ As well, it is implied that the problem of bigotry and hate never disappeared in America, instead it was whispered and yet “longstanding, deep-seated.”²²¹

Finally, the most significant assumptions the text makes is that social issues matter, “speech is never just speech” and that freedom of speech should not be an excuse for acts of bigotry and hate speech.²²²

All the examples listed above are assumptions expressed as assertions, in other words as facts. Discourse, as we have mentioned before, is based on linguistic choices, for instance, the writer could have used modal verbs in any of those assumptions; some possible examples are: “Trump [*might*] be part of the problem”, “[*maybe*]Twitter is not doing enough”, “Bigotry [*might*] have always been a deep-seated attitude in America”. Instead, we can see ideological work and the pursuit of hegemony and dominance in the text by using assumptions to express opinions as factual statements, “as an unquestioned and unavoidable reality,”²²³

The issue with assumptions is that they can be manipulative. By using presuppositions the author is portraying certain belief as given which can be difficult to prove as it may or may not have been said somewhere by someone.²²⁴ For example, the article assumes that there are millions of Americans having attitudes of hate and bigotry without accounting for where that information comes from. This assertion can be seen as manipulative, as an exaggeration (that might or might not be truth) of reality.

²¹⁸ Yaverbaum.

²¹⁹ Yaverbaum.

²²⁰ Yaverbaum.

²²¹ Yaverbaum.

²²² Yaverbaum.

²²³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 58.

²²⁴ Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, 121.

3.2.3 Genres

Genre, according to Critical Discourse Analysis, is referred as what a text is doing discursively.²²⁵ Genres can be analyzed in terms of “Activity, Social Relations, and Communication Technology – what are people doing, what are the social relations between them, and what communication technology (if any) does their activity depend on?”²²⁶

At first glance, we can detect certain actions carried by the article. The actions are:

1. Complaining about the problem of hate speech and abuse on Twitter: The text’s paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 (see appendix) main activity, discursively, is to point out the problem of abuse, bigotry and hate speech in Twitter, doing so by describing the series of incidents related to those issues in the platform.²²⁷

2. Trying to persuade Twitter that more measures should be taken in order to fight hate speech in the platform: this is observed in paragraph 5 and 6 (see appendix) in statements such as “Twitter needs to effectively address its hate speech problem.”²²⁸

3. Teaching those defending freedom of speech on Twitter about the meaning of the first amendment: this takes place in paragraph 6 (see appendix). This lecturing attitude is present in the fragment “Let me just say this again for those in the back - the First Amendment applies to the government and its enactment of laws, not individuals, not private companies.”²²⁹

4. Trying to convince people that there is a need for more education regarding tolerance and awareness on social issues: this is the last statement of the article, the author urges Americans that education is needed to fight bigotry and hate.²³⁰

The generic structure is the “overall structure or organization of a text, which depends upon the main genre upon which the text draws.”²³¹ The analysis of generic structure is of great importance to understand the most abstract purposes and goals of a text. Although, while some text may have a more defined generic structure, there is some others that might

²²⁵ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 216.

²²⁶ Fairclough, 70.

²²⁷ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

²²⁸ Yaverbaum.

²²⁹ Yaverbaum.

²³⁰

²³¹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 2016.

be a mixture of genres.²³² This is the case of the HuffPost opinion article, which as a whole has the structure of an argument, but it includes some parts of hortatory report.

We can observe the generic structure of an argument in the way a text was written; “argumentation uses language to justify or refuse a standpoint, with the aim of securing agreement in views.”²³³ This genre is often present in opinion and editorial pieces and its purpose is to convince the audience about a certain point of view from the part of the journalist.²³⁴

An argumentative text is composed of Ground + Warrant+ Claim.²³⁵ “The Grounds are the premises of the argument, the Warrant is what justifies the inference from the Grounds to the Claim. We can also distinguish Backing, which gives support for Warrants.”²³⁶

In our corpus, we can find two arguments taking place. The first one is regarding the problem of hate speech on Twitter. The arguments states that Twitter hasn’t done enough to regulate issues of bigotry and hate speech in its platform (grounds). Twitter has the means to limit hate speech as a private company, it has no obligation to stand for freedom of speech²³⁷ (warrant). Finally, Twitter needs to do something about the issue; “Twitter needs to effectively address its hate speech problem, [Twitter] it ought to start standing by its users and seriously reevaluate how it handles hate speech”²³⁸ (claim).

The second argument is about bigotry and hate in America. The generic structure of the arguments is the following: Ground: Hatred is still present in the country and is held by “millions of Americans.”²³⁹ Warrant: It is implicitly assumed that bigotry is not desirable, and that something needs to be done about it. Claim: it is necessary “to educate Americans on why social issues matter”²⁴⁰ and “to learn empathy as a nation.”²⁴¹

²³² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²³³ Van Eemeren et al., “Argumentation,” 208.

²³⁴ Van Eemeren et al., 208.

²³⁵ van Leeuwen, “Genre and Field in Critical Discourse Analysis: A Synopsis”; Devitt, “Genre Performances: John Swales’ Genre Analysis and Rhetorical-Linguistic Genre Studies”; Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²³⁶ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 81.

²³⁷ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

²³⁸ Yaverbaum.

²³⁹ Yaverbaum.

²⁴⁰ Yaverbaum.

²⁴¹ Yaverbaum.

