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How Twitter Exposes Daily Whiteness Practices in Mexico and Argentina

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HOW TWITTER EXPOSES DAILY WHITENESS PRACTICES IN MEXICO AND
ARGENTINA

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Major Professor: Mel Stanfill

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation questions: How is the social imaginary about the meaning of being white in Mexico produced, reproduced, and problematized in Twitter Discourse? How is the social imaginary about the meaning of being white in Argentina produced, reproduced, and problematized in Twitter Discourse? How are the social imaginaries in Twitter Discourse in Mexico and Argentina related to the cultural and symbolic power exercised by the United States, and does US power influence the structure of privileges built around Whiteness? For doing that, I collected up to 10K tweets using two keywords to identify discourses surrounding Whiteness in tweets from users in Mexico and Argentina and analyzed up to 300 tweets per keyword using Critical Discourse Analysis tools. The findings demonstrate that research on Twitter is valid to explore communities from inside and interpret problems that go beyond digital environments. Furthermore, Twitter provides a unique opportunity to review Whiteness and question its privilege structures. In addition, the tweets operate as a cultural manifestation of the latent social unrest gruesomely exposing racism, dehumanization, eliminationism, and contempt for otherness favored by the affordances of the medium. My approach focused on Argentina and Mexico tweets as selected cases able to reflect the reality of the region in order to explore the function of Whiteness in everyday conversations, considering the impact of digital technologies in society. Both countries represent well-differentiated social structures, and embody particular ways of living ethnicity, cultural capitalism, and globalization. Although to be considered 'white' in Argentina is not the same as in Mexico, they also retain certain identity features related to conceptions of Whiteness that allow its study. Even more interesting, I found that studying

Whiteness in these two countries also illustrated the influence of the United States as a cultural and symbolic power in the development of white supremacist ideas.

Keywords: Whiteness – Twitter – Critical Discourse Analyses – Mexico – Argentina – Social Imaginary

Para Mara, por su generosidad...

Esta aventura comenzó aquí en Orlando, una noche de verano, caminando por el campus de esta hermosa universidad y preguntándonos ¿por qué no? Y fue un espectacular salto de fe.

This adventure started here in Orlando, one summer night walking around the campus of this beautiful university and wondering why not? And it was a spectacular leap of faith.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The material collected for this Dissertation was infused with two events that received massive worldwide attention. One of them was the murder of George Floyd, a member of the Minneapolis African American community who succumbed to police brutality. The second event was the spread of Covid-19 that forced the closure of international borders and the seclusion of citizens to prevent the spread of the first pandemic of the new millennium. Both events began in the off-line world but quickly grew in virtuality and affected—in a way that we society are not truly aware of yet—how we as humans are going to survive from now on. Also, I argue that these events confirmed the relevance of the research questions guiding this Dissertation: This dissertation questions: How is the social imaginary about the meaning of being white in Mexico produced, reproduced, and problematized in Twitter Discourse? How is the social imaginary about the meaning of being white in Argentina produced, reproduced, and problematized in Twitter Discourse? How are the social imaginaries in Twitter Discourse in Mexico and Argentina related to the cultural and symbolic power exercised by the United States, and does US power influence the structure of privileges built around Whiteness?

In their own way, the citizens of Mexico and Argentina reflected both events in the comments that they voluntarily deposited on Twitter and exposed how those events were impacting their private daily lives, making it clear—if there was any doubt about it—that in an interconnected planet it is very difficult to abstract from what is happening in the dominant countries. Then, the present Dissertation is about Whiteness, but as I will discuss also it includes the affordances and constraints of Twitter. In addition, it reflects social hierarchies and how prejudices organize people's attitudes, but more importantly it discusses conceptual issues about

being white, non-white, civilized, citizen, important and disposable in a world where the most impenetrable borders may be found in the human minds.

1. The new cyber public sphere

With a certain openness of the Social Discourse¹ motivated by the explosion of new digital communication technologies, individuals and communities also took their social practices to the virtual arena. In this sense, the Internet is a place (or a non-place) where it is possible to acquire goods, obtain services, trade, inform, enter virtual realities, acquire new identities, meet people, express opinions, subscribe to cooking channels and, even, perform whiteness. In this sense, the new digital media accelerated the globalization not only of the economy but of social experiences, and audiences become active participants in these expedited cultural exchanges.

In addition, the new cyber public sphere involves the complex relationships between audiences connected and not connected to the constantly-changing environments that digital technologies propose (Tufekci, 2017). Due to the increased role of digital communication systems influencing people's daily lives, it is increasingly difficult not to be connected. Then, in a certain way, interactivity empowers users and allows them to access new positions of dominance and participation in Social Discourse through crafted content —memes, videos, pictures, blog posts, comments, audios — able to be disseminated across the Internet (J. A. G. M. van Dijk, 2006), while exacerbating social anxieties that now are discussed and exposed widely.

While the Internet was not intended as a medium for communication and personal expression (Baym, 2010), and social media are automatic systems also designed to track user

¹ This word is capitalized because it refers to a main concept that is distinguished from the individual discourses able to be performed in society.

activities and calculate their preferences using algorithms in order to offer experiences that can generate economic profitability, Social Network Sites (SNSs) encourage personal contact and connection between individuals and groups. Social media is therefore a user-centered technology that facilitates creative participation and collaborative activities among users through the promotion of ideas and thoughts. But, just as users influence others with their statements, networks and algorithms also affect the actions and thoughts of those who interact with them. In that way, hyper-connection immerses people in a crisis of belonging (Meikle, 2016) where they are willing need to participate and interact in social media as part of their socialization processes.

In that sense, Hinton & Hjorth (2013) suggested that it is tempting to think that social media platforms promote new democratization because they allow the penetration of power structures and ensure that information is produced and circulated from multiple voices. “This decentralization of the production of media content also decentralizes media control, which poses vast challenges for media companies that established their media empire based upon a monopoly over distribution” (Hinton & Hjorth, 2013, p. 22). Certainly, Social Media² empower the user who, when generating content and distributing it, disputes the power of the media corporations, usually in the hands of privileged white populations. However, it cannot be ignored that in order to participate in the sphere of Social Media it is necessary to resign some control over the user’s own data that will then be commodities over which new centers of power are established, based on the commercial logic of the new communication platforms. On the other hand, it should be acknowledged that while minorities and groups that are not satisfied with the status quo resort to Social Media as fundamental instruments of their empowerment (Anton

² I capitalize Social Media when I am referring to them as social institutions.

Mahfoud et al., 2020; Brock, 2016; Tufekci, 2017), the circulation of the Social Discourse is still orchestrated by the powerful groups that have all the forms of capital and all the access (Kemp, 2021a; T. A. van Dijk, 1994). At the end, the economic and ideological capital return to the elites and the exploitation system continues to enjoy good health, even in this new interactive sphere and, apparently, more openly democratic environment.

2. Defining Whiteness

Whiteness is a system and a way of enrolling in an invisible social dynamic, submerged in the unconscious of individuals, overlapping in such a way that to discover it, it is necessary to question it, subtracting it from the collective unconscious and exposing it in all its iniquity. As Nakayama & Martin (1999) point out, white people are uncomfortable recognizing themselves within a racialized category because they almost never face the need to define themselves in terms of their ethnicity or the color of their skin. When not defined racially, they occupy a naturalized position: “In news events, the racial identities of whites are rarely mentioned, whereas the racial identities of minorities are often noted” (Nakayama & Martin, 1999, p. 31).

At this point is important to highlight that Whiteness³ is about social and historical constructions that, on the one hand, justify the superiority of white people without any rational justification, and on the other, generate verifiable and palpable consequences within communities as they redistribute opportunities, wealth and prestige, and divide societies into complex systems of power (Dyer, 1997; Garner, 2007; Lipsitz, 2006; Roediger, 2007; Wray & Newitz, 1997). However, as Sansone (2003) pointed out, this construction “can vary in space and

³ I capitalize Whiteness when I refer to a social institution. I do not capitalize whiteness when I am interpreting it as a place, a behavior, an attitude or a physical characteristic.

time, and from one context to another” (2003, p. 11). In other words, ‘race’ is something mobile; it is not a fixed category, nor does it work in the same way in all contexts. Sometimes it can privilege people and sometimes it can be questioned, as the testimonies collected by Moreno Figueroa (2010) suggested. Indeed, it would be a methodological error to consider Whiteness outside its construction context, so it is necessary to establish the particularities of the society that is going to be studied and the influence of the digital media-sphere in the social practices of the mentioned society.

In every social order there are power structures that keep the system stable. As stated by Althusser (1971), the institutions--which we know as the family, the educational system, the mainstream media, the political system, among others— organize the society according to a complex Ideological Apparatus where the ruling classes retain the power and the exploited classes struggle to earn a position in the system. Then, to justify the structures of power and exploitation that reproduce Whiteness as ideology, the State Apparatus promulgates certain ideas through institutions like the educational system, the Mass Media, the religion, the army, the job market, and the family, that impacted the communities and favored the stigmatization of the different other. In such ways, fantasies or imagined narratives emerge to justify white supremacy fueled by fear and social anxiety (Gries & Bratta, 2019). That is, in order for power to remain in the hands of dominant groups, not only the elites but also other less privileged groups need to demonize non-white groups (Daniels, 1997; Guglielmo & Salerno, 2003; Roediger, 2007; Wray & Newitz, 1997). “White supremacy is an equal opportunity employer; nonwhite people can become active agents of white supremacy as well as passive participants in its hierarchies and rewards” (Lipsitz, 2006, p. viii). Therefore, according to Wander et al (1999)

it is necessary to expose the invisibility of Whiteness to find its mechanisms of domination and perpetuation. That is, Whiteness does not develop in isolation but in complex economic, productive, cultural, and social systems that need to be reviewed, even in nonwhite populations.

The process of Whiteness reproduction is extremely complex and has been perpetuated even before the emergence of the nation-state. In this regard, Anibal Quijano (2000) discussed the power groups have had, among their privileges, to rename conquered and exploited identities. In this sense, the colonizers stripped the conquered peoples of their names: Aztecs, Mayas, Incas, as well as Yorubas, Congos, Zulus, were reclassified as 'Indians' and 'Blacks' in order to make the new labor division successful. In this sense, for Quijano as well as for Lipsitz (2006), the construction of race itself is a matter strongly linked to economic and cultural capitalism where white people not only dominate production of goods but Discourse and rationales about why they own them.

To make it even clearer, being white is not an accidental event but is based on deep social structures that have given it embodiment since Colonialism. Being white implies being immersed in a structure of privileges that is systematically denied to non-whites. Historically, as Quijano (2000) & (1992) and Anderson (1991) pointed out, in continental America, Whiteness constituted one of the pillars of the nation-state, managing to homogenize identities and liquify disputes under a national ideology. However, each human group has its peculiarities, and therefore the process occurred in different ways in each country and established a valid point to consider the application of the Whiteness study in accordance with the idiosyncrasies of each society and the historical moment. For example, the United States, Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay established similar processes of separation between white and indigenous citizens,

which included deportation, segregation, and extermination of natives; however, possession of the land marked the difference between North Americans and South Americans. For Quijano (2000), the North American lands were distributed in a ‘more democratic’ way referring to the settlers, but in Argentina, especially, the concentration of large tracts of land in the hands of an elite, deepened social differences that have not yet been overcome. In countries such as Mexico and Bolivia the homogenization process was assumed through ‘miscegenation’ (El Colegio de México, 2015; Moreno Figueroa, 2010; Quijano, 2000; Solís et al., 2019) which is a contradictory process where people are included and excluded at the same time. To make it clearer, Mexico’s national state instituted around 57 native ethnic identities into their territory and labeled as citizens of the ‘Mexican nation’. However, in the daily practices there are certain hierarchies that distribute the power between white populations —surrounding a supposed European heritage— and the non-whites, privileging the former over the latter.

This issue about European heritage is a phenomenon that is reproduced continuously along the countries in continental America. That is, being white in Mexico is not the same as being white in Argentina, which is different from being white in the United States. It does not only have to do with skin color but with an attitude and a social practice (Ahmed, 2007; Gordillo, 2016; Lipsitz, 2006). Indeed, whiteness is a habit, and it is a place where individuals and their bodies inhabit, but it is also inherited in ways that impact material reality given opportunities and privileges to certain sectors of the population in detriment of many others. “Whiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it, or those who get so used to its inhabitation that they learn not to see it, even when they are not it” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 157). In that sense, everyone who does not comply with Whiteness expectations would experience concrete consequences in their daily

lives. Then, the question is what can be done to achieve more equanimous societies in terms of the distribution of power, access to the welfare of culture and participation in social and technological spheres?

According to Dyer (1997) and taking post-structuralist ideas, it is necessary that the groups and individuals that assume Whiteness begin their process of ‘deconstruction’ in which they start to be aware and question the privileges that, in capitalist societies, were presented as natural and normative. In this sense, we as society must stop thinking that Whiteness represents everything that is universal as a human being, and non-whites represent the exception that confirms the norm. We must, instead, assume that Whiteness is a social construction that guarantees privileges and capital for a social sector to the detriment of many others. We need to learn to identify it in our daily practices what reproduce and perpetuate it on a conscious or unconscious level. Likewise, it is imperative that we analyze it in the different institutions, but above all in the social media, because it is in them where their influence can grow exponentially and assume harmful and corrosive forms. Finally, and in the light of the so-called democratization of access and ease of communications, it is essential to evaluate Whiteness impact on Hispanic-American⁴ societies because they reflect, with greater or lesser fidelity, the actions of developed countries over economically vulnerable nations.

3. Twitter cultural relevance

Twitter is, in the words of Marwick and boyd, “a heavily-appropriated technology” (2010, p. 122) that people use to perform several activities, like recording their daily events and thoughts as if the medium is a personal diary, as well as a source of news, marketing channel, and

⁴ I use Hispanic-American instead of Latino to emphasize the root with Spanish language.

networking platform, among others. Moreover, people attract and negotiate multiple imagined audiences through the tweets they post to construct, curate, and cultivate a virtual identity, managing communicative and linguistic strategies by disclosing and obscuring information that presents them as interesting virtual personas worthwhile of being followed. Marwick and boyd argued that “the ideal audience is often the mirror-image of the user” (2010, p. 120) but many times the audience reached is out of the scope of what the speaker imagined. That is, their curated tweets are potentially able to be read by thousands of other users, creating new opportunities for connection, and that possibility of Discourse decentralization is the novelty that Twitter and Social Media in general introduced. In this sense, the users should manage their multiple-audience constructed virtual persona in a way that responds to an ‘authentic self’ central to maintaining the audiences engaged according to Marwick & boyd (2010), Maragh (2018) and Brock (2012a), where racial authenticity should be performed to preserve connections with the social group to which the user belongs. In this way, the virtual persona created is consistent with the offline practices of each individual who filters their online experiences through racial frames and beliefs (Brock, 2012a). Then, the opportunity of social participation allowed users to bring offline behaviors and expand them in the Social Media environment, mirroring daily private offline practices (Hensman Kettrey & Laster, 2014; Kanjere, 2018) and exposing them worldwide.

In that sense, 36.5% of the people in one survey declared that their principal use of Social Media is related to staying informed of being news and current events while 23.4% use them to express their opinion (Kemp, 2021a),. This, a trend was sustained for example during the 2019 Argentine presidential elections, where 70% of Argentine Twitter users were interested in

seeking information about politics on the platform and three quarters of them claimed to follow accounts related to news sources to be continuously informed (TelcosMedia, 2019). The case of Mexico is similar, where the most popular influencers are mostly politicians and journalists (Ramos, 2021) and the president Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador is followed by 8 million users and has his own hashtag #AMLO and his own space for accounting his government performance Monday to Friday at 7 AM. In this new cyber public sphere where people are eager to participate, studying Twitter is crucial because it “provides a window on contemporary society as such, at national and global levels” (Puschmann et al., 2014, p. 426) and redefines, along with other Social Media and virtual artifacts, the field of studying culture and society now with the incorporation of Internet emergent mediums. In that sense, most digital data available for research purposes in the different Social Media APIs (Application Programming Interface) were collected while the users were focusing on performing the diverse activities the platform proposed: tweeting, reacting, favoriting, reading, posting. In consequence, according to Veltri, the big data now available through social media, is “better suited to capture behavioral information than traditional social scientific instruments” (2020, p. 17) like focus groups, surveys or interviews where the participants, being aware of being studied, control part of the answers they give to researchers (Fiesler & Proferes, 2018). Indeed, Veltri (2020) is not suggesting that traditional self-reported data is useless; however, studying big data —like those obtained through Twitter API—amplifies the scope to understand complex phenomena happening in Social Media.

In this respect, Rogers (2013) asks the question “How to consider Twitter as substantive (and thus is it worthy of serious use and study)? Or does it only offer the banal?” (2013, p. 2).

According to the author, research on Twitter evolved from studying tweets as private, superficial, and immediate expressions to analyzing their operation in emergency situations, world events and as an instrument for revolution⁵—or for insurrections as Bolivia’s 2019 coup d’état, I would add (Gallagher, 2019; Rogers, 2013; Tufekci, 2017). In this sense, although much of what happens on Twitter could be labeled as ‘small talk’ (Rogers, 2013), what we say on a daily basis that comes directly from our cultural conceptions, the social system in which we participate and from our vision of reality tinged with our prejudices, fears, and hopes. As André Brock (2012a) argued, many times cultural conceptions linked to ethnicity configure and shape the use that communities make of Twitter.

Then, although potentially it could be used by all sort of publics, I argue that Twitter has its own audience that is significantly different from other that interact in other platforms. In fact, Twitter is worldwide ranked 16th among the most used Social Media platforms with 353 million accounts while Facebook is at the top with almost 3 billion accounts. Of course, many users possibly are active in both platforms, but certainly each Social Media meets different users’ objectives in agreeing with the platform’s particular affordances and constraints. In turn, among Argentine users of Social Media—considering WhatsApp Groups, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat (Carrier, 2019)—Twitter is in 4th place of preference with over 5 million users (Kemp, 2021c) whose ages correspond mostly to centennials⁶ and millennials of middle and upper-classes from urban areas, characteristics that clearly distinguish Twitter from Facebook, whose use “tends to grow as the socioeconomic level decreases” (Carrier, 2019, para. 4). In the

⁵ See Tufekci’s work about Arab Spring in Twitter and the tear gas (Tufekci, 2017)

⁶ Centennials are the cohort born between 1995 and 2010 whose older members are now beginning to integrate into the job market. They are the first generation who spent their entire life in the Internet era so companies are starting to explore their consumer habits that may differ from millennials’ (Entrepreneur Staff, 2020).

case of Mexico, Twitter reports 11 million accounts (Kemp, 2021b), which is 10% of the total of Social Media users (Kemp, 2021c), and the profile of the users follows the same patterns as in Argentina, the users are mostly centennial and millennial from the highest income sectors (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, 2018; Romo de la Cruz, 2020).

From that, I claim that Twitter in Argentina and Mexico is most popular among white elites who construct their virtual personas in opposition to those considered non-white popular sectors and for that reason it is worthwhile studying Twitter as a cultural artifact where the elites from those countries display their vision of the world in accordance with racial and cultural conceptions, following Brock's (2012a) arguments. The fact that the elites (as the groups that have held power for decades because they access a large number of discourses) possess the Discourse on Twitter implies a power of action over the entire social sphere (T. A. van Dijk, 1994). Then, elites' presence should be tracked, researched and analyzed because if they are the ones who dominate the Discourse they "define who can speak, about what and when" (T. A. van Dijk, 1994, p. 10) as a way for holding the power, preserving their privileges and maintaining the status quo.

Although Twitter's Discourse is monopolized by privileged sectors, still this is not to say that there is no diversity, but it seems remarkable that "The governments of only four countries do not have a Twitter presence, namely Laos, North Korea, Sao Tome and Principe and Turkmenistan" (BCW, 2020a) and the presidents of both countries in this study, Andrés Manuel López Obrador @lopezobrador and Alberto Fernández @alferdez, are among the 50 world leaders with most followers (BCW, 2020b). In this sense, according to the Twiplomacy study (BCW, 2016), "Twitter is the social media channel of choice for governments and foreign

ministries judging by the number of governments on the platform” and each leader maintains a careful agenda on Twitter since they speak to the Media, other politicians, businessmen, opinion leaders and professionals

Twitter gains increasing popularity as public diplomacy mean. Its popularity amongst states leaders, governments and other institutions can be explained not only by facilitation of the dialogue between politicians and wider audience people but also by the fact that this public diplomacy mean helps to introduce foreign policy goals and to develop certain image of state. (Dumčiuvienė, 2016, p. 98)

In short, they speak to the elites of their countries and the world. In other words, elites do not organize power randomly but rather through hierarchies in which whites are at the top while racialized individuals are displaced towards the bottom of the social pyramid. That is why in the supposedly post-racial 21st Century it is extremely important to address the functioning of Twitter in our hyperconnected societies: to dismantle the whiteness promulgated from the sectors in power that is now also spread in virtual spaces. The popularity of Twitter among social researchers is related to the availability of the data facilitates the study of the platform, although researching tweets has important limitations, biases and ethical problems linked to Twitter’s policies and business models as well as users’ demographics that should be considered and balanced cautiously (Fiesler & Proferes, 2018). Nevertheless, it is still important to explore the platform and decide “to what extent it is possible to use the study of Twitter as a lens through which we may observe contemporary society” (Puschmann et al., 2014, p. 427). These are lenses that are not more perfect than other mediums, continue the authors, and have blind spots, but whose contribution can be combined with those of other forms of communication to create a

bigger picture that reflects contemporary societies. Even though the metaphors of the lenses seem fair to me, I prefer to consider Twitter—and the various virtual communication environments—as mirrors that reflect society and that have the same limitations as material mirrors, derived from their shape, the manufacture, and the angle in which the light is reflected. Then, the methods to approach their study are ways of casting light on the crystallized surfaces to distinguish lights and shadows of contemporary societies, recording their performances in real time, building a living history of which we are also protagonists as in the most cherished dreams of Bertolt Brecht.⁷

4. About this Dissertation

The essence of this project includes proving virtual environments, such as Twitter should be included along with traditional spaces in the dynamic of reproduction of Whiteness. If before the Internet era, Whiteness was reproducing through the whole set of practices that take place within a community: in the family, at school, in books, in science, in labor relations, in religion, in art, in cinema, in the mass media (Berger et al., 2004; Daniels, 1997; Guaraná, 2018; Kerr, 2017; Roediger, 2007; Wiegman, 1999), in sum the set of practices that are contained in Social Discourse, then Twitter is also a practice in a community. These practices that privilege certain groups of individuals to the detriment of others have an ideological background that was explored by theorists and scholars in the United States. In this sense, Lipsitz (2006) develops the concept of “possessive investment in whiteness” and how people who assume the social position of this whiteness build and rebuild their own affiliation. This investment is cultural and involves

⁷ I am speaking here particularly of the poem “Questions from a Worker who Reads” (Brecht, 1935) that challenges the traditional conception of the so-called Main History.

the network of relationships that individuals establish, the places they visit, the schools where they educate their children, among other daily rituals. In turn, it also relates to the privileges that participants in Whiteness try to protect at the expense of other cultural classes. However, racial and social privileges have been taking place in communities around the world and have characteristics rooted in their ways of building culture (Aidoo, 2018; Alberto & Elena, 2016; Guaraná, 2018; Kerr, 2017; Moreno Figueroa & Saldívar Tanaka, 2016; Quijano, 2000; Sansone, 2003).

Then, I argue that, among other rituals, societies in Hispanic-America continually perform whiteness practices that are now exposed worldwide through Social Media interactions, and it is worthwhile to approach some of them and problematize their structure, as through an artificial and purely scholastic mechanism we can dissect them to observe closely. I also claim, agreeing with Livio Sansone (2003), that globalization produces new multicultural identities and new forms of racism where Hispanic-American societies are mirroring the United States' cultural influence. Then, I argue that by collecting tweets corresponding to users from Argentina and Mexico, I will be able to glimpse cultural characteristics linked to their social imaginary that are constructed under whiteness performativity.

In the following chapters I will be analyzing the tweets obtained from the samples and some of them will be illustrating the arguments I will be articulating. However, when I analyze a tweet, I will not be judging the user in their individuality; rather, I prefer to interpret it as an example of a society that has made the circulation of Whiteness possible. In addition, I will be reproducing the tweets as-is in the original regional Spanish preserving the grammar and the spelling that the speaker made to avoid altering the meaning or introducing external elements

that the speaker did not foresee. In doing that I am aware that that direct quotation means the text of the posts can be searched in the Twitter platform, but not by directly naming users or linking posts, I add a level of protection to avoid exposing individual posters to scrutiny they may not have anticipated. In turn, the English translation will be available along with the original post with emendations as needed for clarity. Explaining the whole universe of meanings that a little text like a tweet may contain can be challenging so I will provide the necessary contextual explanations, to allow the reader enter these idiosyncratic dimensions.

4.1. The selection of keywords

As I established when defining Whiteness in the above, it is very unlikely that people considered white would define themselves in such terms in everyday life because being white is a sort of a synonym of being ‘normal,’ natural or ‘regular people’. However, they can distinguish themselves from non-white people and establish the differences in a process that most of the time runs at an unconscious level. On the other hand, finding evidence of whiteness in everyday Twitter conversation would require managing certain *sutilezas del lenguaje* [subtleties of language] to decode between the lines the nuances of white supremacy that are sedimented under several layers of cultural shaping. In consequence, I proposed to go in a reverse direction, finding white people and whiteness behaviors through what they say they are not. This is, according to the alterity attached to negative moral values they project in others.

From a whole set of possibilities, that I carefully measured using my own cultural heritage, and terms suggested by Mexican and Argentine people through informal conversations, I conducted a pilot collection using TAGS, a free access tool for collecting tweets from the last 7 days (Hawksey, 2021). Afterward, I decided to select *pinche prieto* as the keyword for finding

Mexican users and *negro de mierda* as the keyword for finding Argentine users. The selection was based on meanings that contains black ≠ white distinction and the associated ideas: light> European> superior> civilized vs. Dark> non-European> inferior> underdeveloped.

The word *prieto* means “*de piel morena, trigueño* [brown-skinned, brunette]” (Gómez de Silva, 2001, p. 182) while “*trigueño /a*” is a euphemism for not saying ‘black’, according to Aguiló (Fuentes, 2018); it is like saying dark or brown and in this refers to the idea of pigmentocracy (Lipschutz, 1944; Telles, 2014; Vargas Cervantes, 2015) that will be developed in the next chapter. I decided to combine the word *pinche* with *prieto* conforming *pinche prieto* because it is an idiomatic expression that only Mexican people use. *Pinche* according to the Short Dictionary of Mexicanisms (Gómez de Silva, 2001) means despicable and is described as “inappropriate expression of cultured or educated people, which offends the ears of people of good taste” (2001: 4); then, it is rude, and it is not said in formal situations. Besides, another interesting thing is that it is an adjective placed always before the noun. In Spanish, qualifying adjectives in general can be placed before or after the noun, but *pinche* is used necessarily before the noun, never after.

In turn, in the Argentine social imaginary the presence of the dark is directly marked by the word *negro* [black], and its euphemisms – *oscuro* [dark], *oscurito* [little dark], *negrito* [little black], *trigueño* [brunette], *pardo* [brown, dark], *morocho* [dark hair], *cabecita negra* [black head], *marrón* [brown]. However, as an Argentine citizen knowledgeable of her own culture, I combined *negro* with the very pejorative *de mierda* [shitty] which means in Alejandro Mamaní’s words: “The linguist Saussure speaks of signifier / signified. How do you translate that binomial when you say ‘*negro de mierda*’ [shitty black]? The meaning clearly refers to a person from the

poor neighborhoods, from the margins, low-income, marginal” (2020, para. 3). In this sense, as Ignacio Aguiló pointed out in an interview with Fuentes (Fuentes, 2018), the concept of *negro* [black] “implies social status and lack of proper behavior” (2018, pt. 18' 40"). From all this we can infer that a *negro de mierda* is not a proper citizen, but quite the opposite. In addition, in the social imaginary these individuals are associated with poverty, marginalization, and uncivilization. I want to clarify that *negro de mierda* is not an expression of exclusive use in Argentina; however, the meanings that I described above are only attributable to the Argentine social imaginary. In turn, there are other patterns that allow me to distinguish if a tweet was generated by an Argentine. These are related to the conjugation of verbs and the use of 'vos' instead of 'tu' when referring to the 2nd person singular. At the same time, I also resort to clearly Argentine words, as I will distinguish in the next section. To this is added the presence of links with events that occur at the social level, geographies, habits, customs. Finally, when possible, I turned to the original post looking for traces that would indicate the author's national origin. In that sense, if a text is a node in a network of meanings (Foucault, 2004) *negro de mierda* or *pinche prieto* have their own and exclusive connotations linked to the context of use. Because the Twitter API does not collect —or at least it does not share— accurate data on the geographical location of its users, I must rely on my knowledge of the Spanish language and the experience that I have with the culture of both countries to find the linguistic clues attached within each tweet that represent very specific aspects that are part of these language subtleties that distinguish the speakers of both countries. In the case of Twitter’s users, they still can choose to disclose or not their location in their profile, an issue that posed a limitation for my scraping tool. In addition, the coordinated geo-localization is still imprecise: “Billions of tweets that all report

the same coordinate of the centroid of New York City renders mapping attempts futile”(The GDELT Project, 2020, para. 35). Therefore, although the Twitter API does not allow geolocation, I can interpret them from the tweets themselves, drawing on contextual references, idioms, and articulations to find texts generated by Argentines and Mexicans and distinguish them from others proposed by users of other nationalities, considering that Twitter is “a medium whose style is closer to oral than written communication” (Puschmann et al., 2014, p. 427) implying that on Twitter people write as they speak, with the same cadence, silences, abbreviations, tacit references that can be noticed in subsequent chapters.

According to my observations, although the comments obtained for both keywords contain high doses of racism, classism, supremacism, dehumanization, and eliminationism, they will be observed as symptomatic of Whiteness’s prevalence underlying social organizations. The speakers that are making these assumptions are not really aware of the profound violence and harm those little tweets represent, they are only repeating, reproducing, and spreading what was given to them in their socialization processes where we as individuals capture everything good and everything bad that our society of origin creates. There we apprehend mental constructions, values, ideas, perspectives on the past as well as who is to blame for the place we occupy in the world scheme. In this sense, each member of a society has the potential to display everything learned in their socialization processes in each act of daily life (Castoriadis, 1997).

I decided to adopt and adjust notions developed for Teun van Dijk (2014) after he pointed out that using Critical Discourse Analysis, researchers are able to highlight inequalities within a society, but not only to describe but to understand why problems such as racism and whiteness are reproduced still today in communities around the globe after experiencing situations such as the Indigenous exterminations, African slavery, and the Holocaust. According to the author, although the racism of regular people is

expressed in a forceful and concrete way, for example, in a street exchange of insults, the racism of the elites functions in a less visible and more diffuse way through the domain of the Social Discourse. The issue that differentiates the elites from the regular citizens is that the former have access to many more discourses than the latter and have the power and the resources to generate and circulate ideas. The ultimate goal of the elites is to maintain the status quo and sectorize the social fabric to continue maintaining their privileges. Then, it is important to understand that in a society where everyone could truly exercise all their rights, it would not be an unequal society, but quite the opposite. Unfortunately, there are no human societies that today can declare themselves free from inequalities. However, the Critical Analysis of the Discourse allows us at least to unmask the strategies of the elites and unmask how they operate in the everyday in order to stop participating in their discursive performances.

