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POLITICALLY CORRECT LANGUAGE AND ITS INFLUENCE

ON POLITICAL SUCCESS

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Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my original work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

České Budějovice, 5th December 2022

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Viktória Onderková

Anotácia

Politická korektnosť (PC language) ako súčasť politického diskurzu je neprehliadnuteľným rysom modernej rétoriky. Taktiež je jedným z faktorov ovplyvňujúcich úspešnosť politikov v očiach spoločnosti. Cieľom tejto bakalárskej práce bude analyzovať prítomnosť politickej korektnosti v politickom prejave, a vzťah medzi popularitou konkrétnych politikov a ich prácou s politicky korektným jazykom pri verejných prejavoch či vystúpeniach. Tento vzťah bude overovaný koreláciou medzi používaním konkrétnych výrazov považovaných za politicky korektné či nekorektné, a výsledkami verejných prieskumov preferencií. Náš výskum bude zameraný na prezidentské voľby v USA v roku 2016. Na základe tejto skutočnosti a predchádzajúceho výskumu sme sformulovali hypotézu ktorá predpokladá, že čím viac používa politik politicky korektný jazyk, tým horšie výsledky získa v prieskumoch preferencií spoločnosti. Súčasťou tejto práce bude aj vysvetlenie pojmu politická korektnosť, jeho historický vývoj, a vplyv na spoločnosť a politickú situáciu dneška.

Kľúčové slová: politicky korektný jazyk (PC language), jazyková norma, jazykový vývoj, diskriminácia, eufemizmus

Abstract

The phenomenon of political correctness (PC) in political discourse is undeniably one of the signature characteristics of modern rhetoric. It also falls among the factors which influence political success in the eyes of the public. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to analyse how often politically correct language appears in political discourse and the correlation between the popularity of particular politicians and how they use politically correct language during public appearances. This correlation will be studied by analysing the concrete use of politically correct and incorrect language and its impact on public popularity polls. Our research will primarily focus on the 2016 United States presidential elections. Due to this circumstance and previous research, we propose a hypothesis, which says that the more a politician uses politically correct language, the worse their results in general popularity polls get. This thesis will also include the definition of the term politically correct, its evolution throughout history and its influence on society and today's political situation.

Key terms: politically correct language (PC language), language norm, language evolution, discrimination, euphemism

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1. Introduction

Political correctness is a multifaceted concept which has notably impacted modern politics. This thesis will attempt to examine it from various points of view, but it will predominantly focus on its impact on the political discourse of the current day. To carry out the investigation, we will use data from the highly controversial 2016 United States presidential election. We shall focus mainly on its most contentious candidates - Donald John Trump and Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton. The reason for this is that they distinctly represent the two opposing sides of the politically correct spectrum, ideologically and linguistically.

Before proceeding to the data analysis, we shall dive deeper into the concept of political correctness itself. Starting with the introduction of the mindset by discussing its political and linguistic peculiarities, we will attempt to create an all-encompassing definition of the term. Next, we will delve into the history of political correctness and discuss its first appearance, its presence all around the world, and its metamorphosis from an egalitarian philosophy to a highly censoring and language-policing movement of the modern libertarian leftist ideology. We will also discuss the frequent disagreements between the supporters of the politically correct language and its adversaries.

The basic framework of the practical analysis of data will consist of listing instances when the candidates in debates used politically correct and incorrect language during their public appearances and how those significant statements influenced the popularity polls conducted at the closest following date. We shall also briefly include potential reactions in the mainstream media and culture to the political debates and the language mentioned in them.

Based on our present knowledge, we propose a hypothesis for this thesis as follows - the more a politician uses politically correct language, the lower their popularity with the general public is.

2. What Is Political Correctness

2.1. Term Definition

Even though the term *politically correct* is widely used in today's discourse and is perceived as universally understood, it is often not the case. To truly grasp the meaning of the term and its peculiarities, we will attempt to synthesise various definitions of the term provided by dictionaries and scholars to create a comprehensive all-encompassing definition.

The most basic definition of *politically correct* is provided by the Oxford Dictionary of New Words, which describes it as follows: "Conformity to a body of liberal or radical opinion on social matters, characterized by the advocacy of approved views and the rejection of language and behaviours considered discriminatory or offensive" (Knowles and Elliott 239). This definition denotes the term as a mindset and practice of altering oneself to fit within the idea of political correctness and implies the existence of norms, which the followers of the mindset must abide by. Unfortunately, it does not dive deeper into the specifics - neither the nature of the offensive language nor the identity of those, who invented and popularised the movement concerned with fighting against its use. On the other hand, the full dictionary entry offers more information about a common abbreviation of political correctness - *PC*. "The abbreviation *PC* for both *politically correct* and *political correctness* has been widely used in the [nineteen] nineties, almost always ironically or pejoratively, and its derivatives *PC-ery* (modelled on such depreciatory nouns as quackery and popery) and *PC-ness* have been recorded. To be *non-PC* is frequently considered a positive attribute" (Knowles and Elliott 239). Via this excerpt, we further observe connotations to certain political movements, namely those situated on the left side of the political compass. Further explanation of the political spectrum and its connection to the topic of political correctness shall be elaborated upon further

in this thesis. In regard to the abbreviations themselves - in this essay, we will mainly use the full form of the term, but on some occasions, we shall also use its abbreviated version.

To delve deeper and discover which behaviours and views can be considered questionable, we shall investigate the definitions by scholars. According to Melnikova and Guslyakova, “*PC* is a cultural and behavioural and linguistic trend aimed to replace established terms that could hurt the feelings and dignity of an individual with emotionally neutral and/or positive euphemisms” (3). To more precisely identify the social groups which could be offended by non-politically correct language, we shall look at the definition of the term proposed by Monashnenko et al., “*Political correctness* ... is based on a very approving desire not to offend, not to touch a person's feelings, to preserve the dignity and good mood. This is achieved through the inadmissibility of the derogatory mentions of physical or mental disabilities of the third parties, their racial, religious or national affiliation, gender equality in public and private life, measures against sexual harassment at work, as well as the prevention of contempt, derogatory remarks and aggressive attacks on address those people who consider themselves sexual minorities, if their behavior does not go beyond the law” (149). To understand the goal of using politically correct language, we will look at Ben O'Neill's work, which claims that using replacement terms has two distinct goals. Namely, that “it reduces the social acceptability of using offensive terms” and “...discourages the reflexive use of words that import a negative stereotype, thereby promoting conscious thinking about how to describe others fairly on their merits” (Ben O’Neil 280). Finally, to discover who is perpetuating political correctness as a practice and movement, we look to Hutton and his definition, which states that “*Political correctness* is one of the brilliant tools that the American Right developed in the mid-1980s as part of its demolition of American liberalism” (para. 6).

By studying all these definitions, we can create a full-spectrum definition which will be used as an unshakeable base for this thesis. *Political correctness* is a social, cultural, and

political movement which was popularised mainly by the political movements of the liberal left and is mostly observed in the Western world, primarily the United States of America. Its goal is to minimise any potential offence via the use of terms which carry negative connotations to specific social groups. These marginalised groups include the groups frequently exposed to discrimination (cultural, racial, religious, and sexual minorities; women), the groups which have been marked by unpleasant physical and mental circumstances (the physically and mentally disabled, the poor, those suffering with uncurable diseases and those affected by social vices) and those, who do not fit the physical standards of attractiveness preferred by society (according to their height, weight, age or appearance). The main strategy of political correctness to minimise and condemn the use of negative terminology is the implementation of linguistic substitution of commonly used offensive terms with new terms, which carry either neutral or positive connotations at the time of the substitution being made.

2.2. Similar Terms

Throughout the many years during which the concept of political correctness developed, it had not exclusively carried the label *political correctness*. As it is common in the field of humanities, politology and linguistics it carries various labels used by different scholars. Here we shall introduce the two most popular ones - *self-censorship* and *conformity*.

2.2.1. *Self-Censorship*

The term *self-censorship* implies that individuals themselves censor their potentially politically incorrect mindset and vocabulary to fit within the rules of political correctness. These rules must be drafted and put into use by a figure of authority. Thus, we can establish a relationship between a censor and a censee. According to Cook and Heilmann, "*self-censorship* ... means that individuals internalise some aspects of the public censor and then

censor themselves” (179). To be more exact, censors wield authority over the appropriateness of terms and thus create societal and linguistic norms. Censees obey these norms by imposing restrictions on their thinking and speech. The reason for such conduct is to either avoid offending marginalised groups genuinely or to blend into society in order not to be punished for not following the widely accepted social norms. Cook and Heilmann also distinguish between self-censorship performed in public and in private. *Public self-censorship* is observed in settings where there is an external censor present, thus the speaker may openly face scrutiny if they do not follow the established norms. In this case, other participants of self-censorship may hold the position of censors and are free to openly criticise those who disobey the norms. *Private self-censorship* implies that external censors are not present. Thus, the censees are left to decide for themselves whether their beliefs and vocabulary are acceptable to be expressed or not and whether they wish to obey the norms even under such circumstances (179).

It shall be also mentioned that the nature of the concept of censors is rooted in the existence of political dictatorships past and present, such as Soviet Russia, Communist China, and North Korea, in which the censorship of not only media but public thought in general, was and is one of the main means of supervising and restraining of the population. Due to this fact, a deeper look into cases of public self-censorship reveals that the other censees assume the role of censors themselves rather quickly. It is due to the collective guilt mindset established and enforced by the state - the ultimate censor. Thus, to avoid persecution, the censees censor the other citizens/conversational participants.