Once again, we can identify ideological work this time in the generic structure of the text. The warrant in an argumentative genre, as it is exemplified in the second argument, that may be implicit and based on assumptions. Implicitness plays an important role in doing ideological work, it is implied that bigotry is an undesirable attitude; it is assumed that is just a matter of common sense to do something about it.²⁴² As well, we can find in the warrants characteristics of specific discourses²⁴³, in the example above there are similarities to what political correctness discourse stands for according to the literature; to avoid offensive language against minority groups²⁴⁴, in the text portrayed as “victims of social injustice.”²⁴⁵

In terms of meaning relations, in the broader sense of the relationship of bigger parts of the text, we can find that the HuffPost carries a “problem-solution” semantic relation. Starting with the title “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored”²⁴⁶ which stresses the idea that there is a problem that needs to be solved. The relation is illustrated as follows:

First case:

Problem: Twitter’s mechanisms to regulate abuse haven’t adequately face the bigotry and hate problem in the platform. Solution: As a private company, twitter should establish its own rules to stop hate speech.²⁴⁷

Second case:

Problem: Bigotry and hate are attitudes that are still present in millions of Americans.²⁴⁸ Solution: “We need to educate Americans on why social issues matter, why they should care about people that look, worship, or love differently than them, and we desperately need to learn empathy as a nation.”²⁴⁹

The problems and solutions that are part of the article are strategies of hegemony based on moral evaluations.²⁵⁰ In the text, there are extensive examples of value assumptions, as we will see in the section on evaluation; bigotry, hate speech, racism, xenophobia, sexism,

²⁴² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 81.

²⁴³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²⁴⁴ Hughes, *Political Correctness: A History of Semantics and Culture*.

²⁴⁵ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

²⁴⁶ Yaverbaum.

²⁴⁷ Yaverbaum.

²⁴⁸ Yaverbaum.

²⁴⁹ Yaverbaum.

²⁵⁰ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 98.

among others,²⁵¹ are undesirable values. On the other hand, awareness about social issues, empathy, and tolerance towards people of different race or sexual orientation²⁵² are seen as desirable values. These values and conceptions of the world are the ones that legitimize the author claims that the problem of hate and bigotry in Twitter and as well in the country must be solved by implementing better rules and regulations of abuse for the former, and education on social issues for the latter.

Moreover, texts, at the clause level, have different types of exchange which can be “‘knowledge exchange’, where the focus is on exchange of information, eliciting and giving information, making claims, stating facts, and so forth; and ‘activity exchange’, where the focus is on activity, on people doing things or getting others to do things.”²⁵³

The HuffPost article presents both features of exchange. For one side the text is full with knowledge exchange in the form of statements and giving information. From the beginning of the text where the author states the problem of hate speech in Twitter it does by describing the series of events that have taken place on the platform regarding abuse and hatred. Furthermore, the text also provided information regarding the rules of usage of Twitter and the meaning of the Fifth Amendment.

On the other hand, the article also shows features of “activity exchange” since some statements have a heavy dose of evaluations, and in some cases prescriptions. The text is engaging in strategic action, meaning that “people act (and act upon other people) in ways which are oriented to achieving results, greater ‘effectivity’ or ‘efficiency’ and so forth.”²⁵⁴ In strategic action the request for action it is disguised in the form of statements, they are not openly eliciting the reader or social actors in the text to do something.²⁵⁵

For instance in the sentence “this response did little to slow down the hateful army of the “alt-right” - aggressive group of conservative racist nationalists”²⁵⁶ the author is evaluating the response of Twitter towards the incident and it is also evaluating the group of the alt-right as hateful and aggressive. A very similar type of statements with implicit

²⁵¹ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

²⁵² Yaverbaum.

²⁵³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 105.

²⁵⁴ Fairclough, 110.

²⁵⁵ Fairclough, 106.

²⁵⁶ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

evaluation is found in the sentence “Indeed, previous Twitter updates have done little to remedy the situation.”

The text is also requesting and suggesting in the form of statements. Some clauses have some degree of proposition, asking to do something without the typical imperative mood. The author insist that Twitter *needs to do* something about abuse in its platform from one side, and that America *needs to change* its attitudes towards one another. The text also suggests that America *need to get educated* about social issues. We can see that the author is not only stating facts, it is also prescribing, indicating what it needs to get done to solve the problem of hate in the country. The features described above are a characteristic of “hortatory report”,²⁵⁷

3.2.4 Discourse

In this part of the analysis, we study discourse as representations of the world. In a text, the author may represent the world in a particular way, using a specific discourse accordingly²⁵⁸. However, he also may introduce different discourses in to the text by mixing them together to create representations (for example mixing political discourse and capitalism), or by bringing other discourses to contest them (for example left and right politics discourse)²⁵⁹. Therefore, the text may consist of one or many discourses and they may relate to each other in different ways.

In order to identify the discourses present in the text we need to “1) Identify the main parts of the world (including areas of social life) which are represented – the main ‘themes’. (2) identify the particular perspective or angle or point of view from which they are represented.”²⁶⁰

In the case of our corpus, we firstly identified the main topics that are included. The main themes represented in the text are social media (represented by Twitter), freedom of speech, political correctness, hate speech, bigotry, the left political discourse, liberal opinion, the alt-right political discourse, multicultural discourse, liberal discourse.

²⁵⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 93.

²⁵⁸ Fairclough, 129.

²⁵⁹ Fairclough, 124.

²⁶⁰ Fairclough, 129.

The areas of social life that are represented in the text are: public opinion, education, politics and law, and they are represented from a liberal point of view

We can find contested discourses in the text. From one side we have the defense of freedom of speech discourse versus the discourse against hate speech (which can also just be called the political correctness discourse). We also have the liberal vs conservative discourse.

Contested discourses such as those mentioned above have a purpose in representing reality. According to Fairclough, when discourses are presented in a relationship of conflict “what is centrally contested is the power of these pre-constructed semantic systems to generate particular visions of the world which may have the performative power to sustain or remake the world in their image.”²⁶¹

For instance, the discourse of free speech is contested with discourse against hate speech, the latter being part of the political correctness discourse but may be also part of others such as liberal discourse, and there seems to be no common ground between them in the way the text is representing both subjects.