In turn, the notions developed by André Brock (Brock, 2016) inspired the connection of the Critical Discourse Analysis applied to digital technologies, considering that Twitter is not a neutral mechanical platform rather a cultural artifact that urges us to scholarly intervention to unravel the implications in the social fabric. If before we humanists analyzed fixed texts on a support, today we witness ephemeral texts that last a few seconds before being replaced by others in an endless overfall and that is also history, leaving their testimonies in real time.

Then, the study of Social Media is important and should not be ignored or trivialized, because each one of the tweets is clothed with prejudices, symbolic charges, and points of view, reflections that evoke a whole human group and the struggles for power which are truly battles for the dominance of Discourse.

4.2. Data collection

My data consists of two samples of tweets from 01/01/2020 to 07/31/2020 collected using a scraping software developed in the UCF Center for Humanities and Digital Research (Giroux, 2020) using the two keyword phrases that I described above.

Initially, the software collected the tweets and placed them on a csv file per each keyword that later were converted to .xlsx files. Then the software collected 5288 tweets related to the *pinche prieto* keyword, which might contain both words —*pinche & prieto*— arranged together or separated and 59995 tweets related to the *negros de mierda* keyword, which might contain the three words —*negros & de & mierda*— arranged together or separated. In awareness of that, I filtered the tweets using MS Excel (Simonyie, 2012) and extracted only those containing the keyword as it is stipulated. I put them in a separate spreadsheet and asked the software to erase the repetitions caused by retweets in an intent to minimize the influence of bots. After that, I obtained 2408 tweets that contained the keyword *pinche prieto* and 16836 tweets that contained the keyword *negros de mierda*.

Table 1 Tweets collected per keyword

keywords	Initial results from the scraping tool	Total sample after filtering
<i>pinche prieto</i>	5288 tweets	2408 tweets
<i>negro de mierda</i>	59995 tweets	16836 tweets

Then, I put the resulting samples in Orange (Demsar et al., 2013) to create a first word-cloud per each keyword and visualize the more frequently used words. The objective was to get a general idea of the topics present in the tweets and the ideas they evoked. As it can be observed in Figure 1, the left word-cloud is linked to *pinche prieto* and the right word-cloud is related to *negros de mierda*. Still from this general vision it could be inferred that each one belongs to different Spanish speakers from the use of regional words like: *naco*, *chingas*, *mames* in the left and *chorros*, *pelotudos*, *chetos* in the right.



Figure 1 Comparative of both keywords word-clouds

After creating the word clouds and identifying among the more frequently used words those related to whiteness, I returned to MS Excel (Simonyie, 2012) and filtered the tweets a second time placing them in different sheets as in figure 2. The objective for doing this is reducing the noise observed in the general word-cloud and establishing topics related to whiteness. Below, figure 2 shows the content of the individual sheet “*resentido* [resentful] composed by 52 tweets that contain that word. Part of the pinche *prieto* keyword’ sample was organized in 28 filters to make a first approximation to the content.

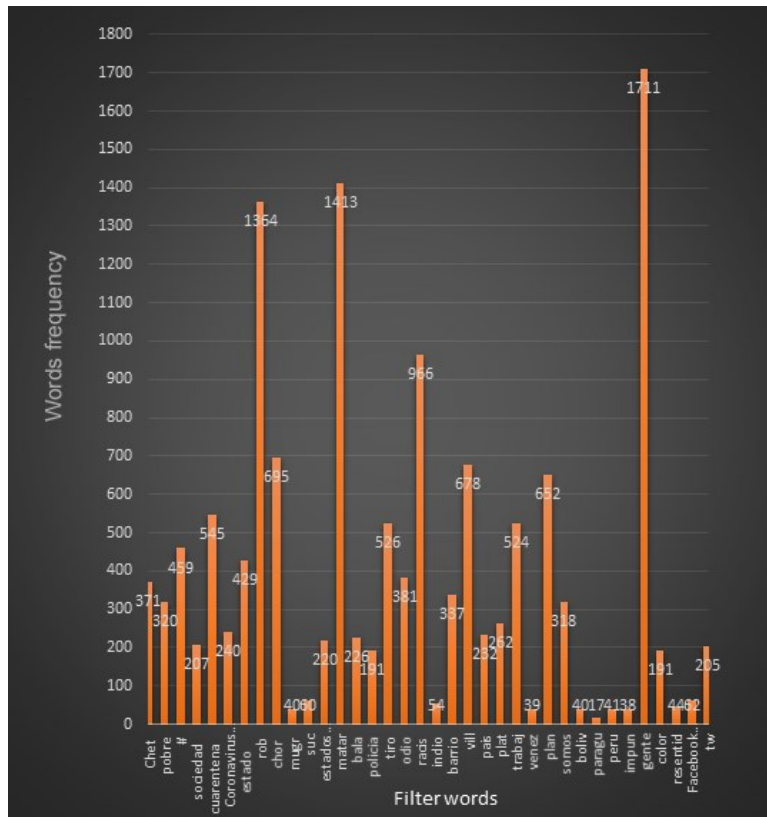


Figure 5 Frequent words chart of negros de mierda keyword sample

As I was analyzing the samples of both keywords, I began to observe references that suggested ties to the United States. Then Then I created a sheet for those tweets in the general spreadsheets belonging to each keyword along with the other filtered words that I explained above. From that I obtained two sub-samples that I placed in a new .xlsx file belonging to both the general sample of tweets from Argentina and those from Mexico.

The filters that I applied for obtaining United States references were:

From the Mexican sample:

- ‘racis’ which is the root of the words *racismo*, *racista*, *racistas*. [racism, racist, racists]
- ‘gring’ which is the root of the words *gringo*, *gringa*, *gringos*, *gringas*, which is the most common way in which citizens of the United States are called.

- The words “Estados Unidos”, “EUA”, “EE.UU.”, “USA” were the filters to obtain tweets that directly pointed out the relationship with the U.S.
- “black” was the filter to find #blacklivesmatter since many times this hashtag was written in another way, such as “blacklivedmatter” or it was located as a phrase with spaces between words “black lives matter” and not as a hashtag. In turn, with this filter I also found “blackOutTuesday”.
- “Facebook”, “FB” & “bane” —root of *banear* or *banearon* an adaptation of “banned”— to find criticism of the hate speech regulations applied by this social media that prevent the use of keywords.

Within the Argentina sample was also used “racis” as a filter with identical results. But to identify the citizens of the United States it was used “yank” as root of *yanki*, *yankee*, *yanky*, *yankies*, *yankilandia*. To identify the name of the United States, the same words were used as in Mexico, as well as to identify #blacklivesmatter.

Certainly, some tweets could simultaneously combine several of the filters, so I removed the repetitions. As a result, 113 tweets were obtained that constituted the Mexican sub-sample about the United States and 381 formed the Argentine sub-sample.

4.3. *Data analysis*

After doing that, the next step was deducing the **umbrella concepts** that might cluster frequent words. These umbrella concepts that were deduced after close reading are ideas that may not be explicit in the syntaxis of the tweet but are present in the meaning. From them, I created **content labels** that I applied to classify the samples. The umbrella concepts in the *pinche prieto* keyword sample are: Barbara del Regil, beauty/ugliness, BLM, hypocrisy,

dehumanization, eliminationism, explanation, fragility, incapacity, Indian, to infer, reverse, irony, no-rights, normalization, poor/vulgar, politics, racism, resentful/self-conscious, dirtiness, supremacism, and Tenoch. Then, I returned to the general sample of 2408 tweets and started to read each one of them and label them using the content labels, establishing one principal umbrella concept present in the tweet and up to 2 secondary umbrella concepts.

The quantity of collected tweets by keyword supposed a different way for constructing the sample for applying Critical Discourse Analyses. While the selection of tweets for the *pinche prieto* CDA was made by hand, in the *negros de mierda* case I resorted to the selection proposed by Orange Software (Demsar et al., 2013) automatic tools. So, I put the whole sample in the software, and I asked the program to select 310 tweets. I estimated that around 300 tweets were a reasonable number to be analyzed in depth, but I considered that some of them may be eliminated for reasons like discovering language that may not belong to Argentine users; then the 10 extra tweets allow for the margin of error. After eliminating the ones that were doubtful to me, 298 tweets were finally left in the sample. This first close reading allowed me deducing **umbrella concepts** and develop the **content labels** for classifying this sample which are: BLM hypocrisy; *chetos*, covid 19, dehumanization, U.S.; state/taxes; explanation; eliminationism; figure of speech; hypocrisy; incapability/ignorance; injustice/justice, irony; dissatisfaction/protest; no rights; normalization; politics; projection/conditional; racism; resentment, supremacism; xenophobia. Then, I returned to the sample of 298 tweets and started to label them using the content labels, also establishing one principal umbrella concept and up to two secondary umbrella concepts.

Finally, I classified the relevance of each tweet to later analyze them using Critical Discourse Analysis adapting notions developed by Teun van Dijk (1994) and André Brock (2016). The relevance criteria correspond to the capacity of the tweet to comply with most of the next features:

- complexity: it involves more than two umbrella concepts in different levels of predominance.
- narrativity: have one proto story present. Tweets have a limited quantity of characters; in consequence, sometimes the sentences are incomplete or lack a conjugated verb or use ellipsis. Because of that, many times, the text acquires complete sense only in the reader's mind. This means the texts need the participation of the reader for their meaning. Then, in most cases, we cannot find a complete developed story of three acts in less than 300 characters, but the intent of a story or a proto story.
- social imaginary: it implies ideas about the way of being or behaving as a national group.
- memory: it involves the speaker in some level of participation.
- summary: the contents of the tweet recall or synthesize the content of other tweets in the same sample.
- social media awareness: it includes references to the media environment (@, #, rt, words such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram).

As I already established in section 3, tweets are very similar to spoken language and therefore contain many implicit references, ironies, and twists of language. In this sense, I find it more productive to trust the relevance of the tweet from the umbrella concepts than the frequency of the words. In this sense, I believe that the frequency of the words is essential to

paint a general panorama and approach the analysis, but the concepts derived in the form of umbrella concepts are in charge of discovering the deep meanings and the links with the social imaginary and collective beliefs.

5. Chapter outline

The Dissertation will be unfolded as following: in chapter 2, I will argue that whiteness ideas work by naturalized racialization of people in Mexican society. Social mobility then is a confluence between color, physical characteristics, social class, and education that gives individuals a place in the social hierarchy. In that sense, calling someone *pinche prieto* implies the comparison of their skin with nasty things. However, it goes beyond that; it deploys a meaning chain that begins by reducing people to sub humanity and finishes by stating the superiority of the whiter and powerful elites over the society itself, devoting all resources to maintaining the privilege of a few.

In chapter 3, the discussion on Twitter about the *negros de mierda* will be about how non-whites affect the interests of those who dominate the Discourse. From their vision, everything that impedes the development of the country will always be the fault of those who do not represent the ideal of a progressive white and European nation. In this way, public opinion on Twitter becomes a constant battle between two sides, those who do not want to be *negros de mierda* because of what it symbolizes—not being white and civilized Argentines—and those who do not believe that this model of Argentinity should remain current in the 21st Century where multiculturalism and respect for diversity is the new paradigm.

In chapter 4, I will articulate the relationship between the US and Mexico and between the US and Argentina since I argue that the United States exerts a material and symbolic influence on both countries where it operates as a point of comparison and indicates a model of social organization. In this sense, the United States becomes both a cultural beacon and a counterpart that underpins the national identity of each of these countries while spreading its influence in a vertical way.

Finally, the conclusion in chapter 5 will synthesize the findings and the importance of strengthening Whiteness studies from outside the United States, problematizing the role of Hispanic-American scholars.

CHAPTER 2: BEING *PRIETO*: THE COMPLICATED REALITY OF *MESTIZAJE*

In 2011, I was offered a fellowship from the *Instituto Superior de Estudios y Tecnológico de Monterrey (Tec. de Monterrey)* for pursuing a master's degree. At that time, the *Tec. de Monterrey* was trying to expand its influence in South America. Their experience was successful in Peru, so now they were trying to attract people from Argentina who were willing to study in a virtual campus modality. After their invitation, I took an exam that was in a convention center in The Sheraton Hotel in Cordoba, Argentina, and weeks later I attended a meeting in a private university to learn more about the program I was planning to attend. At that moment, that hotel and the university were the most expensive in town. I did not realize then what they were trying to say, but now, under the point of view of Whiteness, they were surely pointing out the kind of people they wanted to attract.

I am not saying that *Tec. de Monterrey*, who generously encouraged me to continue studying, are a fortress of white supremacy; I am stating that whiteness is performed even in the education system, distributing access to knowledge, and constructing elites. Further, Whiteness is transnational and seeks to connect the elites around the world. For that reason, it is so important to acknowledge that we are living in a system that performs white privilege in every situation and there is no such thing as innocent acts or cultural behaviors that are neutral to that problem; on the contrary, many actions we perform everyday are imbued with racialization and prejudices against those who are not considered white and regular people. Nevertheless, Whiteness is a pervasive and invisible system. As Richard Dyer (1997) stated,

Whiteness is omnipresent yet invisible because it is everywhere and nowhere all at once." (West, 2005, p. 386). It is so internalized and naturalized within the culture that it circulates without being questioned until somehow, either for personal reasons or because external events motivate people to review the naturalized racism in which they have played up to that moment, someone acquires an attitude of 'estrangement'".

This chapter will analyze the keyword *pinche prieto*, which is a derogative term that can be translated as ‘fucking dark’ and is part of the everyday vernacular language, to understand how Mexican society continues constructing prejudices regarding a complex sort of characteristics where skin color is one of the most prevalent, to maintain its own racial system where some of them, usually the lighter skinned, are the most privileged ones, and the dark ones are the most vulnerable and marginalized.

The sample of tweets, analyzed and organized by topic in this chapter, often include several overlapping themes, since they are very concise texts that in a few words give an account of the reality and the thinking of the speakers. In this sense, I have integrated them into my argument as examples of an incessant conversation that occurs within our societies where intertextuality is the way we communicate with others. Then, the sections that follow are part of a complex thought process that is seldom linear, but that attempts to explain the social cognitive patterns that are glimpsed behind the words.

1. Mestizaje, a living myth

In this section I would like to dwell on the myths that constitute the Mexican identity and how they interact with the collected tweets. As I stated in chapter one, in Mexico, the predominant myth that allowed the State to establish a national identity was *mestizaje* [miscegenation]. According to Moreno Figueroa (2010), *mestizaje* operates in two senses, as a hegemonic ideology that tries to create the illusion that all Mexicans are equal and, simultaneously, as a racist logic that distributes privileges and exclusions on a day-to-day basis.

The *National Survey on Discrimination in Mexico* the National Survey on Discrimination ENADIS 2010⁸ (CONAPRED, 2011)⁹ showed that the *mestizaje* myth is still effective. According to the survey,

⁸ *Encuesta Nacional sobre Discriminación*

⁹ The National Council to Prevent Discrimination

57% of the participants consider that in general in Mexico people are treated equally regarding their skin color in daily interactions. In other words, almost 6 out of 10 people believe that there is no discrimination for color of the skin in the country.

Moreno Figueroa insists that racism in Mexico is real and it is experienced in a dynamic that she calls “distributed intensity” (2010, p. 389). That is, Mexican people fluctuate between not recognizing racism per se and experiencing it as part of their daily life, to feeling and manifesting intense racism when specific circumstances allow its expression and emergence. Moreno Figueroa called this expression of racism a “racist moment” (2010, p. 389). These racist moments could emerge in any circumstances, even in the most banal, but there are racist moments that capture massive attention, either because they are replicated over and over again in the media or because they emerge from the social media themselves and are subjected to public scrutiny. I argue that in the tweets collected it is possible to identify racist moments that lead to analyzing the whiteness that is inserted and spread by social media. In that sense, social media works as a vessel of racist expressions naturalized inside the culture, because neither artifact created within a culture could remain outside the cultural praxis of the people. In that sense, it is important to remember that the collection of the tweets for this project took place from January to July of 2020. In that period, the murder of George Floyd led to a worldwide questioning of all the racist practices that operate in each society every day. Through the hashtag #blacklivesmatter, the massive outcry against police brutality and discriminatory practices was discussed in social media and, also, depicted in the sample in the way that Mexican users interpret the fact in their own context.

1.1. Racism is not here

During my scraping of the *pinche prieto* keyword, I found some comments that insisted on declaring that saying *prieto* is normal, refers to cultural dispositions, and its use does not contain racism. Nevertheless, I perceived in the tweets of this sub-section a certain normalizing spirit when using the expression *pinche prieto*. Sometimes it is taken as a descriptive term, sometimes as part of a cultural

heritage, sometimes it is even a warm and friendly term. Somehow, racism seems to have nuances that justify its use.

Eso depende del contexto de cómo es usada la palabra no es lo mismo decir “qué onda mi prieto” a decir “pinche prieto” puede ser un apodo de cariño, una ofensa o simplemente referirse a una parte más oscura del cuerpo.

[That depends on the context of how the word is used. It is not the same to say “what's up my *prieto*” to saying “pinche *prieto*”. It can be a nickname of affection, an offense or simply refer to a darker part of the body] (tweet 803) ¹⁰

This tweet illustrates how *prieto* is a mobile term, which can be used with different degrees of affection towards the non-white other, and *pinche prieto* would be the expression of minimal affection. In that sense the speaker agrees with Pérez (2013) who explains that *prieto* (fem. *prieta*) sometimes is used pejoratively to describe someone with darker skin, in comparison with others who are lighter, although often it is also used as a term of affection, for example if someone says *mi prietito* [my little dark one].

Certainly, it can be perceived that for the users who created the tweets contained in this section it is normal and part of the culture to call someone a *pinche prieto* and it would not constitute an offense. However, I notice some discomfort in the statements, as if it is problematic to face the questioning. In this regard, according to Solis et al (2019) daily discrimination practices are key in the reproduction of inequality in Mexico and affect the population in a

¹⁰ All tweet spellings and abbreviations are reproduced as-is in Spanish, with emendations in brackets as needed for clarity when they are translated to English. I am aware that direct quotation means the text of the posts can be searched in the Twitter platform, but by not directly naming users or linking posts, I add a level of protection to avoid exposing individual posters to scrutiny they may not have anticipated.

transversal way, with those individuals who have darker skin and / or exhibit characteristics related to ethnicity (language, clothing, and place of origin), and belong to lower social strata being more vulnerable. According to the authors, discriminatory practices include those that have cumulative effects on the personal lives of the people who suffer them “involving nicknames, insults, contempt, and disregard” (Solís et al., 2019: 3). Then, using *pinche prieto* is part of those discriminatory practices.

*Soy un pinche prieto!... Es autodescrimación?... Es autoracismo?... O es narcisismo?...
Lo que sea, nada de esto lo tomo a pecho; porque mi idiosincracia supera las Mentadas
de Madre, esto señores PORQUE SOY PARTE DE UN PUEBLO PICARO,
SACARSTICO, DE HUMOR NEGRO Y SENSIBLE.*

[I'm a *pinche prieto*! ... Is it self-discrimination? ... Is it self-racism? Or is it narcissism? ... Whatever, I do not take any of this personally; because my idiosyncrasy surpasses the insults; that is gentlemen BECAUSE I AM PART OF A NAUGHTY AND SARCASTIC PEOPLE, WITH SENSITIVITY FOR BLACK HUMOR]. (tweet 633)

Here the speaker states that saying *pinche prieto* is part of cultural idiosyncrasy of Mexicans as if it were a linguistic game that everyone understands and that no one offends. In fact, according to the text, anyone could call himself/herself a *prieto/a* without this implying any discriminatory act. In that sense, the speaker seems not to be aware of the symbolic power contained in words that reference blackness.

It is important to consider how the concept of race has been mutating from the questioning of scientific racism that occurred after World War II and is currently a combination of biological

and cultural aspects. Many times, the cultural characteristics that allow racializing and discriminating against certain groups are considered as something immutable. However, sometimes Whiteness allows social mobility through the acquisition of certain cultural assets, such as reaching higher educational levels or achieving an improvement in economic position through the professionalization of employment. (Back & Zavala, 2017). In some ways, the social group rewards the adaptation of individuals to the social game that implies assuming the hierarchies of Whiteness and investing in them (Back & Zavala, 2017; Lipsitz, 2006).

However, one of the characteristics of Whiteness is that it is invisible, naturalized and settled in the minds of the participants of the culture. They assume it as a "must be" and incorporate it as an unquestionable social order as if things naturally flow in that direction and Whiteness was not an ideological construct. But when something questions that status quo as happened after the death of George Floyd and the hashtag #blacklivesmatter on the trending topic, users are motivated to question whether the social structure to which they are attached allows the exclusion and discrimination of certain social groups and who these marginalized people are. Moreno Figueroa & Saldívar Tanaka (2016) argue that Mexican society perceives itself as raceless because the general idea is that all are mestizo and differ from societies such as the United States where the races are well differentiated. In this sense, this resistance to identifying racialization within Mexican society led to users who complained that on Twitter "*uy ya están como en USA, todo lo vuelven racismo* [you are already like in the USA, you make everything racism] (tweet 825). Some of them established very clear contextual differences per country and in the intention of the people that perform de racialization.

No adoptemos broncas que no son de nosotros. En Estados Unidos decirle negro a un negro, es delito y te llevan a la corte. Aquí en Mexico decirle negro a un pinche prieto pinacate es pura camaradería, así es que no vengan a mamar con broncas ajenas.

#NoMamar

[Let's not take fights that are not ours. In the United States, calling a black man black is a crime and they take you to court. Here in Mexico to say black to a pinche prieto pinacate¹¹ is pure camaraderie, so do not come to bother with other people's fights. #NoFuck] (tweet 907)

In this sense, it seems that the belief that it is punishable in the United States gives a dimension of existence to racism, an institutional reality, while in Mexico doing so is a friendly act according to some user's posts. In this pretense of racelessness, the author of tweet 907 calls the *pinche prieto* a beetle when he/she uses the word *pinacate*, which means odorous black bug. The speaker does it with total impunity, saying: "that is pure camaraderie" and finally he/she takes off the seriousness of the matter with the chosen hashtag.

Solís et al. (2019) also point out that in Mexico, people tend to use principles of social classification based on racial criteria to identify others and themselves, even when there are no marked and defined racial groups. Consequently, as the practice is so widespread, anyone can be a perpetrator of discriminatory practices in both formal social spheres (work, school, and government agencies) as well as informal ones (family, friends, and neighbors). In this sense, the normalization of whiteness as a way of interpreting the world contributes to the fact that it is not

¹¹ *Pinacate* (from *Pinacatl* in Nahuatl language) "Large, foul-smelling black beetle that breeds in damp places"(Real Academia Española, 2014).

possible to distinguish at first glance that the use of certain words or word associations such as the keyword analyzed here has a racializing objective. In that sense, “*Una cosa es discriminar y otra muy diferente es describir. O sea alguien te diga pinche prieto, no es discriminar.* [It is one thing to discriminate and quite another to describe. In other words, if someone tells you *pinche prieto*, it is not discriminating.]” (tweet 624). If we agree with the explanation contained in the tweet and accept that it is only describing rather than racializing, we should deny the symbolic burden that being dark entails and the complex social hierarchies established in relation to race, color and class (Hernández, 2015; Moreno Figueroa, 2010; Navarrete, 2016; Quijano, 2000; Vargas Cervantes, 2015).

According to Pérez (2013) and Villarreal (2010), in Mexico, although there is no definition of race, there are words in everyday language that contain colorimetry and that are associated with other cultural values, always benefiting people who are less dark. In addition, according to Ahmed (2007), light-skinned people are rarely forced to assume their ethnic identity or define themselves in racial terms. For this reason, it is probably more usual in social practice to racialize dark people and not the white ones. The racialization (if any) of whites has other characteristics as we will see in section 5. On the other hand, applying the use of *pinche*¹² which is almost always pejorative, does nothing but highlight the darkness “*una cosa es decir “moreno” y otra decir “ay pinche Prieto” (...) para referirse despectivamente de gente q pues no son de tez clara.* [It is one thing to say “moreno”¹³ and another to say “oh pinche prieto”, (...) to refer disparagingly to people who are not light skinned.]” (tweet 737). In this sense, there is a very

¹² See Gómez de Silva (2001)

¹³ Brown, brunette.

subtle but powerful gradation in language to refer to the dark. The opposition *moreno* ≠ *prieto* already addressed by Pérez (2013), indicates that being brown is qualitatively different from being black, especially in the symbolic weight of the word. While being *moreno* speaks of being dark in some socially acceptable way, being *prieto* is being dark and unacceptable.

1.2. Stratified society

The effectiveness in the propagation of Whiteness as a system resides in that when practiced it is normalized. Consequently, it becomes highly difficult to uproot the use of the term from everyday habits unless we question the underlying social cognitive patterns.

According to Navarrete (2009), in the pre-colonial times, what would later become Mexico was inhabited by groups that constituted ethnic and political entities that competed with each other, conquered each other militarily or established alliances with the objective of accumulating wealth, tributes and the hand of work which allowed them to prosper. Upon the arrival of the Spanish, these ethnic differentiations were sublimated into a single category. ‘Indian’ was the name given to the natives whose common characteristic, in addition to their geographical origin, was being pagan. In turn, Juris Tipa (2020) argues that the caste system that was established in the Viceroyalty of New Spain —current Mexican territory, Central America, and part of the United States, Asia and Oceania — established an instrument of power and social control more or less flexible in terms of contact between different social groups. In this sense, those who were ‘whiter’ —Spanish and Creole — occupied the highest places in the social stratification. Accordingly, Navarrete (2009), established that the caste system tried to channel the mixes of groups along paths that would favor the whitening and purification of mixed individuals so that they would adopt the dominant Spanish culture.

During the wars of independence, the Creole elites embraced the American identity, as opposed to the Spanish identity, while the Mexican identity would appear later during the war years. The indigenous

groups then represented a danger to the interests of the Creoles who tried to preserve their privileges (Sanchez-Guillermo, 2007). In this way, the independent republic of the 19th century was the political-ideological construction of the Creole elites (Báez-Jorge, 1996). Therefore, an immigration policy was promoted, aimed at whitening the population through European immigrants, establishing colonies in rural and remote areas. The situation of the natives did not improve in the post-independence period, which led to indigenous uprisings and, at the end of the 19th century, the Caste war. Finally, the Mexican Revolution gave a definitive step to the capitalist structure, where society was stratified by societal classes (Báez-Jorge, 1996; Navarrete, 2009; Navarro, 1968; Sanchez-Guillermo, 2007, p.; Tipa, 2020)

According to Hernández (2015), the transfer from the colonial system delimited by racial castes to the democratic capitalist system divided into social classes implied that the dominant classes erected themselves as racially superior. In doing so, the elites stigmatized those whom they considered inferior in order to dominate them, building all the social structures destined to maintain class privileges for themselves. ‘The ‘social classes’, in Latin America, have ‘color’” (Quijano, 2000: 241). This means that, like race, social class is a habitus,¹⁴ a way of life, and many times race is often used as an integrating structure of social classes (Hernández, 2015; Moreno Figueroa, 2010). That explains why frequently I found tweets that integrate Whiteness ideology with social class formation within the sample.

In that venue, I found that *pinche prieto* was associated with poor,¹⁵ fucked,¹⁶ *muerto de hambre*¹⁷ [lowlife], *come cuando hay* [(pejorative) needy] and builder¹⁸ in deliberate allusion to the lower classes where supposedly the dark ones are. This association between lower class and dark skin is presented frequently in Mexican society (Moreno Figueroa, 2010; M. I. Pérez, 2017;

¹⁴ “Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they ‘take up’ space” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 150)

¹⁵ Original from: *Pobre*.

¹⁶ Original from: *Jodido*.

¹⁷ Lit: dead from hunger.

¹⁸ Original from: *Albañil*.

Navarrete, 2016) and constitutes broadly spread racial stereotypes: “*Hasta acá huele a ignorancia, pobreza y humedad. Ya quítenle el celular a ese pinche prieto, cara de macaco con aires de sureño* [Even here it smells of ignorance, poverty and humidity. Now take the cell phone from that *pinche prieto*, monkey face with southern airs].” (tweet 263)

The tweet 263 illustrates some of the associations of being *prieto* that is equalized with being poor, miserable, and ignorant. The speaker ends the statement dehumanizing the target by saying a monkey face, while he/she objects the target’s ability to express coherent opinions by demanding someone to take away the target’s cell phone. The concept of "with southern airs" is not very clear but it could indicate that the speaker is accusing the target of being Indian because in the South of Mexico lives the main indigenous population. Because of that, using *pinche prieto* could never be “just a description”; it entails a symbolic burden associated with individuals from the lower classes.

In that sense, the news platform AJ+ Español (*Por qué no hay personas morenas en la publicidad mexicana?*, 2020) reported about how in Mexico the advertisement industry exploits a model called “*Look latinoamericano internacional*” [International Latin American look] to promote consumption habits. That implies that the people who appear in publicity consuming products, shopping and using services should be of light skin and dark hair, tall and svelte because those characteristics stimulate aspirationism in consumers. Then, the aspirational publicity manipulates the human necessity of belongingness and recognition to persuade people to buy things with the hope of being seen as successful and prosperous. In Mexico, successfulness and prosperity is related with light skin and European phenotype. On the contrary, poverty is related with dark skin and indigenous phenotype.

In that sense, on tweet 1870 the speaker uses aspirationism in a pejorative way to highlight the failures of the *pinche prieto*: “*pinche prieto ... Eres un muerto de hambre y no dejarás de ser un jodido aspiracionista LLORÓN. [pinche prieto...You are a muerto de hambre [lowlife] and you won't stop being a crying fucking aspirationist.]*” (tweet 1870). The darkness then is rooted in the social cognition system as an impediment for social mobility or the right to. Aspirationism then becomes an economical engine for Whiteness that pushes individuals to invest in what allegedly make them whiter. The concept of aspirationism in racial and class formation within a society gives the opportunity of reviewing naturalized racism as a confluence between color, physical characteristics, social class, and education that gives individuals a place in the social hierarchy. Lipschutz (1944), from whom Edward Telles (2014) took the word ‘pigmentocracy’ for his Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA) that measured ethnoracial inequality, established that during the colonial times:

The skin pigment, in the first place, but also the other physical racial characters serve as the basis for the law by which their respective groups are awarded roles and functions, the role of the lord and the role of the servant...