2.2.2. *Conformity*

The idea of *conformity* is very similar to the concepts of *political correctness* and *self-censorship*. Still, it could work as an umbrella term for the general obedience to social norms proposed by various social groups, not only those who perpetuate the ideology of political

correctness. Conformity to any ideology falls under this term, it is not exclusive to the teachings and norms perpetuated by the liberal left.

If understood as a synonym for *political correctness*, it is often associated with censorship in the academic setting and the suppression of specific schools of thought which strive to question the widely perpetuated and accepted ideas. As Williams claims, “the creation of a culture of intellectual conformity within academia prevents the checks and balances upon research that emerge from discussion with colleagues who do not share the same political outlook or value framework” (79). This directly implies that politics exude influence on academia, which should ideally stay unbiased to motivate general research and progress in all fields. *Academic censorship* leads to the creation of a politically correct research culture on academic soil which inherently restricts itself, hinders research and censors potential intellectual breakthroughs.

3. “Politics” in Political Correctness

3.1. Essential Terms

Since this thesis is heavily reliant on quite extensive knowledge of the world’s political systems, we have taken the liberty of including a full chapter concerned with introducing the reader to the issue at hand. In the following paragraphs, we shall include a rather simplistic description of political systems along with their various nuances necessary for the proper understanding required by this thesis, specifically focusing on the issue of social equality.

3.1.1. *Politics*

The term *politics* is quite difficult to define, mainly due to its definitions altering and expanding throughout millennia. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics defines it as the “Practice of the art or science of directing and administrating states or other political units” (McLean and McMillan 417). We may identify a few of the spheres which require such administration as the following: distribution of resources, natural or human; establishing and upholding power relations between individuals and groups alike; allocation of responsibilities to individuals, groups, and governing bodies; decision-making; etc.

McLean and McMillan continue their definition by stating, “Politics applies only to human beings, or at least those beings which can communicate symbolically and thus make statements, invoke principles, argue, and disagree. Politics occurs where people disagree [...] and have at least some procedures for the resolution of such disagreements. It is thus not present in the state of nature where people make war on each other in their own interests, shouting, as it were, ‘I will have that’ rather than ‘I have a right to that. It is also absent in other cases, where there is a monolithic and complete agreement on the rights and duties in a society” (418). By establishing these points, we can list the most prominent means that politics use to achieve a peaceful resolution of disagreements and conflicts. These include pursuing negotiations with

various political subjects, law-making, spreading one's own political beliefs and agenda to the public, and protecting its subject of interest by exercising sovereignty, either ideological or physical.

The history of politics can be traced back to bygone times, and locations such as Ancient Greece, India, and China. The most notable contemporary thinkers and their works establishing the concept of politics include *Republic* by Plato and *Politics* by his student Aristotle, *Arthashastra* by Chanakya, and Confucius's various manuscripts. Many later philosophers and political scientists trace their ideas back to these works, retaining at least some link to theories of the days long gone.

3.1.2. *Political Party*

Politics may be exercised on many social levels, from the smallest communities to international governing agencies. In modern times, political parties most often represent and act upon politics. *Political parties* are organisations whose main goals are to associate individuals with similar outlooks on various political issues, choose and coordinate their representatives to spread the parties' ideas to the general public, and run for office in elections.

The governing system of competing political parties has established itself as the most popular one worldwide, following its spread, initiated from the European continent, over the last couple of centuries. It depends on the various parties cooperating to govern a state. The alternative to this *multi-party* system is the *single-party* governmental system, which grants a single party the right to form a functioning government. The leading party in such a system may attempt to secure its position of power through unlawful means, such as limiting the effect of democratic elections by manipulating attendance or the results, or by outright banning them. The most well-known examples of single-party governments which demonstrate such power-manipulating tactics include the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic

of Korea, and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. We shall stress that a multi-party system may resemble a single-party one if one of the political parties of the state becomes overwhelmingly powerful. Such a situation calls for a term *dominant-party* system. It is exceedingly rare for a modern state to have a *nonpartisan* national governmental system, but some examples of such states include Oceania's Federal States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, and Tuvalu, which follow this system de facto, and Persian Gulf's State of Kuwait and Sultanate of Oman, following the system de jure.

3.1.3. *Political Ideology*

A *political ideology*, as used in the field of social studies, is a particular ethical set of ideals, principles, beliefs, myths, or tokens of a social movement, institution, class, or large group that describes how society should function and provides some sort of political and cultural blueprint for a particular social order. The economy and trade, education, health care, labour law, the justice system and criminal law, the provision of social security and social welfare, protection of minors, the environment, immigration, race, the use of the military, patriotism, and established religions are just a few examples of the many facets of society with which political ideologies are concerned. Some political parties subscribe closely to a single ideology, while others choose to gather inspiration from various ideologies and create their own compound ideology, but not express exclusive association to any of the source ones. Parties usually choose to spread their beliefs to the general public via their representatives. Some representatives may become faces of the ideologies at hand not only for the state's population but internationally as well.

3.1.4. *Political Spectrum*

All political ideologies are composed of two main components: aims, which illustrate the ideal structure of society; and means, which describe the best approach to achieve an

agreeable result. How an ideology chooses to present its aims and enact its means can be studied, classified, and help allocate the given ideology's place on a political spectrum.

A political spectrum is a system which characterises all political ideologies, compares them to one another, and allocates their position in a grand scope of politics. This placement is most often graphically showcased by physically placing an ideology into either a single-axis or multi-axis graph often called a *political compass* or a *political map*. In our thesis, we will mostly operate with the multi-axis political compass, since the single axis is often regarded as incomplete, and thus inaccurate.

The origin of the single-axis model of the political spectrum can be traced back to the physical spectrum of the National Assembly of France in the 18th century. At the time, France was facing the beginning of the French Revolution and the storming of the Bastille in 1789, so the political priority was the completion of its new constitution. The main issue at hand was how much political power would be allocated to its main representative, the king. The main policy in question was whether the king should possess the right to an absolute veto. Seating arrangements of political members in the National Assembly were allocated to which side of the argument they supported, so the more conservative politicians who believed that the king should have such a right were seated at the right side of the assembly hall, and the liberal-leaning ones who disagreed and did not wish to grant the king such a right sat on the left side. This pattern of seating repeated itself for the future legislatures and became commonplace not only in France but in other states as well. Due to the newspaper reporters frequently referring to the groups of politicians according to their seating positions, for example, “the ones on the left” or “the right-seated ones”, the terms *political right and left* became synonymous with the identification of political ideas and ideologies. These terms have begun to spread across the world and by the time of Russia's Bolshevik Revolution at the start of the 20th century, they became a common occurrence in the vocabulary of the masses.

In the 1950s the single-axis map began to slowly retire due to its rather simplistic portrayal of the political spectrum, and new models of the political spectrum started to come around. As Cox writes, “ Leonard Ferguson and Hans Eysenck independently showed that a two-dimensional graph gave a better view of the spectrum of political beliefs, with one axis being left-wing vs right-wing, and the other authoritarian vs libertarian” (para. 1). These two axes create a political compass divided into 4 quadrants, into which we may place political ideologies into. Other scientists have also proposed their takes on the two-dimensional political compass and proposed other dimensions, which would determine the ideology's placement in it. However, the modern, and most popular, double-axis political compass included below is based on Eysenck’s work on determining political personalities.

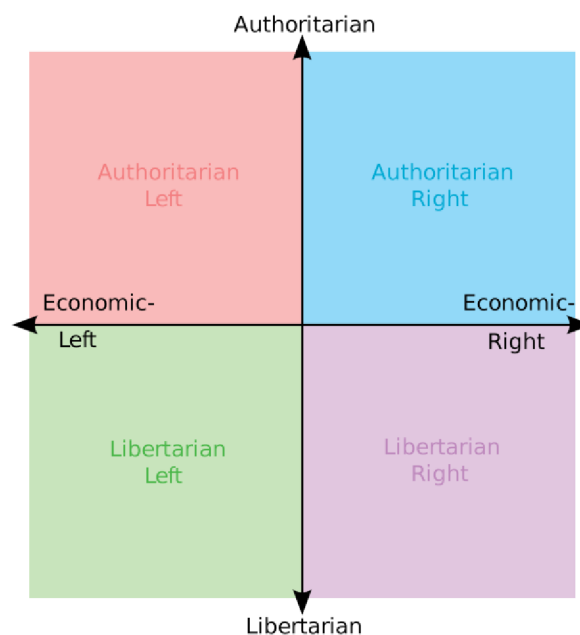


Image no.1 - The Standard Political Compass

To better illustrate what these axes represented, we shall denote their functions a bit more simplistically. The horizontal axis, also known as the X-axis, symbolises how an ideology views the position and role of government in a state. The more *authoritarian*, regulatory, and pro-government an ideology is, the more north of the centre point we locate it. The more *libertarian*, pro-freedom, and pro-individual it is, the farther south of the centre point it lays.

The Y-axis represents the same social scale as the one in the single-axis model. On the other hand, the vertical axis, also known as the X-axis, illustrates the economic scale of the compass, i.e., how an ideology handles money and social issues. If an ideology places more east of the centre point, it places a high value on privacy and exclusion of outsiders, and on individuals maintaining their accumulated wealth, and it is considered to be *right-wing*. The further west from the centre point an ideology places, the more *left-wing* it is, and thus favours ideas of distribution of money to masses, pro-social policies, and social acceptance. It is necessary to mention that this two-axis graph is not a perfect tool, since some ideologies may show up close to each other or even in the same place of the compass if we attempt to isolate and judge an ideology's stances on an issue taken out of context of the rest of the ideological makeup. Thus, a complex analysis of ideology from various angles is necessary to accurately locate it on the political compass.