Indeed, it appears to be different ways in defining or giving meaning to the concept of freedom of speech. From one side it is implied that the alt-right understand freedom of speech as the freedom to express whatever opinion, including hate speech. This is illustrated in the sentence “while the alt-right rally behind those like Yiannopoulos - decrying that Twitter is no longer a beacon of free speech”²⁶² taking into consideration that Yiannopoulos was actually banned from the platform due to his racist, sexist and homophobic posts. On the other hand, the author is also representing freedom of speech as a right that must be regulated and that does not justify hate speech, this is represented in the statement “it should go without saying, but the alleged preservation of free speech cannot be used to justify pure and unadulterated hatred and bigotry.”²⁶³

Moreover, while it is assumed that the alt-right believes that freedom of speech is a right that needs to be protected by Twitter, there is another point of view in the text; the belief that it is a right that concerns only the government to protect expressed in the line “let

²⁶¹ Fairclough, 130.

²⁶² Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

²⁶³ Yaverbaum.

me just say this again for those in the back - the First Amendment applies to the government and its enactment of laws, not individuals, not private companies”²⁶⁴

In the case of hate speech, the subject is attributed to the alt-right and a practice that it takes place on Twitter. According to what is expressed in this text, hate speech is something that should be policed, regulated, addressed in sentences such as “removing abusers and instigators like Yiannopoulos is not enough to stop hate speech,”²⁶⁵ “Twitter needs to effectively address its hate speech problem,”²⁶⁶ or “Twitter can therefore create its own rules regarding hate speech.”²⁶⁷ It is also asserted in the title that it is a problem in Twitter and in America as a whole.

It is also asserted that bigotry is a problem in America, according to the text it is a problem that has always been there but it was not outspoken. It is also related to Donald Trump since asserts that one reason for the resurgence of bigotry among Americans is his campaign, this is illustrated in the assertion that “Trump campaign has irrevocably emboldened and amplified a once whispered bigotry into one that is shouted and impossible to drown out.”²⁶⁸

On the other hand, the political correctness discourse is mentioned only once. Nevertheless, the text holds some of the characteristics of political correctness. It is concern with social justice and social issues such as hate speech, abuse, racism, xenophobia that are the same concerns of political correctness. The text also supports the regulation of speech as political correctness, which is the main argument of the text and represented in sentence such as “[Twitter] it is a private company that can quite frankly limit speech however it sees fit - it has no obligation whatsoever to protect free speech.”²⁶⁹ The corpus has also features of liberal ideology by supporting openness to difference similarly to political correctness which is evident in the last paragraph that states “We need to educate Americans on why social issues matter, why they should care about people that look, worship, or love differently than them, and we desperately need to learn empathy as a nation.”²⁷⁰

²⁶⁴ Yaverbaum.

²⁶⁵ Yaverbaum.

²⁶⁶ Yaverbaum.

²⁶⁷ Yaverbaum.

²⁶⁸ Yaverbaum.

²⁶⁹ Yaverbaum.

²⁷⁰ Yaverbaum.

A text may also include or exclude different social events related to the one belonging to the text. According to Fairclough “Social events bring together various elements. Let us say in very broad terms that they include: Forms of activity, Persons (with beliefs/desires/values . . . histories), Social relations, institutional forms Objects, Means (technologies . . .) Times and places, Language (and other types of semiosis).”²⁷¹

By looking at the events that are included or excluded in a text and how they are represented we can identify the perspective of the author, what are his choices in terms of not only the event present or absent in the article, but also which elements of such events are included or excluded.²⁷²

For instance, we can find series of specific events listed in paragraph 4 (see appendix) where subjects are not included. The majority of the processes in these events are nominalized; processes are represented as entities²⁷³ where the social agent disappears. In the sentence “Twitter was also home to the racist attacks hurled at 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick”²⁷⁴, the verb “attack” was nominalized and “hurl” was use in its passive form excluding the agent that hurled the attacks, thus nobody is held accountable for the actions, the responsibility does not rest on someone.²⁷⁵

It is worth noticing that in text analysis nominalization of processes is a form of metaphor, not in the typical form of bringing other aspects of the word to represent something else, but rather a grammatical form where the grammatical structure is changed.²⁷⁶

In the case of the typical form of metaphor, “words which generally represent one part of the world being extended to another”²⁷⁷, we can find a few in the text:

1. “Twitter, which considers itself the “free speech wing of **the free speech party**,” **has come under fire** from both ends of the political spectrum”²⁷⁸

²⁷¹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 165–136.

²⁷² Fairclough, 136.

²⁷³ Fairclough, 143.

²⁷⁴ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

²⁷⁵ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 144.

²⁷⁶ Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors* quoted in Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²⁷⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 131.

²⁷⁸ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

2. “the 2016 election (complete with a reality star and real-estate tycoon leading a campaign of hate and fear-mongering) **has added plenty more fuel to this dumpster fire** of an online political landscape”²⁷⁹

3. “The toxicity (the deeply disturbing and most hateful qualities of our nation) **has risen from the depths to the surface.**”²⁸⁰

In the first sentence, we can observe two metaphors in the same sentence. The first one is borrowing terms from the political field, comparing twitter to a political party expresses with the terms “wing” and “party”. Representing Twitter with the attributions of a political party seems to imply that Twitter has the obligation, as it would be the case of a politician, to defend the freedom of speech or issues related to it.

In the same line, we find a second metaphor “has come under fire”²⁸¹ referring to the critics against the management of hate speech on Twitter. The metaphor in sentence 2 is also related to fire referring to the divisions in the social media and suggesting that the elections and Donald Trump have contributed to the polarization of opinions. Finally, sentence 3 refers to the nature, the sea metaphor more specifically, implying that the negative attitudes in America were always there, but were hidden from the public.

These metaphors are representations of the world; they help the producer of the text to relate the events he is describing to other areas of the world as symbolism and comparisons.²⁸² We can see through these metaphors how the author interprets the events and social actors in the text, in this interpretation, Twitter has an obligation to regulate hate speech, the social media is under polemic, and bigotry was never a thing of the pass.

We have analyzed in previous sections the voices and texts included or excluded from the corpus. In this case, we will look at how social actors are represented: in terms of what is their grammatical role, what is their participation in processes, how are they are being portrayed.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Yaverbaum.

²⁸⁰ Yaverbaum.