Membership of the group is attested by manifest racial origin, documented first by the skin pigment. It is a pigmentocracy, in the true sense of the word: pigment, more than any other physical character, serves as a symbol ... to highlight indelible rights. (Lipschutz, 1944, pp. 70 & 72)

In turn, Vargas Cervantes (2015) defines pigmentocracy as a system where there is a differentiation of individuals through the combination of skin color and social class that gives negative values to the darkest and positive to what is whiter. If we discuss Mexican whiteness

practices in terms of pigmentocracy, we are able to integrate variables that belong to Mexican idiosyncrasies, as well as to the operativity of the miscegenation myth, and are frequently ignored by scholars that only focus on the indigenous marginalization problem (Vargas Cervantes, 2015; Solís et al., 2019). This does not mean that the stereotyping of the indigenous is not important in the reproduction of Whiteness, but that the problem of racism as the opposite of Whiteness goes beyond *the indigenous problem*, which I will discuss in the next section.

2. About Indian people and their position in society

The national policies of the Mexican State at the beginning of the 20th century tried to solve what they called ‘the indigenous problem’ that was thought to impede the modernization and progress of the country. Mexican intellectuals such as Manuel Gamio advocated for the incorporation of the indigenous masses to the post-revolutionary nation project.

Gamio's ideas about the "fusion of races", "social convergence" and "forging a country" (Gamio, [1916] 1992: 183) were probably antecedents of the notion of "miscegenation" coined by Vasconcelos, among others, that they marked the projects for the construction of national identity in post-revolutionary Mexico. (Castillo Ramírez, 2013, p. 124).

It was then proposed to promote the idea of miscegenation, according to which the Indians would be harmoniously integrated into the social group and would disappear as such within the social fabric, giving rise to what José Vasconcelos called ‘the cosmic race’ (A. M. Pérez, 2013). Vasconcelos (1882-1957) was a humanist who exerted great influence on intellectual thought throughout the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). As Minister of State during the Obregon government (1920- 1924), Vasconcelos founded the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) through which he summoned other intellectuals committed to the ideals of the Revolution to try to modernize Mexico, having education, art, and the integration of

indigenous people as the main engine. Vasconcelos's idea was deeply humanistic and opposed to the positivism and social Darwinism that had prevailed in the pre-revolutionary period (Luchtenberg, 2016). In his essay "The Cosmic Race" he explains that Mexico, and Ibero-America in general, were called to establish a fifth race endowed with the most beautiful genetic and spiritual attributes. This would happen through miscegenation, where the other four races —white, yellow, red and black— would contribute its best elements. This would be like an awakening of humanity to a new era where culture would abandon localism and become universalist or cosmic (Vasconcelos, 1948).

For his part, Gamio, who established the foundations of Mexican anthropology, thought that it was essential to form a single cultural and linguistic nucleus through the fusion of indigenous and European (Castillo Ramírez, 2013). In other words, from the ethnic fusion between Europeans and indigenous people, a new purely Mexican national being would be generated. To achieve this, the state concentrated at first on trying to get monolingual Indians to learn Spanish, the national language of Mexico, and to integrate into the productive apparatus as factory employees or rural laborers. However, the objectives were not fully met, so decades later they changed the strategy and tried to make indigenous people literate through bilingual schools (Stavenhagen, 2013).

After the change in paradigms that occurred with the phenomenon of economic and cultural globalization since the 1990's, the state and academia adopted the idea of multiculturalism and promoted the autonomy of indigenous communities, as a way to remedy the excesses of the Spanish conquest, and claim the cultural heritage of the peoples (Stavenhagen, 2013). That is the model that is in force today and calls into question the principles of 19th century scientific racism that permeated contemporary thought until the 1960s.

Although in the legal and political instance, indigenous communities have maintained their civil rights since the reforms achieved with the Mexican Revolution, in practice they were often silenced, exploited, and deprived of their economic resources and properties and despised for ancestral customs. In

this way, indigenous communities were marginalized and isolated, impoverished and discriminated against daily while, at the same time, national institutions promoted a cult around indigenous heritage. In this way, the idea of the Indian was built from two contradictions, on the one hand, the stereotype dictated that being an Indian is necessarily being poor and incapable of exercising citizenship rights while, simultaneously, the rich Mexican indigenous cultural heritage was vindicated (Stavenhagen, 2013). Some studies such as those carried out by Vázquez Flores (2015) illustrate this ambivalent relationship. Analyzing the discourse that the press in the south of the country promotes about the indigenous people, Vázquez Flores found that they were characterized in three ways: on one hand “depicted as underage, rustic and miserable, unable to manage their own development” (Vázquez Flores, 2015: 162). On the other hand, “they are seen as a threat when reported as a migrant in cities, where they are characterized as a criminal or an invader” (Vázquez Flores, 2015: 162). Finally,

As folklorized indigenous people, represented as heir to pre-Hispanic traditions: it is the shaman, the healer, the dancer, the “good savage”, who serves as a decorative element in all official acts that allude to indigenous assistance programs, but also in political campaigns, in congresses and forums on various topics and for different audiences (Vázquez Flores, 2015, p. 162)

In this sense, the National Survey on Discrimination ENADIS 2010 (CONAPRED, 2011) indicates that those surveyed who belong to ethnic groups consider that they do not have the same access to employment, social assistance, health, and education as other groups considered non-ethnic. Furthermore, these ethnic communities argue that the main problems they suffer are discrimination, poverty, lack of government support, and language as a barrier to social integration.

In some ways, this perception coincides with the survey carried out by Parametría (2014) where 10% of Mexicans still consider that indigenous people prevent the country from progressing and 26% associate indigenous people with poverty. At the same time, the interviewees recognized the position of

vulnerability and lack of access that the country's indigenous people experience and 57% considered that the word Indian is used in a discriminatory way in Mexico, while 30% believe that saying Indian is normal and part of the language of the average Mexican.

2.1. Indigenous references

In this regard, in the analyzed sample I found that frequently being *prieto* is associated with being Indian. Consequently, references to Indian rituals, indigenous features, indigenous food, or indigenous elements are present in the tweets: “*Puro pinche Prieto abuelo indio (...) gente estúpida*. [Genuine *pinche prieto* whose grandfather was an Indian (...) stupid people.]” (tweet 1806). In the sentence a consequence is indicated: having an Indian grandfather leads to the person being a *pinche prieto*. As a corollary, the person is ultimately stupid. That is to say, the word Indian is used pejoratively to diminish the discourse of the *prieto* that represent the otherness, the people who do not share the same opinion as the speaker.

On other occasions, some tweets do not contain the word Indian as it is but use representations of indigenous issues to counteract the *prieto*'s speech: “*Pinche Prieto órale a tu cerro a bailar*. [Pinche *Prieto*, go to your hill to dance.]” (tweet 822). Here the construction of the short sentence has many levels of complexity. On the one hand, it alludes the customs of the Catholic Indians who lived in the upper parts of the hills, that were the places that whites reserved for them. This idea of the Indians living in hills was also found in other tweets represented as *indio bajado del cerro a tamborazos* [Indian descended from the hill with drum sounds], an old phrase that refers to the custom performed by the Indians of going down the hill when they heard the sound of the *tambora*¹⁹ to go to a church (Piña, 2018). On the other hand,

¹⁹ Drum.

the speaker in tweet 822 abruptly cut the conversation because is not interested in discussing more with the target. Then, the speaker symbolically banishes the target from Twitter and sends him "to his hill to dance" using the imperative *órale*²⁰ tacitly implying that the target has nothing to do in the world of whites. The speaker declares the target "Indian" and takes away from him the right to continue expressing his opinion. In this sense, the speaker positions himself at a level of intellectual or moral superiority where he/she can prohibit the *pinche prieto* from intervening in this social sphere represented by Twitter. Then, as Vázquez Flores (2015) pointed out, the Indian could be considered as an invader in *tweet 822* or a creature incapable of development in *tweet 1806*.

2.1.1 Civilization and alimentation

In many tweets, aspects of Mexican indigenous culture were used to attack and classify people in a moment of racism, highlighting distances between those who consider themselves more civilized and sensible in relation to the others. This refers to us to the need to specify who wants to control the discourse. In the three tweets I will analyze below, there is a sort of entitlement exerted by the speaker to legitimate or not the discourse of the others. In that sense, the speakers try to silence, invalidate, or delegitimize the claims of the *prietos* saying “*Cállate pinche prieto, que graciosos son los color mole* [Shut up pinche *prieto*, how amusing are the *mole*²¹ color people.”] (tweet 1490). I infer that for the speaker is amusing that mole color people think they are allowed to talk, indicating that *prietos*’ words do not count. Then the statement

²⁰ *Órale* is a mexicanism that has no exact translation but could be defined as “go now!” It comes from *ora* meaning “now” (Gómez de Silva, 2001)

²¹ *Mole* is a typical dish from indigenous cuisine.

starts with ‘shut up’, an imperative identified in other tweets throughout the sample like “*Callate pinche prieto cara de nopal* [Shut up pinche *prieto* nopal cactus face]” (tweet 1840).

In general lines, these speakers on tweet 1490 and tweet 1840 are telling non-white people ‘do not talk because your arguments have no value’. In both examples the prohibition to talk comes stuck to indigenous elements like mole and nopal cactus, which represent ideas about mestizaje among native communities and Europeans, but the relationship lacks balance, because the indigenous element seems less valid in the tweets.

From my point of view it is interesting how people in Twitter use the affordances and restrictions of the medium to condense classist and racist references in a few words. For example, stating:

Pinche prieto color cazuela, háblale de usted, igualado.

[*Pinche prieto* clay pottery color, talk to them with respect, inferior.] (tweet 913)

In this occasion I preserve the original statement in Spanish to point out a few things. On the one hand this issue of talking using ‘usted’. In Spanish the general norm states that there are two levels of distance to refer to the second personal pronoun (You): *usted* and *tú*. The former is generally used to establish vertical relationships underlining differences in power, rank or indicating generational distance. In this sense, the use of *usted* is more respectful and the use of *tú* implies familiarity or level equality (Marín, 1972). In the tweet, the speaker is telling the *pinche prieto* that he is not at the same level as his interlocutor. That is why the speaker demands *pinche prieto* to use *usted* so as not to be *un igualado*. In other words, the speaker indicates that the *pinche prieto* clay pottery skin should show respect, pointing out that being dark and

indigenous is not the same as being white, that is, they are not at the same level. In conclusion, if the receptor wants to talk, he should adequate himself to the rules imposed by social hierarchies. In sum, tweet 913 exposed a highly supremacist statement. In the three tweets cited, there is a combination between being silenced and indigenous cuisine. *Mole*, nopal cactus and clay pottery are all elements that distinguish pre-Hispanic and traditional Mexican cuisine. Analyzing their incidence can help to glimpse social cognitive structures that allow Mexicans in general to establish relationships between people's habits and their value on the social scale, and how Whiteness ideas are inserted in these discourses.

The *mole* (from *mulli* in the Nahuatl language) is a traditional dish from pre-Columbian times like a thick sauce that is served with meat. Each region has its own version, but some recipes contain more than 70 ingredients like different varieties of fresh and dried chili peppers, corn, epazote, tomato, pumpkin seeds, and chocolate. The mole was modified over the centuries adapting to new culinary techniques and ingredients from Europe such as pepper. Their preparation can be simpler or more complex and depending on the different ingredients vary in color, but most of them are tan and brown tones (del Villar, 2016; Muñoz Zurita, 2012).

In turn, the nopal cactus was truly important to Mesoamerican cultures. So much so that it was venerated as a sacred plant by the Aztecs and is currently included in the Mexican flag. Although it grows throughout the continent, between 65 and 100 different species have been identified only in Mexico and its leaves, its flowers and fruits have been part of the varied Mexican gastronomy since times before the arrival of Europeans (Muñoz Zurita, 2012).

According to Muñoz Zurita (2012) the fabrication of clay pots dates back to pre-Hispanic times. There is a great variety in size and shape of the containers, but it is possible to know from

which region the casserole is and what its specific use is based on the shape. Some are so large that they can hold 600-person servings and so heavy that it takes more than one person to move them. There are also copper pots that were as well used from times before the Spanish conquest.²²

The connection of skin color or body parts to specifically indigenous cuisine matters because, according to Martínez (2002), diet and nutrition was also influenced by ideas that tried to highlight the supposed superiority of European over indigenous people. From the mid-19th to the mid-20 century, the postulates of the European Hygienist Movement were very popular in Mexico, where the most privileged classes tried to dictate the rules of a vigorous and healthy life as well as an adequate nutrition. Consequently, diet, labor and lifestyle distinguished a civilized person from another that was not. According to hygienist theories, the quality of food determined the quality of people. In this way, the wealthy and the intellectuals had to consume red meat, which they considered the most perfect and complete food, while the peasants and workers had to consume carbohydrates and alcohol. In that time, it was common for the popular classes to take advantage of the parts of the animals that the higher classes considered disgusting, such as the legs, necks, ears, or eyes, or consume poultry or wild animals to meet their dietary needs as beef was well above their daily budget. This led to a racialization of people also due to the ability to access food and perform habits that the hygienist aristocrats considered adequate and proper of civilized people.

²² In the analyzed sample, the expression *prieto color cazuela* is repeatedly found. Although the speakers do not clarify if they refer to clay or copper pots, I have preferred to use clay pottery for clarity in the translation.

Pásame tu número de teléfono, ahorita mismo te marco por FaceTime para que veas el asco que me provocas, Pinche prieto color cazuela. Acábo de comer, así que te prometo un buen vómito, sirve que de una vez tragas algo nutritivo en tu vida.

[Give me your phone number, right now I'll dial you on FaceTime so you can see the disgust you cause me, Pinche *prieto* clay pottery color. I just ate, so I promise you a good vomit, it helps that at once you swallow something nutritious in your life]. (tweet 332)

Then, according to the tweet, the *pinche prieto* has at least two problems; on one hand he is disgusting, a topic that I will discuss later, and on the other he does not eat adequately; in consequence, the speaker's vomit is better than the food the *prieto* eats daily. As I mentioned above (see section 1.2.), I also found in the tweets references to the hunger that *prietos* supposedly experience when they use the phrase *muertos de hambre*.²³ Outside of the literal meaning, the phrase could be translated as “being a lowlife” but in any case, I find the condensation of meanings and the darkening of language interesting, where everything bad comes from being dark and indigenous.

2.1.2. Looking like Indians

One disturbing aspect about Whiteness functioning in social media is that before digital technology exploded certain phrases would just be said in person and have a limited audience, but nowadays they are launched through Twitter to potentially reach millions. That is, Twitter is

²³ *Muerto de hambre* represents lack of money and social importance, lit. starving, pauper.

a cultural artifact and a cultural space where people perform daily whiteness just as well as they did it before offline.

In that sense, it is interesting how some tweets appealed to indigenous elements but not naming anyone, only suggesting similarities. In the next example, the speaker updates an old phrase with which indigenous communities are insulted, when they called them *indio/s pata rajada* [Cracked feet Indian/s] alluding to the indigenous custom of walking barefoot or wearing *huaraches* [Indian sandals] performing tasks outdoors. In tweet 2073, the speaker states: “*yo que culpa tengo que tengas ascendencia tan culera pinche familia patas de polvorón*. [What fault do I have that you have such a fucking ancestry, fucking family with feet like *polvorón* cookies.]”, the speaker is alluding to the soles of the Indian’s feet that become dry and develop cracks and calluses from weather and exertion. But instead of using the term “cracked feet,” the speaker uses *polvorones* that are dry and sweet brown cookies dusted in flour or powdered sugar that usually break due to their own dryness. In other words, the tweet is comparing parched indigenous feet with parched cookies increasing the quantity of discriminatory phrases and probably extending its use.

Other references to Indigeneity are used such as *cara de artesanía tolteca/chiapaneca/maya/Azteca* [Toltec or Chiapas or Mayan or Aztec figurine face] in allusion to known indigenous peoples and making connections between the facial features of the people and their representation in the elements exhibited in national and indigenous museums from Mexico. This reminds me of the words of Vázquez Flores (2015) around the fact that the Indians represent part of a cultural heritage that must be revered as part of a brilliant past but that has no place in contemporary times. Other references found in the tweets directly replace the

denomination of a cultural group by writing *cara de artesanía prehispánica* [Pre-hispanic figurine face] or Indian face:²⁴

de seguro tienes cara de artesanía tolteta y te andas creyendo caucasico germanico, pinche prieto de mierda, bien sabido es que mexico es de los paises mas racistas y clasistas, dejen de chingar con usa, y ponganse a corregirse a si mismos, putos.

[Surely you have the face of Toltec figurine and you go on believing you are Caucasian, Germanic, fucking pinche *prieto*, well known is that Mexico is one of the most racist and classist countries, stop fucking with the USA, and start correcting yourselves, you faggots.] (tweet 713)

This tweet is very particular because on the one hand it urges to the target to be less racist, and on the other, it is terribly racist with its target. That is, the speaker does not hesitate to use indigenous elements added to the *pinche prieto* to revile the target. Indicating that the last one is stupid enough to not notice that he/she is not white and will never be accepted among Caucasians. Following that, the speaker immediately moves away from the social group and marks a distance, as if pointing out that he or she is not racist by demanding "start correcting yourselves," even when he/she displays his/her racism, among other discriminatory elements such as the use of "you faggots" throughout the tweet.

²⁴Original from: *Cara de Indio* or *Cara de india*

2.2. Ethnicity as dead end

In the analyzed sample, I found other allusions that despise the indigenous and autochthonous such as: *pelos de nopal* [nopal cactus hair], *come conchas* [conchas eater],²⁵ *servil* [slavish], *traes el nopal en la cara* [I can see the nopal cactus in your face], *miserable* [wretched], *huasteco*,²⁶ *oaxaco*,²⁷ *Indio paisa* [rustic Indian], *bigotes de indio aguamielero* [mustaches of a mead drinker Indian],²⁸ *pinche Indian*,²⁹ *Indian color*,³⁰ *pinche indio acomplejado* [self-conscious *pinche* Indian].

Through these terms the speaker tries to establish that there is a fault in being indigenous, which could not be solved with mestizaje, nor with education, nor with learning Spanish. In other words, despite all attempts at Europeanization, indigenous features are still preserved. This constructs the indigenous as a dead end where government strategies and social engineering do not matter as the indigenous element will remain in force. The problem seems to be that far from being integrated, the indigenous remains in a marginal stage without integrating into national self, and it becomes a problem and a permanent reason for social unrest.

Tweet 1050 illustrate this belief saying “*Jajaja sigue chillando pinche prieto miserable, jamás dejarás de ser un resentido de mierda creyendo que todos tienen la culpa por tu pinche color de indio* [Hahaha keep screaming miserable *pinche prieto*, you will never stop being a shit resentful person believing that everyone is to blame for your fucking Indian color.]” In this tweet, the speaker acknowledges that there is a situation of inequality between those who have "Indian color" and those who do not, the latter being those who hold privileges, causing alleged

²⁵ The *conchas* in Mexico are a very popular kind of sweet bread.

²⁶ Indian from La Huasteca, San Luis Potosí.

²⁷ Indian from Oaxaca, the state most populated by indigenous people.

²⁸ The *aguamiel* is a pre-Columbian mead obtained when the maguey plant is fermented to make pulque.

²⁹ Original from: *Pinche indio*.

³⁰ Original from: *color de indio*.

resentment in the former. So, this tweet shares with tweet 2073, cited in the previous section, the idea that ancestry is what complicates the life of the *prieto*. That is, if the imagined *prietos* subjects of both tweets did not have indigenous ancestry, they would not be resentful. It is curious how the speaker in both cases detaches himself or herself from the circumstance of inequality, not recognizing any responsibility in the perpetuation of disparity expressing “we are not the ones to blame for your situation” and leaving the non-resolution of the conflict in the hands of biology and genetics.

3. Social unrest

During the analysis of the sample, it caught my attention how the speakers attack their interlocutors using the word *resentido* [resentful] to which other qualifiers are added such as: violent, chillón [weeping], *asqueroso* [disgusting], *rastrero* [creeping], *mezquino* [mean], mediocre, *naco* [vulgar], wannabe, opportunist, and miserable.

Beyond the hateful expressions, in accordance with van Dijk (1994), it is important to explore the social cognitive schema underlying these expressions; this schema includes the prejudice that white people hold and share within their group. In that sense this idea about how the *prietos* are resentful because they are not white is meaningful, implying that *prietos* lack privileges that Whiteness guarantees for the powerful groups. “*No es gracia, pero quejarse todo el pinche día que si el clasismo, racismo y puras mamadas evidenciando su puta frustración ante la vida por ser pinche prieto.* [It's not funny, but complaining all the fucking day that if classism, racism and pure nonsense, only shows his fucking life frustration for being a pinche *prieto*.]” (tweet 289). From this perspective, the *pinche prieto* is resentful and frustrated because he does not have the right skin color to enter the white castes. Therefore again, extending Lipsitz's (2006)

notion over the social structure I analyze here, non-white people in racist societies do not access the benefits that being white brings. However, the tweet seems to rule out racism, or perhaps normalize it, as part of a status quo or even worse, stating that dark people deserve inequality due to their darkness that involve moral considerations. In this sense, Moreno Figueroa speaks of "possessive denial of racial hierarchies and privileges" (Moreno Figueroa & Saldívar Tanaka, 2016) where Mexican society defines itself as mestizo and raceless allowing or not recognizing racism in everyday interactions.

However, according to some tweets, Mexican society is far from being raceless. In that sense, tweet 879 explains it:

es aguantar los chistes de mis "amigos" con palabras como negro o esclavo. Es ir a pedir trabajo y que te lo nieguen por tu color de piel o como dicen ellos "no cumplir con los estándares de imagen" y es escuchar el típico "pinche prieto".

[It is putting up with the jokes of my "friends" with words like black or slave. It is going to ask for a job and being denied it because of your skin color or, as they say, "not meeting image standards" and it's listening to the typical "pinche prieto"]. (tweet 879)

Here the tweet exemplifies the words of Anibal Quijano (2000) and Vargas Cervantes (2015) about class racialization and pigmentocracy. It is very complicated for people who do not comply with the stereotypes of being national and Mexican, promulgated from the state and from the media, to effectively access their rights and break down the barriers that impede social mobility and economic growth. As Mónica Moreno Figueroa (El Colegio de México, 2015) says, there are groups within Mexican society that cannot leave their bodies behind, that is, their present is linked to their biological and ethnic characteristics and they are constant victims of group prejudices generated from the dominant and

powerful elites that control discourse (T. A. van Dijk, 1994). Much of the material found in this sample accounts for this.

3.1. Fighting for the status quo

On the other hand, it is even more interesting to find in part of the analyzed tweets a certain social determinism where social hierarchies somehow seem immovable in the minds of the speakers. In this way, privileges are not questioned but are assumed and it is intended that those less privileged accept their position in the social hierarchy in the same way.

Todos sabemos de un pinche prieto resentido y frustrado que se la pasa criticando a otros por ser blancos o tener la posibilidad de viajar o tener más recursos económicos.

[We all know of a resentful and frustrated pinche *prieto* who spends his time criticizing others for being white or having the possibility of traveling or having more economic resources]. (tweet 2372)

The speaker is answering to Tenoch Huerta — Mexican actor and activist well known in Twitter sphere by his posting against racism and classism in Mexican society—tweeting a screenshot from Tenoch Huerta’s account and constructing the beginning of the statement with the same phrase “We all know of...”. In this specific occasion, Tenoch Huerta is not making a claim against racism, he is stating “We all have a fascist uncle who says your mother could not be a real woman to keep her man, but everyone at the stripper club greets him by name” but he becomes a target for who want to preserve the status quo that Whiteness imposes.



Figure 6 : Tenoch Huerta's original tweet

References of this type, whether or not naming Tenoch Huerta explicitly, appear repeatedly throughout the sample and most of the time refuting his anti-discrimination comments with hostility, especially those comments aimed at highlighting stereotypes in audiovisual media where indigenous and / or dark actors such as Tenoch Huerta himself are relegated to secondary roles, while actors who comply with the stereotypes of Mexican whiteness (see sub section 1.2.) are those who, generally, are starring in most movies and series which, in turn, speak of the well-to-do classes.

“@TenochHuerta nada mas pasaba para decirte por gusto y placer... Pinche prieto color cazuela, cartón mojado, tez diarrea... Que vayas y chingues mucho a tu madre extra de apocalypto. [@TenochHuerta I was just passing by here to tell you with satisfaction and pleasure

... Pinche *prieto* clay pot color, wet cardboard, diarrhea complexion ... Go and fuck your mother a lot, you extra from Apocalypto.]” (tweet 274). Triggering the most common insults related to the skin color and indigenous features frequently directed to the *prietos* and depositing on Tenoch Huerta as a representation of all *prietos*, this kind of tweet shows the social unrest that emerges when Whiteness and privileges are threatened.

In that sense, Moreno Figueroa (2016) insists on the utility of focusing on the racialization in the Mexican context understanding racialization as the process in which people, places, discourses, identities are attributed inherent characteristics to define them. I argue then that *prietos* do not constitute a race per se, but dark people are racialized within the Twitter’s discourse and called *prietos* to merge in this concept numerous characteristics that contribute to their exclusion. In turn, Stavenhagen (1994) established that groups that not only are physically different from the dominant groups, but who embodied elements that disturb the idea of an homogeneous nation, are frequently racialized. I venture to say when individuals like Tenoch Huerta, who have certain social notoriety, question everyday interactions, this jeopardizes the order of things, hits the status quo consecrated by advertising aspirationism (see sub-section 1.2), and disturbs Whiteness. Whiteness is pervasive because it is invisible; it is normalized across the social mesh and does not admit questions of any kind.

3.2. Reverse racism in a fragility era

En nuestro grupo de amigos tenemos un negro y un prieto.. "Pinche prieto Hijo de la chIngadaaaa! Te traje cahuamas!" "Ah huevo!" Creen que por sus pinches complejos vamos a cambiar eso? Tiene un problema gente... Son de cristal...

[In our group of friends, we have a black man and a *prieto* ... "Pinche *prieto* son of a bitch! I brought you beers!" "All right!" Do you think that because of your fucking complexes we are going to change that? You people have a problem ... you are made of glass ...] (tweet 601)

In the tweet, the speaker recounts his personal and close experience with the expression “*pinche prieto*”. According to the speaker, it is something that exists, it is normal, and it even corresponds to a friendly denomination within its peer group. The fact that a practice is normalized implies that it is culturally ingrained (Murillo & Aznar Molina, 2018) and according to the *Encuesta sobre Discriminación en Ciudad de México*³¹ (Murillo & Aznar Molina, 2018) there has been an improvement in the perception of discrimination among the younger generations or individuals with a higher educational level, possibly due to the effectiveness of public policies aimed at sensitizing the population on human rights, but the practice continues to be rooted in older generations. In this sense, the tweet seems to suggest that it is about experiences narrated by someone from previous generations for whom calling one of their friends a *prieto* is not offensive. On the other hand, the same tweet finds a problem in people who see something offensive in it because it accuses them of fragility when it says: “you are made of glass”.

This accusation about the supposed fragility of those who are offended by standard racist practices is a recurring topic in the sample.

³¹ Survey on Discrimination in Mexico City.

El mundo era más sensato y pacífico cuando la gente decía "pinche prieto" y le contestaban "chupala güero desabrido" y en lugar de hacerse los ofendidos se reían y lo resolvían con unas Carta Blanca banqueteras.

[The world was more sensible and peaceful when people said "pinche *prieto*" and they answered: "suck it, flavorless güero",³² and instead of pretending to be offended they laughed and solved it with some Carta Blanca beers]. (tweet 394)

Here the speaker is also normalizing the practice of calling anyone a *prieto* in an ideal time "when the world was sensible and peaceful," implying that now things have changed. On the other hand, the speaker highlights that currently people "pretend to be offended," as if to say that they fake the offense knowing that it is not real, that is, that the offense does not exist, that is, there has been no racializing intention. In this short text, the speaker points out a counterpoint between the *prietos* and the whites that is resolved by drinking beer in a relaxed way, as if it were just a nice anecdote of daily events. Again, here a certain fragility is entrusted to the new generations in respect to what is cultural and is normalized in Mexican society.

In the tweets of this section, I am interested in delving into the veiled social unrest that these texts contain when they are related to the perception of a threat embodied in the dark. That is, those who call themselves white seem to believe that a change in the status quo threatens their privileges on the social scale and they position themselves and construct their texts from a vulnerable place, a white fragility in some sense. The social unrest of those who do not believe that it is possible to amplify the social equality to wider sectors or those who not believe

³² Pérez (2013) makes a distinction between *güera* and *rubia*. *Güera* means fair-skinned, European features with brown or dark hair while *rubia* means blonde.

discrimination is necessarily wrong increases when their whiteness ceases to be transparent and becomes visible (Camara & Orbe, 2011). Then, highlighting the perfection of being white and how *prietos* envy that becomes crucial: “*Puro pinche prieto pendejo acomplejado que se siente inferior te trata mal por ser blanco y con dinero no es nuestra culpa haber nacido perfectos...* [Plenty of self-conscious asshole pinche *prieto* who feels inferior and in consequence treats people badly for being white and with money. It is not our fault that we were born perfect.”] (tweet 900)

In accordance with Camara & Orbe (2011), when whites see their whiteness exposed, questioned or perceive a certain cut in their privileges, they interpret that what happens to them at the individual level extends over their entire group of belonging. That is, they generalize the prejudice received at the individual level by a member of a non-white group, as if it were or had the same entity as an act of racism, but in reverse. We see this from one tweet:

Nunca he entendido porque, ya que veo varios tuits, dicen que NO es racismo decirle “Whitexicans” y que sólo aplica para gente afroamericana. Porque decirle a un blanco: “maldito blanco” no es ofensa pero decir: “pinche prieto” si? Para mi, ambos casos son rascismo.

[I have never understood why, since I see several tweets, they say that it is NOT racism to say “Whitexicans”³³ and that it only applies to African American people. Because saying to a white man: "damn white" is not an offense but saying: "pinche *prieto*" is? For me, both cases are racism]. (tweet 1612)

³³ Whitexican means white + Mexican

In the tweet, the speaker equates being insulted for being white with being called a *prieto*, as if both acts had the same social weight. However, according to Nelson and colleagues (Nelson et al., 2018), the acts that whites perceive against themselves are not the same as the discrimination suffered by non-whites. To make it clearer, the discrimination, racism and prejudices that have historically been applied to non-white sectors have been consecutively endorsed at the institutional level.³⁴ The most privileged sectors are rarely the target of prejudice as a social group and have not experienced the oppression that non-white sectors have experienced, without thereby denying that whites in certain situations could be victims at the individual level of mistreatment or prejudice applied by individuals who come from the oppressed sectors. In these lines, the racialized experiences reported by whites only make sense in relation to the systematic and institutional racialization of non-whites (Nelson et al., 2018). When privileged Mexicans are called “whitexicans,” a range of class and attitudinal prejudices are attributed to them, but those do not have the same social burden as being *prieto* or indigenous in the Mexican context (Almanza, 2019). In other words, it is highly unlikely that a *whitexican* will not access a job or will not move up the social ladder because of their skin color and social class; while that is more likely to happen to someone labeled as *prieto/a*.