Aside from the single and double-axis compass models, there exist some alternative compasses, such as the Cartesian graph, known also as the Cartesian triangle, which operates with a 3D triple-axis diagram. In our thesis, we will however only refer to the ideologies as placed on the double-axis compass for ease of understanding and terminology usage.

3.2. USA's Main Political Ideologies

As a short reiteration - in the previous subchapter we have established that political ideologies get classified according to how authoritarian or libertarian they are, and by how right-wing or left-wing they lean. And we also know that each political party either works with a single ideology or uses a collection of ideas gathered from various ideologies. In modern times, the latter is usually the case for most world's political parties. This is also the case for the political parties of the United States of America, to which we turn our focus while conducting our research.

We classify the United States as a two-party governmental system, whose Democratic Party and the Republican Party have been the two major political parties since the middle of the 19th century. It is common for these parties to be dominant in certain states of the federation, and to hold that position for decades. We associate these states as either the colour red or blue, the colours being assigned to the Republican and the Democratic party respectively. *Red states* are usually located in the centre of the federation, with the exception of Alaska, while the *blue states* most often lay on the federation's periphery. If a state is neither red nor blue, it is considered a *purple state*, known also as a *swing state*. During every election, the candidates of both parties put great focus on their campaign runs in the swing states to win them over. These terms have been popularised by the presidential elections in the year 2000 and are a part of an American voter's lexicon.

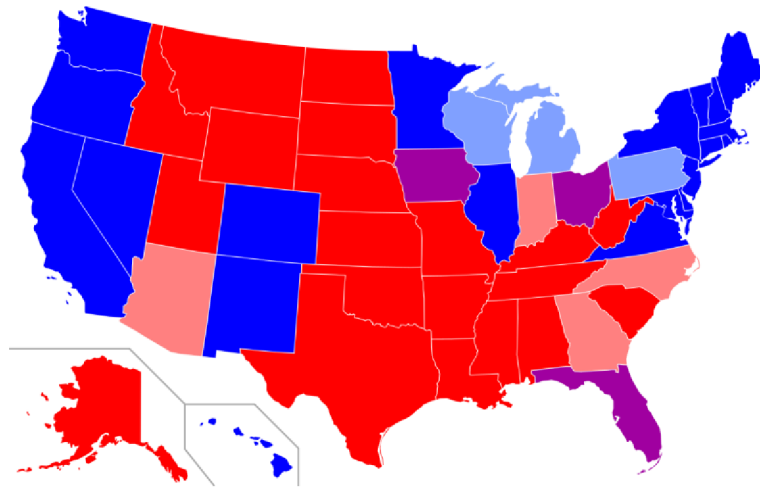


Image no.2 - The State-by-State Summary of the 2008, 2012, 2016, and 2020

Presidential Elections

Even though not common knowledge, other, much smaller political parties operate within the United States of America, but only in some parts of it. For example, Native American nations living within the states have the right to establish their tribal governments and political parties, for example, the Seneca Party of the Seneca Nation. Another example of other political parties operating in a restricted area would be the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and its three

main political parties, which have been dominating the Puerto Rican governmental system since 1952.

When it comes to the Democratic and Republican Parties, *liberalism* and *conservatism* are two popular ideas that are frequently linked to them. Liberal ideology is frequently linked to the Democratic Party, whilst conservative ideology is associated with the Republican Party. Thus, many presume that these ideologies are on the opposite ends of the X-axis inside the political compass. That said, if we look deeper into their purest ideological form and historical data, and search for their original placement in the political compass, we will notice that both are generally agreed to be located very close to each other, within the southernmost section of the upper right quadrant, known as the authoritarian right quadrant. This may be confusing, since even the name liberalism implies that it would be placed to the west, or the left, of the compasses' X-axis. The main reason for the confusion at hand is the continuous development and metamorphosis of ideologies, more so in modern times. Another fact in this matter is that more ideologies can express the same stance on a given isolated issue, as we have previously mentioned.

3.2.1. *Conservatism*

Conservatism's central tenet is the protection of existing institutions, rights, and freedoms, thus institutions and behaviours that provide stability and have developed gradually are typically preferred. Conservatives frequently reject modernism and call for a return to traditional values, such as property ownership, the culture of life, and freedom of religious expression. However, different conservative groups may select different traditional ideals to uphold. The aforementioned rights are expected to be protected by governments, while still keeping the level of personal autonomy high.

Looking specifically at American Conservatism, a few more rights and institutions, which the average conservative wants to preserve for the future enter the list. Some of them include American exceptionalism, traditional binary family values, free trade and pro-business policies, relatively lax gun control, strong national defence, and protection of Western culture in the face of rising multiculturalism. It fiercely opposes non-traditional family structures, same-sex marriage and the option of adoption for such couples, abortion, euthanasia and other progressive social policies. Unfortunately, as we have witnessed over a few decades, an average supporter of American conservatism is prone to not trust scientific authorities when it comes to valid points concerning climate change, evolution, and most recently public health.

Conservatism has many subtypes, like liberal conservatism, national conservatism, social conservatism, progressive conservatism, and many more. To dispel the potential confusion, liberal conservatism is not a mixture of liberal and conservative ideologies, but it rather builds upon traditional conservatism, pushing the ideology towards law and order combined with a greater emphasis on morality.

3.2.2. *Liberalism*

The central principle of liberalism is government-protected individuality, which holds that all citizens are created equal, and that the role of the state is to ensure that they retain their sense of autonomy. Examples of such independence are the freedom of speech, the right to participate in democratic elections and universal protection of the public from crime by the state-run police.

American Liberalism adds a few more points of interest. It specifically expands freedom of speech to the press and general media, fair and equal treatment from the judicial system, the right to due process, and maintaining religious freedoms while separating church and state. To oppose American Conservatism more explicitly, it has also opted to support

women's rights, the rights of various types of minorities, abolishing the death penalty and overhauling the prison system, universal healthcare and access to public housing and transportation, environmentalism, and many more.

Liberalism can also be divided into subtypes, for example, classical liberalism and modern liberalism. Modern liberalism expands the roster of its sympathiser's concerns by including support for same-sex marriages, non-traditional family structures, transgenderism and gender politics in general. Classical liberals on the other hand preach that economic prosperity and the free market take priority over social issues.

4. History of Political Correctness

4.1. Chisholm v. Georgia

The first instance of the application of politically correct principles we discovered during our research was the controversial case of *Chisholm v. Georgia*. This case had a massive impact on the judicial system of the United States of America since it prompted the creation of the Eleventh Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. It was also the first public lawsuit which emphasised the protection of marginalised individuals' interests.

The background of the case is quite straightforward according to today's standards. During the American War of Independence, which took place between the years 1775 and 1783, the state of Georgia purchased war supplies from an individual named Captain Robert Farquhar - a South Carolinian merchant of Scottish origin. The purchase was made on credit, but after the war ended, Georgia refused to pay for the delivered goods. The reason given was that the state of Georgia considered Farquhar a member of the Loyalist group, thus they could not possibly financially compensate an enemy of the state. Farquhar accepted this reasoning and died without ever being reimbursed. However, the executor who took over his estate, a man by the name of Alexander Chisholm, brought the matter to the Supreme Court of the United States. Unfortunately, during this time in history, a lawsuit proposed by a private individual against a state could not be filed on the pretence that extremely simply put, the state could not be a part of a legal lawsuit against itself if it did not consent to take up the position of a defendant. This was the case due to states being granted supreme immunity by the Constitution of the United States. The Supreme Court however disregarded this fact and heard the case of *Chisholm* in the year 1793. It ended up siding with the plaintiff and ruled that Chisholm was to receive the full payment for the goods from the state of Georgia. Unfortunately, the Constitution did not authorise the Supreme Court to hear the case and the

United States Congress overturned the decision. Thus, the Eleventh Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed in 1794 to unequivocally restrict the ability of private citizens to bring states to federal court. It is important to mention that the sovereignty of states was granted in the original version of the Constitution and the Eleventh Amendment was passed to explicitly reiterate this fact.

The principle of political correctness in this lawsuit was applied by the Supreme Court which deemed the fact that Farquhar was discriminated against due to his supposed identification as a British Loyalist, unacceptable. We must say that we did not discover any evidence of him publicly identifying with the movement. Whether he did or did not belong to the Loyalist group, he deserved financial compensation for the goods he sold on credit to the state of Georgia. Thus, under these circumstances, the Loyalists were considered a marginalised group. Even though there was no direct talk of political correctness as we know it today, the situation can be identified as a case of direct application of political correctness as a principle, not as a linguistic practice.

4.2. First Appearances

During the very turbulent period from the 1930s to the 1950s, the term political correctness started slowly creeping into the mainstream, appearing more and more in the writings of many scientists and literary personalities alike. There are instances where it was explicitly named and then scrutinised, but in others, it was simply analysed without using the exact terminology which we have established in earlier chapters. In this section of our thesis, we will examine some of these instances and introduce the presence of political correctness critique not only in the Western world but also in the Old Continent.

The earliest critique of political correctness during this period we discovered arose from Perry and her mention of Krutch, who in 1935 criticised how much the members of academia

at Columbia University insisted on the use of subjectively correct opinions. Krutch claimed that these members of the academia started to radicalise themselves - slowly changing from the Old Left to the New Left (72). The Old Left was a far-reaching political movement heavily influenced by Marxism and Communism, which was mostly focused on labour laws and unions. Its supporters were often blue-collar workers who were not too concerned with political correctness or social justice. We shall talk about the New Left at length in the following subchapter.