²⁸¹ Yaverbaum.

²⁸² Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*.

²⁸³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 145.

One of the social actors represented in the text is Twitter, even though it is an online platform and it functions as place, in the text it is also included as an actor that can take actions, police, regulate, react etc. It has also a prominent place in the text since it is mentioned 25 times (see table 1). Moreover, it was mentioned 9 times as subject that is, continues, wants, likes, needs to do, says, decides and does.

Table 1 Frequent keywords in the corpus calculated by Sketch Engine.

Term	Frequency	Term	Frequency
hatred	8	abuse	8
racist	6	threat	6
twitter	7	attack	6
Twitter	18	free	11
speech	20	hate speech	8
hate	9	free speech	9

The victims of social injustice are as well social actors included in the text, however this group is in the background²⁸⁴. They are only mentioned once as affected group by the issues of bigotry and hate speech.

The alt-right is another social actor represented in the HuffPost piece. This group is represented as an active actor²⁸⁵; it *rallies* behind Milo Yiannopoulos and *defends* freedom of speech. It is also implied that the alt-right is behind the cases of abuse and hate speech since it is declared that the “massacre” taken on Twitter against Yiannopoulos didn’t stop the group (without really elaborating on what they did not stop doing exactly). However, in the context and the way the alt-right is framed, the reader can assume that the writer is talking about the abuse and hatred in the platform.

Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton are represented personally since they are referred by name. From one hand, Hillary Clinton is only mentioned once in relation to her position in the poles, which seems to be reassuring for the author since it is implied that her victory would be desirable. In contrast, Donald Trump is represented as part of the problem of bigotry and hate speech, which is implied in the assertion that “Trump campaign has

²⁸⁴ Fairclough, 145.

²⁸⁵ Fairclough, 145.

irrevocably emboldened and amplified a once whispered bigotry into one that is shouted and impossible to drown out.”²⁸⁶

Finally, we can observe the representation of Americans as a social actor. The role of Americans as a subject it has a rather negative connotation (Americans have attitudes of hatred and they need to get educated²⁸⁷) and the author seems to distance himself from the term. On the other hand, we see the author, as we will see below, identifying with the term nation and society.

3.2.5 Style

The analysis of a text in terms of style allow us to identify, firstly the author's degree of commitment to the truth and obligation (modality),²⁸⁸ and secondly, what he represents as desired and undesirable (evaluations)²⁸⁹. Looking at modality and evaluation is of great importance to determine identifications in the text, in other words, to what does the author identifies with and how does he sees the world he is representing in his discursive practice.²⁹⁰

As we mentioned before, modality reflects the commitment of the producer of discourse to the truth. Therefore, Modality can represent discourses in terms of obligations, necessity possibility among other degrees that exists between an assertion and a denial.²⁹¹

The majority of the text we are analyzing is expressed with assertions and denials. For instance, it is asserted that there is a problem of bigotry and hate speech on Twitter and in America. It is also asserted that Donald Trump has contributed to worsen the hate and bigotry in the country. On the other hand, we can see denials in the case of freedom of speech. According to the author of the piece, freedom of speech is not a justification for abuse and hate speech.²⁹²

In the case of modality, we can find that there are two types. Firstly we can find in the text cases of modality that are not represented by the typical modal verbs (might, could,

²⁸⁶ Yaverbaum, “America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored.”

²⁸⁷ Yaverbaum.

²⁸⁸ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*; Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar.”

²⁸⁹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 172.

²⁹⁰ Fairclough, 164.

²⁹¹ Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar”; Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

²⁹² Yaverbaum, “America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored.”

should etc.) but it is made of verbs such as “appear” or “seem” which are a middle point between an assertion and a denial.²⁹³ For instance in the sentence “*the alleged* preservation of free speech cannot be used to justify pure and unadulterated hatred and bigotry”²⁹⁴ the author distance himself from justifying hatred and bigotry with freedom of speech.

The second type of modality present in the text is modality of obligation, which is distinguished as “modulations” by Halliday.²⁹⁵ The modals of obligations are *must*, *should* and *may*, ordered by highest to lower intensity.²⁹⁶ The text shows a medium degree of obligation. For example, in the sentence “We *need* to educate Americans on why social issues matter, why they *should* care about people that look, worship, or love differently than them”²⁹⁷ although the main verb is “need”, it is assumed that there is a degree of obligation to care about people different to us. Moreover, in the text it is expressed a high degree of obligation in the case of Twitter who *ought* to protect its users from hate speech and it *ought* to reevaluate how it deals with the issue. In the same manner, “free speech *ought* not permit unmitigated abuse and threats”²⁹⁸ the text attributes a high degree of obligation to hate speech.

Accordingly, we have observed the speaker in the text, in this case the writer of the article of the HuffPost, has a strong commitment to the statements he makes in the text. He shows a high degree of commitment to convince Twitter and Americans to take action to reduce hate speech, he makes strong statements about the way freedom of speech, according to the writer, is being used to justify hate. This is especially illustrated by the choices that the author makes; he could have make moralized statements such as “*maybe* Twitter is not doing enough” or “*maybe* freedom of speech is being used to justify hate”, instead he have decided to use non-moralized clauses showing that he strongly believe in those statements.

²⁹³ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 170–71.

²⁹⁴ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

²⁹⁵ Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar,” 147.

²⁹⁶ Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, 513.

²⁹⁷ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

²⁹⁸ Yaverbaum.

3.2.6 Evaluations.

We will finally analyze the text in terms of what is called in Critical Discourse Analysis statement evaluations.²⁹⁹ We have addressed the topic of evaluations in the first section where we analyzed interdiscursivity, however, in this case, the focus will be in evaluations as “statements about desirability and undesirability,”³⁰⁰ meaning what is considered by the discourse in the text as good or bad.