Ahora resulta que es pecado no ser prieto, cuantas veces me han dicho pinche prieto o pinche negro y lo que hize fue demostrar que mas alla de que soy moreno sabia hacer mi trabajo y no desgarrada las vestiduras, ahora todo ofende a las personas.

³⁴ For example, although according to the National Institute of Indigenous Languages in Mexico about 68 languages are spoken, of which 51 are of indigenous origin, Spanish is the preferred one to communicate at the institutional level and in the mass media.

[Now it turns out that it is a sin not to be *prieto*, how many times have they told me pinche *prieto* or pinche black man, and what I did was show that beyond the fact that I am dark, I knew how to do my job and I did not tear my clothes. Now everything offends people]. (tweet 613)

Here the tweet is narrating an experience of resistance where being *prieto* gave him an apparent disadvantage, but the speaker took charge of fighting against prejudice by working even harder than he would have tried if he were not *prieto*. In this sense, Villarreal (2010) found evidence that people with darker skin tend to have lower educational levels and lower paid jobs than those with lighter skin, so skin color would be an important predictor of whether an individual will be successful in employment. In turn, Reeskens & Velasco Aguilar (2020) they believe that it is a combination of mechanisms that causes an individual with darker skin to rise less in the social hierarchy; however, the idea that lighter skinned people occupy the highest social strata is constantly reinforced by popular culture (see sub-section 1.2.).

4. Ugliness and race improvement

In June of 2020, Bárbara de Regil, a well-known Instagrammer, was repudiated on social media because, testing skin filters on her phone, during an Instagram Live broadcast, she said the phrase "*Ay no, qué prieta, qué fea!*" [Oh no, how dark, how ugly I look!] when she saw her screen mirroring her own image with various darker skin tones (Redacción AN / ES, 2020). The outburst went viral and was discussed both on social media and on national television, which led to an apology from de Regil. However, it suggests how this relationship operates in everyday life, whiteness = Beauty, while Darkness = Ugliness.

During the analysis of the sample, I identified tweets reacting to this incident in different ways. In tweet 795, for example, the speaker aligns himself with the thought of Bárbara de Regil, stating that her reaction is something normal and has nothing extraordinary, somehow lessening the severity of the incident. That is, for the speaker it would also be an unhappy fact to become *prieto*, even momentarily: “*Que feo "Pinche prieto" si me viera al espejo o cámara así. [I would also say "How ugly" "Pinche prieto" if I saw myself in the mirror or camera like that.]*” (tweet 795). On the contrary, on tweet 806 the speaker declares himself within the group of *prietos* but distances himself from the offended, fragile,³⁵ and vulnerable *prietos* because what Bárbara de Regil says is not worth concern for him: “*Pinches prietos ofendidos. Yo igual estoy bien pinche prieto pero me vale lo que diga esa vieja. [Pinches prietos offended. I'm still far pinche prieto but I don't care what that vieja says.]*” (tweet 806). Here, he does not call de Regil by her name but says “*esa vieja*” which is a vernacular way of calling women in Mexico and it is an unstable term since sometimes it carries a negative connotation as in this case, and other times it can be more or less affectionate. From a vindictive point of view, on tweet 823 the speaker presents the situation of Barbara de Regil in reverse, establishing that to be *prieto* is to be beautiful: “*Qué pinche prieto tan hermoso!!. Yo cuando me tomo una selfie. #BarbaradeRegil. [What a beautiful pinche prieto! Me taking a selfie. #BarbaradeRegil.]*” (tweet 823). In turn, he uses the word *pinche* to accentuate the darkness, because he is not only talking merely about color but about an attitude toward life. The use of the hashtag indicates willingness to participate in a conversation already developing on Twitter.

³⁵ I briefly discussed this on section 3.2

Bárbara de Regil's Instagram Live produced an impact because it exhibited the contradictory relationship between beauty and darkness at a time when there is a greater sensitivity towards racist practices in everyday life. Nevertheless, several of the tweets I found reflect this contradiction.

4.1. White is beauty

In Mexico, according to Moreno Figueroa (El Colegio de México, 2015) what complicates the idea of racism is that mestizaje supposes that Mexicans are part of the same group since they are all mestizo. However, the mixtures are not all the same and in consequence there are intra-family and social pressures to associate with people whose phenotypes are more European. The idea behind this practice is racial improvement, trying to whiten the descendants, and wipe African and indigenous genetic inheritance intending to correct the previous mixtures (Aidoo, 2018). That is, being dark implies an error that must be corrected in order to achieve all the affordances of white biology. These ideas that began with 19th Century scientific racism and were reinforced also by the Mexican State Apparatus still remain in the social imaginary and dictate the ways of relating and seeing oneself and others.

Yo estoy bien pinche prieto, no moreno claro ni eso, soy prieto y me gustan las güeritas, ¿eso me vuelve racista?, si digo que me gustan las güeritas. ¡Ah! pero si es al revés y digo que no me gustan las güeras y si las morenas, ¿ahí si no hay pedo vdd?

[I am far pinche *prieto*, not light *moreno* or that, I'm *prieto* and I like *güeritas*,³⁶ does that make me racist if I say I like *güeritas*? Ah! but if it's the other way around and I say I don't like *güeras* and I like the *morenas*, that's okay, right?] (tweet 804)

In the tweet the speaker is denouncing hypocrisy around what is licit to say in social context. Considering Twitter as part of the social sphere according to the text, it is a problem to declare a preference for fair-skinned females. Somehow the speaker seems to indicate that although it is not polite to say so, the preference may exist, and people should not be censured for that. Throughout this section I will inquire into what is the social imaginary behind the preference for *güeritas* that is more complex than a simple personal preference. On the other side, notice also how the speaker uses the word *moreno*³⁷ "(I am) not light *moreno*" saying that his skin does not have traces of whiteness, establishing a distance with the whites, but positioning his preferences on their side. In addition, when he mentions black, or dark women he calls them *morenas*, because saying *prieta* is less polite than saying *morena* to refer to dark-skinned women.

According to A. M. Pérez (2013) while *morena*³⁸ is used to denominate people dark and beautiful, *prieta* is used to call someone dark and ugly. However, *moreno* also is a word that Mexican people use to avoid the association with blackness and African descent. In the sample I analyzed, the meaning of *moreno* is an unstable because it sometimes works as a synonym of *prieto* and others softens its meaning or elevates the category of darkness: "one thing is to say 'moreno' and other is to say 'pinche *prieto*'..." (tweet 737).³⁹ In this mechanism of softening the

³⁶ *Güera* means fair-skinned, European features with brown or dark hair (see footnote 38). *Güeritas* is a plural and diminutive of *güera*, like saying little *güeras*.

³⁷ *Moreno* is an unstable word that could be brown, dark, black or brunette depending on the context.

³⁸ *Morena* is feminine of *moreno*.

³⁹ Original from: ...una cosa es decir 'moreno' y otra decir 'pinche prieto'...

words, *moreno* is more suitable to name someone who has been tanned by the sun but retains acceptable features (A. M. Pérez, 2013) while *prieto* is reserved for what is dark and unpleasant. Then, I found within the tweets collected that some users prefer to define themselves as *morenos* instead of *prietos* and even refer to *morenos* as a class or group of people *nosotros los morenos* [We the brown or we the dark].

Mi mami es jubilada IMSS y es súper blanca y yo salí negro otra cosa le hubiera sacado al pinche prieto de mi padre.

[My mom is retired from IMSS and she is super white, and I came out black, other thing I should have taken out of my pinche *prieto* father]. (tweet 2386)

Making the comparison among his mother, his father and himself highlighting as a positive characteristic the Whiteness of his mother, the speaker, between the lines, points to a failed case of race improvement because the expected whitening did not result after the union of a "super white" woman with a dark man. Certainly, there is a hint of longing, where the speaker would have liked to be white but did not succeed. Furthermore, there is a clear reproach to the father whom he calls "*pinche prieto*" for the failed mixture.

A. M. Pérez (2013) points out that under *mestizaje* logic, Mexican people avoid racial classification and instead establish color classifications, allocating economic and cultural capitals and the possession of beauty to those whose skin is lighter. Although Reeskens & Velasco Aguilar (2020) recognize that at the popular level there is this notion that being lighter is equivalent to better social positioning, they claim that there is not a determined classification of colors in Mexico, which complicates the relationship between social success and skin color. The

tone of the skin is grouped together with the shape of the body, height, hair style, characteristics of the face, accent, the way of dressing and the consumption habits, to establish complex relationships that determine what is considered beautiful and acceptable in Mexican society (A. M. Pérez, 2013; Vargas Cervantes, 2015; Iturriaga Acevedo, 2015 & Moreno Figueroa (El Colegio de México, 2015).

4.2. Loving prietos

The comments that tell stories related to the alleged ugliness of the *prietos* and the supposed beauty of the whites repeats throughout the sample. There is a recurring theme that despite all the cultural ideology of whitening and race improvement, women continue to fall in love with allegedly ugly *prietos*: “*No hay nada más culero que una mujer bonita en los brazos de un pinche prieto feo y sin dinero.* [There is nothing more upsetting that a pretty woman in the arms of a pinche *prieto* ugly and with no money.]” (tweet: 702). Then, the tweet is pointing out the idea of race improvement mentioned in previous sections where in order to ascend the social hierarchy, it is imperative that women take advantage of their physical characteristics and associate with men who are white and therefore handsome and also have economic capital, ensuring privileges and progress for their descendants. Presumably when talking about “pretty women” the author of the tweet is not referring to dark women, or *prietos*, because otherwise there would not be such a contradiction. The author of the tweet tacitly and from cultural experience bestows the virtue of beauty on women with light skin and European features.

According to the tweets collected, there is certain embarrassment in the event that a “pretty woman” (that is white in this logic) suffer for the love of a *prieto* man. Apparently, this situation is interpreted as a failure in the system, as if it were unworthy to have feelings for someone who

is *prieto*. It then implies a look from different levels where there is one that is superior (and should supposedly have higher and more appropriate tastes) and other that is inferior because he or she is *prieto* as in the next tweet: “*Le doy consejos a mis amigas de que se quieran y que no lloren a un vato feo que le vale verga y mírenme yo aquí llorando por un pinche prieto. [I give advice to my friends that they should love themselves and mustn’t cry to an ugly guy who does not care about them and look at me here crying for a pinche prieto.]*” (tweet 2230). Apparently, the author of the tweet positioned herself on a scale where both she and her friends are the beauties who have romantic disagreements with men below their position. It is a battle between a ‘light us’ and a ‘dark them’, establishing a contradiction between beauty and darkness. These kind of statements suggest, in Pérez’s words, “cross societal understandings of colorism that associates dark skin with ugliness, dirt, and undesirability” (2013, p. 178). In that sense, I also found associations with *asqueroso*⁴⁰ to increase the insulting meaning, directing the victim of the tweet towards a place of no return, the last corner of human rottenness.

On the other hand, I also found tweets that narrate how this *prieto* = ugliness relationship is destructive and harmed the lives of friends and schoolmates who learned that being *prieto* marginalized them from the cultural beauty standards reflected in advertisements and media, where being *prieto* necessarily implied being ugly, determining an immovable place and assigning certain experiences and denying others.

creo que la parte que más cruel era cuando amigos tenían que decir "ya sé que estoy prieto" o "ya sé que por ser moreno estoy feo". Pero la gente insiste en que México no es racista #mexicoracista

⁴⁰ Disgusting. See section 5.

[I think the cruelest part was when friends had to say "I know I'm black" or "I know that because I'm dark I'm ugly". But people insist that Mexico is not racist #mexicoracista] (tweet 906)

Although according to the analyzed sample, the association of ugliness and darkness continues to operate in the socio-cognitive structure of the participants on Twitter, and I argue that is because the idea is still alive in the everyday Mexico society, there are certain initiatives to deconstruct them, for example the photographic exhibition “Mexicano” by Dorian Ulises López Macías, exhibited in the Whitney Museum, New York in 2017 (M. I. Pérez, 2017) where the goal was to do a photo-shoot with regular Mexican people with mixed race features during their daily duties, exposing in this way that everyone could be considered beautiful and worthy in their one unique way.

In addition, the *Consejo Nacional para Prevenir la Discriminación CONAPRED*⁴¹ is actively working with the aim to “bring reflection on the phenomenon of discrimination as far as possible and promote the culture of defense and promotion of equality and non-discrimination in the country” (CONAPRED, 2020). In that line, it is important that the efforts to reverse whiteness attitudes come from government sectors because that implies more funding for campaigns aimed at educating the population about racist practices performed daily and that affects the digital sphere increasing social media engagement.

5. Sub-human pinches *prietos*

While being *prieto* in plain Spanish means “*de piel morena, trigueño*” (Gómez de Silva, 2001: 182),⁴² I found in the analyzed sample that speakers made comparisons with things that

⁴¹ National Council to Prevent Discrimination.

⁴² Brown-skinned, brunette.

normally are dark or brown like *mole*,⁴³ clay pottery,⁴⁴ and copper -- that as I stated in section 2 are indigenous elements-- but also with tires, excrement, wet cardboard, cockroach, charcoal, mud, and *chapopote*,⁴⁵ to define which color is *prieto*.

I argue that this attitude of comparing a skin color with certain objects is not accidental, but rather openly dehumanizes the *prieto*. In this sense, saying that certain people have excrement-colored skin means that the speaker places them in this category of waste and undesirable things. Far from being a joke or a cultural way of speaking, it threatens the human integrity of the receiver of the discourse.

5.1. Dirty Skin

This tweet exemplifies the way some users are associating being dark with elements that are not nice nor pleasant, pointing out that the brownness that *prietos* expose is comparable with feces like manure in the tweet cited above, or plainly calling them ‘shit skin’:⁴⁶ “*Te dolió pinche prieto color de llanta, cambujo*⁴⁷ *de color cazuela, renegrado de mierda, tácuaro de estiércol, negrito cucurumbé.....* [It hurt you pinche *prieto* tire color, clay pot color dark Indian, shitty black, manure tacuaro,⁴⁸ little black cucurumbé⁴⁹]” (tweet 2254). The comparison with feces is powerful because it implies other associations also found in the sample that are related to

⁴³ See sub-section 2.1.2

⁴⁴ The indigenous that lived in the territory that now is occupied by Mexico usually cooked in clay pots, using wooden and copper utensils.

⁴⁵ *Chapopote* (from Indigenous *chapopotli*) black and odorous bitumen used in the manufacture of waterproof bricks (Peñafiel, 2009).

⁴⁶ In the sample it was found *prieto color cagada* and *prieto color caca*, both meaning shit skin.

⁴⁷ *Cambujo* was used in colonial times to name the mixture among Indians and Zambos (the mixture among Amerindians and Africans). In general lines it describes someone who is dark with indigenous features (Real Academia Española, 2014).

⁴⁸ *Tácuaro* (from Tarasco language) is a cabin to store magueys, but in the tweet cited may work as container (Peñafiel, 2009).

⁴⁹ *La negrita Cucurumbé* is a character from a classic Mexican infantile song that tells the story of a black girl who goes to the beach wishing to whiten her skin. There a fish tells her how beautiful she is in her own way (Gabilondo Soler (Cri-cri), 1963).

garbage like when they say a *pinche prieto* is wet cardboard color, roach color or mud color, and dirtiness when *prietos* are called ‘filthy’, ‘stinky’ and ‘disgusting’.

siempre me asombra la cantidad de mugre que los nacos sueltan cuando se meten al agua. Like wtf desde cuando no te bañas pinche prieto. Luego dicen que uno es racista pero esos weyes no s eayudan. Creen que por que son color mugre no se nota, se les olvida que la mugre apesta.

[I am always amazed at the amount of grime that nacos release when they get into the water. Like wtf, how long has it been since you bathed? you *pinche prieto*. Then they say that one is racist, but those guys do not help. They think that because they are filthy color it is not noticeable; they forget that dirt stinks]. (tweet 1107)

The idea of the tweet is explained why they say that people with dark complexions smell bad and are nasty. Here it is attributed to lack of personal care and laziness. Some others tweet in the same line are directly calling *prietos* as *pinche prieto mugroso* [filthy dark] or *pinche prieto asqueroso* [nasty/disgusting dark].

According to Wiener (2020), in Hispanic-American cultures, brown color is associated with dirt and excrement. The author explains how Peruvian school children soon learn that light pink pencil is called ‘skin color’, though the khaki pencil represents the skin of most Peruvian children. In the sample, I also found examples of this attitude that states pink color is the normal color for skin. “*Cállese pinche prieto color kaki* [Shut up khaki color *pinche prieto*]” (tweet 481), pointing out the non-whiteness of the target and at the same time trying to silence him, that is to say, the dominate the other by highlighting the skin color.

Then, it is important to consider that probably many of the associations with dirt and excrement have been present in the social imaginary and have been introjected into the individual during their socialization. Probably most of the speakers do not believe that their expressions are really racist and harmful, because they were absorbed daily, during small acts that established normalizations of what is white to the detriment of what is not white. That is, if in this rhetorical logic the skin color is light pink, what is the color of those that are not light pink? Or put in a cruder way, what kind of people are those whose skin is not light pink?

5.2. *Non-human skin*

As I have already stated in section 4.2, some tweets diminish the romantic value of certain partners due to the color of their skin. In the next example, not only does the idea that a relationship with a *prieto* man is worthless arise, but also other negative and dehumanizing characteristics are loaded on the *prieto*: “*Que pedo con las mrras que le comentan a la foto de sus parejas "mio", tranquila amiga nadie te va a quitar a tu pinche prieto pendejo color de llanta.* [What is going on with those girls who comment "mine" on the photo of their boyfriends? Calm down friend, nobody is going to take away your tire-color asshole *pinche prieto*.]” (tweet 1211). In turn, the speaker qualifies the *prieto* as asshole and associates him with a tire. The association *prieto/a* + tire color exists in Mexican popular culture and now it is also spreading over the internet to continue feeding white supremacist statements.

In that sense, I found a song of the legendary singer Vicente Fernández (Fernández, 1985) who talks about an affair with a woman from another ranch and how apparently this situation has brought him enemies and gossip; the cause is not well explained, but it seems to be because she is not white. In one verse he sings: “*Ay, prieta, color de llanta, pareces una potrancia*” [Oh, *prieta* tire color, you look like a young filly]. Then the author is associating here a non-white woman with a tire and with an animal for

riding in the same verse, contributing to the exoticization and erotization of non-white women, as well as their dehumanization.

In the same way, the other color associations described earlier were also present before the Internet era. In this sense, Twitter as part of the social sphere would not be creating new content but potentially spreading it to other geographies, exposing whiteness statements in all their crudeness and without any type of restriction.

O más aún cuando de "Broma" dicen "JAJAJAJ pinche prieto" "Wey eres como color petróleo" o también directa o indirectamente para hacerse los "graciositos" dicen "ayy que chistosa es la gente color llanta" como si su color dependiera de su valor como persona.

[Or even more when “joking” they say "ha ha ha pinche *prieto*" "Dude, you are like petrol color" or also directly or indirectly to become the "funniest" they say "Oh, how amusing are tire-colored people" as if their color might define their value as a person]. (tweet 858)

The example is depicting situations that people witness every day, where comparing people with objects is a way of devaluing the subject, of linking it to something that is not human. But, as the author of the tweet says, the seriousness of the matter is removed by applying an atmosphere of humor, where it is easier to overcome the barriers of respect for human dignity. In this sense, violent discourses that dehumanize certain sectors of the population -- although they are disguised behind phrases that pretend to be funny-- hide the desire to dominate others and eliminate them if they represent a danger to those who seek to preserve power and privilege (Neiwert, 2009). As an example of how humour sometimes naturalizes dehumanization, a great controversy sparked in 2019 after Mexican comic actress Yeka

I mean in this regard that in Mexico the word '*puto*' is used in many senses, almost always pejorative, to establish doubts about someone's virility, but also to point out someone who is complaining or confronting. It does not matter then if the *prieto* is homosexual or not, what matters is the intention of the speaker to add defects: crazy + dark + not virile.

Then, using charcoal, *chapopote*, tires, excrement or wet cardboard to define people's skin color it is anything but an innocent act or a joke without major consequences. It is about reinforcing stereotypes, calling into question people's ability to act in a conscious and responsible way. "The dimension of dehumanization is mainly about biological (cognitive, physical, etc.) capacity, held to be impaired" (Goldhagen, 2009: 321). In this sense, everyday discourse is so infected with prejudices regarding people's color that it is logical to find them in Twitter comments. However, it is not only the fact of commenting that such a person is of a particular color, but associating that characteristic of the skin with objects, situations, and characteristics other than the color itself.

oilo, dile a tu tribu que ya deje de venir al norte nos dejan sin jale y se ve culero N.L. de puro pinche prieto color carbon.

[Hey, tell your tribe to stop coming to the north, they leave us without jobs and Nuevo Leon looks ugly plenty of pure pinche *prieto* charcoal color]. (tweet 401)

The tweet is stating that an entire state of 64,924 km² is becoming worse due to the presence of non-white people. But even more, according to the speaker, the non-whites are organized into tribes, that is, it implies that they are not civilized and are not welcome in the world of the whites. In this sense, the state is not only becoming darker, but it is losing its urbanity because of the *prietos*. But even more, the problem here is that the *prietos* supposedly are taking all the jobs.

Then, as Goldhagen (2009) states, the speaker is demonizing and dehumanizing non-white people, in this case for their lack of jobs.

5.3. Sparks of eliminationism

The problem with dehumanizing people is that it creates the belief that they do not deserve rights, respect, or protection because they are not fully human beings. It would only take a small spark to ignite the powder keg of eliminationism. In this sense, discourse is powerful; that is why words have meaning and weight of their own in societies where inequality is palpable.

Eliminationism, according to Goldhagen (2009) and Neiwert (2009), emerges when people feel threatened and find enemies to justify their fear due to situations that create social anxieties.

Political and social conflicts among groups exist in all human societies, and often between societies or countries. When unwilling to come to some *modus vivendi*, groups, people, and polities (usually the dominant groups within them) deal with populations they have conflicts with or see as a danger that must be neutralized by seeking to eliminate them or to destroy their capacity to inflict putative harm. (Goldhagen, 2009, p. 14)

Normally, those enemies are found within marginalized people. In the next examples the situation that generated social anxiety was the lock-down and sanitation measures imposed by COVID-19, but this event gave the opportunity to expose eliminationist statements on Twitter. In tweet 1497, the speaker claims: “*Pinche prieto naco y feo, ojalá se contagie y muera lentamente. [Naco [vulgar] and ugly Pinche prieto, I hope he gets infected and dies slowly.]*” indicating a desire for the “*naco and ugly pinche prieto*” to disappear, but suggesting that before dying he must suffer, tortured by the virus. In this tweet the question that arises is that the speaker wants

the target to suffer and die because he is *prieto*. Or being *prieto* implies that the receiver has behaviors not approved by the speaker and therefore must suffer a slow death. In this sense, both concepts "being *prieto*" and "must die" are so implicated that it cannot be established if one is a cause and the other a consequence, we can only read the expressed desire that the *prieto* must be eliminated.

Ese pinche prieto cabron deben de colgarlo ya que sabía de los efectos del virus desde diciembre y se hizo pendejo hasta que se salio de control.

[That bastard pinche *prieto* must be hung up since he knew about the effects of the virus since December, and he became an asshole until it got out of control]. (tweet 266)

This tweet I understand that it talks about politics, it probably refers to some political leader, president, governor, mayor who supposedly could have operated more efficiently in terms of COVID-19 prevention measures and did not do so, according to the speaker. Eliminationism is perceived in the phrase "that bastard *pinche prieto* must be hung up," considering that in Mexico no inmate has been executed since 1961 (Delgadillo, 2017). In this sense, the speaker invokes an eliminationism perpetrated from the state on a "bastard pinche *Prieto*." Here the idea of eliminating him starts from the poor efficiency of the *pinche prieto*, however, the speaker emphasizes that he is a bastard *pinche prieto*, to give more strength to the initial idea of eliminationism.

The two previous tweets were directed to specific individuals, but the next one is dedicated to a group of people who are in power, who he calls apes and *tlacuaches*,⁵¹ using a religious formula to plead with the virus, as if it were a personification of a deity or a wish-fulfilling entity, to eliminate them.

Como odio ser gobernado por putos tlacuaches, virusito ven y arrasa con todos estos simios te lo pido porfavor y lo de tlacuache va por pinche prieto qulero .:

[How I hate being ruled by fucking *tlacuaches*, little virus come and destroy all these apes, I ask you please, and the *tlacuache* (reference) is for being *pinche prieto* asshole]. (tweet 1761)

In this sense, through eliminationism, the speaker tries to erase a part of society that is not like himself, but he classifies them as non-human. In Mexico, the word *tlacuache* is sometimes used to refer to someone in a derogatory way. Moreover, using the word ape to refer to 'the others (not whites, not Europeans)' is already traditional in racist discourses.

It is fair to say that from the discourse to the realization of these eliminationist ideas and desires in material world is not something that can be predicted by analyzing Twitter texts, but Twitter Discourse analysis can be a tool for monitoring the social mood that allow us to understand the processes that would make possible that people pass from contemplating an idea to effectively applying it in the real world.

⁵¹ *Tlacuache* or *tlacoache* (from Nahuatl *tlacuatzin*) Opossum. (Gómez de Silva, 2001)

6. About Whiteness in Mexican Twitter

Tweets also recreate within themselves all the restrictions and affordances of the medium in which they circulate, and echo the dynamics proposed within the medium itself. In this sense, I was able to collect the term *pinche prieto* because Twitter does not have a very restrictive policy regarding the content of tweets. In other words, the platform expects users to behave in a way that does not discriminate or judge people, for example because of their skin color or ethnic origin, but if someone violated these policies, Twitter would not act without a prior complaint (Twitter, 2020). Consequently, to eradicate, for example, the expression *pinche prieto* and other similar expressions, many accounts should be reported. The question then would be whether to specifically prohibit the use of *pinche prieto* in social media would have a real impact on the offline practices of society as a whole, considering that approximately only 8% of the 126 million inhabitants of Mexico have a Twitter account (Statista, 2020). This percentage could be reduced, in turn, if we consider that part of such accounts corresponds to bots⁵² or other mechanisms that are not human persons interacting in the platform. Thus the immediate impact of prohibition policies regarding to racializing attitudes deep-rooted in Mexican society is uncertain.

On the other hand, it should also be considered that according to the last *Encuesta Nacional de Consumos Audiovisuales ENCCA 2018*⁵³ (Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, 2018) the population of social media users is mostly Generation Z⁵⁴ and millennial from the highest income sectors (Romo de la Cruz, 2020; Instituto Federal de Telecomunicaciones, 2018). This means that, in some way, those who generate content on Twitter by appealing to the derogatory terms described and analyzed in this chapter could also be members of the country's mestizo and

⁵² According to Varol et al. (2017) between 9% and 15% of the Twitter accounts corresponds to bots in English-speaker Twitter. The percentage of bots present in Spanish-speaker Twitter is uncertain.

⁵³ ENCCA Audiovisual Consumption Survey

⁵⁴ Generation Z or Centennials or are people born from 1997. The difference with Millennials or Generation Y who born from 1980 is that the former incorporated high technology and social media from early childhood while Millennials had infancies without massive use of Internet (Young, 2021).

white elites, who are lately called *whitexicans* in social media but before the digital age were called *fifis* [fine people], *clases acomodadas* [well-to-do classes], *niños bien* [fine children], *fresas* [wealthy and snob people]⁵⁵ and were characterized by being *güeros* [light-skinned] or *rubios* [blonde] and have all the privileges of capital and culture. By this I do not mean that people who do not belong to the elites and are on Twitter are deprived of using the term, but its use is more functional to the elites and ends up feeding the white supremacism that manages to survive, expand, and reproduce as well in the digital age.

I said at the beginning of this chapter that whiteness attitudes circulate silently in society until events occur that motivate their questioning. In this sense, after the murder of George Floyd, new impetus was given to the hashtag #Blacklivesmatter and that impulse had an impact on part of the sample collected. Although the focus of my collection was not that hashtag, I did find references to how racism is lived in Mexico through anecdotes and memories or situations that are continuously repeated such as yelling at someone *¡pinche prieto!* But I also found references to how social networks constitute a kind of showcase where users show their adherence to anti-racist causes, since they usually behave in a racist way. This attitude, reported by some users, can be read in the following tweet:

*Me da risa la gente que anda compartiendo o publicando la imagen de
#BlackLivesMatter pero hace unos años o meses atrás, diciéndoles indios a otros,
diciéndoles “pinche prieto” en fin la hipocresía...*

[It is funny the people who are today sharing or publishing the image of #BlackLivesMatter but a few years or months ago, they called others Indians, or they called them “pinche prieto” in short, hypocrisy]. (tweet 981)

⁵⁵ Lit. strawberries.

Currently, social media have become part of the social sphere of the people who participate in them and, as in any other social sphere, they tend to act according to tacit rules that guarantee a certain belonging to imagined communities in the sense of Marwick & boyd (2010) where comments circulate to connect with affinity groups and for this, strategies of written language style and linguistic turns are used. Joining the statement against racism of the BlackLivesMatter movement implies assuming a political stance that should be consistent with behavior in other areas of the social sphere. What the tweet denounces is that offline behaviors do not always coincide with what is shown on social media, where the important thing is to join causes that have a great impact on the media. However, as Baym (2010) says, people on social networks try to send messages to others about who they are and in which groups they intend to be affiliated with, making connections that shape how people are perceived by others. The social sensitivity that emerged after George Floyd's murder was not created from the very fact of his death but his death allowed this sensitivity to manifest itself. In this sense, social media also collaborate to rethink old problems over and over again and integrate new audiences in this collective and networked reflection.

As the sample illustrates, there is a lot of racism at work in the cultural sphere, but the fact of being able to publicly share experiences also helps to address the issue from more plural points of view. In other words, although people who belong to indigenous communities are one of the most vulnerable groups in Mexico, there is also discrimination against other groups and the exposure of racism on social media provides the opportunity to also speak about other forms of exclusion.

El racismo no solo importa cuando pasa en Estados Unidos, aquí operan a mujeres nativas para que no tengan hijos, se burlan de las personas que venden en la calle,

arremedan los acentos en forma de burla y le dicen a todos pinche prieto. Eso también es racismo.

[Racism does not only matter when it happens in the United States, here they perform surgeries to native women to prevent them from having children, they make fun of people who sell on the street, they lash out at accents in the form of derision, and they tell everyone pinche *prieto*. That is also racism]. (tweet 1079)

Mexican society, according to Moreno Figueroa (El Colegio de México, 2015) tends to quickly distinguish the prevailing racism in the United States because social divisions are clearer and an identity is assigned to them (blacks, Latinos, Asians, etc.) but because of miscegenation, Mexicans perceive themselves as a single national group. That, according to the author, causes racism to be experienced at a more intimate level, as documented by the works of Moreno Figueroa (2010) herself as well as the investigations of A. M. Pérez (2013) and as some of the collected tweets account for this.

A mí el racismo me tocó crudo y salvaje... hasta que llegué a odiarme sólo por ser moreno. "Es buen Niño, lástima que sea moreno" ... "Es que Luis es prieto", "los morenos van atrás para que no se vean en la foto", "pinche prieto", "si no fuera por su mamá hubiera salido blanco".