The first use of the exact term political correctness, or rather its negative variant, was discovered not in research papers nor journal articles, but in a novel by the prolific Russian author Vladimir Nabokov. He mentioned it in one of his earliest works written fully in the English language, which he had written between the years 1945 and 1946, *Bend Sinister*. The story of the novel revolves around the fictional philosophical movement by the name of ekwilism, which promotes the idea of absolute equality of citizens upheld by the state. The state uses its physical power and intimidation tactics to censor all ideas which could destabilise the regime. The novel includes an excerpt from a fictional state-run newspaper, which states that “some organizations used to be pretty bad and are forbidden today, but nevertheless it is better for a man to have belonged to a politically incorrect organization than not to have belonged to any organization at all” (Nabokov 168). We can safely assume that politically incorrect organisations from this party’s point of view were those, which would oppose the established authoritarian regime in any way, shape, or form. Either way, the strong sense of belonging to a grand movement and repression of individualism are openly expressed. According to this regime, being a lonely outsider meant being a threat, which could not be monitored or controlled. By belonging to even politically incorrect organisations, the state could assert its dominance over the members and maintain its upper hand. In conclusion,

political correctness and incorrectness were both deemed to have a societal value - incorrectness was not simply dismissed.

Up until now, we have only mentioned examples present in an American context. It is safe to assume that the idea of political correctness was also discussed in other parts of the world, most notably Europe. The discussion of political correctness would also be connected to academia, but it was mostly concerned with the results and consequences of the Second World War and the subsequent events. We must not omit the influence of ideologies such as Fascism, Nazism, Marxism and Communism on the European continent and the unique views on political correctness they prompted. In the year 1953 a Nobel Prize laureate of Polish origin, Czesław Miłosz, mentioned political correctness in one of his works - *The Captive Mind*. In it, Miłosz tried to bring the Western reader closer to the realities of the post-war period, the great influence of Stalinism on Europe and the harsh conditions within the Soviet Block. In one of the chapters, he retells the tragic story of Tadeusz Borowski who survived his incarceration in the Auschwitz concentration camp. After his traumatising experience, Borowski became a public speaker who did not shy away from describing the horrors he had witnessed during his imprisonment. “Still, a politically correct theme would not have saved him from the critics' attack had they wanted to apply orthodox criteria, because he described the concentration camp as he personally had seen it, not as one was supposed to see it” (Miłosz 120). From this excerpt, we can deduce that many post-war supporters of the Stalinist regime in Poland wished to minimise or completely dismiss the horrors which took place in concentration camps all over Europe. The reason for such actions was to promote the propaganda of Russia being the ultimate saviour of Eastern Europe from the evil clutches of Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany. But since Borowski survived his time in the camp in relative comfort by claiming the food and clothing of Jewish prisoners for himself, he did not fit within the propagandist notion of the Polish post-war government. Thus, his experience and horrific life story were considered

politically incorrect, even though he belonged to a marginalised group of concentration camp occupants.

4.3. Public Activism

The Mid to late 1960s is regarded by many as the time when the term political correctness burst into the public's vocabulary, especially in the United States of America. This can be attributed to various social activist groups stepping into the public eye. The best examples of these are the feminist movement, religious minorities such as Muslims, racial minorities, of which the most vocal ones were the Black Panthers, and many more. It is necessary to mention the principal catalyst which sparked the creation and growth of these movements - the civil rights movement led by the civil rights movement, which has been around since the 1950s but achieved most of its influential goals in the 1960s. The massive spread of awareness of anti-Black racism thanks to the "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial performed by Martin Luther King Jr paved the way for further changes., such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. These were crucial legislative victories not only for the civil rights movement but for the aforementioned activist groups too. These groups were en masse composed of younger individuals, mainly teenagers and young adults, many of whom were studying at America's universities. They have seen themselves as messengers of the new era, of change and progress. Their distrust of the older generation represented by the Old Left, loudly and publicly voiced by slogans such as "Don't trust anyone over thirty [years of age]!" or "Question authority!" cemented their stand on social issues - it was time to distrust and question the governments' and corporate bodies' actions. Thus, the use of the term political correctness became widespread. Its use was not purely binary - positive or negative. It was multifaceted - serious,

sarcastic, and full of self-mockery, disapproving, dogmatic, battlecry-like, idealistic, and many more.

At this time, the Old Left finalised its transformation and awoke into the modern time in an updated form - the New Left. Nowadays it is mostly known as Left Liberalism or the Liberal Left. This new form of the movement changed its focus from social class and unionisation issues to problems concerning social matters - environmental and peace advocacy, and enforcement of early politically correct attitudes towards women and minority groups. This rejuvenation of traditional leftist priorities was met with a mixed reaction from its sympathisers, mainly concerning the question of its Marxist roots. One side of the movement completely rejected its involvement with it, while the other insisted on its importance and revitalisation inspired by Maoism. Mao Zedong, previously romanised as Mao Tse-tung, and his famous book *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* held the more sympathetic fraction of the New Left in a tight grip. Many argue that this is how the term political correctness became part of the New Left's jargon.

The first official English translation of the book, published in 1966, greatly emphasised acceptable and unacceptable thoughts and behaviours through the frequent usage of the words "correct" and "incorrect". We were not able to discover whether the use of these words in the translated version was an accurate translation of the terminology used by Zedong due to our unfamiliarity with the Chinese language and its dialects. Thus, we may polemise whether the translators took creative liberty with the vocabulary used and whether they projected their political stands into the final work. This may be supported by our mention of Krutch's criticism of academia's usage of politically correct terminology discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis.

This piece of literature, the so-called "*Little Red Book*", was unequivocally popular during this era. As Perry mentions, both major constituencies, the black and white radicals,

read it avidly (73). The book spread the Maoist thought and attitude towards the “correct” thinking that would help maintain the stability of a socialist regime through certain tools, such as contention and support of free speech. Many supporters of the New Left were excited by the premise of free speech and thus they determinedly used it and preached about its importance. Perry talks about how not striving to be politically correct during the nineteen sixties was synonymous with being an Uncle Tom, a non-insurgent human, and a sloppy person - for example, a hippie (73). Thus, it is obvious that the activists of the time exhorted an idea best expressed by the well-known phrase “you are either with us or against us”.

When it comes to direct mentions of political correctness in American contemporary literary works, Perry remarks that the first contextual reference to political correctness she had found was present in an essay by Toni Cade (now widely known as Toni Cade Bambara, before she *On the Issue of Roles*, which was an excerpt from her previous biographical essay “*The Scattered Sopranos*”, delivered at a lecture at the Black Woman’s Seminar organised and held by Livingston College in December 1969 (73). *On the Issue of Roles* was later published in an anthology that Bambara edited, called *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, and it retells her personal experience from when she had lectured about prejudice centred around gender, specifically the anti-female rhetoric, and racial bigotry. The contextual reference goes as follows: “Racism and chauvinism are anti-people. And a man cannot be politically correct and a chauvinist too” (Cade 107).

The 1970s were mostly simply continuing the spreading of politically correct rhetoric and activism, even though it was not as publicised. The decade is however uniquely marked with an emergence of a significant issue - some of the New Left’s users of the politically correct language have come to realise that the replacement terms, used in place of previously despised politically incorrect terminology, have started to slowly gain negative connotations themselves. It was an unforeseen issue which left the activists and preachers of the politically correct

movement stunned and scrambling for a quick solution. The most widely agreed upon solution was the implementation of the perpetual replacement strategy. As Greer puts it in her feminist analysis *The Female Eunuch*, “It is the fate of euphemisms to lose their function rapidly by association with the actuality of what they designate, so that they must be regularly replaced with euphemisms for themselves” (298). Thus, thanks to the newer works, such as the one by O’Neil in which he mentions Pinker’s ideas, the nature of this replacement strategy is inherently cyclical and will end up being stuck in a perpetual loop. This loop consists of a replacement term first having the status of a euphemism, later changing into an orthophemism, and inevitably gaining the status of a dysphemism. When the replacement term arrives at this last, unacceptable stage of its use, it gets retired into the same category as the original, non-politically correct term, and gets replaced by a new euphemism (282). O’Neil also states a crucial fact which emphasises that this cycle can repeat itself indefinitely as long as the social dynamics remain the same, thus, the list of retired terms will also grow indefinitely (283). This fact to this day results in societal confusion in cases when the user of politically correct language does not keep up with the ever-changing terminology regularly, and thus ends up being politically incorrect unintentionally.

4.4. Universities as Hubs of Progress

The 1980s are regarded by many as the decade when political correctness, its spread and its presence in media became inescapable. The term entered the mainstream media and took it by storm thanks to a Richard Bernstein story published in October 1990. As he remarked, “Across the country the term *p.c.*, as it is commonly abbreviated, is being heard more and more in debates over what should be taught at the universities” (Bernstein para. 3). Political correctness as a term was mostly being used in the academic circles at the time - that is especially because political correctness activism has moved to university campuses across

the United States, creating a strong base of operation in these locations. These academic institutions, which have been over two decades, since the 1960s, transformed from being almost exclusively racially dominated by the white race to a notional Molotov cocktail of rapid diversity politics. Howell claims in the 1960s, men made up 63 per cent of all university students. Students at public universities and colleges, 94 per cent of which were made up of African Americans, were not admitted to any top school. Many elite universities did not admit women. At private institutions, 96 per cent of students were white (187). These percentages have started to change with the successful implementation of the legislative changes, namely the Civil Rights Act of 1964, briefly mentioned in the previous subchapter. Racial segregation in educational institutions and other public spaces, along with employment discrimination, was rendered unlawful by the legislation. It also generally outlawed discrimination based on skin colour, race, national origin, gender, and religion. The gates of many educational institutions were forced open, and the influx of female and non-white students challenged the omnipresent bigoted ideals, which have been considered a norm before. Some universities have accepted the inevitable change and started to mould the academic mindset to make the campuses more inclusive, but unsurprisingly, there were some outliers even among the most prestigious institutions. As Seligman satirically puts it, “Diversity in higher education is politically correct, with the single exception of the young lady Harvard who gave fits to its then-president Derek Bok by hanging a Confederate flag outside her window. (“They want diversity,” she said. “I’ll show them diversity.”)” (para. 22).

