A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Rhetoric

Following George Floyd's Killing, May 25, 2020

By

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the United States President Donald Trump's rhetoric following the African American George Floyd's killing by a white policeman. The type of discourse is political and the aim is to investigate the strategies followed by Trump through language over the months of May and June, 2020. The eclectic method of analysis, adapted here from Grice's implicature (1975), Van Dijk (2003) among others' strategies, tests the theory against the data represented by Trump's statements, replies, press conferences, tweets, and announcements throughout the period of fury. Following Fairclough (1992), Cook (2011), Fowler (1996), Trump's language is discursively examined and ideologically and critically analyzed with the major purpose of social change and accepting the other. The study concluded with the fact that needs and predicaments could have been resolved except that President Donald Trump could not observe discursive strategies and could not manage to understand the other.

Keywords:
Critical Discourse Analysis - Political Language – Language and Power - Discursive Practices – Ideological Beliefs – Accepting the Other – Social Change
1. Introduction:

The type of analysis in this research is political and the rhetoric is politics, the language of politicians. Language is no longer autonomous, in the sense that it is not separated from social contexts. Following the linguistic theory initiated by Chomsky (1957, 1965), the investigation has become to see what is meant by language in specific contexts and by specific people (Newmeyer, 1980). In addition to the study of the deep and underlying representation of language, the emphasis has come to be on real world language and on what people need to do with language.

The study of discourse, then, has become the most popular new sub-discipline in linguistics. Discourse study entails studying language in its natural settings. Everyday conversation, interaction, tweets, and commentaries have become one of the most common and most encompassing form of discourse analysis. Moreover, Discourse analysis is in fact an interdisciplinary undertaking. And in order to do discourse analysis, a holistic approach ought to be considered. Some of these considerations are the type of text, its production, distribution, its audience, its power relations, its hegemonic voice, social level, psychology, political context, among many others. Discourse analysis should aim at finding answers to societal problems through discursive and ideological practices (Van Dijk, 2003). In this context, "discursive practice is constitutive", (Fairclough, 1992:65). It helps to reproduce society and also to transform it.
2. Context of the study:

2.1 George Floyd's killing:

According to Bebernes (Editor of the Yahoo News 360), political debates have been going on in the United States since 1955, a year that dated the brutality of the Pre-Civil Rights in southern USA. This brutality ranged between beating (of Rodney King in 1992) and killing (of Eric Garner and Michael Brown in 2014). Such events are examples of many lives of Black Americans. The significance of George Floyd's killing lies in the fact that it has got an extraordinary nationwide and a worldwide (Dewan & Hansler June 6, 2020) appeal in the way the man was killed by the white police officer. The police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's neck, with his left hand in his pocket, for nearly nine minutes.

The culmination of the tragedy reached its peak, as the graphic video taken by the 17-year-old bystander showed, when Floyd was begging the officer for a breath, for Mom but in no vain. Floyd died immediately and protesters burst into anger against police brutality, injustice, discrimination, and racism. Nobody comforted them or gave them a word of sympathy. Instead, Trump and his administration used an inflammatory, oppressive, non-discursive, irrational, and unreasonable rhetorical strategies. Concurrent with Floyd's killing were other killings like Ahmaud Arbery, Breunna Taylor, in a very brutal way, and Tony McDade, among many others.

The uniqueness of Floyd's death comes from the circumstances amid which he died. Moreover, the graphic video taken by a bystander spread like fire in the ash. This escalation, among other crises faced by the United
States in time, caused a parallel escalation in debate and in rhetoric. People protested and President Trump and his administration sent inflammatory tweets that added fuel to fire across the States.

2.2 The use of language in Politics:

It is a fact that most politicians use language to suit their own objectives and they skew it to move the feelings of their audience. Politicians sometimes lie but they wrap it in a truthful form. So language represents a tool which politicians use to approach people, (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002).

Successful persuasive discourse looks for reasonable ways to choose from proposed courses of action. This is done, of course, on the basis of reason, cooperative principles (Grice (1975), and on logic, so as to convince the other about the validity or fallacy of certain proposition, (Johonson and R. Johonson, 2000). The latter maintain that the speaker needs to incorporate into the hearer's beliefs and build a mental attitude that meets the mental attitude of the other so as to meet and achieve change, comprise, and solidarity. But it seems that this does not usually happen. Politics is the process by which decisions are made within a group. Harold Lasswell (1978), a theorist, has defined politics as "who gets what, when, and how". (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/political)

George Orwell (1946) in his essay Politics and the English Language says:

In our time, political speech and writing are largely defense of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism,
question - begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air in north Iraq until today, the inhabitants driven out into their villages... this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called a transfer of population and war on terrorism. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps. This is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them.

2.3 Truth and Political Language:

In his Nobel lecture (2005), Harold Pinter explains: Political language, as used by politicians, does not venture into any of this territory [truth] since the majority of politicians, on the evidence available to us, are interested not in truth but in power and in the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives. What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed. (http://www.Nobelprize.org)

The truth is something entirely different from all these political lies. It is concerned with the role that the United States adopts in its relationships with all the world countries. Pinter takes the United States as a model because it is the biggest power and clever, of course with its people, citizens, and presidents. To him, the trust came from the words "The American People" which if said by a President, people would comfortably listen. But politics is something and truth is something else as has been mentioned above. Pinter cites the dirty example of the invasion of Iraq. He concluded that the invasion was a complete contempt to the international law and was built on false lies and lies mostly woven by misconceptions and wrong ideology by media and
President G. W. Bush. Pinter gave an excerpt from Bush's presumably truth in his political speeches:

‘God is good. God is great. God is good. My God is good. Bin Laden's God is bad. His is a bad God. Saddam's God was bad, except he didn't have one. He was a barbarian. We are not barbarians. We don't chop people's heads off. We believe in freedom. So does God. I am not a barbarian. I am the democratically elected leader of a freedom-loving democracy. We are a compassionate society. We give compassionate electrocution and compassionate lethal injection. We are a great nation. I am not a dictator. He is. I am not a barbarian. He is. And he is. They all are. I possess moral authority. You see this fist? This is my moral authority. And don't you forget it’. (http://www.Nobelprize.org)

2.4 The Language of Assault vs. the Language of Dialogue:

Language always forms a primary step before any political act. Even acts of physical violence are justified by the so called "the language of assault". John. F. Kennedy and Yitzhak Rabin were subjected to serious verbal assaults before their assassination, a thing which has shortened their life expectancy.