In our corpus, the author evaluates values, actions and ideologies, explicitly or implicitly, according to what he considers desirable or undesirable through different grammar choices (see table 2). Some values and ideologies are very clearly catalogued as undesirable since the goal of the piece is to denounce them and those include racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, violence and abuse (see appendix paragraph 4). While we might think that those are values that very unlikely would be evaluated as desirable, it is actually possible to find implicit support towards attitudes that might be considered as any of the attitudes mentioned before, in contrast the text constantly rejects them.

Table 2 Values and ideologies evaluated as desirables and undesirables in the text.

Desirable values	Undesirable values
Regulated Free speech	Hate speech
Liberal opinion	Conservative ideology
Awareness on social issues	Bigotry
Decency	Transphobia
Morality	Homophobia
Tolerance	Xenophobia
Empathy	Violence
Political correctness	Abuse
	Misogyny
	Sexism
	Racism
	Bigotry
	Nationalism

²⁹⁹ Fairclough, “Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language. Language in Social Life Series”; Lemke, “Text Structure and Text Semantics.”

³⁰⁰ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 172.

Moreover, other evaluations are made clearer by the use of adjectives, adverbs or the designation of negative attributes³⁰¹. For instance the title itself evaluates negatively bigotry and hate speech by stating that they are a problem. The text also use attributes in the form of adjectives to evaluate the alt-right as a hateful and aggressive group.

Evaluation can also be present in a text through modality,³⁰² modal verbs that reflect a degree of obligation.³⁰³ The text express that Americans *need* to be educated on why social issues matters and why they *should* be tolerant towards people that are different and learn empathy.³⁰⁴

However, as we mentioned, some evaluations are not triggered by an attribute and it is the reader who interprets those evaluation that the authors is expressing implicitly. In the piece under analysis we can interpret that the writer is evaluating nationalism as undesirable and conservative since it is being linked to the alt-right, a group that was already established as undesirable.

In addition, Donald Trump was accused of been part of the “fuel” that has been feeding the hate onlin in contrast of Democrat candidate Hilary Clinton who is seen as the possible solution to the hate problem (see appendix paragraph 8). In this case, Donald Trump represents the conservative nationalistic ideologue while Clinton represents liberal ideology.

More importantly, political correctness is evaluated as desirable implicitly all throughout the article. Firstly by sarcastically acknowledging the critics of PC and at the same time denouncing political incorrectness in the very first line that states “In an age where being politically correct and standing up for social justice are seen as weaknesses, those that are victims of social injustice are often berated with slurs, insults, and threats through social media.”³⁰⁵ Additionally, in paragraph 4 (see appendix) the author denounces some of the cases in which political incorrectness has been present in the social media towards public figures due to their race, sex or sexual orientation.

³⁰¹ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

³⁰² Fairclough, 172.

³⁰³ Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar.”

³⁰⁴ Yaverbaum, “America ’ s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can ’ t Be Ignored.”

³⁰⁵ Yaverbaum.

3.3 Results

As we have shown in our analysis above, the article “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored”, presents a great deal of ideological work and it features characteristics of hegemony and dominance.³⁰⁶

According to what we have analyzed previously, the author’s view of the world, based on his assertions, assumptions, representations and evaluations, is that speech should be regulated in order to avoid hate speech and abuse against victims of social injustice. The latter can be considered as its ideological work, but it can also be seen as hegemonic and dominance work since those views are being universalized and generalized³⁰⁷ and taken as given. The linguistic choices of the author reveal these relations of dominance by declarative statements.³⁰⁸ The lack of modality in the text also reflects that the views expressed by it are taken as facts.

We can relate the ideological work to political correctness ideology since it is the most prominent discourse identified in the text. For instance, the author points out on the importance of speech and its effects on the victims of social injustice and minorities, and defends the regulation of speech in the social media, which correspond to the premises of political correctness.³⁰⁹

The main themes addressed in the piece are also part of the discourse of political correctness. The most evident is the theme of freedom of speech and hate speech since they are concern with language, but other themes are as well shared with political correctness, such as racism, xenophobia, homophobia, bigotry and so on.

Moreover, the text in question contested positions of discourses; the “bad-good guy” or antagonist-protagonist relationship,³¹⁰ between tenants of free speech and those against hate speech, which can be seen as well as actions of dominance due to framing of

³⁰⁶ Sriwimon and Zilli, “Applying Critical Discourse Analysis as a Conceptual Framework for Investigating Gender Stereotypes in Political Media Discourse,” cited in: Gosse, *The Movements of the New Left 1950-1975*; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, “Discourse in Late Modernity Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis -.”

³⁰⁷ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 58.

³⁰⁸ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

³⁰⁹ HOOVER and HOWARD, “The Political Correctness Controversy Revisited”; Moller, “Dilemmas of Political Correctness.”

³¹⁰ Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*, 54.

positions.³¹¹ The lexical choices to frame the alt-right and groups against abuse reflect a work of dominance between “decent human beings”³¹² and “aggressive conservative groups”³¹³

Finally, another trace of dominance work in the text is reflected in the use of modality of necessity. The author plays the role of an expert, proscribing what it needed or should be done.³¹⁴ In this case, the author uses a declarative mood to engage in commands addressed not only to Twitter but also to America as a whole. The idea that the writer intends to impose is that bigotry and hate are a problem in America that needs to be solved by regulation and education. The latter is especially of a dominance type by not using modality and by being expressed together with statements of fact.

In conclusion, the case we have analyzed features strong ideological work aimed at legitimization of ideologies, hegemony and dominance.

³¹¹ Chouliaraki and Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*.

³¹² Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

³¹³ Yaverbaum.

³¹⁴ Halliday and Matthiessen M.I.M, “An Introduction to Functional Grammar”; Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse, Textual Analysis for Social Research*.

4 The interpretation of research results in the light of Peace theory

We have reviewed the literature in political correctness and we have also analyzed a representation of its discourse during the 2016 US elections through Critical Discourse Analysis. This has provided us with a closer look to the PC phenomenon; that is, what are its aims, what are its mechanisms. In this section, we will compare the results of our text analysis with the theory of peace and violence by Johan Galtung in order to identify how political correctness in the 2016 elections can be understood from the peace studies perspective.