The mentioned incident is just one example of what it was like to face politically incorrect behaviour on campus. Howell gives further examples of politically incorrect incidents, which he was given anecdotal evidence of, in the following quote: “The expulsion of a drunken Brown University athlete who shouted insults to Jews, blacks, and gays; the story about the woman forced to move out of her dorm room at the University of Connecticut because

she listed “homos” and “bimbos” on her door as people who should be shot on sight, a joke she said. The charge is that people’s rights to free speech are being violated. But little is said about how an academic community should deal with ruptures of civility (187)”. As we can see, even though there were no exact rules in place on how to deal with politically incorrect behaviours on campuses, some universities have measured notable punishments, not just verbal reprehension, for the misuse of offensive terms pointed towards minority groups with malicious intent. On the other hand, there were many insensitive events which took place and the perpetrators have continued to receive an education without having been reprimanded. “For every story told by the PC users, equally strong anecdotes can be expressed in return, such as the fraternity members at Syracuse who wore T-shirts saying, “Club Faggots, Not Seals,” or the blacks beaten in 1989 at the University of Massachusetts by a mob of hundreds of whites” (Howell 187). After such incidents, we polemise that the usage of the term political correctness lost a bit of its self-satirical nature to the left-leaning activists.

The 1980s and 1990s were also the time when the conservative critics of political correctness started to more openly criticise and fight against it, arguing it restricts their rights. They started to use the term political correctness as a pejorative one, targeting liberal activists and accusing them of policing free speech. Conservatives also claimed that those, who stood behind political correctness, were influenced by Marxist and Communist ideologies, labelling them enemies of the American nation, and alleging that they were trying to destabilise the United States. These arguments were used before the end of the Cold War in 1991 and even after it, and they were given the time of day by the masses. These attitudes have carried over to modern times, often depicting political correctness in this pejorative manner, and rallying the public to boycott not only the euphemistic language associated with it but the whole movement.

5. Analyses of the Presidential Debates

In this part of our thesis, we shall move to the analysis of the 2016 US elections presidential debates, whose participants were the nominee of the Republican Party, Donald John Trump, and the nominee of the Democratic Party, Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton. Both defeated their respective rivals in the primary elections and were invited to participate in the debates. There were three debates in total, all organised on university grounds all around the United States. These debates were moderated by journalists from various popular news networks, and all were attended by the public who were encouraged to not interact with the nominees without being prompted to do so. All the debates were sectioned into segments which either focused on a specific topic proposed and asked about by the moderator at hand, or on answering the questions of the general public, which were gathered beforehand.

The main point of these debates is to familiarise the voters with the two nominees from which they will be choosing on election day and to provide clarification on the nominee's moral compass, political views, and outlooks on issues important to the voters. Since the debates take place while the nominees are still running their campaigns, important updates and controversies may arise. Debates are a place where the public and the moderators can elaborate on potential new information and provide clarification to the public.

The vice-presidential debate that took place on 4th October 2016 will not be analysed in this thesis, since we are focusing on the language used by the presidential candidates, not by the parties which they ran for office under. We acknowledge that the Republican Party and the Democratic Party have specific rhetoric associated mostly adhered to by their members to spread the parties' ideologies, but this shall be elaborated upon when we discuss the nominees' party affiliations and the debates themselves.

5.1. Methodology

The debates were fully transcribed by various news agencies, but we have chosen to use the official transcripts provided by the Commission on Presidential Debates, otherwise known as CPD. This is a nonpartisan organisation which organises the three major debates, and we consider it the highest authority on the correct nature of the transcripts. Video recordings of the debates, which have aired live on national television, are publicly available on a video-sharing website Youtube.com, specifically on channels owned by the news agencies NBC and CBS. We have gone over these recordings as supplemental sources to specifically analyse the sentiment and emotion indivisibly connected to the use of politically correct and incorrect language.

After each debate analysis, we will include information from a compiled popularity poll of each nominee, provided by FiveThreeEight.com, an American website focused on publishing opinion poll analysis and various other topics, such as politics and economics. The website and the polling data analysis system were created by Nate Silver, an American writer and statistician whose main expertise is political and sports analysis. The website is currently run by ABC News.

To compare the popularity of the nominees, we have selected FiveThreeEight's polls-only forecast which took only the information provided by various poll agencies to estimate the probability of each nominee winning the elections held on the 9th of November 2016. To analyse the percentages properly, we will use two data sets for each debate. The first data set will contain percentages of winning estimated one day before the debate. The second set will include information about percentages estimated three days after the debate, the day of the debate being included in this window. The three-day mark was chosen so that it would ensure that the majority of voters have seen or read about the debate and had the chance to potentially change their minds about whom they would vote for.

The polls and graphs which we will include in the analyses below also include the popularity percentage of Gary Johnson, a presidential nominee for the minor Libertarian Party. We were unable to remove the data concerning his run for the presidency from the graphs since the FiveThreeEight website polls do not allow for this kind of modification.

5.2. Nominees

5.2.1. *Hillary Clinton*

As President Barack Obama's 67th Secretary of State from 2009 to 2013, Senator for New York from 2001 to 2009, and First Lady of the United States as President Bill Clinton's wife from 1993 to 2001, Hillary Clinton is an American politician, diplomat, and former lawyer. She is the first woman to historically beat other competitors in the primary elections and thus gain the post as a presidential nominee of one of the two major American political parties. She had lost the 2016 US elections to Donald Trump in the Electoral vote, although she had won the popular vote.

To further analyse her rhetoric, Clinton often uses language following politically correct ideas and vocabulary supported by the liberal leftist political view. As a First Lady, a Senator, and later a presidential nominee who has consistently stood up for left-leaning policies, such as the protection of the rights of women, children, religious minorities, and immigrants, we can anticipate that the terminology, which she will use during the debates, will be politically correct. While participating in a calm discussion, the terminology will be as correct as possible, accompanied by civility and calm behaviour altogether. If the debates get heated, she will still attempt to continue the debate using politically correct language and only emphasise her points via increased volume and sentence stress changes.

5.2.2. *Donald Trump*

A politician, media personality, and businessman from the United States, Donald John Trump was the 45th President of the United States from 2017 to 2021. Trump won the 2016 US presidential elections thanks to the vote of the Electoral College, even though he had lost according to the results of the popular vote. He became the first American president to have never served in the military or government before his nomination. He is often named one of the most controversial presidential candidates and later presidents of the nation, and his run for the presidency has sparked numerous protests not only by the public but by other American public figures as well.

As we will see multiple times during the following debate analysis, Donald Trump and his rhetoric are heated at best and outright disrespectful at worst. He manages to use some politically correct terminology, especially when talking about racial minorities, but his insensitive language is multifaceted. He either uses politically correct terminology and connects the performance aspect of it with a sarcastic tone or other negative contextual queues or uses outright non-politically correct rhetoric with an agenda of “telling things how they truly are”. He often criticises Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, and Barack Obama for not using the correct terminology under the impression of being afraid of the very nature of the topic at hand. Trump’s rhetoric is often called populist, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, and xenophobic.

5.3. First Debate

The first debate took place on 26th September 2016 at Hofstra University, Hempstead, New York. The debate lasted 95 minutes and was moderated by Lester Holt of NBC, who stated that the debate would focus on three main themes: achieving prosperity, America’s direction, and securing America. These themes were formally divided into six different

segments: economy, creation of job opportunities, international trade, the federal deficit, racial tensions and law enforcement, war on terror, and American foreign policy.

5.3.1. *Overview*

The first general theme of the debate centred around achieving economic prosperity, commencing with the topic of the economy of the United States. Clinton starts her speech on the economy with very pro-citizen language, talking about wanting to invest in people and their future. She also lists how she means to create more jobs for people - by investing in technology, clean, renewable energy, and small business. She plans to make the economy more equitable by focusing on raising the national minimum wage and ensuring equal pay for women (para. 21). Her intentions do not stop there, as she also points to the importance of supporting struggling families by having paid family leave, earned sick days, affordable childcare, and debt-free college (para. 23).

Trump starts his speech by inciting hate towards other nations and nationalities. At this time, Trump was known for perpetuating the narrative that foreign countries such as Mexico and China are “stealing” the jobs of good American people. He claims that the export of jobs abroad and import of goods from other countries devalues the US dollar and that China is using the United States as a “piggy bank” to rebuild itself (para. 28). He succeeds this by accusing Clinton and other politicians of causing the outflow of jobs and implies their corruption by saying that “our politicians [...] have special interests and the special interests want those companies to leave, because in many cases, they own the companies” (para. 54).

Clinton continues her talk about clean energy and mentions that Trump believes that climate change is a hoax deliberately spread by the Chinese government and media, which she does not agree with (para. 62). Trump disagrees with the statement, claiming he never said such a thing, but his tweet from 2012 says the following: “The concept of global warming was

created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive” (Trump 6 Nov. 2012). This statement not only incites hate towards China for supposedly causing the economic problems of the United States but also builds on the racial difference and Asian hate still common among the American people.