Using the language of dialogue, on the contrary, makes it possible for citizens to articulate sharp differences of opinion. The words of assault, vilification, mendacity, and incitement are out of place in the politics of democracy. Many confused citizens cannot distinguish the language of assaults from the language of dialogue. Seduced by babblings about "individual rights" and "freedom", many citizens can accept any idea with rich advertisements. That is why language is very important in the field of politics.
2.5 Political Discourse:

According to van Dijk (2001), political discourse is a class of genres defined by a certain social domain, namely that of politics (Van Dijk, 1998b). Thus, government deliberations, parliamentary debates, party programs, and speeches by politicians, are among the many genres that belong to the domain of politics. In doing so, Van Dijk has limited the area of political discourse to the professional activities of politicians. He also considers such discourse to be a form of institutional discourse, that is, only such discourses of politicians are considered that are produced in institutional settings as governments, political parties, or parliaments. This means that an informal conversation between a politician and friend does not count as a political discourse. "The discourse must be produced by the speaker in her professional role of a politician and in an institutional setting." Furthermore, discourse is political when it accomplishes a certain political act such as governing, legislation, electoral campaigning and so on.

D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson (2000) explain the purposes of political discourse as:

(a) clarifying citizens’ understanding of the issue and helping them reach the best judgment as to which course of action will solve a problem (b) helping them reach the best judgment concerning the solution of the problem, (c) increasing their participation, and (d) socializing the next generation into the attitudes they need to be active citizens.

Van Dijk (2001) describes political discourse at the level of context. A parliamentary debate, for instance, is defined by the fact that the participants are Parliament Members (MPs), and that it takes place in parliament. It is also a political act of policy-making and its consequences are defined in the institutional terms of political decision-making. Laws are enacted and policies are decided.
However, the study of topics, coherence, lexical style, metaphors or euphemisms is a unique indication of such a discourse.

Thomas Jefferson, according to D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson (2000), believes that political discourse is the heart of democracy. They also consider political discourse to be the formal exchange of reasoned views in order to determine the most appropriate course of action to solve a societal problem. It involves all citizens in the making of a decision, persuades others and illustrates the most effective course of action in order to solve problems. Within political discourse, each alternative course of action is expected to get its due attention and be analyzed in order to reveal its strengths and weaknesses.

Destructive political persuasion, according to D.W. Johnson and R.T. Johnson (2000), exists when misleading or irrelevant information is presented in a way that decreases citizen's understanding of and participation in the issue. Other means of negative persuasion are ignoring important issues and focusing on the candidates (not the issues) through imagery and slogans. Another negative means is argumentation and aggression. It consists of directing arguments at the opponent rather than his or her ideas.

This is done via accusing the opponent of past misconduct or acting on personal interest. Aggressive arguments communicate that the opponent is bad and therefore must be wrong. By focusing on the opponent's soft points, procedures will be useless in clarifying which course of action a society should take.

The negativity effect exists when a negative trait results in a stronger impression than a positive trait. The use of negative personal attack as an instrument of power undermines both trust in political participation and the
moral bonds holding society together. This is what characterizes the type of discourse dealt with in this research.

2.6 Research hypotheses:
This study advocates the following hypotheses:
1. There are certain rhetorical strategies followed by political authorities that blocked a compromise.
2. There are no discursive or shared ideological practices followed by political authorities in the context of this coverage.
3. The United States is no longer the moral guardian of the world.

2.7 Research questions:
The study attempts to find answers to the following questions:
1. What are the rhetorical strategies followed by political authorities and that blocked a compromise?
2. Are there any discursive or ideological practices followed by political authorities in the context of this coverage.
3. Is the United States still the moral guardian of the world?

2.8 Significance of the study:
This study is significant in that it adopts the study of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as one of the effective tools that could lead to social change. Through discursive and ideological practices, people come to reach a better understanding. Discursive implies logical, reasonable, rational, and legitimate right grounds. It is significant also in that the whole society; young and old, men and women, blacks and whites, presumably share almost the same slogans, same beliefs, and same ideology. Through analysis of the United States President Donald Trump's rhetoric, a significant understanding of the President's political
ideology could be reached.

2.9 Objectives of the study:

The major objective of this study is to uncover the reality behind Donald Trump's language. A second objective is to know the intentions of the President behind his rhetoric and what he implies by that. A third objective is that a critical analysis of the discourse here will lead to an understanding of Trump's ideology and the ideology of the other, that is, the people, and more specifically the African Americans. Finally, the study aims at classifying Trump's language as racist or nonracist.

3. Methodology and procedure:

To investigate into the intended meaning of what is said by President Donald Trump in his language response to George Floyd's killing, the theory of implicature initiated by Grice (1975) is best needed here.

3.1 The implicature principle:

Paul Grice (1975) has introduced a theory of inferences that hearers make in order to understand what a speaker means by an utterance, especially when the speaker’s words communicate a hidden meaning, other than that of the actual words. The term implicature is used by Grice (1975) to account for what a speaker can imply, mean, or suggest, as distinct from what he has literally uttered.