[Racism hit me raw and savage ... I even came to hate myself just for being brown. "He's a good boy, too bad he's *prieto*" ... "It's that Luis is *prieto*", "the dark ones go back so they can't be seen in the photo", "pinche *prieto*", "if it wasn't for his mother, he would have gone out White"]. (tweet 992)

Here, in 226 characters, the speaker documents some of the phrases that his closest environment told him during his childhood and adolescence, and that would be quite frequent according to the theoretical body that supports my research.

The character in the tweet narrates in the first person that he felt so much disapproval for being supposedly darker than everyone around him that he even hated his body and his person. This tweet demonstrates Moreno Figueroa's argument that racism is lived at an intimate level, because the protagonist of the story compares himself and is compared with the members of his group of belonging. From what is read, it seems that others feel sorry for him because he is dark, as if being dark was a difficult sentence to bear 'he is a good boy, BUT he is dark'. It could be said that the darkest being is lived as a birth mistake, as if his father had chosen a mother with the wrong skin and that constitutes the background of his misery, because if he had been born lighter (like his father) he would not suffer, and this tweet would have no reason to be.

7. Final thoughts

Whiteness ideas work by naturalized racialization of people in Mexican society. The social mobility then is a confluence between color, physical characteristics, social class, and education that gives individuals a place in the social hierarchy. In that sense, I collected tweets that are not naming white people per se; however, the exercise intended to find the pervasive presence of Whiteness while discussing otherness. Calling someone *pinche prieto* goes beyond the comparison of their skin with nasty things. It deploys a meaning chain that begins reducing people to sub humanity and finishes stating superiority of the whiter and powerful elites over the society itself, devoting all resources to maintaining the privilege of a few. Thus, the sample analyzed in this chapter showed that social media could be used both to continue strengthening whiteness practices, actualizing, and sharing old derogatory discourses, and to protest them, rescuing terrible stories, vivid still in our memory, where we were participants or witnesses of the suffering of other human beings.

Although the tweets exposed here show very crudely how the ideas of Whiteness have settled in the minds of those who participate in Twitter, exposing racism, insults, dehumanization, eliminationism, contempt for those who do not represent the ideals of the Mexican national myth and supremacism, I think it is important to be able to observe, analyze and deconstruct them. I do not try to judge the authors of each tweet individually, but rather I prefer to consider them a cultural manifestation, in a space where aside from the character limitations, there are not too many restrictions on what is allowed or not to be said. Twitter is, as it says in its policies, a public site where people have the possibility to use language in the best way for their purposes, and in this case, it is used to continue reproducing supremacist ideas that have a materialization in the way society organizes and establishes its power games.

CHAPTER 3: ARGENTINA AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING WHITE

Finding Whiteness in Argentina requires questioning an entire cultural and social system that positions Argentines as a homogeneous group of people with a set of characteristics that includes having European backgrounds. In that sense, it is remarkable how the state institutions, media and organizations in general make arrangements to support these ideas. For example, Andrews (2016) explains how in the 2010 National Census, the government interpreted the findings in such way that confirmed that Argentina is populated by 97% of white people. When asked if they recognized Amerindians or African antecedents, 3% of those surveyed declared having those backgrounds. Consequently, those who did not recognize a particular genetic heritage were counted as white, resulting in the country with the highest white rate on the planet.

When I chose to use “*negros de mierda*,” which could be translated as ‘shitty blacks,’ as a keyword, it was with the idea of finding that message between the lines, where Argentine people practice whiteness by pointing out those who are on their margins. Being black in Argentina is not merely about color, or physical appearance, but has political, geographical, clothing, musical habits, behavior, and moral considerations that are repudiated by sectors that are considered outside blackness and that by all possible means they try to separate themselves from the marginal, from the black, from what does not belong.

I find that this procedure is almost a defense strategy; nobody wants to be singled out, marginalized or devoid of rights and privileges or their place in the social scale. However, from my point of view, the fear of falling into marginality or otherness ends up ensuring the reproduction of racist and deterministic ideas linked to seeing blackness as something disruptive

of the national order.⁵⁶ In this chapter, I will analyze the results obtained after analyzing the sample and I will proceed to exemplify the most operational concepts with the tweets.

Then, the sections that follow are part of a complex thought process that is seldom linear, but that attempts to explain the social cognitive patterns that are glimpsed behind the words. Section 1 unfolds the meaning of the keyword in everyday Argentine conversations. Section 2 consists in how Whiteness historically built a sense of citizenship and organized the power relationships. Section 3 articulates the middle-class as the repository of Whiteness, while Section 4 develops the relationship between social anxieties and eliminationism. Section 5 addresses how Whiteness is uncovered in discourse and section 6 concludes by examining the role Twitter has in reproducing and contradicting the normalized power relations.

1. Derogatory figure of speech

Unlike what I will develop in this chapter, where the description of blackness functions as an opposition to Whiteness and retains certain features that are reminiscent of the use of the N-word in the United States (Asim, 2007), the treatment of the word ‘black’ in Argentina is contextual. Sometimes it has aggressive overtones and other times it refers to ethnic blackness or African roots. Other times it is used to highlight a difference —this thing is darker respect to something less dark—and sometimes it implies a certain affection towards another person (Grimson, 2017), for example when people greet each other happily saying “*qué hacés negrito?*”⁵⁷

In this sense, I think it is important to problematize its use, but also to understand the cultural context. The problem is when that difference is used to deprive people of their rights, to

⁵⁶ West (2005) called this sort of attitudes ‘white fear’ an involve all the actions taken in order to protect and defend Whiteness privileges.

⁵⁷ This is similar to say “what’s up pal?” but using *negrito* as synonymous of pal.

stereotype them or to attack them: “*Desde hace miles de años se les dice negros pero no de forma discriminatoria, si fuera despectivamente sería "negros de mierda"* [For thousands of years they have been called blacks but not in a discriminatory way, if it were disparagingly it would be "*negros de mierda*"] (tweet 6333). Then, to call someone *negro de mierda* is highly pejorative and violent because it carries a lot of symbolic charge that I will explain as the tweets go on: “*Están los negros de mierda y los negros humildes jajajajaja* [There are the *negros de mierda* and the blacks with humble origins hahahaha]” (tweet 8756). In this sense, sometimes people that consider themselves out of the marginalized groups hide their racism in statements that depict situations or social behaviors (Back & Zavala, 2017) as we see here opposing (humble) negros and negros de mierda but anyway they are pointing out people that according to them are out of what society expects.

In that sense, Geler (2016) stated that in Argentina, being white is by default the definition of the national being while of the black race is understood as belonging to foreign people and with no numeric significance in the social mesh. Then, racial blackness is understood in a visual way classifying individuals with curly hair, wide nose, thick lips and very dark skin “rather than by a system of descent, blood, or genetics” (Geler, 2016, p. 219). In consequence, whiteness is the umbrella race that incorporates the whole universe that is not included in racial blackness. In such way, whiteness become the normal for Argentines in general (Geler, 2016). I argue then that whiteness is a matter of such importance that everything that is not articulated within it constitutes a threatening otherness able to disrupt a social order that imagines Argentina as a reflection of Europe linked to values of progress and destiny of greatness.

To begin with, I would like to suggest that in the way Argentines speak, saying “*negros de mierda*” is almost a figure of speech, sedimented under generations of use of the term and among nationals we know what we mean when we qualify someone that way. To define it quickly, generally those who are so qualified are suspected of: living in *villas miseria* [shanty towns] or at least in poor neighborhoods, listening to urban tropical national music (*cumbia*⁵⁸ or *cuarteto*⁵⁹), going to places where people listen to that kind of music,⁶⁰ having precarious jobs or directly being unemployed and live on social assistance,⁶¹ using welfare money to spend on temporary goods and parties, being alcoholics and drug users, being criminals and thieves, having many children who consume state resources, being lazy, and sometimes being from neighboring countries and having indigenous and black features. In that sense, Geler described it as “popular *negritud*” [popular blackness] and it represents “a social and cultural stigma against mestizo and low-income social groups” (2016, p. 220).

Despite these very specific characteristics, anyone who suffers any inconvenience, of any severity, with an individual, state institution or organization can exclaim the phrase “¡*qué negros de mierda!* [Those *negros de mierda!*]” which becomes a symbol that these people have experienced something negative in their life or have observed it. That is, it is a figure of speech with derogatory connotations. In this sense, in the sample I found tweets that mostly contained the phrase without another context indicator. In certain cases they included an insult to

⁵⁸ “Cumbia music, a tropical genre imported from Colombia that became extremely successful in 1990s Argentina, especially among the urban working class” (Aguiló, 2014, p. 178).

⁵⁹ Cuarteto is a genre created in the 1940s, a mix between pasodoble and tarantella that later incorporated tropical sounds. The cuarteto sound originates from the city of Córdoba and constitutes a whole subculture around dance. Although their songs could be present at parties of all social classes, the cuarteto's culture is more closely linked to popular sectors that have their own consumer circuits. Currently this genre is consumed throughout the country but maintains its main reference circuit in Córdoba. The movie “De caravana” (Ruíz, 2010) shows part of this world.

⁶⁰ *Bailes o bailantas*, or concerts of those musical styles where people dance.

⁶¹ What generates conflicts with the middle class for the payment of taxes and the use of the proceeds.

accentuate the annoyance, for example: “*Negros de mierda.. muertos de hambre*”⁶² [*Negros de mierda... lowlives*]” (tweet 4016), in others an extension to the entire social group “*Increíble es el país de los negros de mierda* [Unbelievable, it's the country of *negros de mierda*]” (tweet 3306) and in others a kind of victimization “*Me tienen cansada estos negros de mierda* [These *negros de mierda* got me tired]” (tweet 15153). There were also those who expressed deep rejection: “*Asco me dan estos negros de mierda*. [These *negros de mierda* make me sick]” (tweet 15185) and rhetorical question type phrases “*Porque tengo vecinos tan negros de mierda, alguien me puede decir* [Why do I have such *negros de mierda* as neighbors, can anyone tell me?]” (tweet 2913). In this sense, in any negative situation that a person experiences, the phrase emerges automatically: “*Que rabia loco , negros de mierda* [I feel enraged, pal, *negros de mierda*]” (tweet 14245) and it seems to become a repetitive situation: “*Otra vez estos negros de mierda!!* [Again these *negros de mierda!!*]” (tweet 1587)

In this sense, the use of this derogatory figure of speech it always represents otherness, which occupies another space and has different habits and customs respect to the speaker. In that sense, according to Geler (2016), whiteness in Argentina compounds a complex set of behaviors, assumptions and values that represent what is socially acceptable in relation with Europe ancestry and capitalism. In sum, white is considered normal; while *negros de mierda* and popular blackness represent what is a deviant way of being.

⁶² Lit: dead from hunger.

2. Constructing a white Nation

Argentina is a country which was envisioned as a reflection of Europe, so it was fundamental to create an “Argentine race” constituted with European genetic material. The project of whitening Argentina was formally motivated in 1876 through the *Ley de Fomento a la Inmigración* [Immigration Promotion Law] in order to encourage the arrival of immigrants through the granting of benefits and promises of acquisition of land and rural job positions.⁶³ Then, different waves of European migrants that arrived between 1880-1930 were distributed over the country —although the majority remain in Buenos Aires—with the hope that they would constitute the genetic roots of the new national being. In that sense, the immigration policies that placed the white race in the top of the evolution pyramid were supported by a scientific racism following notions related to the survival of the fittest (Gordillo, 2016; Kaminsky, 2009; Keeling, 2017; G. B. Rodríguez, 2015).

According to Keeling (2017), imaging Argentina as a white, cosmopolitan and civilized country is more aspirational than real and it continues problematizing Argentines’ identity who are always halfway between Latin-America and Europe. In that sense, Kaminsky (2009, p. 1) called it “the myth of a monocultural Argentina” that was constructed by Argentine elites using material and discursive means. After independence in 1816, the borders of the country and the cultural and political aspects of the state were poorly defined, and the next four decades were consumed by civil wars between the Unitarian and Federal sides. The former believed that power

⁶³ “There were various ways by which potential emigrants obtained news of the possibilities offered by eventual destination countries, and concrete options from which to make their decisions. On the one hand, the information provided by government agents, from the colonization companies or navigation companies, and the one that the emigrants obtained through their relationships with relatives, friends and neighbors, on the other, from the networks used by the migrants for practical purposes such as obtaining work and accommodation.” (Argentina.gob.ar, 2019)

should be centralized in Buenos Aires, and the latter were convinced that the different provincial entities should retain their autonomy and respond to a national government (Keeling, 2017).

Both groups were influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, scientific racism, and the idea of the importance of making room for the “true Argentine being.” The Federals claimed that the true national being was attached to the land, and, in consequence, the quintessence of Argentina was the *gauchos* –mixed race men of the pampas,⁶⁴ nomadic, solitary,⁶⁵ similar in some extent to US cowboys- and the *criollos* (descendent from Spanish conquerors). The Unitarians, instead, believed that the barbarism, represented by Indians and Blacks, should be extirpated to get to civilization represented by Europeans that will be imported directly from their countries (G. Joseph, 2000; Kaminsky, 2009).

During the 19th Century, Black people were massively conscripted to fight during the independence wars (1810-1816), as a military corps in the provinces (1816-1853), during the Paraguayan wars (1864-1870) and many died during the yellow fever epidemic (1871) in the poor neighborhoods of Buenos Aires. They also participated in the Conquest of the Desert (1879-1917) led by General Julio A. Roca with the objective of expanding the national territory over the Patagonian region to the south, and then to the Gran Chaco region in the northeast, both territories occupied by indigenous groups at that time. The natives who did not perish during these military campaigns were displaced from their lands—which became state territories— and survived incorporated into the new nation as a cheap labor force. In that way, both groups -

⁶⁴ “The pampas are the enormous stretch of plains that surround Buenos Aires where the cattle industry, the primary source of Argentina’s wealth, was developed in the nineteenth century” (G. Joseph, 2000, p. 364). The *Pampeana* region occupies nowadays the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos and center and south of Córdoba.

⁶⁵ Kaminsky (2009) makes a description analyzing the *Martin Fierro* by José Hernández, the most important Argentine literary work.

Indians and Blacks- were removed from the national territory and their descendants were silenced, ignored and eradicated from the social discourse (Geler, 2016; Kaminsky, 2009; Keeling, 2017; M. E. Rodríguez, 2016). “The tactic of disproportionately sending Black troops to kill Indigenous peoples, making their lands safe for the ever growing number of Whites, was a stroke of diabolic genius” (Kaminsky, 2009, p. 10).

Consequently, according to Joseph (2000), the Amerindian population decreased from being 38.5% of the national total in 1810, to 4.3% at the end of the 19th Century, while the African population shared a similar fate, going from being 30% of the total inhabitants of the city of Buenos Aires —where the majority resided— to less than 2% in the same period. In that sense, the goals of getting rid of the non-whites was basically solved and the white Argentina myth completed its first step.

The vacant place was occupied by 5 million immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe and the Middle East, who arrived at the country between 1880 and 1930. In consequence, 30% of the Buenos Aires population was foreign born in 1914. The massive immigration that populated the country was part of the project of nationhood contrived by the elite called *la la Generación del '37* [the Generation of '37] and executed by *la Generación del 80* [the Generation of '80] whose objective was the creation of a Europeanized and prosperous society, which would be part of the world powers. The idea of these elite was to attract immigrants from England and Germany, as they considered them more civilized and with a stronger work ethic than the rest of Europeans and superior to Asians. The “desirable Europeans,” as Kaminsky (2009) called them, would be in charge of leading the young nation towards progress and prosperity. However, the

elites had to settle for people from peasant backgrounds, many of them illiterates looking to flee wars and famine (G. Joseph, 2000; Kaminsky, 2009; Keeling, 2017).

In this sense, the process of civilization and whitening did not go as expected, but this did not prevent powerful groups from establishing the idea that the country is made up of a "*crisol de razas* [melting pot or racial crucible]" of European races (Geler, 2016; Gordillo, 2016) that constitutes the so-called Argentine exceptionalism⁶⁶ that differentiates its society from the rest of the Hispanic-American countries.

In this sense, the 13810 tweet expresses:

“Desde que nací no me avergüenzo del color de mi piel, cabello, ojos e idiosincracia europea ... no me tiño para tapar el negro natural que no tengo, como uds. Y quiero seguir viviendo y trabajando con gente como yo, no con negros de mierda como uds.

[since I was born, I am not ashamed of the color of my skin, hair, eyes and European idiosyncrasies I don't dye myself to cover the natural black that I don't have, like you.

And I want to keep living and working with people like me, not *negros de mierda* like you all]”. (tweet 13810)

Emphasizing the color of the skin, hair, eyes and general features as European the speaker is suggesting that he/she corresponds to what is expected in Argentine society displaying an Argentine identity based in what Golay calls a xenophilic image "of racial, cultural and social

⁶⁶Whiteness: This exceptionality is an ideological construct that banished Indian and African roots from the national being and only accepted mestizaje when the genetic blend generated more white individuals (Briones, 2004; G. Joseph, 2000; Kaminsky, 2009; Keeling, 2017). In this sense, I think that all countries claim an exceptionality that differentiates them from others. In the case of Mexico, as we saw in the previous chapter, it is this idea of a miscegenation between the best of indigenous elements and the best of Europeans. In the case of Argentina, it is a Whiteness directly imported from Europe that remains unpolluted by mixing only with other imported Europeans.

superiority of Europeans and on the differential valuation of these" (2013, p. 6) where Amerindians and people with African roots do not take part and are end up excluded from the *crisol de razas* (Briones, 2004; Gordillo, 2016; M. E. Rodríguez, 2016) although their presence as part of the biological inheritance of Argentines was demonstrated in recent genetic studies that established that one third of the overall population "has Amerindians ancestry, which rises to two-thirds in the northwest provinces" (Keeling, 2017, p. 18).

This stress the speaker made about his/her own European background it can be read as the crystallization of the rhetoric created by the Generation of '80, which was reproduced through the 20th Century in political speeches, the educative system and public policies, through scholars, artists, sports representatives and journalists, created in the population an idea that whiteness and European origins is the common denominator that united all its inhabitants (Alberto & Elena, 2016). Argentine whiteness became thus a kind of dogma and the racial tensions were sublimated in class struggles (Geler, 2016). In that sense the speaker establishes a willingness to associate with people with a similar European background, as he/she were constructing an imaginary barrier that separate the 'people like him/her' from the *negros de mierda*.

Another thing that I would like to point out here is a certain racial pride that the speaker displays when saying that he is not ashamed of the color of his skin, eyes, and hair, assuming that not displaying the correct colors expected by Whiteness is shameful and require extra work for part of the *negros de mierda* like lightening the dark hair to appear 'less black.' In that sense, discussing about that whiteness traits and European backgrounds are quite common in everyday

Argentine society's⁶⁷ conversations, as I witnessed during a break in elementary school, where I clearly remember listening to two teachers pondering the light eyes of many of the children in my class, wondering which sector of Italy they would come from, or if they were Nordic or Germans. Whiteness. This kind of attitudes reaffirm in practice the idea of the melting pot among only European races.

Then, assuming that all Argentines have European grandparents, especially Italian or Spanish—who were the populations that most arrived in the migratory waves—is totally normalized. In relation to this, I remember when I was about to start my application process for a tourist visa for the United States, a friend hosted me at her house in Buenos Aires where the United States embassy is located. She asked me why I was doing the visa process if it was easier to enter the United States with a European passport that did not require a visa. I explained to my friend that I did not have a European passport and she asked me why I did not get one, as surely, I must have an Italian or Spanish grandfather somewhere.⁶⁸

Reproducing this idea about European ancestry is crucial for the functioning of Argentine identity (Geler, 2016; Keeling, 2017; Reid Andrews, 2016). Then, it is very normal for each family to know from which region their European ancestors came, keeping hidden or directly

⁶⁷ When I speak of Argentine society in an autobiographical sense, I mean groups of middle-class people who access social discourses and cultural capitals, who live in urban areas, in middle-class neighborhoods, who belong to professional environments, who are part of the business community and government areas and whose kids are mainly educated in private schools. The authors that I referenced in this chapter interpret Whiteness in the context of *porteños*, elites who inhabit Buenos Aires city; nevertheless, because of the influence *porteños* elites exercise over the national group, I can realize that a reproduction of this elite is found in each large or small city, with its particular local variants, and a more exhaustive study is needed on these groups throughout the national territory. Although there is a rivalry for power between Buenos Aires and the provinces as described by Joseph (2000) and Keeling (2017), it is also true that Whiteness is perpetuated at the local, provincial and national levels through interconnected elites that exercise hegemony in the control of discourse.

⁶⁸ Truly, the only European relative that I have a record of is my maternal great-grandfather who came from Austria, from somewhere on the border with Germany, around 1914. It is important to highlight that not all European nations grant the same facilities as Spain or Italy to obtain passports from foreign-born individuals and that has to do with their own national identity policies promoted from the state. Whether or not I have a Spanish background that could justify my last name is something that can never be revealed since not many records are kept in this regard.

ignoring the biological part that is not related to Europe, and that it is Indian, African or mestizo (Geler, 2016). The purpose of this erasure of their own ancestral ties is to not be marginalized⁶⁹ out of a social group who holds being white in high esteem “since in Argentina what is ‘normal’ is, by definition, white, it follows that whiteness is configured locally as a capacious category that incorporates everything that is left outside of racial blackness” (Geler, 2016, p. 219).

Kaminsky has a compelling argument about Argentina's strategy of "transplanting" whiteness directly from Europe rather than obtaining it by mixing with local elements. “Europe was inclined to relate to the non-European world as the site of exoticism and barbarism (in the civilization-barbarism dyad that haunts Argentina to this day), the colonized or colonizable other” (2009, p. 20). In this sense, Argentina reveals itself to Europe, escaping otherness, establishing itself as a European bastion nestled in South America, claiming the same whiteness as the old continent, declaring itself devoid of elements that could dispute that supposed whiteness —hence the material and ideological mechanism finely orchestrated to eliminate Indians and Africans and any trace of their previous presence in those lands. “Argentina, among the many colonial sites onto which Europe deflects its racial anxiety refuses to be so othered, choosing, rather, to engage in the same pretense of whiteness” (Kaminsky, 2009, p. 21). In this way, the Argentine elites constructed an idea of a nation that pretends to be considered as just another European country, erasing from the collective memory any element that opposes it. However, this idea is constantly in dispute and therefore tensions emerge that create a conflicted national identity that is sometimes perceived as a failure in the system that ends up dividing the

⁶⁹ Geler (2016) makes a very compelling argument about how nonwhite people educate themselves to behave and look like whites.

population between the so-called white and those designated as non-white (Keeling, 2017). In that sense, in the tweet 12185 the speaker declares: “*chicos ustedes en europa serían los negros de mierda, no se coman la peli* [Guys, in Europe the *negros de mierda* would be you, do not buy the story” (tweet 12185) evidently disputing the idea about European transplantation so much rooted in people like the speaker in tweet 13810, who appropriate the alleged European idiosyncrasy. Also, the speaker of tweet 12185 is suggesting the otherness that Argentines would experience in European countries when the European anxiety would be directed to them.

In the analyzed sample, the tensions between sectors who consider themselves the representation of whiteness and the others who do not coincide or agree with the national myth seem permanent. An enormous frustration is perceived by those embracing—in a way more or less unconscious—the project of national identity against other sectors who are accused by the former of making the idea of Argentine exceptionalism fail.

2.1. The white Argentinity

The formation of a national state is a complex process where various elements converge linked to available economic resources, possible industries, hierarchies and social classes, the place that the future state will occupy in relation to other nations, and positions and intentions of the social actors involved. The national state is then an instance of organization of power arranged by social relations and institutions. One of the fundamental properties of the national state is precisely the ability to internalize a collective identity through the use of symbols that allow the development of a sense of belonging that keeps its inhabitants united and instills in them a fraternal feeling. The nation is thus a mechanism of social control and ideological

domination that inspires individuals to sympathize with an imagined community of beings whom they do not know beyond their national alignment (Anderson, 1991; Oszlak, 1982).

According to Oszlak (1982) then, the ideologues of the Argentine state fundamentally sought to avoid the disintegration of the territory that had previously belonged to the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and organize it in a new framework that was consistent with the productive system and the relations of domination. In this sense, they first sought to achieve a legal and social ‘order’ that would give way to sustained economic and technological ‘progress’ that would define relations with other nations. The idea of order, therefore, implied a definition of citizenship aimed at legitimizing certain individuals as members of the new society and excluding all those who in the eyes of the dominant groups -aristocracy, commercial bourgeoisie, and landowners- held back the idea of progress - Indians and blacks. In this sense, the dominant groups had to achieve what Oszlak calls "ideological penetration," which is to get the general population to adopt and naturalize particular values of certain groups and convert them into national values. The idea that the Argentine population was directly transplanted from Europe and that for this reason it is ‘white’ and ‘more civilized’ than the rest of the Spanish-speaking countries is an ideological penetration, that is, a form of cultural domination that gradually became legitimized over the years and today it impacts on this always problematic identity: the so-called Argentinidad⁷⁰ whose structure, according to Keeling (2017), was consolidated around the early 1930's, but it always varies according to the political situation and global relations.

⁷⁰ The Argentine rock band Bersuit Vergarabat composed “La argentinidad al palo [the Argentinidad on the top]” (Martin et al., 2004) a song that ironically reflects on the national myths. The song begins “La calle más larga, el río más ancho, las minas más lindas del mundo... [The longest street, the widest river, the most beautiful women in the world...] to start naming a few elements that function as national symbols repeated by social agents in such a way that later were incorporated in the social imaginary as national prides. The function of these symbols is to homogenize Argentine identity but also reinforce the supposed exceptionality of being Argentine.

However, Keeling (2017) argues that Argentina as a country with an idiosyncrasy marked by the European is a complex project that despite all the efforts never fully materialized. In this sense, the evident disparities between the capital city and deep Argentina were always a source of identity instability. In this sense, Adamovsky (2016) argues that although Argentines are formally considered white, “in terms of physical appearance there was a substantial grey area between those who clearly displayed the right (“European”) skin tones and facial features, and those who obviously did not. In theory, Argentina’s whiteness was one; but in practice it had its visual and social nuances” (2016, p. 155). In that sense, Adamovsky (2016) accords with Geler (2016) that whiteness is “a capacious category that incorporates everything that is left outside of racial blackness” (2016, p. 219). However, as Kaminsky (2009) and Gordillo (2016) point out in turn, there is a whole complex series of juxtaposed and contradictory categories of which skin color and physical characteristics constitute only one component to be considered included in whiteness or excluded from it.

In that sense, Geler (2016) calls ‘popular blacks’ all those who, without being considered black by race and included within whiteness, do not present all the characteristics required by whiteness and do not represent for the author a racial alterity to the idea of nation, but rather their alterity is anchored to their form of being in and seeing the world. In this sense, they are associated with belonging to the working classes, where supposedly the grotesque and the uncivilized are housed together with the lack of education, poverty and all its associations - dirt, precariousness, delinquency, heightened sexuality - among other characteristics. “Basically, the attributes of this sort of blackness reflect the pejorative way in which many members of the

(generally urban) middle and upper classes conceive of the popular world and popular sectors” (Geler, 2016, p. 219). We see this attitude in the Twitter corpus:

“ *** ATENCION!! *** *NdelaR: Cuando esta cuenta expresa NEGROS DE MIERDA, que conste en actas que pueden ser rubios y de ojos celestes, pero con un corazón NEGRO DE MIERDA (y mierda en el cerebro). Pueden continuar con su programación habitual.*

[*** ATTENTION!! *** Editorial Note: When this account expresses NEGROS DE MIERDA, for the record that they can be blonde and blue-eyed, but with a NEGRO DE MIERDA’S heart (and shit in the brain). You can continue with your usual programming]”. (tweet 14077)

In this sense, according to the tweet, it is not enough to display the correct colors to be white, but rather it could be said that being white involve a series of performances that determines that a person meets the ideals of Whiteness required to be considered a valuable citizen. Geler claimed that, whiteness is acquired by genetic mixing with individuals who physically display European traits, as well as by education and proper manners achieved through personal effort to conform to the standards of whiteness ‘civilizing’ oneself” (2016, p. 231) as a way of achieving social mobility and distancing oneself from popular blackness. In the case of tweet 14077, it seems impossible to achieve this non-association with blackness when you have a “*negro de mierda’s heart*” and a brain made of manure. Like tweet 1804, here we speak of an inner blackness that cannot be solved, a fundamental problem of being that cannot be fixed even with the appropriate physical characteristics of whiteness. In this sense, there are tweets in the sample that allude to

negros de mierda clarifying that it is not about physical blackness “*Negros de mierda!* (*Entiéndase no es por color de piel*) [Negros de mierda! (It should be understood that it is not because of skin color) (tweet 3621)]. In this sense, I infer that what these speakers want is to distance themselves from racism and maintain this idea that in Argentina there are no races because they are all European: “*Los bien llamados "negros de mierda" (no es cuestión de tono de piel, esta claro)* [The well-called “*negros de mierda*” (not a matter of skin tone, of course)] (tweet 15638). As I said at the beginning in Argentina, everyone knows what they speak of when they pronounce “*negros de mierda*” and as the aforementioned authors say, the definition is crossed by access to different types of social and economic capital. In this sense, you can be a “blond” black as in tweet 14077 or a poor black as in tweet 8756 or someone who has blackness in his blood and soul as in tweet 1804.

2.2. We are not them

In relation to that, Gordillo argues that Whiteness as a phenomenon “can be better understood as an affective and geographic formation that is in denial of its existence because it is not reducible to a conscious ideology and operates at a pre-discursive emotional level” (2016, p. 243). In that sense, Gordillo agrees with Ahmed (2007) that white bodies establish white spaces. That is why it is possible to be black and blond with blue eyes at the same time if that individual's body somehow inhabits a space (physical or behavioral) reserved for blackness.

According to Adamovsky (2016) and Gordillo (2016), popular blackness began to be addressed in the social discourse in the governments of Hipólito Yrigoyen (1916-1922 / 1928-1930) and Juan Domingo Perón (1946-1955 / 1973-1974) when their followers were accused of

being ‘*cabecitas negras* [black heads],’⁷¹ ‘*negros* [blacks]’ o ‘*gronchos*’⁷² since both leaders congregated popular masses that had not found parliamentary representation until that moment. In this way, Adamovsky & Arza (2012) y Aguiló (2014) argue that from 1946 on, a racializing narrative was created from the Argentine intellectual areas that established that Peronism was supported by the lower classes that were imagined to be composed of blacks or mestizos heirs of *criollo* [Creole] barbarism, represented by their provincial origins and belonging to the working class; while the middle class became the heir to European immigration and therefore is described as modern, progressive and thriving. This is important because through these ideological operations, the so-called middle class appropriated the ideals of civilization and seized the nation model proposed by the generation of the 1880s, leaving the place of no progress to be occupied by popular blacks. However, it is fair to clarify that although Peronism is accused of containing *negros de mierda* in its ranks, this political movement encompasses different ideological currents, often in contradiction, on a spectrum that goes from the extreme right to the extreme left.