While the debate stirs to Trump and his unreleased tax returns, he manages to stir the conversation to the fact that the United States is dealing with \$20 trillion in debt, which causes the country’s infrastructure to suffer. He mentions American airports and how badly they look in comparison to Dubai, Qatar and China. He exclaims that America has become a third-world country (para. 223). This statement greatly mocks most of the the world’s countries combating poverty, since according to Global Finance the United States ranked in ninth place in the 2015 GDP-based rankings (Pasquali).

The debate opens the next major theme, America’s direction, with the question of race. Clinton talks about youths facing racism and discrimination in public educational institutions and from the justice system. She provides examples of racist misjudgement by mentioning two tragic police interventions during which two unarmed African-American men were shot and killed by police officers. The first one was the Tulsa shooting of Terence Catcher and the second one was the Charlotte shooting of Keith Lamont Scott, which had ensured a three-day riot (para. 253). These events drew widespread media coverage and advanced the discussion on the ongoing hostility between African-Americans and law officers that was started by the Black Lives Matter movement. She also discusses the gun epidemic, how simple it is to obtain a firearm, and how it is the leading cause of death for young African-American men (para. 257).

Trump retaliates, criticising Clinton for not using the words law and order, insinuating that she is speaking politically correctly and thus avoiding the issue at hand (para. 259). He continues by talking about the violence in inner cities, and how the African-Americans and

Hispanics are living “in hell because it’s so dangerous” (para. 262). He continues by mentioning murderous gangs and saying, that many of them are composed of violent illegal immigrants (para. 265). This is a perpetuation of a stereotype, which we will continue to see further - Trump’s rhetoric would indicate that all immigrants, legal and illegal, are stereotypically prone to commit violent acts such as murders and drug crimes. He often connects this to nationalities of Latino and Arab origin. It is also important to mention that he uses the terms Latino and Hispanic interchangeably, even though they denote a different population group. The *Latino* are usually people whose country of origin lies in Latin America, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. The term *Hispanic* denotes people whose primary language is Spanish, and their country officially recognises Spanish as its main language. Lumping these two identities leads to confusion and ignorance.

Clinton tries to stand up for the African-American community, calling Trump's negative portrayal of it at his rallies unfortunate (para. 279.) She continues by talking about how African-American and Latin-American men end up in jail for nonviolent offences, and how they are twice as likely to go through the whole criminal justice system and be convicted and incarcerated. She lists systemic racism in the justice system as the cause of the situation (para. 284).

Trump follows this up by accusing Clinton of using the term “super-predator” while talking about “young black youth” in the past. He acknowledges that she has apologised for it, but still calls it a terrible thing to say (para. 298). Clinton does not respond to this remark.

He continues by talking about how the Democrat politicians let the African-American community down over many years by promising change during election time and then not delivering any change to the communities, claiming that they have been controlling them for about one hundred years (para. 315). With these remarks, Trump is trying to win the urban African-American voter.

A very important controversy of the elections gets brought up by Holt - Trump's perpetuation of a false claim that Barack Obama was not an American-born citizen, and thus had no right to serve as a president of the nation. The hoax was disproven in 2011, yet Trump talked about it for years after that (para. 329). Trump claims that he did a great job and a great service to the nation by forcing Obama to produce his birth certificate (para. 338). Clinton then mentions a pattern of Trump's racist behaviour that the public has witnessed, beginning in 1973, when he was sued by the Justice Department for racial discrimination for refusing to rent apartments in buildings he owned to African-Americans (para. 343). Before responding to the allegation, Trump brings out an allegation of his own and accuses Clinton of sharing photos of Obama wearing a Muslim garb during her run against him in the 2008 presidential election primaries (para. 347). Trump continues in his defence by claiming that multiple companies were sued, not just his, and that he had settled the lawsuit without admission of guilt, thus being found not guilty (para. 349). He also lists one of his clubs in Palm Beach, Florida, as a very successful, non-discriminatory place (para. 352).

The topic of cybersecurity gets brought up next and while Clinton voices her concerns about the potential interference of the Russian Federation in the 2016 elections, Trump minimises her claims by saying that the hacking could have been done by anyone, even by “somebody sitting on their bed that weighs 400 pounds” (para 367.) This is an example of using politically incorrect language to shame a person based on their physical appearance and using it to stereotype people who are interested in IT technologies.

Foreign terrorism and ISIS get brought up next and Clinton brings up the topic of Trump's hate and racism towards Muslim communities and countries, where Islam is considered the main religion. He often claimed that he would not cooperate with them to protect countries like Syria. “Donald has consistently insulted Muslims abroad, Muslims at home,

when we need to be cooperating with Muslim nations and with the American Muslim community” (para. 395).

Later, Trump is to respond to a quote he said about Clinton sometime before the debate, claiming that “she does not have the presidential look” (para. 487). Trump follows that up by also stating that she does not believe that Clinton possesses the stamina to be a president and to deal with negotiations with foreign countries (para. 491). Trump's remark is an example of sexist politically incorrect language, assuming that women are the weaker sex and thus incapable of completing tasks which have been historically assigned to men. Clinton retaliates at Trump to call out his sexist and racist remarks towards former Miss Universe, Alicia Machado, “Miss Piggy” due to her gaining weight, and “Miss Housekeeping” due to her Latin American, specifically Venezuelan, origin.

5.3.2. Poll Analysis

One day before the first debate, on 25th September 2016, the probability of Clinton winning was at 46.7% and Trump’s was at 44.8%.

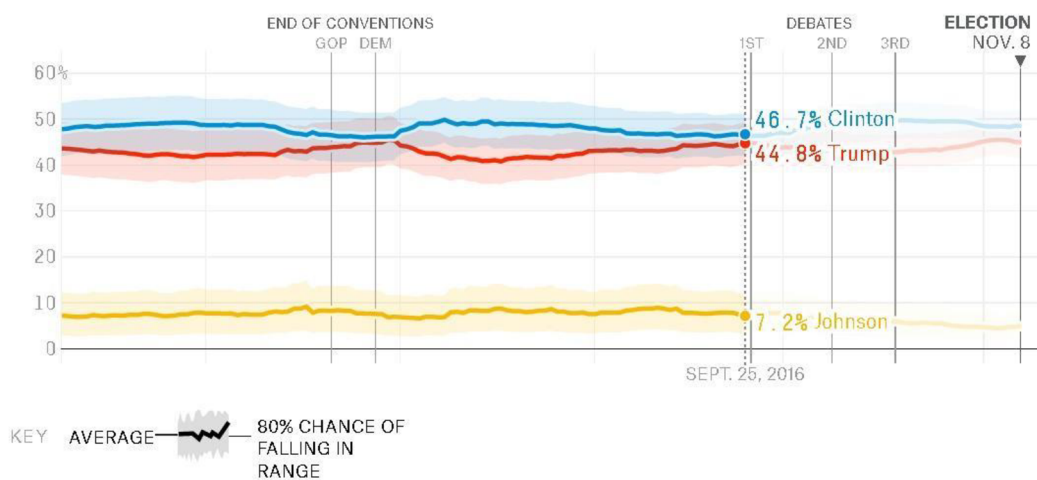


Image no.3 - 25th September Poll Graph

Three days after the first debate, on 28th September 2016, Clinton's chances of winning had fallen by 0.3% to 46.4%. Trump's probability had also dropped by 0.3% to 44.5%.

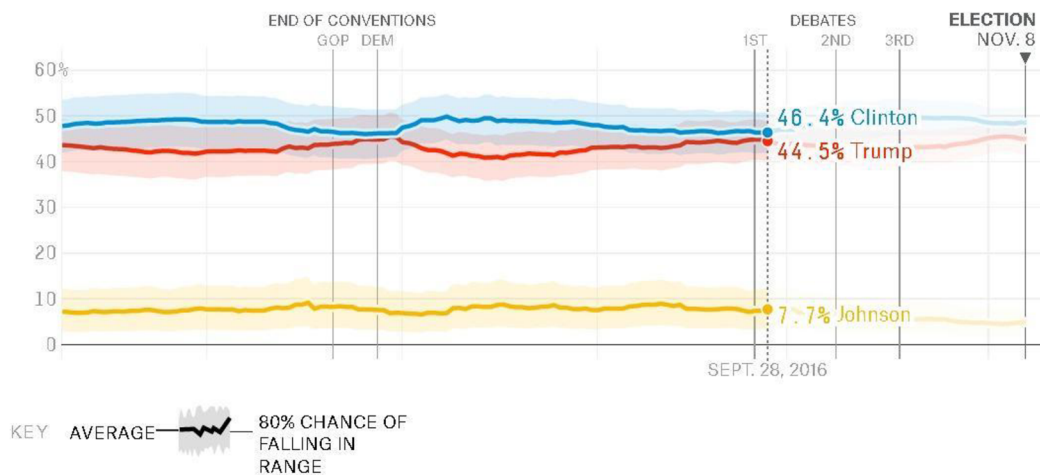


Image no.4 - 28th September Poll Graph

5.4. Second Debate

The second debate took place on 9th October 2016 at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. The debate lasted 90 minutes and was moderated by two moderators: Martha Raddatz of ABC News and Anderson Cooper of CNN. The questions and topics for this template were structured differently than in the first debate. The American voters were encouraged to submit questions they were interested in receiving answers to through the official CPD website, and then the moderators chose out of the thirty most popular questions. The moderators would ask follow-up questions to facilitate discussion, but the main word was given to the undecided public.