Grice (1975) distinguishes between conventional and conversational implicatures. They both add another meaning beyond that of the literal words. Conventional implicatures are attached by convention to particular language items. Conversational implicatures depend on the context. They arise when the speaker flouts deliberately any conversational maxim.
In his book “Logic and Conversation” Grice introduces the Co-operative Principle which governs conversation. It reads, "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged." (Grice, 1975:45)

Grice derives from the Co-operative Principle some conversational maxims, which support this principle. These maxims are:

**Quantity**
A. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of exchange).
B. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

**Quality:**
1- Do not say what you believe to be false.
2- Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

**Relation:**
Be relevant

**Manner**
1- Avoid obscurity of expression.
2- Avoid ambiguity.
3- Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4- Be orderly. (Grice, 1975:46)

Palmer (1981: 174) claims: “The chief interest in implicatures, however, has centered on the occasion when they derive, not from the observation of maxims, but from their violation”. The most important reason for failing to observe a maxim is to say something indirectly: to implicate a meaning.

**3.2 Ideology and Discourse:**
Together with the principle of implication (Grice 1975), other factors are brought into the scene. The scene of a critical analysis of the discourse data of this study needs a
bringing in of everything that helps clarify the discourse. Trump's tweets, retweets, the White House's statements, the Attorney General's statements, and other related commentaries are taken care of and considered.

Regarding the intricacy of language and ideology, reference is drawn here to Van Dijk's (2003) model of political discourse analysis, Fairclough's (1995, 2000) strategies and Johnson and Johnson's explanations as suitable tools of analysis of the type of discourse that is dealt with here.

Discourse is very complex, featuring many levels of structures, each with their own categories and elements, which may be combined in innumerable ways. Ideologies might be expressed explicitly, and then they are easy to detect, but this may also happen very indirectly, implicitly, or in less obvious structures of discourse, such as a tone, a hesitation or a pronoun. In this paper, the ways ideologies manifest themselves in discourse are explored, according to Van Dijk’s 2003 model of ideological discourse analysis, to elucidate how the speakers’ ideologies are intricately interwoven within discourse. Indeed, ideologies typically organize people and society in polarized terms. Group membership first of all has to do with who belongs or does not belong to Us, and how we distinguish ourselves from others by our actions, aims and norms, as well as our resources. Socially fundamental is what position we have relative to the Others, whether we are in a dominant or dominated position, or whether we are respected or marginalized, etc., as is typically the case in chauvinist vs. feminist, racist vs. anti-racist ideologies. Many social ideologies of groups and movements have these properties. Basically, the overall strategy of most ideological discourse is a very general one:
Say positive things about Us
Say negative things about Them

This form of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is not only a very general characteristic of group conflict and the ways we interact with opposed groups, but also characterizes the way we talk about ourselves and others.

Now, this overall strategy typically applies to meaning (content), and would therefore be rather limited. Thus, we need to extend it in some ways so that also other discourse structures can be included by it. But first, we need to complement it with its opposite meanings:

Do not say negative things about Us
Do not say positive things about Them.

As formulated, the strategy is too absolute and too general. So in order to enable a more subtle ideological analysis that also applies to other structures in the expression of ideology, we modify the four principles as follows:

Emphasize positive things about Us.
Emphasize negative things about Them.
De-emphasize negative things about Us.
De-emphasize positive things about Them.

The four possibilities stated above form a conceptual square, which may be called the “ideological square”. It may be applied to the analysis of all levels of discourse structures. As to their content, they may apply to semantic and lexical analysis, but the use of the opposing pairs 'emphasize' and 'de-emphasize' allows for many forms of structural variation: we (as language users) may talk at length or briefly about our good or their bad things, prominently or not, explicitly or implicitly, with hyperbole or euphemism, with big or small headlines, and so on. In
other words, discourse has many ways to emphasize or de-emphasize meanings, and as soon as these have an ideological basis, we are able to analyze the expression of ideology on many levels of discourse, of which some examples are now presented.

3.2.1 Meaning:

Ideological 'content' is most directly expressed in discourse meaning. So we shall pay special attention to the semantics of ideological discourse.

3.2.2 Topics:

Topics represent the gist or most important information of a discourse, and tell us what a discourse “is about”, globally speaking. Typically, they are the information that is best recalled of a discourse. Although topics may characterize the meaning of a whole discourse or of a larger fragment of discourse in an abstract way, they may also be concretely formulated in the text itself, for instance in summaries, abstracts, titles or headlines. The ideological functions of topics are to topicalize our good things as well as to de-topicalize our bad things.

3.2.3 Level of description and Degree of detail:

To give many or few details about an event, or to describe it at a rather abstract, general level, or at the level of specifics must be of various ideological purports. we will usually be more specific and more detailed about our good things and about the bad things of the others, and vice versa -- remain pretty vague and general when it comes to talk about our failures.

3.2.4 Contrast:

Ideologies often emerge when two or more groups have conflicting interests, when there is social struggle or
competition, and in situations of domination. Contrast is the ideal semantic technique to emphasize Our good things and Their bad things. In racist discourse, for instance, we discover many statements and stories that are organized by this form of contrast: We work hard, They are lazy; They easily get jobs (housing etc), and we do not, and so on.

3.2.5 Implications and presuppositions:

Ideological discourse analysis making explicit the meanings implied by a sentence or text fragment may be a powerful instrument of critical study. The option to express information or leave it explicit is not ideologically neutral, however. Typically, people tend to leave information implicit when it is inconsistent with their positive self-image. On the other hand, any information that tells the recipient about the bad things of our enemies or about those we consider our outgroup will tend to be explicitly expressed in text and talk.

3.2.6 Counterfactuals and disclaimers:

"What would happen, if..." is the standard formula that defines counterfactuals. As a warning or advice, counterfactuals are relevant in political debate in parliament to show what would happen if we would NOT take any measures or formulate policies or a law.

The Apparent Negation is the best known disclaimer: I have nothing against X, but… We call this an Apparent Negation because it is only the first clause that denies adverse feelings or racism against another group, while the rest of the discourse may say very negative things about the others. Apart from the well-known Apparent Denial, there are many types of disclaimers, such as:

Apparent Concession: They may be very smart, but….