Gordillo (2016) argues that the phrase “*negros de mierda*” highlights the anger that certain individuals unleash when observing that Argentina is far from being a white and homogeneous nation, given that the heritage of those who formerly populated those territories is still in force and that the efforts to whiten the population did not give the expected result. In this sense, according to the author, non-whites are not fully accepted as members of the Argentine nation,

⁷¹ According to Aguiló (2014) the name black head comes from a bird native to South America. Grimson (2017) argues that this hypothesis is difficult to verify. I speculate that it may be a simple visual contrast that appealed to a euphemism derived from a visual issue, as if from a certain height groups of dark-haired heads were observed walking the streets. That is, it is a euphemism to refer to blacks, mestizos and indigenous people as others that are used for the same purpose such as calling them morochos [black hair], oscuros [dark], or pardos [brown].

⁷² “(colloquial, derogatory, Argentina, Uruguay) [person] that is vulgar and ordinary, or lacks manners due to his low social status” fem. groncha (Lexico Dictionaries, 2021).

and they tend to be interpreted as invaders who occupy geographic areas destined for whites. That is, it is assumed as normal for blacks to occupy shanty towns and working-class neighborhoods —that is why they are also called *villeros*, because they inhabit *villas miseria* [slums]— but their presence makes whites uncomfortable when they are integrated into a public space that is normally occupied by white bodies. This does not mean that among vulnerable people there are no white people with European features, simply that it reflects the complexity and the chain of negotiations that implies being defined as black or white in a country that does not establish explicit racial markers.

Negros de mierda....está es la gente que hace de este país un desastre...no.salimos más.con este negraje. (tweet 2387)

[Negros de mierda ... these are the people who make this country a mess ... we won't ever stand up with this negraje⁷³ [blackness].] (tweet 2387)

In the tweet the speaker states that those who impede the development of the country are the *negros de mierda*. There is thus an idea of us vs. them where 'we' are the organized and powerful part, and 'they' are the *negros* who disorganize everything that has been achieved. This idea that there is progress to be achieved comes from the notion that there are advanced, First World countries, and impoverished countries in the Third World and 'burdens' that Third World societies carry and that do not allow them to join the progress. The phrase "we won't ever stand up" indicates that the country is sunk or stopped in some uncomfortable place.

⁷³ *Negraje* is not a real word but it alludes to the property of being black. Instead of saying 'these blacks' use the word *negraje* increasing the level of derogatory comment.

The notion that there are social agents that impede the advancement of the country is expressed in tweet 15797 that fatalistically names the groups that turn the country into a nightmare full of uncivilization: “nunca cambiaremos .negros de mierda. *piqueteros*⁷⁴ ociosos y delincuentes los quiero afuera porque no podemos ser un país civilizado es una pesadilla esto [We will never change: negros de mierda, idle picketers, and criminals. I want them outside. why can't we be a civilized country? this is a nightmare].” The speaker declares: “I want them out” hoping that these agents will be expelled and with that the obstacles to progress will end. Therefore, this idea continues that divides the population between the citizens who do allow progress vs. those who are an obstacle.

3. Inheriting whiteness

As I said previously, the ideas linked with the white European population as the truly Argentine self were supported since the second half of the 20th century until nowadays by the middle class who consider themselves the inheritors of the Argentine destiny of greatness. According to Visacovsky (2018), the middle class is defined by a series of culturally supported stereotypes, models and narratives. “In Argentina the color is white, to the point that it can become decisive when it comes to including or excluding individuals, neighborhoods, bodies, clothing, food and drinks, music, sports or television programs” (2018, pp. 17–18). In that sense, Adamovsky y Arza (2012) clarifies that the middle class is a concept that in Argentina only gained strength after 1946 as a counter-discourse strategy against the advance of Peronism and its supporters mainly distributed into a racialized working class. For his part, Visacovsky (2018)

⁷⁴ “Group of people who walk the streets or stand in certain places to report on a protest platform or prevent work from being done when a strike has been called.” (Lexico Dictionaries, 2021). The *piqueteros* gained importance after the 2001 crisis as a political movement with different party alignments, generally made up of unemployed people who demanded very specific purposes such as food or state subsidies, appealing to the roadblock to get the attention of the authorities (Birss, 2005).

establishes that the categorizations that attempt to define the middle class constitute moral evaluations that contrast the good and the bad, the appropriate and the inappropriate, the decent and the indecent and are applied to all kinds of objects, locations, and forms of consumption. In this sense, there are expectations to meet and negotiate to be considered within the middle class. In this sense, being middle class is very mobile and whether or not one belongs depends on the environment with whom this assignment is being negotiated. That is to say, people can be middle class due to the level of education, but their membership could be objected to if they do not reside in an area classified as middle class or do not comply with certain social rituals. Then, following Visacovsky (2018), the so-called Argentine middle class is a very heterogeneous segment, with many subdivisions whose ideological orientation is inclined by the values of the dominant classes. In this sense, it is curious how, according to Casas (2019) 82% of Argentines perceive themselves as belonging to the middle class, while only 45% would be by income level. I argue then that being middle class is an identity value of Argentines in general and belonging is ascribed within whiteness because if, as Adamovsky says (2016), the classes are defined in contrast to the others, being middle class distances them from the marginal, from the poor and from popular blackness.

The middle class is constantly struggling to make noticeable their difference from the *negros de mierda* that ultimately function as scapegoats for everything that moves the country away from its supposed destiny of greatness. In the sample, there are several examples of how *negros de mierda* complicate different aspects that, according to the middle class, are vital for the country's integration into the so-called developed world, including government, the use of public funds and insecurity.

3.1. Government

“Todos sabemos que el pueblo argentino es idiota... sino fijate porque nos gobiernan estos negros de mierda hace 70 años. Somos un pueblo pobre e ignorante, donde el culto y el rico son discriminados y excluidos.

[We all know that the Argentine people are idiots ... but look at why these negros de mierda have ruled us for 70 years. We are a poor and ignorant people, where the cultured and the rich are discriminated against and excluded.]” (tweet 5179)

There are several reasons for electing a political leader in particular, but the speaker of tweet 5179 believe that the only possible explanation for voting for Peronism is that the Argentine people do not have enough intellectual capacity. According to the speaker, the *negros de mierda* are in power because “the rich and the cultured” have been systematically excluded suggesting implicitly that if the government were assumed by elites, Argentina will be rich and cultured.

Accusations that link *negros de mierda*>Peronism> poor governance are permanent. “*Ahí tienen a su presidente Alberto, PERONCHOS NEGROS DE MIERDA, así vamos a terminar* [There you have your president Alberto, *PERONCHOS*⁷⁵ *NEGROS DE MIERDA*, that's how we're going to finish]” (tweet 9694). In this sense, the speaker thinks this president does not bode well for the future of the country. According to the text, the president belongs to ‘them’ —not ours or not mine— because it is ‘they’ who voted for Alberto Fernández. However, the consequences will be suffered by everyone, including the speaker who establishes “that's how we're going to finish.”

⁷⁵ *Peroncho* is a hybrid word merging *peronista* and *groncho* (vulgar) (See section 2.2)

Consequently, the speakers worried for the Argentina's future try to distance themselves from the racialized others making clear that they do not vote for Peronists because they are not *negros de mierda*, “¿Crees que todos somos *negros de mierda* como los que votaron *está fantochada*? [You think we're all *negros de mierda* like the ones who voted for this carnival?]" (tweet 12251). Then I infer that the main concern for the speakers that expressed in this venue is to become less white and in consequence, loss Argentine exceptionalism status returning to some alleged uncivilization:

Los negros de mierda votaron el gobierno que los va a hacer comer tierra, pues tierra tendrán que comer, y andar en patas, y morir de hambre y sin atención en los hospitales, porque esa mierda fue lo que pidieron

[The *negros de mierda* voted for the government to make them eat dirt, well they'll have to eat dirt, and walk barefoot, and starve and die without care in hospitals, because that shit was what they asked for.] (tweet 504)

The speaker interprets that the consequences of a poor government will only reach those who voted “that shit” instead of choosing whatever candidate the speaker believed will accompany Argentine progress. Considering that the idea of progress was settled by the 19th Century white elites who determined the agro-export model that the country follows to this day, the allusion to walking barefoot—as uncivilized—and eating dirt—as savages—is what indicates that the speaker resents that, democratically, Argentina has not been directed towards the whiteness that the speaker expected.

3.2. *Work and taxes*

According to the sample, there is the idea that the middle class is the only one that pays taxes allowing the Argentine state to continue to function: “*Donó el 50% de todos mis ingresos y gastos para alimentar a negros de mierda que no hacen un carajo...* [I donate 50% of all my income and expenses to feed *negros de mierda* who don't do a damn thing...]” (tweet 5988). Using of the verb ‘donate’ the speaker is ironically referring to the taxes he/she pays and how this money is waste in on people who do not contribute to country’s sustainability because for them, supposedly, working is not a value. This link between the middle class and a culture of work and meritocracy is extended in the sample when speakers discuss the destination of public funds.

Uno se estresa, se rompe la cabeza creando cosas y cosas para generar. Se pasa el día entero laburando y renegando para que todo salga como uno espera y lograr tener un mínimo ingreso. Y estos negros de mierda que alimenta el puto gobiernos tienen más palta que cualquiera.

[You get stressed, you break your head creating things and things to generate. You spend the whole day working and struggling so that everything goes as expected and you get a minimum income. And these negros de mierda fed by the fucking government have more money than anyone else]” (tweet 8052)

Tweet 8052 synthesizes the belief that there are some who work hard to obtain just the minimum to cover their basic needs while others live on the benefits granted by the state in abundance and without worries. The speaker considers that those who are in a situation of

poverty have a lot of income due to the supposed number of welfare plans of which they are beneficiaries. Along the same lines, tweet 665 states: “*Mirá! y vos rompiendote el orto laburando para ganar un mango, pagar impuestos y mantener a estos vagos, inútiles, parásitos, negros de mierda. ésto es el peronismo, se dan cuenta xq éste país No crece más..??* ["Look.! And you breaking your ass working to earn a nickel, pay taxes and keep these lazy, useless, parasites, *negros de mierda*. This is Peronism, do you realize why this country does not grow any longer?].” The rhetoric that some work and others are maintained by the former is preserved here also establishing that *negros de mierda* are a hindrance to the progress of the country.

According to Visacovsky (2018) the classic values attributed to the middle class referring to equality, freedom, success, and justice were put into crisis since 2001 after a deep economic struggle that had repercussions at the political and social level which caused disbelief in the institutions that became part of the collective memory, with deep mistrust in the political parties and in the institutions in general, hurting the sense of citizenship and social solidarity. In turn, Aguiló (2014) establishes that this crisis of 2001 also impacted the image that Argentines had of their own national identity, partially removing the myth of the supposed exceptionalism based on the supposed whiteness inherited from Europe. I argue then that these consequences are reflected in tweets that express ideas like: “*Es inútil en este país, ser un buen ciudadano, lo sos y te garcan para regalarles a los negros de mierda.* [“It's useless in this country being a good citizen; if you are one, they shit on you to give everything away to the *negros de mierda*].” (tweet 855).

In an ideal scenario where the relations between classes and the state are balanced, the middle classes would be expected to contribute heavily to state income through taxes and receive broad benefits derived from social policies, but in Latin America this is far from true. Currently

the fiscal covenant⁷⁶ in Latin America, in general, applies great tax pressure on the lower-income sectors, while it is quite lax in the pressure directed towards the richest and most powerful sectors, which generates an atmosphere of growing disagreement. Countries like Argentina have large states with many programs aimed at the poorest income sectors in order to combat poverty, which has largely been achieved; however, the middle class has not improved its income much or made more profits.

For their part, 11 million people receive social assistance from the state to feed themselves and cover some basic needs (Smink, 2020), These are classified as “*negros de mierda planeros* [*negros de mierda* welfare recipients]” (tweet 5701) because due to their low level of income they qualify for state benefits or social plans designed to alleviate their vulnerability at some point. Nevertheless, some speakers believe that the welfare will be wasted in the *negros de mierda*'s vices: “*negros de mierda, planeros, drogonos* [*negros de mierda*, welfare recipients, drug addicts]” (tweet 8840). I infer that the chain of meanings is connected: black> poor> unemployed> do drugs, constituting another element of the stereotyping non-whites that I analyze in this chapter.

3.3. Insecurity feelings

According to what was observed in the tweets, the speakers are concerned about insecurity, crimes and robberies committed by *negros de mierda*: “*Iara cada vez que me cuenta que cerca de su casa pasó algo, me da más miedo de que salga , que negros de mierda* [Every time Iara tells me that something happened near her house, I'm more afraid of her going outside, those

⁷⁶ The fiscal covenant according to Avanzini (2012) includes all agreements between organized society and political interests to distribute public spending derived from tax collection. This will have an impact on the governance and well-being of the various social sectors.

negros de mierda]" (tweet 16218). However, Argentina in general has a low homicide rate —6.6 per 100,000 inhabitants— but a high robbery rate —among which is mostly attempted robbery (Pardo, 2016). In this context, Argentines in general consider insecurity one of their main concerns, according to a survey carried out by the Argentine Catholic University Observatory, where it was detected that although about 35% of those surveyed had suffered a criminal act, about 85% had a constant feeling of insecurity in the face of crime. On the other hand, people from the lower strata are more likely to suffer criminal acts, and less likely to report them because they have fewer material and personal tools to address the traumatic psychological consequences derived (Muratori & Rodríguez Espínola, 2016). That means that the middle class is not the most vulnerable with respect to insecurity, but they are highly concerned about it, according to the sample.

“Ya los negros de mierda no son como antes que te robaban lo que necesitaban y listo se iban, ahora son morbosos los enfermos, te hacen cantar, bailar, te sacan un ojo y después te matan sin problemas, es peor o igual que una película de terror (tweet 14488)

[The *negros de mierda* aren't like before when they stole what they needed and that's it, they left. Now they are morbid, they are insane; They make you sing, dance, take out your eye and then kill you without problems, it is worse or the same as a horror movie.] (tweet 14488).

When the speaker makes a distinction between before and now is establishing that currently the situation worsened, and the *negros de mierda* were filled with evil and monstrous desires to torture. This is important because it helps to understand this feeling of insecurity that leads many

speakers to suggest that it is necessary to get rid of that part of society that has been debased in order to preserve the other part that has moral values that contribute to the progress of the country. In this way, in the sample there are several stories of robberies and crimes at the hands of terrifying *negros de mierda* who rob or attempt to steal motorbikes, cars, cellphones, public lighting cables, banners, pets, houses, vandalize public spaces and kill in cold blood (tweet 12759; 12470; 8573; 15981; 5793; 13170; 10557) along with a perceived generalized sense of impunity where *negros de mierda* are alleged of being above the law (tweet 9210; 4391)

In response, the appeal to eliminationism—which I will examine in more depth later—emerges: “*En serio hay gente que defiende a estos negros de mierda? lo minimo que se merecen es un tiro en la cabeza* [Are there really people who defend these *negros de mierda*? the least they deserve is a shot to the head]” (tweet 4644). Killing criminals directly with no intervention of judicial system is a very present idea whose justification is derived from this feeling of constant and overwhelming insecurity. As illustrated in the following tweet that responded to a call to kill the *negros de mierda*:

(matarlos sí) Soluciona muchas cosas, indirectamente beneficias a muchas familias que probablemente sean asaltadas por estas personas en un futuro, defendes a un país con menos delincuentes, y se lo piensan dos veces antes de salir a matar. Eligen robar porque son unos negros de mierda, corta.

[(killing them) It solves many things, indirectly you benefit many families that are likely to be assaulted by these people in the future, you defend a country with fewer criminals,

and they think twice before going out to kill. They choose to steal because they're *negros de mierda*, cut it out.]” (tweet 14591)⁷⁷

In other words, eliminationism as envisioned in this tweet would be a preventative measure to solve urban security problems abandoning the constitutional guarantees of the presumption of innocence until proven otherwise. Eliminationism is a strong idea detected in the sample and it will be developed in the next section.

4. Us or them

During the collection period of the sample, Jorge Ríos, a 70-year-old retiree, shot some individuals who allegedly entered his house to rob, causing the death of one of them. The retiree remained in police custody after his preventive detention was ordered until the circumstances that led to the death of the alleged thief were clarified. Apparently, the murdered individual received one of the shots outside the home of Ríos, so that the claim of legitimate defense would be doubtful (Fahsbender, 2020).

However, the opinion on Twitter was in favor of the release of Ríos, arguing that his action was correct. The speaker of tweet 15089 for example states that Ríos should be awarded: “*Ese viejo merece una condecoración digna de tal acto heroico. La cárcel es para los negros de mierda, no para los hombres de bien* [That old man deserves a decoration worthy of such a heroic act. Jail is for *negros de mierda*, not upright men].” That is, for the speaker, killing a thief is an act of good men and must be recognized by society. Furthermore, he emphasizes that Jorge Ríos is not a *negro de mierda* —because *negros de mierda* are the ones who steal, not the ones

⁷⁷ The phrase in parentheses comes from the thread from which the tweet was extracted, and I decided to retrieve it to facilitate understanding of the text.

who defend themselves— and that is why he shouldn't go to prison. Of course, the speaker leaves aside that there is a constitutional guarantee of presumption of innocence, and a fair judicial process must be issued in consideration of the concrete circumstances of the event.

A month after the event, Jorge Ríos was released from prison and transferred to house arrest. Given this fact, a television channel recorded that the relatives of the alleged dead thief appeared at the door of Ríos' house to demand explanations. The speaker of tweet 14950 replies to the video of this event uploaded to Twitter by another user: “*Los tienen q matar a uno por uno no sirven para nada, el viejo hizo todo bien, ni derechos tendrían q tener negros de mierda* [They have to kill them one by one they are useless, the old man did everything right, *negros de mierda* you would not have any rights.” The speaker's message is certainly confusing; it cannot be deduced if it refers to the fact that you have to “kill one by one” all the *negros de mierda* because they do not contribute anything or you have to specifically kill the people you see in the video, I say this because following the logic that the alleged thief is a *negro de mierda* man, then it would be productive to also kill his relatives for the same reason. When the speaker announces “the old man did everything right” he/she celebrates the death of a human being and congratulates his executioner, agreeing with the heroism conferred on him by tweet 15089. When he/she states that they shouldn't have any rights, the speaker takes dehumanization to the extreme. By this I mean, he/she considers that *negros de mierda* are not really people so they shouldn't have human rights.

Regarding the same original post, the speaker of tweet 15330 argues: “*NEGROS DE MIERDA! Salen a chorear, los matan y sale la familia del "pobre choro incomprendido social, excluido, etc".. hay miles de opciones antes de salir a robar. NADA NI NADIE puede justificar*

eso. Se joden. [NEGROS DE MIERDA! They go out to steal, they kill them and the family of the "poor socially misunderstood thief, excluded, etc." comes out ... There are thousands of options before stealing. NOTHING AND NOBODY can justify that. Fuck them.]

The "fuck them" can be aimed at the dead man's family as well as anyone who is a *negro de mierda*. The speaker takes it for granted that if he is a *negro de mierda*, he will be inclined to rob someone else's property. On the other hand, the speaker mocks the social inclusion policies promulgated by the government and the analysis of specialists on the subject by putting the phrase "poor socially misunderstood thief, excluded, etc." in quotation marks, as if quoting them from some other text or place. For the speaker, clearly the people who steal deserve to die; that is, both facts seem equivalent to the speaker because stealing in his/her mind is unforgivable and should be strongly penalized.

In the case of Jorge Ríos, justice can only be issued based on specific facts. But it is interesting how the speakers turn the murder of a non-white person into a heroic act. They are not really interested in assessing whether it was legitimate defense, but rather they put it in a plane of 'us' against 'them' where Jorge Ríos belongs to 'us' and where their fantasies of eliminating *negros de mierda* are realized in a certain way.

I therefore argue that, in the face of insecurity, concrete or imagined, and the lack of adequate responses from the state, the speakers project their frustrations on another whom they imagine to be devoid of any ethical sense and lacking any appreciation of the principle of personal effort. The speakers cannot conceive them as an integral part of their own group of belonging because there is an enormous contradiction that could be expressed in the following way: 'how is it possible that some of us do not agree with the rules that Whiteness establishes to

secure order and progress, respecting individual goods as in any civilized white country?’ Faced with this impossibility and contradiction, the speakers imagine them external, not white, uncivilized. Consequently, if they are not white, —speakers may think—they cannot really be Argentine, but black, *negros de mierda*. Ultimately, this logic considers that all those who do not do things correctly in Argentina must have something black or be black in some way. The main anxiety is triggered for those who are convinced of this logic when their expectations are not met, at that moment in their mind Argentina becomes a kind of hole infested with faceless people who destroy the idea of the exceptional nation and Argentina becomes 'a shitty country full of *negros de mierda*.'

4.1. Otherness and eliminationism

*Que los caguen a tiros a todos por negros de mierda, lo llevan en la sangre, en el alma.
Es otra raza, otra cultura esa gente! No entienden y no lo van a hacer. Así que por eso
mátenlos si son un estorbo*

[Let them all be shot down for negros de mierda, they carry it in their blood, in their soul. These people are another race, another culture! They don't understand and they won't. So that's why kill them, if they're a hindrance] (tweet 1804).

In the tweet the speaker begins and ends by stating that *negros de mierda* should be eliminated and gives his/her reasons for that, and openly talks about their otherness and refers to them as "those people." According to the speaker, they must be killed because it is impossible to fix them since the root of the evil is carried in their biological constitution and extends to spiritual characteristics. In this sense, it would be difficult to integrate them into Argentine

society because there is nothing genetic or spiritual that makes them identify with the population as a whole and that is why they must die, according to the author of the tweet. To do this, he suggests a formula “let them all be shot down” and finally reduces them to “hindrance.”

Killing them by shooting is one of the suggested actions most used in this sample to carry out eliminationism and is expressed with different variants like shooting in the head or the forehead (tweets 4739; 6104; 4644; 14601)”; using 1, 3, or lots of bullets (tweet 3989; 14601; 771; 13994), executing them one by one or massively (tweet 786; 13994); as if the speakers imagined themselves as part of firing squads running a population purge “*Es hora de empezar a ejecutar a estos negros de mierda*. [Time to start executing these *negros de mierda*]” (tweet 4467).

This idea of shooting people that are ‘uncomfortable’ is developed in a country that went through a military dictatorship (1976-1983) where the alleged enemies of the nation, the *elementos subversivos* [subversive elements] were imprisoned, kidnapped (in some cases along with their children, who were resettled with foster families), disappeared, and in many cases executed by their captors and buried in nameless mass graves, following a policy of state terrorism that left deep marks on the social fabric. According to Gordillo (2016) the military dictatorship was dedicated to honoring white Argentina so the armed forces treated the alleged subversive urban multitudes with the same violence the government did with Amerindians and mixed race gauchos. In turn, Gamarnik (2017), analyzing the role of the media on the construction of public enemies during dictatorship, establishes that:

It was necessary that anyone who was involved in any way in the repression had no moral qualms, did not see in their victim a human being. But it was also necessary that the

population generally support the paradigm of "subversion" to which it was necessary to annihilate. (Gamarnik, 2017, p. 49)

The tweet 7681 for example “*3 tiros y al río por negros de mierda* [3 shots and down to the river for being *negros de mierda*”] contains a reminiscence of the so-called ‘death flights,’⁷⁸ where political prisoners during 1976-1977 were thrown unconscious into the Río de la Plata — and later into the Argentine Sea—where they drowned, and their bodies were found later on the Argentine and Uruguayan coast and buried in nameless graves (Llorente, 2021). This was one of the murder techniques used in the first years of dictatorship that disappeared people in a very concrete way, making any trace of their humanity disappear.

Other example with similar reminiscences to murder techniques developed during dictatorship are found in tweet 7779 “*ponerlos en un paredón y bala* [put them on a wall and bullet].” In the framework of relating these eliminationist phrases with the effective extermination carried out in dictatorship, it is disturbing how in all these cases, the depicted action of killing is a desire to practice it as a community, where the perpetrator is society — excluding the *negros de mierda* of such society— similar to the discourse that took place in the 1970’s when the repressive state, commanded by the Armed Forces, appropriated the power to assassinate people to ‘cleanse society’ and organize it in what they called ‘*El Proceso de Reorganización Nacional*’ [National Reorganization Process].

⁷⁸ In October, 2020 started a trial focused in the death flights “On this occasion, the prosecution seeks to prove the existence of the "death flights" operated from Campo de Mayo, a military base in the northeast of the province of Buenos Aires where another clandestine detention center operated, to convict those who commanded that operation” (Llorente, 2021, para. 8). These procedures also were performed in the dictatorships of Chile and Uruguay (Agencia Telam, 2021; Toro Agurte, 2016).

Nevertheless, in tweet 2813 a novelty is introduced: “*Tendría q ser legal que pase x arriba con la patrulla a esos q le tiraron piedras, 1ro x negros de mierda 2do por pelotudos 3ro x si tienen crías* [It should be legal for them to run with the patrol all over those who threw stones at them, 1st for being *negros de mierda*, 2nd for being assholes, 3rd in case they have offspring]” (tweet 2813). Without much contextual development, the tweet tells the story of a patrol attacked with stones by a group of people. The speaker expresses that in these situations it should be legal to run over the crowd and then the speaker gives the reasons for this procedure linked to being *negros de mierda* and lacking in good sense or good judgment but the most shocking perhaps is the third reason that the speaker uses: “*por si tienen crías* [in case they have offspring]” stating that they are all animals — due to “*crías*” is a term used for animal offspring— that should die under the wheels of the police patrol, which made me think that the speaker imagines them as opossums, or perhaps spiders, who carry their young attached to their bodies. In any case, the massacre of adults and their children will keep them from reproducing this behavior that the speaker disapproves. The novelty is introduced with this phrase since the military when they kidnapped pregnant women or parents of toddlers, relocated the children in families that they were allied with the regime (Regueiro, 2015). The military preserved the children because they thought that in the ‘right’ environment the ‘malignant tendencies’ of the parents could be corrected, but in the tweet 2813 these trends would be incorrigible and that is why children should be exterminated as well.

This thinking about whether the offspring can be redeemed is very powerful because it allows the redemption of certain individuals or the extermination of the whole. That is to say, the military evidently did not believe that subversion could be carried in the blood. However, as we

already analyzed at the beginning of this section in tweet 1804 and we will see later, the blackness 'of the soul' is something inherited, and nothing can be done if the individual was born with that 'defect.'

Along the same lines of causing the indiscriminate death of all *negros de mierda*, I found tweets expressing ideas around an imperative wish that all *negros de mierda* die (tweet 5602) by some means or directly encouraging to kill them on tweets 12470 and 8313 with expressions like “*Hay que matar a los negros de mierda* [We got to kill the negros de mierda]” (tweet 12470). Other suggested methods in order to make the *negros de mierda* disappear are noted in “*los paso x arriba* [I step them up]” (tweet 15936) and “*los choco a todos* [I run them all over]” (tweet 2559) alluding to the use of vehicles to run over people, similar to how the military used bulldozers to remove shanty towns close to Buenos Aires downtown to hide the poverty when preparing the city for tourism that would visit it during the 1978 Soccer World Cup (Gordillo, 2016). Other options for eliminating people detected in the sample contain the use of regular bombs and atomic bombs, arson, capital punishment including the use of electric chairs and stamping-out people (tweet 5532; 5677; 3629; 12668).

Finally, in relation to the pandemic context in the period in which the sample was collected, some speakers find the coronavirus suitable to supply the fantasy of massive disappearance of *negros de mierda*, as can be observed in tweet 7996: “*Mueranse de coronavirus negros de mierda* [Die from coronavirus *negros de mierda*]” or they think at least they will be sick for disobeying the rules of social isolation (tweet 2493; 1687) and partying all night (tweet 9148), listening to *cuarteto* music (tweet 1156) and finally dying in a collapsed hospital: “*negros de mierda saben las leyes para usarlas para hacer lo que quieran, ojalá se contagie y no haya*

respirador. #Amor [negros de mierda they know the laws to use them to do whatever they want. I hope she gets infected and there is no respirator. #Love]” (tweet 5803) as could be read as a comment of a video posted on Twitter where a young woman refuses to identify herself and justify her presence in a neighborhood before two policemen who question her.

According Back & Zavala (2017) racism is more than an ideology; it is a performative act that adapts to the context to survive acquiring different forms in line with the socio-historical moment. In this sense, I argue that it was the historical circumstances that built the background for the emergence of eliminationist thoughts; they are not practiced in the same way as 40 years ago, but rather are tailored to current events and the way society defines otherness.

5. Blaming whites

In the sample there are also speakers who prefer to adhere to *negros de mierda* as a counter-discourse as opposed to those who despise them. That is, if these speakers must choose between two sides, they prefer the one where those who point to others as *negros de mierda* are not present.

In this way, the speaker of tweet 16484 declares: “*La derecha fue, es y será apática y cínica. Solo quieren un país para ellos, los demás somos negros de mierda* [The right wing was, is and will be apathetic and cynical. They only want a country for themselves, the rest of us are *negros de mierda*].” The speaker accuses the middle and conservative classes of only looking out for their own interests. Again, this division between two sides —civilization and barbarism— is glimpsed, where according to the speaker the ‘others’ — the non-whites in which he/she is included— do not matter and are not part of the citizenship envisioned by whites; that is why the speaker says: “they only want a country for themselves.” The speaker then is positioning

him/herself on the opposite side to the ‘right’ and is willing to assume the otherness because there seems to be no other intermediate areas.

In this closed game of oppositions, every topic of the media agenda could be a motive for dialectic struggle between those who propose continuing to uphold whiteness as a system of social order and those who problematize it. Then Covid-19 was a big opportunity for highlighting Whiteness double-standards. For example, this speaker denounces that “*Los ricos vinieron con el virus pero ahora la culpa es del gobierno que votamos los negros de mierda xdd* [The rich came with the virus but now it is the fault of the government that we the *negros de mierda* vote XDD]” (tweet 3053) establishing chains of guilt among those who can afford international travels for the spreading of Coronavirus and denouncing the double standard against which behaviors are measured during the pandemic. Another tweet says, “*Lo peor de todo es q los q salen son los primeros en apuntar a los "negros de mierda " cdo se anuncia un positivo en una villa. Y se olvidan que el virus no lo trajeron ellos...* [The worst of all is that those who come out are the first to target the "negros de mierda" when a positive is announced in a shanty town. And they forget that the virus was not brought by them...]” (tweet 12915). Along the same lines, another speaker points out: “*La "fiestita" de Recoleta es Glam...si hubiese sido en una "villa" serían unos negros de mierda....esa gente merece el covid19 y sus consecuencias más trágicas* [Recoleta's "little party" is Glam ... if it had been in a "villa" they would be negros de mierda ... those people deserve the covid19 and its most tragic consequences]” (tweet 13448). Recoleta is one of the most traditional and exclusive neighborhoods in Argentina, so the speaker is highlighting the hypocrisy with which public opinion decides who has the right to have glamorous parties avoiding the curfew. In this way, the speaker directs eliminationism towards

all those who defend the behaviors of the most privileged to the detriment of other individuals who are not glamorous or white and who live in marginal neighborhoods where the police constantly patrol to avoid people gatherings.