Before comparing the CDA results with the theory, it is worth acknowledging the common ground between Critical Discourse Analysis and Galtung's Theory of Peace in what concerns language and discourse. First, both approaches recognized the importance of language, in the case of CDA as an important part of social life and social practices, and in peace theory as an element of a culture that can serve to legitimize culture or peace. The last point is also shared by Critical Discourse Analysis where discourse, meaning a particular way to use language, is a tool to legitimize ideologies and exercise power and dominance.³¹⁵

As we have noted before, according to peace theory, language, as an element of culture, can legitimize peace or violence.³¹⁶ This is concerned to what type of actions and values represents and justifies as "the normal". However, from a CDA perspective, discourse not only represents the world, it also can enact it through speech acts.³¹⁷ Therefore, we need to compare PC and peace theory regarding not only what that discourse represents, but also what is doing discursively.

According to the text analysis carried in this paper, the article "America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored"³¹⁸ presents the characteristics of political correctness. Therefore, the text analysis result will be used as our data to compare political correctness and the premises of peace theory.

³¹⁵ Wodak, "What CDA Is about—a Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments."; Van Dijk, "Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction."

³¹⁶ Galtung, "Cultural Violence."

³¹⁷ Chouliaraki and Fairclough, *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*.; Chouliaraki and Fairclough, "Discourse in Late Modernity Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis -."

³¹⁸ Yaverbaum, "America's Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can't Be Ignored."

We will start with the values that are represented in our political correctness case study. According to our text analysis to the HuffPost article the author engages in evaluation of what is desirable and what is undesirable based on values assumptions. Some of these evaluations were explicit, by using adverbs or by framing, but some other evaluations were implicit and required a work of interpretation for the part of the reader. According to what is desirable and undesirable, we find that the majority of the values and themes promoted by this case of political correctness, are of a culture of peace which are tolerance, empathy, morality, caring and awareness.

One of the main values that is openly framed as desirable is empathy. In the text the author urged for the need to learn empathy in the United States. In this case, it refers to empathy for people different from ourselves in terms of religion, ethnicity, race and sexual orientation.³¹⁹ Galtung also stresses the importance of empathy in a culture of peace and he attributes empathy to the female mind.³²⁰ Moreover, Galtung stresses the role of empathy as a practice that can prevent violence and as a tool for conflict transformation, and similar to the article, urges for more education based on empathy.³²¹

Some other values that are classified in the text as undesirable are values related to violence, therefore, in rejecting them, the author engage in prioritizing values of a culture of peace. In contrast, the text represents as undesirable hate speech, conservative ideology, bigotry, transphobia, homophobia, xenophobia, violence, abuse, misogyny, sexism, racism, nationalism. Apart from conservative ideology, the rest of the elements emulate what Galtung describe as direct and structural violence, what it means is that the discourse in question is categorically against direct and structural violence.

Moreover, in the work “Positive and negative peace”, Galtung and Fischer sustained that in order to build structural peace such structure should be based on values of “reciprocity, equal rights, benefits and dignity.”³²² In addition, in his most recent work Galtung incorporates to the theory some new values, which in the case for peace are depolarization and empathy. We have addressed the case of empathy above and concluded that PC is based on this value. However, taking into consideration the results of our analysis, we can actually agree that political correctness does not align with the value of depolarization

³¹⁹ Yaverbaum.

³²⁰ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 40.

³²¹ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*; Galtung and Fischer, *Johan Galtung, Pioneer of Peace Research*, 44.

³²² Galtung and Fischer, “Positive and Negative Peace.”

since it is actually working in a structure of “good vs bad” dynamic in which views of the world are being contested and those not aligning with those views are seen as the enemy. Galtung also points out that while committing to certain set of values it is necessary to achieve a culture of peace, a maximum of values in such discourse is not recommended in order to not cross the fine line existing between education and indoctrination.³²³

Furthermore, bigotry and hate seems to be the main topics of the article, topics that are portrayed as problems that need to be solved, and this goes in line with Galtung’s premises. Bigotry refers to intolerance towards people different to oneself³²⁴, Galtung calls these Self-Other gradients. Therefore, intolerance is part of structural violence and its opposite would be tolerance, the capacity, as Galtung points out, “to see Self in Other and Other in Self.”³²⁵ This is similar to the last paragraphs as the author calls for education on “why social issues matter, why they should care about people that look, worship, or love differently than them,”³²⁶

There are also parallelisms between political correctness discourse used in the article and peace theories views on nationalism. Both consider nationalism as a negative practice, in the text it is associated to the “hateful army of the “alt-right” - an aggressive group of conservative racist nationalists.”³²⁷ In a similar manner, Galtung’s relates nationalism with direct and structural violence³²⁸, which is the excuse use by nation-state countries to justify war.³²⁹

Moving forward, the text feature some attitudes related to violence. Remembering that discourse could act in the form of speech acts, it can demand, ask, offers etc. political correctness, represented here by the article of the HuffPost, and features some characteristics of hegemony and dominance. The text, by using statements and assumption and evaluations based on value assumptions, it tries to influence the reader by ideological work, The ideology here being that freedom of speech does not justify hate, that speech is important and that America should be more empathic. According to Galtung, violence can occur under a system of influencer and an influenced person, in his words; “Thus, a person can be influenced not

³²³ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 14.

³²⁴ Merriam-Webster.com., “Bigotry.”

³²⁵ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 46.

³²⁶ Merriam-Webster.com., “Bigotry.”

³²⁷ Merriam-Webster.com.

³²⁸ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, 60.