Apparent Empathy: They may have had problems, but…
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Apparent Apology: Excuse me, but…
Apparent Effort: We do everything we can, but…
Transfer: I have no problems with them, but my clients…
Reversal, blaming the victim: THEY are not discriminated against, but WE are!

All these disclaimers combine a positive aspect of our own group, with negative ones of the Others, and thus directly instantiates the contradictions in ideological based attitudes.

3.2.7 Propositional structures (Actors and modality):

Structures of discourse are of significant ideological connotations that may ameliorate our analysis of discourse. The arguments of a proposition may be about actors in various roles, namely as agents, patients, or beneficiaries of an action. Since ideological discourse is typically about Us and Them, the further analysis of actors is very important. Instead of talking individually and specifically, all Others are being homogenized, for instance, in terms of generalized or generic expressions.

Propositions may be modified by modalities, such as “It is necessary that”, “It is possible that” or “It is known that”. Representing (say) police brutality as 'necessary' may imply some kind of legitimization for such violence, as is often the case in newspaper accounts of “race riots”.

3.2.8 Euphemism:
This is a well-known rhetorical figure which is usually used between groups opposing each other. It is an evasive technique functioned as a way of mitigation when talking about the negative acts of a group. It represents a defensive wall against attacks of the own group and thus builds a good ground of the self. The speaker uses euphemistic expressions that seem less offensive, less
hurting, and less disturbing to the listeners about the own group, or about the own party, here the Grand Old Party (GOP), and specifically about the President. In politics, this technique is used in contexts that mean "double speak" and "hyperbole."

3.2.9 Discursive paraphrase:

These are two semantic properties that elucidate the relation between propositions. Plainly, synonyms are words which mean the same and paraphrase refers to rewording. Yet, strict synonymy does not exist; paraphrases are typically expressions that have more or less the same meaning, but not quite, and are usually formulated in different words. Thus, we may of course speak about immigrants- or the Other in general- in terms of many expressions and descriptions that are more or less synonymous, but whose meanings-of-use and ideological implicatures are different (Lobner, 2002).

3.2.10 Examples and illustrations:

More generally discourse about Us and Them, and hence also racist discourse, is characterized by examples and illustrations, often in the form of stories, about Our good deeds and Their bad behavior. These examples and illustrations lead to social change.

3.2.11 Evidentiality:

Speakers are accountable for what they say. However, evidence provided by the speaker may be of different degrees of reliability, authenticity and validity. In contemporary society the media are a prominent criterion of evidentiality: "I have seen it on TV" or "I read it in the newspaper" are rather powerful arguments in everyday
conversations. Their merit is that they show the signs of change. Yet, mass media is not ideologically neutral.

3.2.12 Rhetoric:

A rhetorical study of ideological discourse will generally follow the same principles that they can topicalize or de-topicalize agency or party depending on ideological goals. It will focus on those figures of style that can be deployed to emphasize our good things and their bad things, and vice versa for our bad things and their good things, such as hyperbole, euphemism, and so on.

4 Data Analysis and discussion:
4.1 Meaning:

As has been mentioned above, the analysis of data in this study is based on Van Dijk's (2003) model of analysis in his article "Ideology and Discourse: A Multidisciplinary Introduction".

This research takes the USA President Donald Trump's tweets together with the related White House retweets and comments as its major data. Emphasis is given to the various meanings of the discourse from its various vantage points. Trump did not have special official speeches to deliver during the period or the tragedy covered by this study. Furthermore, it is his habit to address his audience all over the globe using tweets. So, the tweets that are relevant to this analysis are selected, identified, dissected, and weighed against the criteria of analysis presented in the previous section.

4.2. Topics:

The topics of the tweets here are the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 and the events that erupted after it. A 46-year-old African American was killed by four police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. One of them
Derek Chauvin pressed his knee on George Floyd's neck for over 8 minutes while he was calling "I can't breathe". This topic was the spark that spread protests all over the American cities and all over the world. The sentence "I can't breathe" represented the plain truth and plain justice. The rights of George Floyd and the charge against the killer would not have happened without the video which filmed that fatal incident by a 17-year-old Darnella Frazier. (Brown, CNN May 25, 2020).

Trump's rhetoric reflected on defunding the police, riots, racism, and confederate monuments.

4.3 Level of description and Degree of detail:

To give many or few details about an event, or to describe it at a rather abstract, general level, or at the level of specifics must be of various ideological purports. Mr. President did not give much detail on the incident. He used to tweet directly in short but influential statements to the American people. For him, "words are mightier than swords." It really is here. Trump made a big and abrupt decision to send law enforcement to put down a peaceful gathering of protesters in Washington, D. C. which was a fateful step.

From the details that follow, the President was planning to walk from the White House to Saint John's church while the police were using rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse the peaceful protesters. He didn't even take permission from the church leaders to enter or visit the church, (Rabbi, CNN, 2020), (Bashir, BBC, June 2, 2020). The President held up a Bible, upside down. These first details represented the dumbest things to prepare for what was coming next. On that day, Monday June 2, Military troops were deployed in the streets of Washington, D. C., much concern was felt by public health experts because of
the ocean of congested crowds, hundreds of protesters gathered outside the White house, the president was rushed by Secret Service Agents to a White House bunker where he stayed for almost an hour. The President was strained between COVID-19, the protesters, and the bunker. Later on, he refuted that episode of the bunker and gave opposing statements as "It was a false report," Trump said. "I went down during the day, and I was there for a tiny, little, short period of time. And it was much more for an inspection." (Dylan Stableford, Senior Writer, Yahoo News, June 3, 2020). The only way out for the President was to cross the Lafayette Square and cross the street to reach the Episcopal Church and raise a Bible. The military cleared the road for him and a few members of his administration. Police used tear gas and rubber bullets. At least one Episcopal priest was among those teargassed.