5.4.1. Overview

The first question is concerned with the fact that the previous debate was rated MA, thus being suitable for mature audiences only, but it is to be expected that children will be assigned to view it by their educators at various levels of schooling. Clinton remarks on the

need to model proper behaviour to the young, and her concerns regarding the appropriateness of the language used during the presidential campaigns (para. 15). She calls for the celebration of diversity to inspire the young and the adults on behalf of the United States (para. 16), and remarks that she wants to be a president for all citizens, no matter their origin, appearance, or religious beliefs (para. 19). Trump briefly mentions that he agrees with everything Clinton mentioned.

The next question asked by Cooper segways into a very controversial topic of the sexual assault allegations released two days prior on tape in which Trump openly talks about him sexually assaulting women by kissing them and grabbing their genitals without their receiving consent to do so. Trump apologises to his family and the voters for this incident, but not to the women he assaulted. He minimises the issue by exclaiming that it was simply “locker room talk”, which he is not proud of (para. 27). The recording has since become colloquially known as the “locker room tape” and has sparked much discussion and outrage among the voters. This tape shows Trump using very misogynistic language. Some of the phrases recorded, most famously the one according to which Trump grabs multiple women's genitalia without consent have even entered contemporary pop culture, being reiterated on the internet in a critical and sometimes jovial manner. Trump attempts to steer the discussion away from his shortcomings by talking about ISIS and how the discussion should steer to “much more important things and much bigger things” (para. 32). When Cooper tries to get back to the topic at hand, Trump exclaims: “I have great respect for women. Nobody has more respect for women than I do” (para. 34). After Cooper pushes on to get a direct response, Trump explicitly denies having ever assaulted any woman (para. 38).

Clinton responds to the ordeal by stating that she and other politicians are questioning Trump's fitness to serve the country after this scandal and that his insults and derogatory comments towards them tell a lot about his character (para. 47.) She follows up by calling to

the fact that Trump has shown similar hateful behaviour not only to women, but to racial and religious minorities, the disabled, prisoners of war, and many others (para. 48).

Raddatz closes the topic by exclaiming that the tape has become the single most talked about 2016 elections story on all social media. She continues with a question from a voter, who wondered if Trump thinks that he has changed since the day that tape was recorded. Trump does not respond and deflects to Bill Clinton's sexual misconduct throughout his political career. He also accuses Hillary Clinton of attacking the women who have been victims of Bill Clinton (para. 64).

Clinton retaliates by listing several verbal attacks based on religious and racial pretences committed by Trump, for which he never apologised. Namely, the attack on the Khan family whose son had died in the line of duty in Iraq, because of their religious beliefs, and the attack on a federal judge, whom Trump tried to discredit by claiming his parents were of Mexican origin. The hoax concerning Obama's origin is also mentioned (para. 71-73). Trump goes back to an argument from the first debate that Clinton had spread pictures of Obama in a Muslim garb to discredit him (para. 74).

The discussion briefly stirs to the topic of WikiLeaks and the classified emails which Clinton carelessly deleted along with another 33,000 others. Clinton takes responsibility for her mistake and claims that there is no evidence of any hackers getting the classified information from these emails. Trump mocks Clinton and when he is reminded that this is not the question the discussion should be focused on, he protests and implies that the moderators are protecting Clinton by them facing him three to one (para. 130).

The topic of the Muslim minority and the Islamophobia it faces in the United States stirs the pot yet again. Trump stands behind the idea that Muslims are responsible for properly reporting any discrimination and violence they encounter, calling back to the 2015 San Bernardino mass shooting and attempted bombing by perpetrators of Pakistani descent (para.

180). Then he mentions the 2016 Orlando mass shooting, which was perpetrated by an Afghani-American attacker, and lastly the September 11, 2001, attack committed by al-Qaeda. He labels all the perpetrators as radical Islamic terrorists (para. 181). By including the word Islamic, he was not politically correct, perpetuating the stereotype according to all Muslims are terrorists. Clinton later uses the term jihadist terrorists, which is more politically correct by not condemning all Muslims (para. 188).

Trump's Islamophobic comments do not end here, as Raddatz calls for clarification of Trump's statements on completely banning Muslims from entering the United States based on completing a religious test. He diminishes it by calling it extreme vetting and changes the topic to claim that Clinton's more lax immigration policy would most likely endanger America by accepting thousands of immigrants and refugees from the Middle East (para. 199). Clinton claims that she simply wants to help the people running away from conflict and that she disagrees with Trump wanting to ban certain groups from entering people based on religion since the United States as a nation is built on religious freedom (para. 204). Trump disagrees and repeats his previously mentioned ideas - that the immigrants would most likely be murderers and drug lords. He also uses the term "illegal aliens", which can be viewed as derogatory (para. 217).

Skipping over a few questions, the topic moves to the personal beliefs of the nominees and whether they feel that they would truly act as devoted presidents to all the citizens of the United States in case they win. Trump compares himself to Clinton and says yes, following up with an accusation that she has called a large group of his voters deplorable and irredeemable based on their non-politically correct beliefs, calling them "racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic [and] Islamophobic" (para. 365). Clinton says that she has apologised for these words because she does not wish to condemn all these citizens - only Trump and his violence-

inciting rhetoric against minorities, POWs, the disabled, and women (para. 366-367). Trump continues to bash her for using these terms, especially the word irredeemable (para. 374).

Cooper follows up by asking Trump about his claim that a good leader should be very disciplined, but that Trump himself looks like he lacks the very same mindset. This refers to the 30 September 2016 late-night Twitter rant in which Trump bashed Clinton, called her “Crooked Hillary”, sent people to watch a certain sex tape, and insinuated that she helped the previously mentioned Miss Universe Alicia Machado gain American citizenship just to be able to use her example as a point in a debate (Trump 30 Sept. 2016). Trump deflects the question.

The topic of discussion moves to the Supreme Court. Clinton mentions that she seeks to make it easier for people to vote, especially for people of colour, the old and the young. She also mentions her resolution to stick with marriage equality and to uphold *Roe v. Wade* which grants women the right to get an abortion. (para. 406). This is the first and only time during all three debates that we hear the term *people of colour* be used. It is a term that is supposed to be an umbrella term for people of different races other than white. Nowadays it is regarded as a dysphemism due to its similarity to the term *coloured* used before the Civil Rights Act was passed.

5.4.2. Poll Analysis

One day before the second debate, on 8th October 2016, Clinton’s chances to win were at 48.8% and Trump’s was at 43.2% In comparison to the percentages after the first debate, Clinton’s score had gone up by 2.4%. Trump's score had continued to fall by another 1.3%.

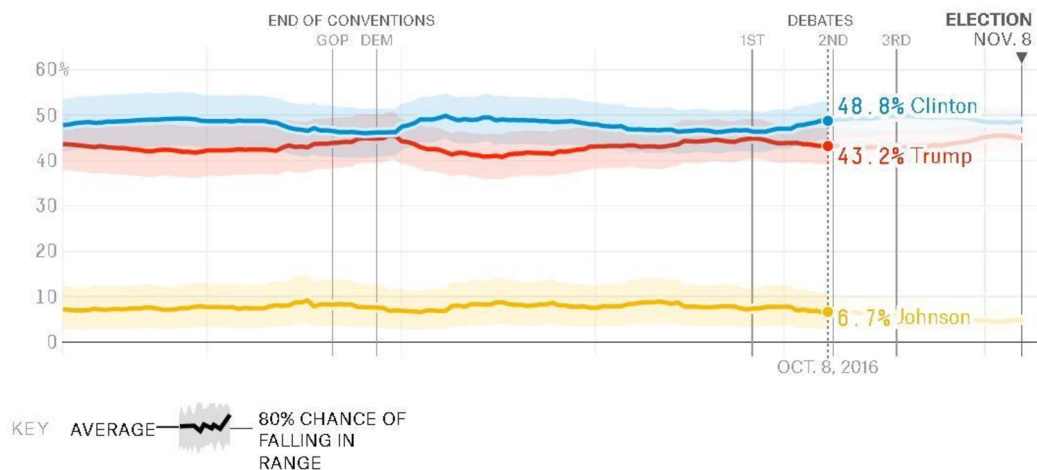


Image no.5 - 8th October Poll Graph

Three days after the second debate, on 11th October 2016, Clinton’s popularity had risen by 0.3% to 49.1%. Trump's chances of winning had remained unchanged at 43.2%.

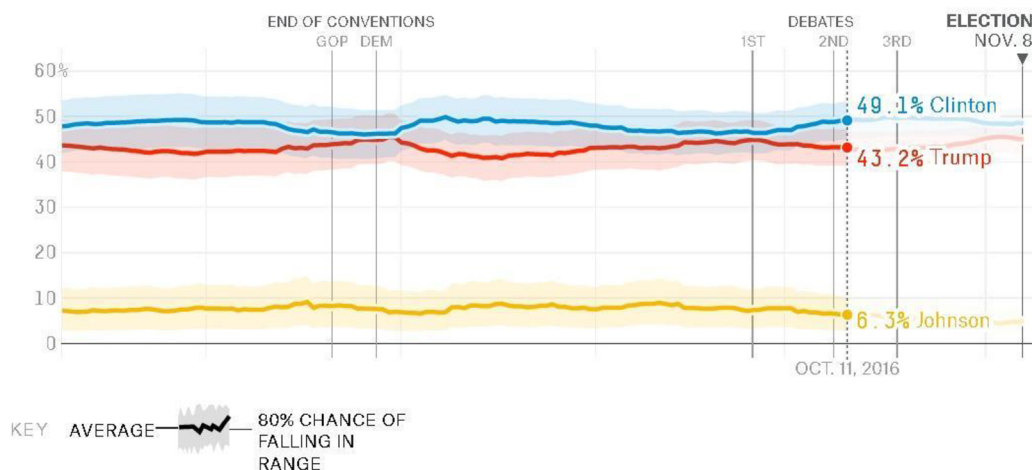


Image no.6 - 11th October Poll Graph

5.5. Third Debate

The third debate took place on 19th October 2016 at the University of Nevada, Paradise, Nevada. The debate lasted 93 minutes and was moderated by Chris Wallace of Fox News. The general structure of the debate was the same as of the first debate - six segments with distinct topics were introduced: Supreme Court, debt and entitlements, immigration policies, economy, foreign points of interest, and adequacy of being president.