³²⁹ Galtung, 228.

only by punishing him when he does what the influencer considers wrong, but also by rewarding him when he does what the influencer considers right.”³³⁰

Moreover, the text also reflects features of a culture of violence in terms of morality. The insistence of morality and moral beings it is a property for justification of violence. Morality related to self-writiouness and with a sense of moral superiority, it may be used to discredit others, demoralize them, or to even justify violence.³³¹

The political correctness discourse featured in our sample it presents both peaceful and violent features according to peace theory. As Johan Galtung point out, not everything is dichotomies good and evil, there can be violence in peace and peace in violence.³³² We can conclude that the use of political correctness in the analyzed text is a discursive practice that forms parts of culture that can be identified as a culture of peace since it promotes values and attitudes of direct and structural peace. However, it also features elements of direct violence by itself since verbal violence is considered as direct violence, “violence of the mind” according to peace theory.³³³ The genre and style of the discourse of political correctness in our case study also feature actions related to violence such as evaluations based on value-assumptions, contesting ideologies, without leaving space for other voices or dialogue and imposing an ideology based on liberal values. Moreover, we have founded that political correctness in the article analyzed while it is promoting a culture of peace, it does so by acts of hegemony and dominance and, according to Galtung, “that imposition of a culture would already be direct violence-against identity.”³³⁴

³³⁰ Galtung, “VIOLENCE, PEACE, AND PEACE RESEARCH*,” 170.

³³¹ Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

³³² Galtung, 16.

³³³ Galtung and Fischer, *Johan Galtung, Pioneer of Peace Research*, 11.

³³⁴ Galtung, “Cultural Violence,” 291.

5 Suggestions

For political correctness:

Political correctness has shown, in the case study in the present thesis, to feature elements of a culture of peace, it promotes respect, tolerance, empathy and it fights against hate speech, bigotry and abuse. Nevertheless, despite political correctness's good intentions, the criticism towards PC language is growing every day. The reach of this has migrated to the political sphere and anti-political correctness has become the slogan of many far-right politicians, including Donald Trump.

We argue that the reason behind the critics of political correctness is its approach, its speech acts related to repression, censorship and a sense of self-righteousness and moral superiority, the same characteristics that we have found are considered as cultural and structural violence by peace theory.³³⁵

Political correctness, and other cultures or languages of peace need to be more aware of how they approach their aims since, as Johan Galtung has stressed out, an imposed culture is close to indoctrination³³⁶. The imposition of a politically correct language has actually pushed groups towards open demonstrations of hate speech and it has shown to be counterproductive.³³⁷

While political correctness stresses the importance of speech and how we address and represent minority groups, its tactics might seem repressive. People practicing political correctness, as in the case of the article studied in this thesis, tend to take the position of experts, almost lecturing those that does not engage in inclusive language. Tolerance should be as well directed at those with different views of the world and dialogue should be open.

For peace studies:

The literature on peace and violence is limited regarding language and peace and most of the work on the area is aimed at a language of war and violence and its effects. Little study

³³⁵ Galtung, "Cultural Violence"; Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means : Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*.

³³⁶ Galtung, "Cultural Violence," 291.

³³⁷ Tumulty and Johnson, "Why Trump May Be Winning the War on 'Political Correctness.'"

have been aimed at a language of peace or discourses of peace; what are its characteristics, how can it succeed without following in cultural engineering.

Moreover, Critical Discourse Analysis could be of great significance in the field, especially by analyzing discourse and its effects on culture from a peace perspective. It could reveal the ideologies behind discourse in order to identify if they are legitimizing peace or violence. As we have proven in our analysis, the latter is not always evident, there could be elements of peace and violence in discourses and identifying them could be of great significance to peace studies.

6 Conclusion

This master thesis analyzed political correctness during the 2016 US presidential elections under the lenses of peace theory. Critical Discourse Analysis was used as methodology to analyze the political correctness discourse in order to compare the results with the literature in peace theory. The objective was to identify the aspects of political correctness from our case study that correspond to a culture of peace or a culture of violence.

Moreover, this master thesis attempted to answer the following research questions:

How can the topics, values and discursive actions of the political correctness discourse be classified under Peace Theory?

The Critical Discourse Analysis has shown that the political correctness discourse, represented in the text “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored”³³⁸, during the US presidential election has topics and values of a culture of peace. Nevertheless, it also proved 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.

The topics and values identified as legitimizing a culture of peace in the article analyzed are: empathy, tolerance, the rejection of violence, bigotry, sexism, racism, nationalism, abuse and hate speech. The discourse of political correctness during the elections was characterized by a call to society to stop bigotry and hate speech. On the other hand, in the same discourse, it was found elements of direct and structural violence such as attitudes of indoctrination, imposition of an ideology and hegemony and dominance work.

These results showed the complexity of the phenomenon of political correctness that was also present in the literature review. Praised by many and criticized by even more, PC hasn’t been an opaque topic. Lately the criticism have grown, the selection of the corpus has demonstrated that the majority of articles related to the topic were aimed to scrutinize the excessive police of political correctness. The academic field has also focused on denouncing the attitudes of censorship and the ridiculous changes PC wants to impose in the use of language. All these critics have been for the most part one-dimensional and based in personal

³³⁸ Yaverbaum, “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored.”

ideologies and anecdotes. Actually the literature review shows that there is no empirical research on the subject, and its study has only taken place in debate format.

The empirical data presented in this thesis prove that in our case study, political correctness is more than just imposing a code language, it is in itself a culture of peace. At the same time, it has proven that many of the critics of the ways political correctness operates are accurate; censorship, imposition, and ideological work. These results, more than justifying a position in the PC debate, could be seen as a step to move forward from criticism to research that centers on a language of peace that effectively promotes and legitimize peace and rejects all form of violence.

Despite its good intentions in promoting an inclusive and tolerant way of speaking, political correctness have actually divided America and pushed many to fall into public verbal abuse and hate speech. Looking at the elements that have caused the failure of political correctness to be a culture of peace can be of great significance in order to research and develop discourses of peace. Indeed, more emphasis should be put in the role of language in social change and in building peace.

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Appendix

Transcript of “America’s Bigotry and Hate Speech Problem Can’t Be Ignored” By Eric Yaverbaum

1. In an age where being politically correct and standing up for social justice are seen as weaknesses, those that are victims of social injustice are often berated with slurs, insults, and threats through social media. Twitter, which considers itself the “free speech wing of the free speech party,” has come under fire from both ends of the political spectrum (for simultaneously doing too much and too little to police hate speech on its platform).