4.4 Contrast;

At first, two contrasts can be depicted here. One is with Trump himself and the other is created by sure accident between Trump and his rival, Joe Biden. Trump ordered a law enforcement with tear gas and rubber bullets while in the meantime he was walking quietly (supposedly) across the street to St. John's Episcopal Church. He was trying to settle order and at the same time he didn't either have invitation to visit the church nor did he ask for permission. What is worse is that he held a Bible and the Bible was upside down.

In so doing, the President gave his Democratic nominee, for Vice President Joe Biden, a clear stage for the following morning to state what the American people were welcoming, serious police reform and ending systemic racism. Trump seems to be in contrast with almost all the people around him through his verbal behavior. Whereas in his speech acts he changed the
streets of America into a battle ground, George W. Bush reasoned, "It is time for America to examine our tragic failures", (Cole, CNN June 3, 2020). Televangelist Pat Robertson also condemned Trump's urge on "police brutality" when Robertson gave a comfortable rhetoric by saying "It seems like now is the time to say, 'I understand your pain, I want to comfort you, I think it is time we love each other'. This shows clearly that Trump lacks too much of diplomacy, or discursive practices. Conversely, he continued to say "I am the President of law and order" and he issued a heads-up", (Cole, CNN, 2020). George W. Bush and former first lady Laura Bush felt "anguished by the brutal suffocation of George Floyd and disturbed by the injustice and fear that suffocate our country.", (Cole, CNN, June 3, 2020).

4.5 Implications and presuppositions:
The power of a critical political discourse study like this one lies in the fact that making explicit what is implicit. Much can be understood from what is said or written (Grice, 1975 and Yule, 2006). Provided that it is in a certain context, an utterance, or a tweet, or a retweet, or even a text fragment could generate too much understanding and interpretation of situations that might seem vague. Trump's social behavior when crossing the street to the church and his zero communication with the religious authorities imply that he lacks respect to those religious leaders. His holding of a Bible upside down implies lack of piety and of religious knowledge. This could let lay people to criticize him saying, for example, that he is not even able to say a single verse from the Holy Book.

The iron fist and law enforcement that Trump is using imply "systemic racism". This made G. W. Bush and his wife Laura Bush to say that "How do we end systemic
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racism in our society?", (Cole, CNN). Bush’s statement implies that there is racism in the American society and the job of the President is to end it by using all possible means. Trump’s language behavior made Bush to call Trump "the race-baiting President." Yes he is the President but this presupposes that he is race-baiting. It can be implied from the term "race-baiting" that this President is obsessed with racism. It is deep rooted in him and in his ideology. The President entraps his people into danger by using his rhetoric as bait.

Under "law enforcement and order" which the President is obsessed with, other killings took place. Ahmaud Arbery was gunned by a white father and son while jogging through a suburban Georgia neighborhood. Breonna Taylor was shot eight times by police who busted through . Charles Duster, (CNN, June 3, 2020) reported Televangelist Pat Robertson when the latter condemned Trump's use of "law and order". On Monday, May 31, 2020, (Duster, CNN), Trump wrote a tweet saying that he is the President of "law and order". This implied law enforcement and bringing Military forces into cities. This generated imposing power on governors who will not quell protests. His inflammatory rhetoric presupposes non-discursive practices toward both citizens and state governors. His rhetoric raised racial tensions. His rhetorical practice was very humiliating to governors as he spoke of them as "being jerks", which is not cool on the part of a President, according to Robertson, (Duster, CNN, June 3, 2020). Trump's inflammatory rhetoric made Robertson get the implication that the President is racist and drove him to correct these racist ideas by saying "we've got to love each other, we just got to do that, we are all one race (implying, of course, to blacks and whites), and we need to love each other."
Bush and Laura Bush's statement "we have resisted our urge to speak out ", implies much more than what is just said. The fear that choked George Floyd is a mere miniature of the fear that suffocates the whole country. This gives the implicature that the President himself is that fear and he is the one who suffocates throats. From what Bush and his wife said , it can be interpreted that their job is not to give lectures and to preach, but the time now is Trump's time.

4.6 Counterfactuals and disclaimers:

What makes counterfactuals relevant in politics (of course among other things) is that politicians use it as a warning and as an excuse against counter actions that might happen. This protective shield represents a disclaimer for them. It gives them authority to take specific policies. Duster and Shortell (CNN reports, June 4, 2020) report that in the White House itself and by the Attorney General William Barr, there existed counterfactuals. There is no wonder because this is a race-baiting administration, as G. W. Bush an wife called it. Blinded by counterfactuals, Barr ordered peaceful protesters to be removed from near the White House. Instead of doing it discursively and talk to the protesters using reason and logic, the administration, aided by police, tried to clear the way from ahead of the President so he can walk through Lafayette square to visit St. John's Episcopal Church. The gross err here is that Barr acted against the facts. It is as if he is giving the disclaimer that "what if this did not happen?" He is the Attorney General but he is counterfactually acting as if he were the President. According to the Retired General of Virginia, Senator Mark Warner, "Barr is unfit for office", and "he is
acting as Donald Trump's personal lawyer instead of fulfilling his duty to act in the public's best interest; (Duster and Shortell, CNN).

More counterfactuals come when Trump says "George Floyd is a good man", and "this is a great day for George Floyd". In fact, The President seized the escalating situation in Minneapolis to do what he actually wants to do. He is the one who is eager to inflame, divide, and most of all, distract the American people from the catastrophes of the pandemic and the unemployment, (Editorial, Washington Post, June 7, 2020 and Yahoo News 360). Here are two distractions that carry propaganda and hyperbole: (Trump's two tweets, May 31, 2020)

The United States of America will be designating ANTIFA as a Terrorist Organization.

7:23 PM - May 31, 2020
Congratulations to our National Guard for the great job they did immediately upon arriving in Minneapolis, Minnesota, last night. The ANTIFA led anarchists, among others, were shut down quickly. Should have been done by Mayor on first night and there would have been no trouble!