In this way, Twitter serves as a space to denounce this double standard by which events are measured and the hypocrisy of some who find ways to break the rules and reproduce stigmatizations:

“Hay gente que cuenta que hoy se junta en sus casas con la familia y tiene la caradurez de criticar a otros que rompen la cuarentena llamándolos negros de mierda. Lo estoy leyendo en un grupo de WhatsApp y no lo puedo creer.

[There are people who say that today they meet in their homes with the family and have the cynicism to criticize others who break the quarantine by calling them negros de mierda. I'm reading it on a WhatsApp group, and I can't believe it]”. (tweet 8340)

This tweet seems interesting to me because it illustrates how the actors in the story make a representation for society where they criticize those who supposedly always break the rules from a position of moral superiority (Visacovsky, 2018) but in private —seen through WhatsApp groups— they behave in the way they disapprove. Faced with this type of behavior, the speaker of tweet 3446 predicts, *“Están subiendo los casos. Principalmente por focos de contagio en barrios humildes de CABA (que no tienen agua hace rato). Sabés qué va a pasar verdad? Van a salir a decir "estos negros de mierda no se cuidaron.... ”* [Cases are increasing. Mainly due to sources of contagion in poor neighborhoods of CABA⁷⁹ (which have not had water for a long

⁷⁹ Autonomous City of Buenos Aires

time). You know what's going to happen right? They're going to come out and say "these *negros de mierda* didn't take care ..."]". The speaker explains that those who raise their accusing fingers against *negros de mierda* forget that the first thing that is needed are basic hygiene measures, such as having tap water, and that it is not only the responsibility of individuals but that the state must provide the necessary infrastructure to bring health to all citizens.

Other speakers express their discomfort through irony, such as tweet 3007 where the story of a 21-year-old Argentine young man who recently arrived from Europe evaded border controls implemented due to the pandemic and risked the lives of 400 passengers when boarding the ferry that connects Montevideo and Buenos Aires (Cannataro, 2020) "*Estubo en Holanda. Llegó enfermo a Uruguay. Se escapó internado. Mintió y abordo Buquebus. Uruguay avisa. 400 en cuarentena. Estos negros de mierda siempre igual.* [He was in the Netherlands. He came to Uruguay sick. He escaped from his hospitalization. He lied and boarded Buquebus. Uruguay warns. 400 quarantined. These *negros de mierda* always the same] (tweet 3007). The irony is expressed when the speaker says "these *negros de mierda* always the same" because it is not the *negros de mierda* who can afford international travels. Then whites also have reprehensible behaviors that do not cooperate with the general well-being, despite the fact that public opinion is always focusing on *negros de mierda*. In that sense, Geler (2016) argues that people's behaviors and ways of being are constantly monitored within society to classify them according to Whiteness archetypes.

Tweet 2000 plays with these archetypes by imagining average white citizens of the well-to-do class who are in two different situations. In the first situation, they are described in their behavior within the country, in their daily practices of contempt for the country and its

inhabitants. In the second situation, the characters are abroad with no possibility of returning due to the closure of regular international flights derived from the pandemic and begs the president of the country that he despises so much to arrange the necessary measures for his return home.⁸⁰

“chetos: argentina un país de MIERDA lleno de NEGROS pena de muerte para todos los NEGROS DE MIERDA país del orto me recibo y me voy bien A LA MIERDA DE ESTE PAÍS

chetos varados en el exterior: presidente metraes devuelta? :(

[chetos: Argentina a SHITTY country full of BLACKS. Death penalty for all the NEGROS DE MIERDA, shitty country, I graduate, and I'll be getting the HELL OUT OF THIS COUNTRY.

chetos stranded abroad: President, will you bring me back please? :(] (tweet 2000)

Then, as can be noticed no speaker is saying the word ‘white,’ because the national myth does not allow that classification, but still they are addressing Whiteness through the depiction of behaviors, situations, events that are not involving *negros de mierda*.

5.1. Chetos

Regarding the statement of tweet 2000, I would like to emphasize that just as there is a name to stigmatize poverty and skin color, there is also a name for those who represent the opposite. In

⁸⁰ During the emergency situation due to the Coronavirus, flights were arranged from the Argentine Foreign Ministry to repatriate Argentines who expressed their desire to return to the country after short stays abroad. According to the Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Guillermo Justo Chaves, 210,000 people had requested a place on these repatriation flights (Télam, 2020).

this sample it is observed how some speakers refer to them as *chetos* which is a word with a certain degree of antiquity in the Argentine vernacular that indicates those who pretend to be of an upper class or who really are (Porteñísima, 2017). They were also previously called *conchetos* [posh], *gente bien* [well-to-do people], *fifis* [snobs], *señoras paquetas* [wealthy ladies], and with a more political emphasis *gorilas* [gorillas] or *oligarcas* [oligarchs]. Although sometimes calling someone *cheto* (fem. *cheta*) like in the case of tweet 2000 is reduced to a derogatory and prejudiced term—similar to the *whitexicans* case developed in Chapter 3—we cannot connect it with a true reverse racism because it is unlikely that people qualified in this way may experience problems of structural discrimination that reduce their chances of achieving a better quality of life. Being *cheto* or *cheta* instead represents from my point of view the quintessence of the alleged Argentine Whiteness.

A long time ago, before I graduated from the Bachelor of Audiovisual Communication, my first job was in an internship in the area of internal communication at the same Blas Pascal University (UBP) where I had studied. UBP is a small private university located in the suburban area of the city of Córdoba, which receives middle- and upper-class students. The work was quite relaxed, and my colleagues were quite friendly, but we had to observe certain unwritten rules of etiquette, which were very important to preserve ‘an educational environment of professionalism.’ One of them was that the permanent staff members could not drink *mate*.⁸¹ We

⁸¹ *Mate* is a traditional drink of Guaraní origin that is consumed in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and southern Brazil, with variations in its flavor and preparation according to the region. Basically, it is about introducing in a small container called *mate*, toasted yerba mate tree leaves (*lex Paraguariensis*) to which sugar, honey, orange peels or other native herbs such as *peperina*, mint or *té de burro* can be added, if you are preparing a sweet and serrano mate, or drink them without any other ingredient in addition to yerba mate and water heated to about 80° C (176° F) using a special straw called *bombilla*, which is usually made of metal with a kind of strainer at the tip to filter the leaves. In Argentina it is a drink with 90% market penetration and was declared a national infusion in 2013 (Argentina.gob.ar, 2020). Regarding its consumption, it is usually drunk daily without restrictions and it is a drink that can be shared since several people can drink from the same *mate* (container) alternating shifts.

could have coffee, tea, juice, or any non-alcoholic beverage during office hours, but never *mate*. The reason was that one of the founding members of the University thought that drinking *mate* in public did not look professional or aesthetic. The prohibition seemed a bit funny for all of us because *mate* is the Argentine national infusion and the tradition of drinking it has been preserved over time, but one could read in this antagonistic relationship between drinking *mate* and being professional and aesthetic an attempt to position the university at a certain level away from the popular (and the non-aesthetic) that is, within whiteness avoiding anything that could jeopardize this symbolic attachment.

Later, in 2017, the harmless *mate* seemed to endanger again the entire structure of the forbidden and permitted within the whiteness. For some reason, a WhatsApp audio was made public where a woman, who would later become known as “*la cheta de Nordelta*,” complained to the administrator of the exclusive housing complex where she lived that her neighbors spoiled her view of the lake and ruined their sunbathing by the pool, as they sat in their lounge chairs to drink *mate* and play with their dog. In the extensive audio (Guillermo, 2017) she call them “beasts that have no education” “grasas [tacky people]” “gente de décima categoría [people without manners]” and alludes to that “they drink *mate* as in the Bristol beach of Mar del Plata.”⁸² For her part, the author of the audio defines herself as a ‘normal’ woman with a certain “aesthetic, moral and ethical profile” that differentiates her from her neighbors. The story went viral and caused parodies, animations, news headlines and put into focus this tenuous dividing line in Argentine society that positions some on a 'correct, moral, aesthetic' side and others on the

⁸² The Bristol beach is the most popular beach in the touristic city of Mar del Plata. Until the 1940's, it was a summer resort for the rich classes but during the first government of J. D. Peron the unions bought hotels in the area and the working class began to vacation on those coasts. The wealthy people then emigrated to the beaches of Uruguay, with Punta del Este the main destination.

opposite direction, grounded on different characteristics, attitudes and performances that link people to the precious national whiteness or distance them from it.

In sum, both stories are alike because both the UBP founding partner and the WhatsApp audio woman share a certain socio-cognitive system that is representative of a country where there is not explicit division between races or ethnic groups. In Argentina where whiteness is the omnipresent container that embraces all that is not racial blackness, all differences are settled in following certain rules for adapting individuals to the ideal of the white Argentine of European backgrounds. However, frequently there are struggles between what Whiteness dictates and how individuals perform. For example, when the woman from the WhatsApp audio calls “grasas [tacky people]” to her neighbors she does nothing more than allude to behaviors that are outside whiteness expectations, which is in short what this chapter developed throughout its sections.

6. Twitter and a troubled idiosyncrasy

All the discussion on Twitter about the *negros de mierda* in this sample has been largely political, about how they affect the interests of those who dominate the Discourse on this social media. It has not been about color, really, or parameters of beauty or race improvement, but about how they are labeled as insurmountable obstacles to the achievement of the objectives that a select group thought for Argentina in the first moments of its constitution as a nation. From this vision, everything that can go wrong in the country will always be due to those who do not represent this ideal of a nation, this ideological penetration imposed through the extermination in successive passages of Argentine history of everything which did not contain connections with Europe. “*Sigo sin entender cómo pueden defender a los negros de mierda esos, odio este país choto* [I still don't understand how they can defend those *negros de mierda*, I hate this shoddy

country.”] declares the speaker of tweet 10250, reproaching the entire social fabric that there is no condemnation of certain individuals who are interpreted as part of a sector with which they live in an uncomfortable way: “2020 y todavia a la gente de mierda le siguen diciendo "negros villeros" "negros de mierda" se escudan con el "no me refiero al color de piel" [2020 and still shit people keep saying "black villeros" "negros de mierda" they argue that "I don't mean the color of skin"]” is pointed out in tweet 7160, reproaching the opposite, the exclusion of a part of society and a veiled but present racial discrimination.

In this way, public opinion on Twitter becomes a constant battle between two sides, those who do not want to be *negros de mierda* because that somehow means to stop being white and civilized Argentines and those who do not believe that this model of Argentinity should remain current, as tweet 6376 illustrates:

“A veces tengo que darme una cachetada para recordarme que tener conciencia de clase es muy importante y hay gente que anda por la vida diciendo "ay estos negros de mierda que me roban los impuestos" con tanta naturalidad agradezco mi crianza todos los días (tweet 6376)

[Sometimes I have to slap myself to remind myself that being class conscious is very important and there are people who go through life saying "oh these negros de mierda who steal my taxes" so naturally that I appreciate my upbringing every day]
(tweet 6376)

In this sense, and as the speaker of this tweet alludes to, the temptation to place the blame for everything bad that happens in the country on *negros de mierda* for representing obstacles to

progress is huge because it is part of a social imaginary that is always present. I think it must be a great relief to put traits, colors, and stereotypes to all the failures of a system that does not respond as expected. That is, if a culprit can be identified, it means that the others did everything well and that they are innocent victims and should not make self-criticisms. Then this dialectical battle of ‘we’ vs ‘them’ is triggered, where polarizations become insurmountable barriers and no agreement between the parties seems possible: “Es ingobernable un país con tantos *rugbiers*⁸³ y *negros de mierda*. Me compadezco de @mauriciomacri y @alferdez una banda [A country with so many *rugbiers* and *negros de mierda* is ungovernable. I feel very sorry for @mauriciomacri and @alferdez]” expresses the speaker of tweet 2749 manifesting in some way the impossibility of assuming intermediate positions and constructive dialogues from the constricted gray areas in this very closed discursive contest.

Facing the 21st century and with the new currents dedicated to the acceptance of national identity as a heterogeneous construction of diversities and dissidences, the type of monocultural models such as that of White Argentina become very difficult to sustain in practice, especially in the constant dialogue between social media and non-virtual reality: ““No al racismo” Dos twits mas tarde... “Negros de mierda viven de los planes” Argenpija sres [“No to racism” Two tweets later ... “*negros de mierda* live off the social plans” Argen-dick ladies & gentlemen]” (tweet 11018). Here the speaker ironically refers to the contradiction between people declaring themselves against racism and at the same time qualify others in a racist and derogatory way.

⁸³ *Rugbiers* make reference to rugby players but it is also another name to refer to *chetos* due to recent cases of attacks and beatings carried out by young middle-class and upper-class members of rugby clubs, a sport that is not of mass consumption such as soccer and it has a certain exclusivity in its practice. The case with the greatest impact in recent times was the murder of Fernando Báez Sosa in January 2020, so there are 8 defendants awaiting trial (Clarín, 2020). The attacks of these individuals against Báez Sosa are suspected of having racial components due to the screams they uttered while they beat him to death. “*Matalo al negro* [Kill the black man]” is what witnesses to the event declared they heard. I would like to add that Báez Sosa was not ethnic black, as can be seen in the photos released by the press.

However, this behavior, so deeply rooted in Argentine culture, also represents a very particular way of experiencing ethnicity. In this way, the social anxiety that according to Kaminsky (2009) Europe projects on Argentina, Argentina projects on its own citizens. As a result, people can be black and white at the same time, black and blonde with light eyes, or white with a black soul, and transfer in these classifications all the weight of a moral assessment that expects to find pure European citizens more than 6851 miles from continental Europe.

CHAPTER 4: UNBALANCED RELATIONSHIPS: MEXICO ≠ U.S. ≠ ARGENTINA

In this chapter I will articulate the relationship between the United States and Mexico and between the United States and Argentina; I argue that the United States exerts a material and symbolic influence on both Latin American countries since it operates as a point of comparison and indicates a goal, a model of social organization. In this sense, the United States is both a cultural beacon and a counterpart that underpins the national identity of each of these countries. It should be noted that identity is a construction process where individuals define themselves in the interrelation with other people, internalizing attitudes and expectations that affirm a sense of belonging to a particular community (Acle Mena et al., 2018). That is, identity is defined in contrast to a symbolic ‘other,’ and I argue that otherness in the sample is occupied by the *pinches prietos* and the *negros de mierda* at a local level and on them are applied all the social anxieties generated by this constant tension between what was imagined as the Argentine or Mexican ‘ideal citizen,’ and what was really achieved after all the social engineering work carried out in these societies. However, at the global level, neither Argentina nor Mexico escapes the processes of otherness that the central countries apply to the peripheral countries and are located in different hierarchies of world power distribution where the powerful and rich countries make up the so-called ‘developed world’ and the others occupy the ‘underdeveloped world.’ Then, in the sample it is visible how the United States offers the benchmarks for comparison in the social imaginary of the Mexican and Argentine users, comparison that always points to the definition of the relative position of each of these countries on the scale of world powers, which is ultimately a question about the level of civilization achieved so far.

Within the sub-samples that give substance to this chapter, I found that these relationships between the United States & Mexico and the United States & Argentina show two complex aspects that encompass different interrelated issues and that are related to this symbolic power that the United States exercises in the social imaginary and that some authors call cultural imperialism —the soft facet of economic domination (Dorfman & Mattelart, 1983; Mateu, 2013).

On the one hand, I would like to point out how Twitter users located in Argentina and Mexico participate in a platform where the largest number of messages circulate vertically from the United States to Mexico and to Argentina; this relationship is not reciprocal, and therefore, it is not an exchange. That is, as Kulshrestha et al (2012) point out, 71% of the tweets are generated in the United States, and not only that, but the users who attract the highest number of followers and generate the highest traffic of tweets are just the 0.05% and are located mostly in the United States. In turn, according Kulshrestha et al (2012), users located in the United States tend to consume tweets from other users located in the United States. Then, I argue the resulting global exchange of information is unbalanced because the United States organizes the culture of consumption of tweets in accordance with its own situation.

Likewise, according to the Kemp's report (2021b), Mexico and Argentina occupy the seventh and eighth place in hours of social media consumption —around 3 hours 25 minutes— while in the United States, the average consumption is 2 hours 7 minutes. In other words, although the United States is the main content producer, its users spend an average of 78 minutes less than their peers in Mexico and Argentina consuming content on social media. The reasons can be varied, but I argue that part of the activities that are carried out are related to patterns of cultural

consumption that emanate from the United States to other countries and impact the relationship with Mexico and Argentina that develops in users' minds.

During the period of the sample collection, there was widespread discussion of racism following the murder of George Floyd and intense attention to #BlackLivesMatter with enormous international repercussions. As the samples show, both Mexico and Argentina echoed the problem and began to question whether an event of the same proportions could occur in their societies or to what extent racism affects their daily lives. Again, the information flows vertically, with the United States proposing the discussion while Mexico and Argentina react to that proposal from their own cultural vision and from their own model of social organization that is based on Whiteness. By this I mean that, although this Dissertation aims to unravel the functioning of Whiteness in Mexico and Argentina as selected cases, the role that the United States assumes in building societies that continue to perpetuate imperialist models cannot be ignored. Mexico and Argentina themselves are subject to powers deployed from the so-called world powers that impose what we might call networked digital imperialism.⁸⁴

In this way, in this chapter I will analyze two discussions detected in the sub-samples. The first is related to the permissiveness offered by Twitter compared to Facebook in the use of keywords and the second is linked to the impact of the George Floyd case on users' opinions. With this I intend to evaluate the relationship of Whiteness in discourse with the affordances of Twitter, which is both a promoter of anti-racist discussions and at the same time a space where derogatory words tied to white supremacy continue to be spread and validated.

⁸⁴ The term was inspired after digital networked activism developed by Tufekci (2017).

1. Twitter and the free speech

When users create a social media account, they agree to respect the rules and policies of the platforms in question if they want to be able to participate in them. Part of these policies have to do with the so-called hate speech that Twitter includes in its policies about ‘hateful conduct’

Hateful conduct: You may not promote violence against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, caste, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability, or serious disease. We also do not allow accounts whose primary purpose is inciting harm towards others on the basis of these categories.

Hateful imagery and display names: You may not use hateful images or symbols in your profile image or profile header. You also may not use your username, display name, or profile bio to engage in abusive behavior, such as targeted harassment or expressing hate towards a person, group, or protected category (Twitter Inc., 2021b, paras. 1–2).

In turn, as the definition of hate speech Facebook is still implementing indicates “hate speech is anything that directly attacks people based on what are known as their “protected characteristics” — race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sex, gender, gender identity, or serious disability or disease” (Allan, 2017, para. 7). Both Facebook and Twitter recognize that according to the country the definition of what one is allowed to say publicly varies, so they need to evaluate what has been reported as hate speech. “Regional and linguistic context is often critical, as is the need to take geopolitical events into account” (Allan, 2017, para. 18). However, both platforms differ in the effective application of their policies

against hate speech. Facebook, for its part, uses algorithms that filter “the most obviously toxic language” (Allan, 2017, para. 29) and a team of experts spread around the world to evaluate content reported as hate speech. Twitter, according to what is described in its policies, seems to rely mostly on the reports of other users or government institutions. Figure 1 explains with examples the kind of content Twitter does not allow that seems related to offenses directed to a community or collective of individuals and that contain calls to action either explicitly or implicitly. When a violation of the policies is reported, Twitter reserves the right to apply any of the following actions individually or in combination: “Labeling a Tweet that may contain disputed or misleading information (...) Limiting Tweet visibility (...) Requiring Tweet removal (...) Hiding a violating Tweet while awaiting its removal (...) Notice of public interest exception” (Twitter Inc., 2021a, paras. 3–6 & 9). This was the case, for example of some tweets from Donald Trump before his account was permanently suspended. Twitter increased monitoring of the @realDonaldTrump account in the months leading up to the 2020 presidential election and tagged with captions that intended to warn other users about the content of 36% of Trump’s posts (Redacción BBC News Mundo, 2020).

We will require Tweets like those below to be removed from Twitter when they are reported to us. We will also continue to surface potentially violative content through proactive detection and automation. If an account repeatedly breaks the Twitter Rules, we may temporarily lock or suspend the account; more on our range of enforcement options [here](#).

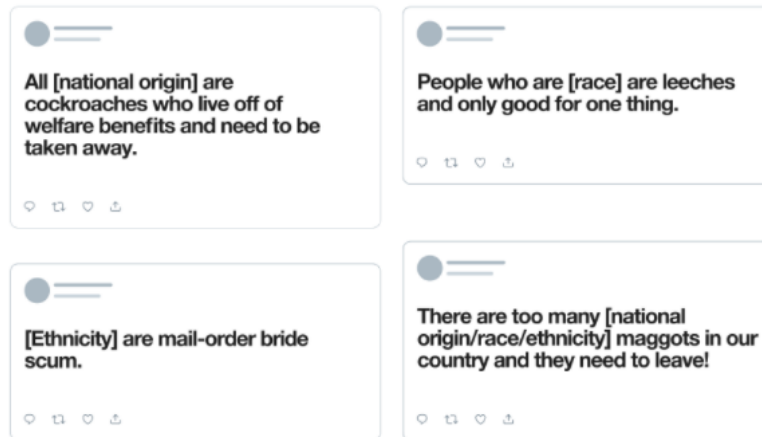


Figure 7 (Twitter Safety, 2020, para. 5)

So far, I have indicated part of the rules that are described in each platform; however, according to the collected tweets, Twitter is more permissive than Facebook to the use of the keywords of this research and that is part of the affordances and constraints of these social media platforms. In this sense, both in the Mexican subsample and in the Argentine subsample, some speakers declare that they are on Twitter after their personal accounts were suspended on Facebook. Many resort to irony to narrate the situation: “*Facebook me bloquea por poner "pinche prieto" en la foto de un amigo, el mundo ya no es como antes* [Facebook blocked me for putting “*pinche prieto*” in the photo of a friend, the world is not like before]” (MxTweet 1652) pointing out how in the past such comments would not be subject of platform scrutiny. In the same venue, the speaker of ArTweet 15565 joked about the situation of his/her mother who does

not understand why Facebook no longer allows users to insult other people using racist phrases “JAJAJAJA mi mamá re enojada por que la bloqueo facebook por poner negros de mierda y le dije y si mami por qué están en contra del racismo y me dice "Y QUE QUERES QUE PONGA ENTONCES RUBIOS DE MIERDA" [HAHA my mom is angry because Facebook blocked her for posting ‘negros de mierda’ and I told her "sure, mommy because they are against racism" and she says: "AND WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO PUT THEN? FUCKING BLONDES"?]”. According to the tweet, the protagonist of the story believes that it is justified to call *negros de mierda* to people that she considers dark and who also, from her point of view, behave in a deviant way using the keyword as derogatory figure of speech that I have already mentioned in chapter 3.

There are also those who accuse Facebook of restricting the free expression of its users: “Aqui si puedo decirle pinche prieto a mi amigo el negro o somos igual de politicamente correctos que facebook [May I call my black friend a *pinche prieto* or here are we so politically correct as in Facebook?]” (MxTweet 317) appealing to the supposed fragility and tendency to take offense of some Social Media users (see chapter 2). The speaker of ArTweet 14333 seems to interpret that Facebook has attacked his/her personal values by preventing he/she from posting offensive content “@facebook : vanyanse a LPMQLP me bloquearan pero NO CAMBIARAN MIS IDEAS si son NEGROS DE MIERDA, SON NEGROS DE MIERDA Y ASESINOS [@facebook: go fuck your selves, you will block me but WILL NOT CHANGE MY IDEAS, if they are *NEGROS DE MIERDA*, THEY ARE NEGROS DE MIERDA AND KILLERS]” and he/she feels entitled to use the keyword if he/she feels that way.

Some speakers of the Mexican subsample declare that the use of the keywords was not in an offensive sense, for example, they were directing it towards a friend or trying to be funny “*Me castigo Facebook por compartir un meme y poner pinche prieto* [Facebook punished me for sharing a meme and commenting *pinche prieto*” (MxTweet 1578). For their part, the Argentine speakers justify the use of the keyword because they referred to some “*salvajes* [savages]” (ArTweet 8940) or because they refer to thieves or people in prison or people acting outside the law. In this sense, all of them coincide in the belief that they have the right to make this type of mention and stereotyping as if it were natural and normal, imagining that their audience agrees with their point of view, and they seem surprised when their behavior is challenged by the policies that regulate hate speech.

Other speakers directly take advantage of the affordances of Twitter to challenge Facebook's restrictions: “*Negros de mierda Negros de mierda Negros de mierda Negros de mierda Negros de mierda...Ahhh que libre me siento de poder decir Negros de mierda... Gracias Twitter!* [Negros de mierda, Negros de mierda, Negros de mierda, Negros de mierda, Negros de mierda... Oh, how free I feel to be allowed to say *Negros de mierda*... Thanks Twitter!]” (ArTweet 4319) as if Facebook applied coercive measures that suppressed freedoms and Twitter restored the natural order.

In short, these speakers are not ashamed to use racist terms, perhaps because they do not recognize them as such. “*Dije negros de mierda en Facebook sin discriminar y me bloquearon la cuenta* [I said *negros de mierda* on Facebook without discrimination and they blocked my account] (ArTweet 4186) rather, they identify them with cultural parameters and discursive forms to which they are accustomed “*Hay que migrar a Twitter, en Facebook te tachan de nazi*

por decir "negros de mierda" [We have to migrate to Twitter, on Facebook they call you a Nazi for saying "negros de mierda"]" (ArTweet 10398). This recalls the analyzes deployed in chapters 3 and 4 where some speakers affirmed that saying *pinche prieto* is part of a way of communicating between Mexicans or that when they say *negros de mierda* they do not refer to the color of the skin, but to a reprehensible and immutable 'way of being'.

I argue there is a correlation between the anti-racist proposals that are read in the Social Media policies and the country where they have their operations center. In this sense, we must refer to the historical struggle for civil rights and its influence on the way that society in the United States behaves when it speaks of minorities and otherness to understand the rationale behind hate speech policies on these platforms. That is, with awareness about the 'N Word' it does not seem feasible that in the United States someone could use '*negros de mierda*' in the same way as in Argentina or justify the use of '*pinche prieto*' and not face social condemnation for their sayings. By this I do not mean that in the United States the practices of discrimination towards everything that is not in the parameters of whiteness do not exist. However, I perceived a greater awareness of the impact of racism in communities motivated from the educational system and academia, the press, the arts, government institutions and also the Internet. "Most whites now adhere to post civil rights notion of public decorum" (Asim, 2007, p. 231) avoiding the use of this slur in social spaces.

In Argentina, as I have already analyzed, there is no general consensus on racial discrimination because its national myth extends whiteness to all its citizens, so, within this logic, if they are all white there are really no racial problems because they share the same race and what they call '*negros de mierda*' they are actually white people who do not behave as social

standards expect. The case of Mexico is similar, because the national myth indicates that all Mexicans are *mestizos*, pointing to someone as '*pinche prieto*' is interpreted as the name that corresponds to those whose mix was darker than expected. In other words, within that logic, more colored mestizos would simply be victims of aesthetic rather than racial prejudices. Consequently, I argue that users in Argentina and Mexico who use Social Media submit to policies that are culturally foreign to them and adopt them to be able to integrate into these spaces. This is also tacitly part of the cultural influence of the United States on these societies and implies an adaptation to certain social norms imposed from abroad that are very important to integrate into a globality outlined from the centers of power.

All of the aforementioned leads us to glimpse how Whiteness and the material consequences it generates adapt to different societies, assuming different ways of expressing within social praxis. In other words, the use of impolite words in the public sphere is frowned upon in the United States, thereby avoiding and condemning their use; however, discriminatory practices against minorities remain and the case of George Floyd is proof of that. On the other hand, in Argentina it is allowed to pronounce racist epithets hiding in the fact that they are not referring to the color of the skin but to behaviors that are not civilized or coincide with public morals. Mexico, for its part, covers discriminatory practices, for example, through humor, and people are allowed to use racist insults with others with whom they maintain a close relationship as friends or family. In this sense, there are three different ways in which Whiteness becomes invisible in everyday practices and continues to reproduce itself through constructs so sedimented that it is difficult to distinguish them with the naked eye.

2. Global race

According to Campos Lima (2020) and Anton Mahfoud et al. (2020) the Black Lives Matter movement found its reflection in Hispanic American countries due to the association between systemic racism and police brutality often directed toward black, brown and mestizo bodies that are those most marginalized in these societies. In addition, I argue that in Twitter, both Argentines and Mexicans found the opportunity to integrate a broader and compelling conversation, which envisions racism globally and locally. The tweets showed how they discussed experiences with racism in their own life as victims or witnesses and how those events impacted their vision of the world; they also made comparisons with U.S. society which is imagined largely racist. In that sense I found tweets that highlight the contradictions that emerge when people support the antiracist activism generated in the US but have racist attitudes toward their own neighbors. These tweets are organized around four principal topics that are concatenated and display how this imagined racism is operating:

- The US is racist; in Argentina and Mexico racism does not occur.
- Marginalized people in the US are allowed to protest because they have rights; in Argentina and Mexico *negros* and *prietos* have no rights to fight for.
- The US is culturally superior.
- People do not want to be labeled as racist but often label others in racist ways.

Considering that in the tweets these topics are overlapped and connected, I will develop them below in four subsections that summarize these complicated concepts.

2.1. *The US is racist*

As I have already explained in the preceding chapters and at the starting of this chapter, there is no general consensus that allows users in Argentina and Mexico to determine with certainty whether there is racism in their societies; rather, they have an idea that it is possible that there is discrimination against certain people and in certain contexts “*por tener determinada ideología política, nacionalidad o por ser de "el interior"* [for having a certain political ideology, nationality or for being from the provinces]” (ArTweet 11302) or people carry out behaviors that generate social fragmentation: “*El racismo no está en México dejen de poner cosas de otros países que no van aquí, el clasismo y nepotismo eso sí está aquí pero cabrón.* [Racism is not in Mexico, stop putting things from other countries that do not go here, classism and nepotism that does happen a lot here.]” (MxTweet 960). However, there is a general consensus that the United States is racist and the dissemination of all the events around George Floyd’s case reaffirmed this idea: “*Pinches guerras de color/raza estupidas en Estados Desunidos* [Pinches stupid color/race wars in Ununited States]” (MxTweet 1956). In this sense, as Moreno Figueroa affirms, there is a clear idea that the United States has a rigid racial classification, something that Gems calls “the American obsession with race and racial characteristics” (Gems, 2006, p. 7) that has been transmitted by virtue of everything the US exports from the cultural industries —movies, sports, music, animations, news, hashtags, economic ideals (Acle Mena et al., 2018; Dorfman & Mattelart, 1983; Gems, 2006; Mateu, 2013). Consequently, everything that happens regarding racism there will always seem more tragic than anywhere else “*Esto no es solo algo en EUA, obviamente la situación allá se ve más grave* [This is not just something happening in the US,

obviously the situation there looks more serious]” the speaker of MxTweet 949 pointed out suggesting that although racism emerges in every society the situation in U.S. is even worse.