2. This summer, conservative writer Milo Yiannopoulos’ attacks on SNL and Ghostbusters 2016 star Leslie Jones were well documented. While Twitter decided to permanently ban Yiannopoulos for his racist and sexist comments against Jones, this response did little to slow down the hateful army of the “alt-right” - an aggressive group of conservative racist nationalists. Those informed on the incident regardless of political leaning will tell you that removing abusers and instigators like Yiannopoulos is not enough to stop hate speech. While the alt-right rally behind those like Yiannopoulos - decrying that Twitter is no longer a beacon of free speech - most decent human beings plead with Twitter to do more to combat the pervasive and overtly racist and misogynistic hate speech that runs rampant on its platform.

3. Twitter has said that it is committed to updating its software to both detect abuse and make reporting it easier. The problem is, Twitter’s abuse system already relies too much on reporting from its users, and most people feel that Twitter does not do enough when abuse actually is reported. Indeed, previous Twitter updates have done little to remedy the situation and have even been criticized for minimizing the seriousness of online abuse by seemingly portraying it as nothing more than a minor annoyance. Twitter’s “Rules” state that “You may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or disease.” While the policy itself sounds like a step in the right direction, with no concrete enforcements, it amounts to nothing more than mere words.

4. Public divisiveness is common for election years, but the 2016 election (complete with a reality star and real-estate tycoon leading a campaign of hate and fear-mongering) has added plenty more fuel to this dumpster fire of an online political landscape. Indeed, the past year has been one marred by disturbingly racist, xenophobic, sexist, misogynistic, homophobic, and transphobic attacks, much of which found its footing on Twitter. It was on Twitter where Leslie Jones was berated with abhorrently racist and misogynistic attacks simply for having the gall to be a successful black woman. Twitter was also home to the racist attacks hurled at 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick for the apparent crime of bringing attention to our country’s institutionalized racism and our severe need to reevaluate how black men and women are treated in America. Twitter also served as host for racially-charged hatred spewed at Malia Obama (for being a black woman who was accepted in Harvard), antisemitic threats and images tweeted at a New York Times Editor, and of

course violent misogyny and rape threats directed at not only a feminist columnist for The Guardian, but at her 5-year old daughter as well. The hatred taking root on Twitter is abundant and seemingly unending - just this past week, Anderson Cooper (the first openly gay moderator of a presidential debate) was bombarded with homophobic insults and slurs on Twitter. And that's just a small handful of some of the year's more high-profile cases - these incidents represent a very small number of the never-ending hatred that seems to run rampant on Twitter. It can be very difficult to express any facet of a liberal opinion online, let alone dare to be a person of color, a woman, a non-Christian, or a member of the LGBTQA community. Even the most benign and seemingly apolitical tweets run the risk of opening oneself up to hatred, abuse, and even threats of physical violence.

5. It's clear, Twitter needs to effectively address its hate speech problem. It should go without saying, but the alleged preservation of free speech cannot be used to justify pure and unadulterated hatred and bigotry (i.e., free speech ought not permit unmitigated abuse and threats). Indeed, spewing hatred and threats of violence in order to silence the opinions of others is in itself antithetical to the very tenets of free speech (and anyone claiming to support free speech while using it to silence others is both a hypocrite and a danger to meaningful dialogue and free and open expression itself).

6. Aside from an appeal for basic moral decency, although Twitter likes to portray itself as a haven for free expression, it is a private company that can quite frankly limit speech however it sees fit - it has no obligation whatsoever to protect free speech. Everyone who uses Twitter must first agree to its terms of service, which despite widespread misconceptions and a gross lack of comprehension of the application of The Bill of Rights, are not in any way bound by the First Amendment (which only protects the right to articulate opinions and ideas without fear of government reprisal and prohibits the enacting of any law that would interfere with that right). Let me just say this again for those in the back - the First Amendment applies to the government and its enactment of laws, not individuals, not private companies. Twitter can therefore create its own rules regarding hate speech. That said, if Twitter wants to continue to be a platform where anyone can freely express their views, then it actually ought to start standing by its users and seriously reevaluate how it handles hate speech (and particularly those users who launch assaults, join in on attacks, and threaten others for simply speaking their mind). Indeed, if Twitter continues to allow unrestricted hate speech to permeate its platform, then it will undoubtedly fail to be the free speech mecca it claims to be. With it continuing to prioritize hateful abuse over those actually being abused (for simply trying to express their ideas), it should come as no surprise that many are leaving Twitter altogether.

7. Although 2016 has borne witness to a critical mass of bigotry and hate speech (with much of it festering on Twitter), it's important to remember that this is not limited to Twitter and is not a new issue, nor is it one that will simply slip back under the surface and fade into irrelevancy. If there is one thing the past year has made abundantly clear, it's that our attitudes toward one another need a massive overhaul. Speech is never just speech - it's unfortunately an accurate reflection of the longstanding and deep-seated hatred and violence that still pervades our society (i.e., deeply-ingrained racism, sexism, misogyny, xenophobia, homophobia, and transphobia).

8. Hatred underlies the prevailing attitudes of millions of Americans. While many of us may have been able to comfortably dismiss our country's rampant bigotry as a problem of the past and nothing more than the views of a few backwards individuals, that is no longer an option any moral actor can take. Hillary Clinton may be leading by double digits in the polls and might be guaranteed victory this November, but the Trump campaign has irrevocably emboldened and amplified a once whispered bigotry into one that is shouted and impossible to drown out. The toxicity (the deeply disturbing and most hateful qualities of our nation) has risen from the depths to the surface, and we simply cannot go back to pretending it does not exist. We need to deal with it.

9. We need to educate Americans on why social issues matter, why they should care about people that look, worship, or love differently than them, and we desperately need to learn empathy as a nation.