7:03 PM - May 31, 2020
In response to the Buffalo elderly man who was shoved by two police officers, Trump's tweet came as a "dark, dangerous, and untrue" comment, (Jordyn Phelps and Libby Cathey Good Morning America June 10, 2020). Here is his tweet on June 9, 2020:

Buffalo protester shoved by Police could be an ANTIFA provocateur. 75 year old Martin Gugino was pushed away after appearing to scan police communications in order to black out the equipment. @OANN I watched, he fell harder than was pushed. Was aiming scanner. Could be a set up?
New York Governor, Andrew Cuomo, commented on Trump's tweet saying that the President is pouring gasoline on the fire, especially at this time of anguish and anger.

Here, Trump lacks democratization, in the sense that he still beating around the bush. He sticks to "inequalities and asymmetries in the discursive and linguistic rights, obligations, and prestige of groups of people" (Fairclough, 1992:201). This is an important parameter for the change that is undeniable in recent years.

4.7 Propositional structures:

Analysis of discourse takes into its account the nature of its structure and how it is built in a way that clarifies its ideological connotations. Actors in a discourse may take various roles in the arguments of a proposition. There are roles for agents, patients, or beneficiaries of an action. Since a big part of the ideological structure in this study is about beliefs on racism, "these beliefs represent a guide for the interpretation of events and the monitoring of social practices" (Van Dijk, 2003: 7) of the actors involved. Actors are the President together with those who possess shared assumptions with him from his administration like the Attorney General, William Barr, from the police and from the citizens. Patients are represented by those who are killed, hurt like their families and relatives and all those who sympathize with them.

Trump's saying "I am the President of the United States" represents an agent of constructive action and he does what he orders by virtue of the power of his position. The others are referred to as a body of homogeneous group that share assumptions known to this administration as
causing all the damage, all the looting, vandalism and destruction.

4.8 Euphemism:

This is a well-known rhetorical figure which is usually used between groups opposing each other. It is an evasive technique functioned as a way of mitigation when talking about the negative acts of a group. It represents a defensive wall against attacks of the own group and thus builds a good ground of the self. The speaker uses euphemistic expressions that seem less offensive, less hurting, and less disturbing to the listeners about the own group, or about the own party, here the Grand Old Party (GOP), and specifically about the President. In politics, this technique is used in contexts that mean "double speak" and "hyperbole."

The Federal Defense Secretary (FDS) James Mattis directly criticized Trump's rhetoric in the aftermath of George Floyd's killing saying the President "tries to divide us", (Mecias, POLITICS, June 3, 2020). As a mitigation to this daring criticism, Ohio Republican Senator Rob Portman said of FDS James Mattis' statement about Trump (and about his own GOP), "I haven't read it". To cover the bad or the ugly side of the situation he pretended that he hasn't read the statement. Of course this is an unacceptable answer by a Republican Senator. It is not as general as war and peace, or Corona virus, or China, or Hong Kong. Analyses by the CNN commentator Cillizza show that Mattis is not criticizing a general issue but in fact something that the President lacks and this is his inability to unite the country. This is what Portman hated to say.

Portman, using euphemistic expressions again, says about Mattis that "He's a decorated war hero and, you know, has got an amazing reputation and career so I want
to take what he says seriously". Cillizza (CNN) believes that when euphemistic expressions go beyond negative acts of the own group to expressions like "hear-no-evil, see-no-evil, speak-no-evil, then it is political cowardice and not soft language. Again this political fear is much better than being neutralized in case you step out of Trump's line. And the word "neutralized" is used euphemistically here instead of "being savaged" or "obliged to retire", by Trump.

4.9 Discourse is discursive:

The goal of discourse is to cherish, treasure, value and maintain discursive practices. It is, in this sense, "constitutive", (Fairclough, 1992: 65). By virtue of its nature, discourse is language and language possesses lots and lots of ways of talking or writing. There are lots of practices and lots of strategies. It is up to the language user to choose, depending on ideology. Trump's ideology is based on law and order, power, racism, and dividing. In the nondiscursive context of the use of tear gas and police tactics to clear the way to the President around the White House to reach the Church, Televangelist Pat Robertson condemned the President, (Duster, CNN June 3, 2020). The Church leaders did the same thing to the President's saying "I am the President of law and order." They call this rhetoric "inflammatory" that added gasoline to racial tension.

Discursive strategies, according to Televangelist Pat Robertson, are in the form of the ways people want and not in ways the President likes. Reasonable rhetoric such as "I want to comfort you", "I think it's time we love each other." But the President took a different route and went on to tweet "I am the President of law and order", and "I
am ready to send in military troops if the nations' governors don't act to quell the violence that has rocked American cities", to which Robertson discursively commented, "It isn't cool." Robertson's "you just don't do that, Mr. President" didn't find attentive ears because it has become clear that the President's words only infuriated people as tyrannical and authoritarian (Dewan and Hansler, CNN, June 6, 2020). There is no such thing as understanding of the other.

The only comment from the President on the killing of George Floyd on May 25 was "tragic and appalling". Floyd had been arrested for allegedly passing on a counterfeit $20 note. He pleaded for air as the officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 8 minutes. In an interview with Sky News Arabia (Sky News Arabia, June 11, 2020), Fylonis Floyd, George Floyd's brother, said that his phone call with President Trump was "too fast". And in his meeting with MSNBC said that the President didn't give him any chance to talk and that was very disappointing. And said that although he tried to talk but the President used to push him off with phrases like "I don't want to hear anything." This is the ideological strategies that Trump practices.

Trump unconsciously applies the ideology in that what position we have relative to the Others, whether we are in a dominant or dominated position, or whether we are respected or marginalized, etc., as is typically the case in chauvinist vs. feminist, racist vs. anti-racist ideologies. Many social ideologies of groups and movements have these properties. Basically, the overall strategy of most ideological discourse is a very general one:

- Say positive things about Us
- Say negative things about Them
This form of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is not only a very general characteristic of group conflict and the ways in which opposed groups interact, but also characterizes the way we talk about ourselves and others. This positive self-presentation makes Trump believe that police killed G. Floyd in daytime while Floyd's brother "can't believe it!." Again, Trump should have listened to people like Televangelist Pat Robertson to tell him "you just don't do that, Mr President", "It isn't cool", "It isn't fair".