5.5.1. Overview

The first topic of the debate is the Supreme Court and the interpretation of the American Constitution - whether it should be liberally interpreted and moulded, or if it should be rigidly enforced. Clinton claims that it should be moulded and applied in a way that would protect all matters which apply to American citizens, including the rights of women and the LGBT community (para. 18). She also mentions the necessity of preserving marriage equality and upholding the Roe v. Wade verdict. Trump states that he will stand for the Supreme Court judges that are pro-life and uphold the Second Amendment, stating that “They will interpret the Constitution the way the founders wanted it interpreted” (para. 27). Clinton states that she also wants to protect the Second Amendment but does not stand for it being left without reasonable regulations, like comprehensive background checks (para. 34). She also mentions Trump’s statement made outside the debates that women who obtain abortion should face some form of punishment (para. 59). Clinton stands behind her support of abortions and claims that the state has no right to interfere into such a private matter of the citizens (para. 62). Trump claims that “[to] take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb” in later stages of pregnancy is not acceptable (para. 65). Clinton calls his statement scare rhetoric (para. 66).

Debate moves onto the topic of securing the country’s borders and Trump accuses Clinton of causing the deaths of many people by allowing illegal immigrants to enter the United

States through her decisions made as a Secretary of State (para. 74). He insists on his promise to make the borders well-secured and to en masse deport illegal immigrants, stating: “We have some bad hombres here, and we’re going to get them out” (para. 77). He uses the Spanish word *hombre*, meaning man, as a colloquial term to refer to Latin Americans to perpetuate the stereotype of Latino immigrants being violent criminals. Clinton says that Trump has stated recently before the debate that every undocumented person would be subject to deportation if he wins the elections (para. 81). She claims that such an operation would be unrealistic, expensive, and anti-nation. She also mocks Trump for wanting to build a wall on the Mexican border, but not being able to bring it up in a face-to-face conversation with the Mexican president (para. 84). She proposes that if she wins the elections, she will introduce a comprehensive immigration reform that would help the illegal immigrants get their citizenship and protection from abuse by employers, who often misuse them as a cheap source of labour and threaten them with deportation if they decide to stand up to unfair treatment. Clinton also accuses Trump of not practising what he preaches, since he has used illegal immigrants to build the most famous of his estates - the Trump Tower (para. 101). Trump does not respond to the allegations and claims his immigration policy would lead to stopping radical Islamic terrorism in the United States (para. 131).

Abuse of women gets brought up again. In response to the previous debate’s take on the “locker room tape”, more allegations of Trump’s sexual misconduct came out in the media. Trump claims that the stories of women have been largely debunked and that they either want fame or that Clinton’s campaign is responsible for the influx of new stories. Clinton mentions more quotes of Trump on women: “He went on to say, “Look at her. I don’t think so.” About another woman, he said, “That wouldn’t be my first choice.” He attacked the woman reporter writing the story, called her “disgusting,” as he has called a number of women during this campaign” (para. 280).

The topic shifts to the conflict of interests and Trump accuses Clinton of being impartial due to the existence of the Clinton Foundation: “It’s a criminal enterprise. Saudi Arabia giving \$25 million, Qatar, all of these countries. You talk about women and women’s rights? So these are people that push gays off business—off buildings. These are people that kill women and treat women horribly. And yet you take their money.” (para. 324). Using the word gay in this instance can be viewed as derogatory and politically incorrect due to the implications and history of the LGBT community being violently oppressed in the United States and worldwide.

We chose to skip over more questions and topics of this debate. The reason for that is that they were thoroughly discussed in previous debates and subchapters and in this debate, they were only reiterated in an inflammatory manner.

5.5.2. Poll Analysis

One day before the third debate, on 18th October 2016, Clinton’s poll results were at 49.8% and Trump’s were at 42.8%. In comparison to the percentages after the second debate, Clinton’s popularity had climbed up by 0.7%. Trump's chances to win once again continued to drop by another 0.4%.

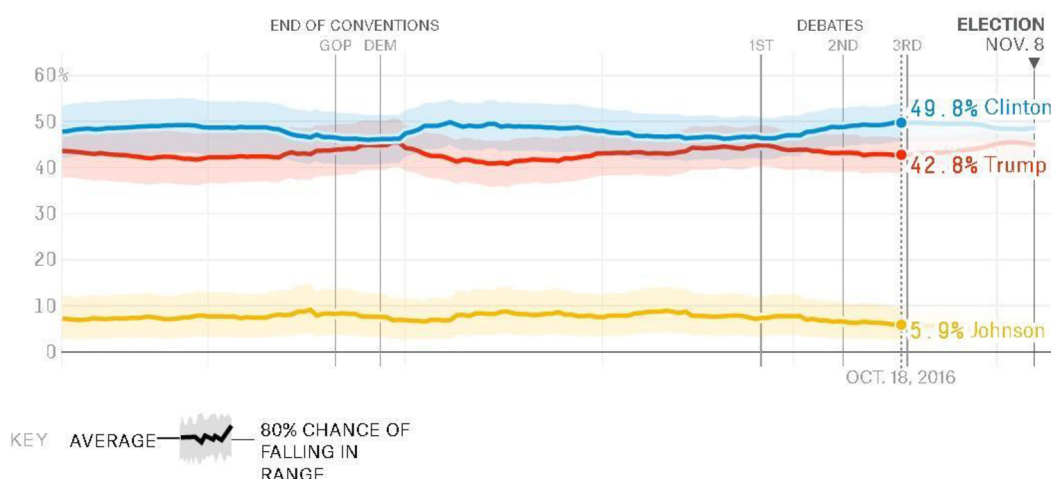


Image no.7 - 18th October Poll Graph

Three days after the third debate, on 21st October 2016, Clinton's probability of winning remained stagnant at 49.8%. Trump's chances of winning had risen by 0.4% to 43.2%.

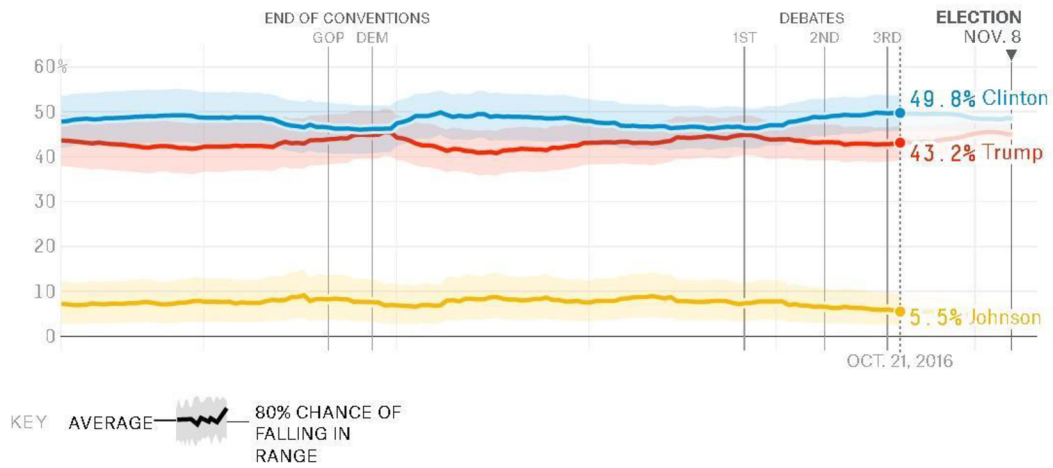


Image no.7 - 21st October Poll Graph

6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the topic of political correctness, which is to this day considered an obscure field to dabble into in terms of linguistics. Due to its heavy connection to historical studies, political science, and sociology, we have been able to explore only a small fraction of the whole issue. During our research, we have stumbled upon many trials which we would like to explore in future research, but we must put all of these ideas on a back burner.

We managed to create a comprehensive definition of what is politically correct language and how to identify it. We were also able to provide a comprehensive historical timeline from the first use of the term to the modern-day circumstances and implications behind not only the linguistic phenomena but the whole sociolinguistic prospect of it. During our analysis of the 2016 US presidential debates, we discovered how hard it is to pay attention to the nuance of politically correct language and how hidden and easily overlooked can some non-politically correct statements seem.

Our thesis hypothesis that the more a politician uses politically correct language, the lower their popularity with the public will have not been fully proven, since it was the case for only one of the three post-debate popularity poll results. Unfortunately, the hypothesis would not be proven even if it was formulated in the opposite direction, meaning that if a politician uses non-politically correct language, it the more popular with the public they get. We assume that we have chosen too small of a sample size of data to compare the results.

To conclude, even if we have not managed to prove our starting hypothesis, we are satisfied with the outcome of our research. We discovered a grant topic to be explored during our future studies, and we hope that if any other researcher comes across our work, they will take inspiration from it and at least use the compiled information on the topic for their benefit.

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