4.10 Social change:

Discursive and ideological practices lead to social change. Katanga Johnson (Reuters, June 8, 2020) confirms that injustice, police brutality, law enforcement, Trump's inflammatory rhetoric, and racial inequality all helped the American people to unite and organize themselves as freedom fighters. Floyd, a 46-year-old African American man, died after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck, with his left hand in his pocket, for nearly nine minutes. Johnson (Reuters, 2020) cites one example (among many other ones) of two young ladies (a black and a white) meeting for the very first time to organize Freedom Fighters D C. They are using social media as a tool of justice. They are organizing a very new ethnically diverse generation to protest Floyd's death and push forward for civil rights reforms in the country.

The recording of Floyd's death on the bystander's cellphone created the most highly charged debate over racial justice. The debate came to unite the nation before the November 2020 Presidential Election. Trump is dividing the nation (FDS James Mattis) whereas there are societal voices from MA students at Georgetown University and first-time activists (among many other
millions across America and the world) are uniting their nation within hours of Floyd's death. Their discourse says, end racism and brutality in the USA, bring justice to the cases of those who were brutally killed by police and law enforcement. Protesters behaved socially and discursively. In front of the White House, they were able to convince a white police officer to kneel with them (Trump tweets "No kneeling"), a victory that achieved cheers from the protesters. They said "change is on the way, and we are here to usher it in", (Heather Timmons and Paul Simao, eds, June 8, 2020).

4.11 Signs of change:

According to Ben Fox, Corey Williams, and Jeff Amy of the Associated Press, June 5, 2020, the city of Minneapolis agreed to ban police chokeholds. This procedure will be followed up by the City Council and then, will be enforceable in court. The calls for change ranged from explosive anger to more peaceful calls for change.

In Washington, D. C., a big "Black Lives Matter" was painted yellow on the ground of the street leading to the White House. This was done by workers and volunteers. The painting stretched across 16th street for a distance of two blocks. This section has been officially given the name "Black Lives Matter Plazza".

Bakari Sellers, a CNN commentator and author of the book "My Vanishing Country, believes that social change is difficult and slow. He thinks that it is very difficult to win a conviction against police officers. Trump himself wrote in a tweet on June 22, 2020:

The Democrat House wants to pass a Bill this week that will destroy our police. Republican Congressmen &
Congresswomen will hopefully fight hard to defeat it. We must protect and cherish our police, they keep us safe!

This is exactly what Former Defense Secretary James Mattis expressed in that the President is dividing the country. Sellers' (CNN) opinions are discursive in the sense that at the time when hearts ache at the loss of the beloved citizens who were killed at the hands of the state they pay for, dialogs on systematic change should start. At the time when everyone can watch G. Floyd call for his mother and plead for mercy and for a breath, discussions on comforting his family should be the real discourse. Trump's "We must protect and cherish our police, they keep us safe!", and his tweet on the 75-year old Buffalo protester saying that “He Fell Harder Than He Was Pushed” (Ted Johnson, 2020) and in his tweet on June 9, 2020:

Buffalo protester shoved by Police could be an ANTIFA provocateur. 75 year old Martin Gugino was pushed away after appearing to scan police communications in order to black out the equipment. @OANN I watched, he fell harder than was pushed. Was aiming scanner. Could be a set up?,

represents a barrier against police reform. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo commented saying that the President is pouring gasoline on the fire at the time of anguish and anger.

On the contrary, Sellers (CNN) views police reform in a constitutive way. He suggests that anger, anguish, and frustration should be removed first and this will heal the wounds and prepare a solid ground for systematic change. People's deep-rooted beliefs about police misconduct and brutality should be replaced by a spirit of securing justice and not securing the police officers. He thinks that these challenges of past history should be challenged and reasonably addressed and he suggested constitutive procedures to reform the police. Chuck Wexler
Dr/ Hoda Soliman Mohammed Soliman commented that policing is getting better. Actions are immediately taken against use-of-force incidents and the releasing of information about brutal officers.

4.12 Divisive rhetoric:

According to Macias (June 3, 2020), Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis responded to Donald Trump's inflammatory rhetoric in another discursive rhetoric. In his tweets, Trump said about the 75-year-old Martin Gugino who was pushed by Buffalo police that the man could be an "ANTIFA provocateur", and all that happened could be kind of "a set up.", (Tweet June 9, 2020)

Buffalo protester shoved by Police could be an ANTIFA provocateur. 75 year old Martin Gugino was pushed away after appearing to scan police communications in order to black out the equipment. @OANN I watched, he fell harder than was pushed. Was aiming scanner. Could be a set up?

In the following tweet, (June 22, 2020) Trump warns and rebukes the governor of the State of Washington and humiliating him:

...as to whether they want help in taking back Seattle. Ready to move quickly! Damage to various Democrat run Cities & States, including statue demolition, should not be allowed to happen.

Ready to solve problem quickly! Federal Government is Ready, Willing & Able!@TuckerCarlson

In the following tweet, (June 10, 2020), Trump expresses his refusal to defund the police, something that infuriates protesters: concerning Defunding (not!) our great Police. This Radical Left agenda is not going to happen. Sleepy Joe Biden will be (already
is) pulled all the way Left. Many, like Minneapolis, want to close their Police Departments. Crazy! On deploying the American Military in the streets of Washington, D.C., Trump tweeted (Tweet June 11, 2020):

Our great National Guard Troops who took care of the area around the White House could hardly believe how easy it was, “A walk in the park”, one said. The protesters, agitators, anarchists (ANTIFA), and others, were handled VERY easily by the Guard, D.C. Police, & S.S. GREAT JOB!

Perhaps this is what made FDS Mattis talk. This is, perhaps, the thread that cut the camel's back.

The President was probably fighting on various forefronts. Here, (Tweet June 20, 2020), he is urging the police, again, to arrest those who pull down the national statues:

The D.C. Police are not doing their job as they watch a statue be ripped down & burn. These people should be immediately arrested. A disgrace to our Country!

In the following tweet, (Tweet June 21, 2020) divisive rhetoric could be clearly watched. Here the President, perhaps unconsciously, is ripping the two parties, The Democrats and the Republicans, apart:

Republicans are the party of LIBERTY, EQUALITY and JUSTICE for ALL. We are the Party of Abraham Lincoln and the party of LAW AND ORDER!

To the above rhetoric, James Mattis burst into statements against the President saying: “Donald Trump is the first president in my lifetime who does not try to unite the American people—does not even pretend to try. Instead, he tries to divide us,” (Macias, June 3, 2020).

Mattis rejects the idea of "militarizing" the scene and of making the American cities a "battle space" or a "fortress" that
Dr/ Hoda Soliman Mohammed Soliman creates a conflict between the military and the civilians. As a counter rhetoric to what the President tweeted, Mattis referred to the slogan written on the front of the United States Supreme Court ‘Equal Justice Under Law’, to be the moral that every American look for and support.

Like Mattis, Washington, D. C. mayor asked the President to stop sending tweets that only divide the American people. She bitterly criticized the President’s saying ”when the looting starts, the shooting starts”, and his threats that he is going to send the "most vicious dogs" to guard the property. In tweets like bullets, the Mayor sent the following tweets (Washington, D. C. Mayor Muriel Bowser Tweets, May 30, 2020) in complete contradiction to what the President did:

My police department will always protect DC and all who are in it whether I agree with them (such as those exercising their First Amendment Right) or those I don’t (namely,

While he hides behind his fence afraid/alone, I stand w/ people peacefully exercising their First Amendment Right after the murder of #GeorgeFloyd & hundreds of years of institutional racism

There are no vicious dogs & ominous weapons. There is just a scared man. Afraid/alone...

While he hides behind his fence afraid/alone, I stand w/ people peacefully exercising their First Amendment Right after the murder of #GeorgeFloyd & hundreds of years of institutional racism

There are no vicious dogs & ominous weapons. There is just a scared man. Afraid/alone...
I call upon our city and our nation to exercise great restraint even while this President continues to try to divide us. Our power is in peace, in our voices and ultimately at the ballot box in November...

According to Bashir (BBC, June 2, 2020) and Stableford (Senior Writer Yahoo News June 3, 2020), President Trump is most supported by the religious conservatives. Contrary to this support by white evangelical Protestants, the whole country is clearly divided. The President's visit to St John's Evangelist National Church angered religious Catholic leaders as it violates the principles of their religion which oblige them to defend the rights of all people regardless of race or color. His raising of a Bible and his photo op are antithetical to the teachings of Jesus. This is a misuse of the holy Book for political agenda. He should have stood beside the protesters in their cause about racism.

A great number of retired military personnel denied what Trump tweeted. They believe that the President used the armed forces to defy the protesters and crush their demands against police brutality and end of racism. Together they asked the President to stop his "divisive rhetoric" and listen to the legal rights of the African Americans and sympathize with George Floyd's mourners.

5. Conclusion

Up to the moment of writing the conclusion of this research, the 25th day of June, 2020, police brutality in America still goes on. Of course a change cannot be expected to happen overnight. It takes time. The very scene that moved the whole world and in which Derek Chawvin pressed his knee on G. Floyd's neck for almost
nine minutes until death is repeated. According to David Ovalle and Haley Lerner of the Miami Herald, June 25, 2020, police officer was arrested after the release of a video showing him with knee on a woman's neck. These are repeated cases and clips of police brutality that are spreading across the USA. The reason is mostly Trump's nondiscursive practices and ideology. It is the "law and order".

This research has concentrated on selected criteria for analysis that highlight the US President Donald Trump's use of rhetoric. The research critically discussed criteria such as topics, degree of detail, contrast, implicature, counterfactuals, structure of propositions, Euphemism, discursiveness, and divisive rhetoric for the sole purpose of clarification and interpretation of the President's language. It has been shown that his language is mostly inflammatory, divisive, and racist, though he sometimes uses modality in "but unfortunately, there probably is some (systemic racism) (Thomas , of the Fox news, June 18, 2020). "I would also say it’s very substantially less than it used to be". Within the context of this study, the President lacks discursive practices that might help him get popular appeal. He is biased because he sides with police officers and always declares that the deaths are "accidental." His administration is, too. His Attorney General Barr supported him in the use of tear gas and Military against civilians. His Vice-President Mike Pence has repeatedly announced that "All Lives Matter" instead of "Black Lives Matter" (Drury, The Independent, June 20, 2020). It is obvious that he stands alone on one side of the extreme and sometimes hides himself in his bunker. The American people stand on the other side of the extreme.

In a few months or, perhaps, in a few years, history will record these disparities, inequalities, and racist
A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Rhetoric

Ideologies that President Trump still practices. But unless the demands of the protesters are met, the United States is not the moral guardian of the world. The President deliberately flouts almost all conversational maxims. His rhetorical contribution is extra rhetorical, extra informative, and inflammatory. He tweets what he really believes to be false. His tweets and the retweets are too many and they create perplexity. The episode of the bunker where he hid himself from the protesters and said he was there to test it, is an example of confusion. His opinions on police brutality, justice, and racism are irrelevant (Us versus Them ideology). Trump emphasizes positive things about his Grand Old Party (GOP) and deemphasizes positive things about the Democratic Party. He was too brief in talking about the death of George Floyd and about talking to Floyd's brother but too elaborate in talking about police officers, law and order, power, Republican Party, military, vicious dogs, threats, and "when the looting starts shooting starts." In terms of manner, he and his administration talk the way they like and not the way people want.
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