2.2. Marginalized people in the US are allowed to protest

The speakers used Twitter to point out the double standards and contradictions that involve protesting against racism following the proposal of Black Lives Matter movement when in their countries there are numerous cases of discrimination that remain unnoticed or do not have the impact that George Floyd’s case motivated. Several tweets were constructed using opposition clauses “*Se ven bien lindos, apoyando protestas contra el racismo, justo después de decirme pinche prieto!* [They look so cute, supporting protests against racism, right after telling me *pinche prieto!*]” (MxTweet 873). That is, they are using the conjunction ‘but’ implicitly or explicitly to contrast two situations and show more than one side of the situation where the same people try to construct their personal brand as antiracist while are using racist slurs at the same time.

“Ahora son todos anti racismo pero no vi a ninguna marchar en contra del gatillo fácil, que es básicamente la policía disparandole a los "negros de mierda" con completa impunidad. pero ey, nada que ver con lo que pasa en estados unidos.

[Now they are all anti-racism, but I didn't see any of them protesting against the fire at will, which is basically the police shooting "negros de mierda" with complete impunity. but hey, it has nothing to do with what happens in the United States] (ArTweet 10705)

The last part of this tweet connects with the previous section about this common idea that in the United States people are racist unlike in Argentina. Certainly, the speaker is using this idea in

an ironic sense saying Argentine society is indeed racist like the US society. In that sense, several speakers are making a point comparing how public opinion in Argentina and Mexico are more likely to look favorably on the protests of blacks in the United States than to support the rights of their nationals to protest and not be discriminated against because of their origin, social status, gender, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual preferences. “*Bien que me decía pinche prieto, o pinche indio verdad. Y ahora apoyando el movimiento. Gente hipócrita.* [You used to call me *pinche prieto*, or *pinche Indian*, right? And now you are supporting the movement. Hypocrite people]” (MxTweet 1054). Hypocrisy is a fundamental concept that is fueling this discussion because it marks the impossibility of being on both sides of the fence at the same time or changing one’s mind suddenly. “*Usted NO puede estar en contra del racismo en EE.UU. si acá le molestan los bolivianos, chilenos y peruanos, y a los más humildes los trata de negros de mierda* [You CANNOT be against racism in the US if here Bolivians, Chileans and Peruvians annoy you, and you treat the humblest ones as *negros de mierda*]” (ArTweet 10107). In that sense, the speakers are complaining that to be against racism in Twitter is a trendy behavior rather than a political disposition.

2.3. The US is culturally superior

In her book *Twitter and Tear Gas*, Zeynep Tufekci explains how digital technologies impacted dramatically on social movements such that “many protests are referred to by their hashtags” (2017, p. XXVI). That is indeed the case of #blacklivesmatter functioning in the sample, where the hashtag indicated the speaker’s purpose even if the tweet did not have any further discussion. On the other side, from the date of collection, I know that the event on the agenda that motivated the use of the hashtag #blacklivesmatter and the discussion on the samples

was George Floyd's murder this time, avoiding the connection with other cases where this hashtag was also used as a tool of political resistance since 2013 (BLM, 2021). Tufekci claimed that networked protests have important advantages among which the opportunity that Social Media offer of connecting people at global scale being easy and low cost stands out. In that sense, Tufekci perceives users' online symbolic actions as something positive that strengthens the message and makes social and cultural change possible. However, the speakers in the sub-sample may not entirely agree with that. "*Es indiscutible lo COOL que es el racismo extranjero, siempre es más indignante el de EEUU o el de Europa, porque acá de verdad tenemos unos negros de mierda. #BlackHypocrite* [It is indisputable how COOL foreign racism is; racism from the United States or from Europe is always more outrageous, because here we really have some *negros de mierda. #BlackHypocrite*]" (ArTweet 11197). Here the speakers try to illustrate their suspicions that a complex issue such as racism becomes something trendy when those who adhere to the cause are not really committed or interested in applying real changes, nevertheless they know that adhering to this cause will improve their social image, so they are eager to participate as if they really care it. As we can see in the tweet the word 'cool' is used as a synonym for 'trendy, something that is repeated along both sub-samples.

The speakers demonstrate their distrust towards these messages with anti-racist implications using different and novel discursive strategies that contain reminiscences of film or television language. For example, in MxTweet 974, the speaker contrasted two temporary lines to point out the evolution of a situation: "*Ayer: pinche prieto, color barro, codos cenizos, tono humilde, etc...* *Hoy: #BlackLivesMatter* [Yesterday: pinche *prieto*, mud color, ash elbows, humble tone, etc ... Today: #BlackLivesMatter]" (MxTweet 974). Other speakers made references to practices that

only happen on social media such as the #BlackOutTuesday campaign whose proposal was to fill the Instagram screens with a black frame as a profile photo (Marine, 2020) “*Q mal me cae la gente q se involucra en un tema solo porque es tendencia, y publica fotitos en instagram con el hashtag #blackoutuesday* [I don't like people who get involved in a topic just because it's a trend, and they post photos on instagram with the hashtag #blackoutuesday]” (ArTweet 11289).

Certainly, they are implying that other users practice click-activism “that suggest easy action requiring little effort or commitment” (Tufekci, 2017, p. XVI) where people can participate in a protest from the comfort of home without involving a political attitude that is sustainable over time, as the irony of the MxTweet 974 indicates and that apparently will not have any real impact to combat situations of inequality, and they are making that using syntactic forms created for Social Media imagining that their audience is able to understand them.

For his part, the speaker of ArTweet 11588 throws a kind of explanation for the behavior of those who, on the one hand, support global causes against racism while they are racist in their daily lives.

Vieron que los que hablan de quitarle derechos a los "negros de mierda" y piden balazo para el chorro, ahora twittean indignados "#JusticeForGeorge" Claro, el tema es que a "este negro de mierda" lo tienen tan lejos de su esquina que no les genera ni miedo ni odio.

Did you see that those who talk about taking rights away from the "negros de mierda" and say that the thief should be shot, are now tweeting indignantly "#JusticeForGeorge"? Of course, the issue is "that negro de mierda" is so far from their corner that he does not generate fear nor hatred in them. (ArTweet 11588)

This tweet raised an interesting point regarding the distance that separates users in Argentina from what happens in the United States. The speaker argues that it is very easy to advocate for equal rights when those who support at a distance do not believe that granting rights to others can affect their own privileges and tip the balance in favor of the marginalized. In that sense it can be said that “*Lo que vive la gente negra en EEUU es inhumano* [What black people live in the US is inhumane]” (ArTweet 7675) without involving profound changes in societies where it is not even recognized that the basis of inequality is this pigmentocracy of which we spoke in chapter 3 that distributes access and privileges.

However, despite racial problems and police brutality, no speaker disputes the United States for its status as a power, at best it will be said “*This sounds like some USA shit lmao, aca en Mexico nomas te dicen pinche prieto o wera pendeja y ya, punto final* [This sounds like some USA shit lmao Here in Mexico they just tell you *pinche prieto* or asshole *wera*⁸⁵ and that's it, period.]” (MxTweet 1956). Nevertheless, in no way does the tweet suggest that the image of the United States is declining in some way but, on the contrary, it generates empathy “*se me pone piel de gallina de la emocion cuando veo fotos de ese pais prendido fuego* [It gives me goose bumps with sorrow when I see photos of that country on fire]” says the speaker of ArTweet 11732 regarding those protests that included clashes, tear gas and fires, whose images were the most widely disseminated (Toro, 2021).

Everything seems to indicate that the culture of the United States is interpreted as superior in some way, more advanced, more civilized where the laws are more effective. “*En Estados Unidos decirle negro a un negro, es delito* [In the United States, calling a black man black is a

⁸⁵ This is another way of write güera (blonde, fair skin).

crime]” (MxTweet 908) and therefore citizens are more organized regarding rights and obligations than in Mexico or Argentina: “*Mi viejo: que negros de mierda los que salen a marchar, anda a hacer eso a estados unidos. Mi viejo viendo noticias de Estados Unidos:*” [My father (says) those *negros de mierda* going out to protest, go to do that in the United States! My father watching the US news:..... ..]” (ArTweet 7228). The ellipsis would indicate how the speaker's father would have been left speechless when what was in his social imaginary about the US did not correspond with the reality shown by Mass Media. In this sense, the speakers denounce how protests are considered locally as contraventions that in more civilized countries would not be tolerated: “*En USA son "activistas", acá son "piqueteros negros de mierda...vagos...#percepciones* [In USA they are “activists”, here they are picketers, *negros de mierda...idlers...#perceptions*]” (Arg tweet 11679). This last #percepciones points out the core of what I am trying to establish in this section. That is, there is a difference in perceptions between the legitimacy of what happens in the United States and what happens in Argentina and Mexico, by virtue of a conviction that there is a developed world and an underdeveloped world and that to get out of underdevelopment it is necessary to resemble the developed world as much as possible: “*#Blacklives-Maters usemos esto y hagamos una autocrítica* [BlacklivesMaters let's use this and do a self-criticism]” the speaker of Arg: tweet 6621 proposed. In this sense, discussing racism at the same time as in the United States represents, in some way, becoming part of this developed world, although not with the economic aspect, at least with the discursive aspect supported by the affordances of Twitter.

2.4. 'I am not a racist'

It seems clear, according to the sub-samples collected, that most speakers have a need to stand on the other side of racism and point out cultural attitudes and behaviors not assumed as racist and discriminatory. As we have seen throughout the preceding sections and chapters, both *pinche prieto* and *negros de mierda* are derogatory terms that demonstrate an antagonism between what society expects from individuals and what individuals actually embody. However, when the flaws of imaginatively raceless societies such as Mexico or Argentina are pointed out, I notice that the blame is not embodied by the speaker at the individual level, although sometimes it is done collectively: “*Todos subiendo fotos a ig en contra del racismo y desps somos los primeros en decir "negros de mierda"* [Everyone uploading photos to Instagram against racism and then we are the first to say "negros de mierda"]” (Arg: tweet 10704) or “*Somos un pais racista igual o peor que ee.uu* [We are a racist country equal to or worse than the United States]” (Arg: tweet 11117) where the speaker is included in the perpetuation structures of Whiteness. But most of the time the blame shifts to a third party “*pinche gente incongruente* [*pinche* incongruent people]” (Mex: tweet 936); “*pinche gente hipócrita* [*pinche* hypocritic people]” (Mex: tweet 945) where the speakers distance themselves from those who interpret reality with a double standard.

I argue that both those who publish #blacklivesmatter along with anti-racist messages as well as those who point out the hypocrisy of the former, want to detach themselves from an unpleasant tag such as being labeled a racist. In this sense, and considering my arguments that the people who participate in Twitter belong to a certain elite, it seems to me to suggest that in a certain way procedures typical of the middle and upper classes of the United States in which

“multiculturalism was supported by middle class whites” (Nelson et al., 2018, p. 340) are imitated following the imposed multicultural model. In that sense, cultivating a self-image that cannot be linked to racism is what really matters to them and Twitter in this case offers the perfect environment for this type of pronouncement.

In this sense, Moreno Figueroa and Saldívar Tanaka (2016) warned that the recent embrace of multiculturalism by government and institutions creates the illusion that we are finally arrived to a post-racial era where everyone will be respected in their diversity. However, this position must be taken with caution “when observing developments towards the institutionalization of a discourse of inclusion that is invested in the disavowal of race and racism and does not challenge underlying racist assumptions about difference” (Moreno Figueroa & Saldívar Tanaka, 2016, p. 527).

According to Back & Zavala (2017) after the Holocaust, it was no longer acceptable to attribute racism to biology, so it was reinvented and focused in cultural aspects. In this way, racist conceptions to justify social hierarchies were rebuilt, which appealed mainly to the cultural aspect while hiding the distorted biological basis assumed by Nazism to justify inequalities. In this sense, the speakers in the sub-samples define themselves in relation to others by creating racial self-perceptions that bring them closer to certain groups and distance them from others through the use of Discourse. They seek to distance themselves from those who call other people *pinches prietos* or *negros de mierda*, but they also do not fully fall within those racialized categories except in a few exceptions. Thus, they hold an intermediate position between the racists and the racialized, which allows them to navigate the Discourse without being excluded or labeled.

3. Imperialism

It has been interesting to observe the presence of the United States around these keywords so deeply rooted in Argentine and Mexican culture, demonstrating that there is a relationship with the U.S. that needs to be addressed and studied more deeply in future works. Scholars like Mateu (2013) are very critical about this relationship and she argued that it is a situation of domination in which the United States favors the application of certain mechanisms over the culture of the dominated countries designed to highlight U.S. economic and technological superiority. This undermines the identity of the dominated countries and makes it easier for the U.S. to impose their political, social and economic vision with the ultimate goal of obtaining economic benefits. In turn, Galen Joseph (2000) claimed that in Argentina's social imaginary "race is one of the domains in which Argentina's place is measured" (2000, p. 362) and, following his thinking, those considered white in Argentina are always concerned about Argentina's international reputation and its place in the world hierarchy. For their part, Acle Mena et al (2018) argued that United States cultural influences over Mexican youth are reflected in consumer preferences and social habits. This does not mean that coexistence with other cultures banishes Mexico's own, these authors add, but a certain arrangement is developed between global and local culture that shape youth practices. In this sense, within the framework of this proclivity to assume certain patterns from the United States, I would like to mention once again the emergence of the term 'whitexican' among Mexican Twitter users to point out with great irony certain tendency of some young Mexicans to appreciate everything what comes from abroad, especially from the United States, including language, tourism habits, brands, media consumption. Something similar can be said about the use of 'chetos' in Argentina, which although it is a word with long

social circulation, on Twitter it is used to signal adherence to proposals generated from Whiteness, especially if they are linked to the United States and Europe. Both forms seem to me a critique of inherited Whiteness that should be studied in greater depth in the future.

In relation to the use of #blacklivesmatter, I argue that it may trigger a deeper discussion about the structures of power and privilege designed by Whiteness and accompany and make visible incipient movements for the rights of minorities at the local level that did not otherwise have so much exposure. In this sense, it is possible that from what happened with George Floyd, public opinion had increased its awareness about Afro-Mexicans and Argentine Afro-descendants as part of the social fabric or to analyze attitudes towards marginalized people. However, we must not ignore that the consumer culture in which we live also encourages the capitalization of hashtags that become assets of the cultural industry, liquefying all its revolutionary potential and becoming part of so-called White comfort (A. J. Joseph et al., 2020; Maxwell & Chesler, 2019) in which privileged people do not intend to subvert power structures but adhere to proposals such as #blacklivesmatter or #blackOutTuesday which serve to cultivate their own personal brand online.⁸⁶

On the other hand, I argue that if the content is generated in the United States and moves vertically from what Dorfman and Mattelart (1983) called the ‘metropolis’ to the ‘satellite’ or from the ‘empire’ to the ‘colony,’ then, certainly, a guideline is being set on how to live or interpret racism/anti-racism, generating attitudes of resistance of the kind of ‘here there is no racism, that only happens in the United States’ or allowing the struggles of the marginalized to

⁸⁶ See Leah Corrine Jones Dissertation “Circulatory publics and counterpublics: a case study of #NotAgainSU, Ch. 1.

be lived through the screens, feeling empathy only for people who live many kilometers away as if it were a movie or another product for the entertainment of the masses.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

1. Thinking present

To be honest, when I started with this project that finally became the Dissertation, I was not very clear about the motivation behind studying dissimilar countries such as Argentina and Mexico, separated by so many kilometers, with such different gastronomic appetites, located in opposite hemispheres and with different economic and business opportunities. It seemed challenging, new, brilliant to do it through some tweets, taking advantage of the access to the Twitter API and managing to access the minds of users without my presence as a researcher at the time they expressed their opinions and put into operation all language strategies for constructing discourses that could potentially reach any corner of the world.

It is not the objective of this Dissertation to tell whether there are more differences that separate Argentina from Mexico or more similarities that bring them closer together; however, a good reason to connect them, of course, is the language they share, at least at the root. Excluding their own linguistic variations, which give each society a very particular way of seeing the world, we can say that at the time of forming their national states they had at least the Spanish Empire as a common opponent against which to reveal themselves and claim their independence. In this sense, the Hispanic root remains there, with its social ordering and its castes that ended in social pyramids that organize the societies of these two countries today and help to understand their present. However, an even greater reason to connect them is to glimpse how the very efficient mechanism contained in Whiteness has found, in both such different contexts, reasons and means to reproduce, multiply and insert itself in the minds of citizens in very concrete ways that have

clear consequences in the present. outlining attitudes and behaviors destined to sustain its structure.

However, we could not talk about the present without exploring the relationship of both countries with the United States as a global force that determines places in the world hierarchy and that is also the center of a material and symbolic power that is respected and rejected according to the circumstances. So, Mexicans and Argentines speakers imagine the United States as a serious, viable, advanced, organized, capitalist, imperialist, racist, exclusive country, whose image reflected in the collective imagination of Mexicans and Argentines serves to prop up nationalist sentiments when the United States does not show itself as civilized as it should be. While, at the same time, it erodes the very image of Argentina and Mexico when their populations encounter flaws and contradictions that supposedly condemn them to underdevelopment. So, the United States becomes the country that Argentines and Mexicans aspire to be when they seek to "progress," "evolve," "grow" economically and culturally, and the country that they reject when it is chaotic, violent, discriminatory. This complex love-hate relationship that others have tried to define as cultural industry, imperialism, free market, neoliberalism, and globalization, has sectarians and detractors, but that has concrete consequences in the present.

In that sense, this Dissertation was an exploration of the present. Of course, I investigated past processes to find contexts and explanations, but what happens on Twitter happens in the current time, simultaneously, right now like everything that happens in the world of social media. Right now, Whiteness is being built, right now it is being disseminated, reproduced, problematized. Right now, someone is appealing to their privileges to tweet speeches based on

Whiteness, appealing to stereotypes, to mental images of ‘the others’ and ‘us,’ probably without even being aware of it, as if the words have no consequences.

2. Labeling ‘white’

When I started studying for my PhD, if there was a topic that I was not going to touch on, it was race, because I wondered what an Argentine woman like me could contribute to the understanding of the racial problems of the United States. What could I know about the struggles of the black community? I felt almost disrespectful just thinking about it. However the racial issue began to draw my attention as I was filling out governmental and institutional forms that urged me to define my race or my ethnicity, which was a bit strange to me because until then I had never had to define it in my country, whose social imaginary covers, in theory all citizens — while in practice it excludes and isolates indigenous people concentrated in communities in the Chaco region or in rural Patagonia and silences blacks with the exception of Africans who arrived due to the situation in Sudan or Senegal in the last decade.

Of the many forms that I filled out, some indicated something like 'if you are Latino, do not state that you are white,' which was certainly violent for me.⁸⁷ Then I reached that powerful moment of estrangement that Richard Dyer pointed out (1997) which became the starting point of this project, when I began to recapitulate all the little moments of white privilege that I experienced as if it were the most natural thing in the world. I understood that all my travel and study opportunities were obtained because I was in a privileged group of people who access all or almost all the benefits of culture. So, I understood that studying my master's degree at a

⁸⁷ Lately I have already filled out other forms that indicate ‘friendlier’: “mark your origin here: White (non-Hispanic, non-Latino)”. The Census Bureau points out that Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origins define an ethnic group “Though many respondents expect to see a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish category on the race question, this question is asked separately because people of Hispanic origin may be of any race(s)” (US Census Bureau, 2020, para. 4).

private university, with Mexican students who are also white and privileged, is something that, as Lipsitz (2006) indicates, we do among whites to distribute our social, cultural, and economic capital. Whites associate among whites to continue to reproduce in a largely unconscious and fluid way a structure of power and privilege. The same can be said of my education in general where I was socialized in white parameters, to integrate productive and community structures of white people, even though it is also fair to admit that neither in Argentina nor in Mexico is white defined in those terms. In other words, the people who in the United States are called 'white' in Argentina and in Mexico are simply 'the people,' clearly normalizing what is white and exoticizing what is different. In this sense I want to emphasize that I used the categories 'white' and 'non-white' because they were operative for me to articulate the concepts of the US Whiteness Studies and the specific bibliography of Mexico, Argentina and other Hispanic countries with certain similar characteristics, but perhaps it would be a point that should be explored in greater depth in future research. That is, I would like to rethink whether it is appropriate to import a terminology that is not presented in the same way in Mexico and Argentina and incorporate it without the corresponding criticism of the problematization of racial / ethnic / social perception.

An illustrative example of the use of 'white' in an uncritical way would be the case of the Argentine singer Angela Torres, who was accused by Instagram and Twitter users of "cultural appropriation" for a series of photos in which she was wearing Fulani braids. Due to this fact, Torres was pejoratively described as "white," "privileged" and "oppressive" for diluting in the superficiality of the mainstream cultural industry all the symbolic burden associated with the use of this type of braids that has strong connections with the slave trade (Giménez, 2019; Moore-

Karim, 2019; Peiró, 2019). However, I think that she was labeled as "white" too quickly, without problematizing what they were referring to, without determining what are the characteristics that an individual must possess to be classified as "white" in the Argentine context, and whether to be 'white' is something circumstantial, intrinsic, mobile or contextual, or if is anyone simply 'white' because he/she is not black, since he/she does not have hair, nose and lips as people with African origins are imagined to have? In that case, aren't we reinforcing once again the myth of European Argentinity where all those who are not ethnic black are more or less white? I argue then that before assuming a priori racial classifications that are operative in the United States as white or brown or Asian, we Argentines should ask ourselves if we cannot think of concepts more linked to our historical reality.

Something similar happens with the term 'whitexican' where I recognize that at least it has some merit to have been created in the Mexican cybersphere itself, but I keep wondering if it is the most appropriate term. In fact, Quijano (2000) referred to Whiteness more specifically as Eurocentrism when he speaks of the collective mental construction of the process of social stratification that began with colonialism and concludes, according to the author, with globalization. In this sense, both the Argentines — whose exceptionality is based on being a melting pot of European races — and the Mexicans — whose exceptionality is being the mixture between extraordinary Amerindian ethnic groups with various Europeans — are, in my view, more prone to denominate European what is called 'white' in the United States. That fact should at least be considered while Hispanic-American scholars like myself examine Whiteness in our countries.

3. Finding Whiteness

The goal of this dissertation was to show how Twitter exposes daily whiteness practices in the tweets of Mexicans and Argentines to understand the level of naturalization that white supremacism practices have in all kinds of cultural objects, exploring how users appropriate the platforms of Social Media as part of their daily discourse interactions. In that sense, I argued that in the tweets collected it is possible to identify racist moments that lead to analyzing the Whiteness that is inserted and spread through social media. Social media then work as a vessel of racist expressions naturalized inside the culture, because neither artifact created within a culture could remain outside the social praxis of the people.

In this sense, the samples showed how the use of *pinche prieto* and *negros de mierda* included levels of naturalization that distort them to be perceived as part of a cultural heritage. Both being *prieto* and being *negro* are mobile concepts whose meaning depends on the context and the intention of the speaker. Sometimes they constitute warm and friendly terms that can be used affectionately as when it is said '*mi prietito*' or '*mi negrito*' (Grimson, 2017; A. M. Pérez, 2013) or like when users commented that they had called a friend in these pejorative ways 'to joke' and the Facebook system had blocked them considering their use to be hate speech. In this sense, it is important to remember that words such as *prieto* or *negro* are words of common use in these societies and do not always indicate ill will on the part of the speaker, but it is important to bear in mind that the association with words such as '*pinche*' or '*mierda*' goes beyond mere colorimetric description and inserts a whole symbolic charge linked to the social vulnerability of those who are called in such ways. As pointed out by (Solís et al., 2019), the daily discrimination practices are key in the reproduction of inequality in Mexico and affect the population in a

transversal way, placing those who are darker in the places of greatest social marginality. In the case of Argentines, to be called *negro de mierda* implies that there is something wrong in the origin of the individual, something that is not entirely correct and that is not trustworthy because it is already dysfunctional from the beginning and cannot be overcome with anything not even exhibiting the 'correct' colors linked to whiteness and European features. For that reason it was possible to find tweets that addressed *negros de mierda* while they were claiming that they were not referring to the color of the skin. Consequently, in both cases, being *prieto* and being *negro*—when defined in a pejorative way—is associated with certain ways of dressing, certain ways of speaking, certain education, certain places of residence, certain habits, and certain cultural consumptions, which are not the same of those who do not consider themselves that way. The imaginaries depicted in the tweets about the *pinches prietos* and the *negros de mierda* demonstrated that these heterogeneous societies are more polarized than it is possible to admit in the social imaginary. In this sense, those who carry the heavy burden of being classified in that way are almost identified as invaders of public space when they are found inhabiting places supposedly destined for white sectors, which updates the works of authors such as Gordillo (2016), Vázquez Flores (2015), Geler (2016) and Iturriaga Acevedo (2015).

For their part, those who do not consider themselves *prietos* or *negros* do work to dissociate and distance themselves from non-whites, erecting a defensive strategy, assuming through the social imaginary they share with the other members of their group, that to fall on the side of non-whites means falling into marginalization and lacking privileges and opportunities for social advancement. That kind of behavior I observed in the tweets was previously studied by Lipsitz (2006) who calls it possessive investment in Whiteness and was taken up by Moreno Figueroa

and Saldívar Tanaka (2016) while observing *mestizaje* logic on Mexican society. Then, I can say that there is a possessive investment in Whiteness through tweets. In this sense, the thoughts and opinions expressed in them reproduce and reaffirm a status quo of social privileges that will always be denied to *prietos* and *negros*. Those attitudes include the tendency to imagine that their audience will agree with largely naturalized and deep-rooted racist affirmations that hardly would be recognized as racist by the speaker. The rationale behind these behaviors is logically tied to the presumption that no one wants to be violated in their human rights. Thus, a struggle is unleashed in daily Twitter's discourse to maintain the status quo that guarantees them rights and that they are willing to uphold, even if that means living in unequal and racialized societies. At the same time, this mechanism allowed me to find traces of Whiteness in people who will not define themselves as whites because, throughout, being white is a synonym of being normal, regular people. Then, I found white people in a reverse way, from the things that they said they are not.

It is important to highlight one more time that most these procedures are carried out unconsciously. For that reason, I was not interested in judging the speakers in their individuality but as a manifestation of a whole culture that endorses discriminatory behavior. In this sense, as Castoriadis (1997) pointed out, each of us as members of a society have the potential to display all the negative and positive aspects of our culture that were learned in our socialization processes. Then, the socio-cognitive patterns that allow us to interpret the world in a certain way are constantly reinforced through institutions that make up the Ideological Apparatus that regulate our role in the social sphere. In that sense, I claim that nobody really wants to be classified as racist, so the speakers needed to fabricate some justification that would support the

social stratification that they were condoning. Consequently, the *pinches prietos* were accused of being poor, fucked, *muertos de hambre* [lowlife] and work as bricklayers in deliberate allusion to the lower classes where supposedly the dark ones are. They were also characterized as indigenous, short of intellect, malnourished, ugly, resentful, frustrated, uncivilized, incapable of forming citizenship and of being integrated without reservations into the social fabric. In turn, the *negros de mierda* were accused of being social impediments to the advancement of the country, of being ignorant, incapable of functioning as citizens, of being lazy, useless and being a burden for public spending, as well as of being savages and uncivilized while underlining their supposed criminality, equating them with being thieves and murderers.

In both social contexts, the tweets clearly demonstrated that national myths were still alive and in good health. These main narratives that had the function of uniting heterogeneous groups of people within the same state contained inclusive and exclusive mechanisms at the same time (Geler, 2016; Moreno Figueroa, 2010; Oszlak, 1982). That is to say, on the one hand, a *mestizo* Mexican society or an Argentine European melting pot is imagined and all citizens under those denominations are equaled but on the other hand, those who fail to integrate the ideals are excluded — either for being indigenous, or black or poor — and they are thrown into a gray area where they do not end up being completely Argentine or Mexican citizens because they are interpreted as inadequate, as if they lacked something that could make them truly fit to be integrated into the nation. Of course, these national ideals are based on Whiteness, which is what distributes privileges, distinguishing between types of mixture and models of citizens, creating social anxieties about everything that is different (El Colegio de México, 2015; G. Joseph, 2000;

Kaminsky, 2009; Keeling, 2017; Moreno Figueroa, 2010; Vargas Cervantes, 2015; Vázquez Flores, 2015).

In this sense, social anxieties were expressed on Twitter through dehumanization, eliminationism, the right to dominate and silence the different and the whitewashing of entire communities. That is to say, on Twitter people do through the Discourse, which was historically practiced in a concrete way through the application of state policies that decimated Amerindian populations, disappeared and murdered ‘subversive elements,’ or promoted the positive association with fair-skinned individuals who carry greater European features. This presence in the Twitter’s discourse is not a minor fact since for a population to naturalize unfair conditions that are contrary to human dignity, people must first accept inequalities on socio-cognitive patterns and this is achieved through the adaptation of language to the interests of the powerful classes that need to stay at the top of the social pyramid (Back & Zavala, 2017; Gamarnik, 2017; T. A. van Dijk, 1994; Vázquez Flores, 2015).

4. Imaging the future

Despite all these harmful and potentially dangerous issues that were found in the samples, I have also read with some joy and hope how Twitter users appropriated the platform and its affordances to express how marginalization and racialization had reached them throughout their life. In this sense, the speakers expressed a deep desire to contribute with their experiences to a change that has yet to take place, tending to stop normalizing discrimination at all levels, intra-family, social, in the workplace and at school. In this sense, I perceive that given the recent ideas that promote diversity and multiculturalism, and after the strength that the #blacklivesmatter movement gained in the last year, a stage of revision of old inherited values begins. This

situation added to future changes for being implemented in a post-pandemic world and given that national myths based on scientific racism now come to be discussed from the perspective of ordinary citizens through small texts collapsed into 280-character tweets, I argue that their perceptions of reality will finally contribute to the Official Story. In that sense, perhaps we are experiencing in real time how HISTORY is built, the one with capital letters that was always reserved for governments and theorists; today it may be democratizing a bit, deconstructing itself, discussed among wider audiences.

Of course, all the business models behind platforms such as Twitter and their affordances, limitations, types of uses, consumption and audience must be considered (Brock, 2012b, 2016; Fiesler & Proferes, 2018; Marwick & boyd, 2010; Meikle, 2016; J. A. G. M. van Dijk, 2006; Veltri, 2020). However, that is our job as scholars of digital humanism: to distinguish the extent to which Twitter allows us to access reality and through which lenses we are going to analyze the new problems posed by the cybersphere.

In this sense, I believe that it is essential to see that Social Media are incorporating new audiences and this was revealed in the analysis of tweets where I found users who not only related their painful experiences in otherness but were prepared to question the use of “*pinche prieto*” or “*negro de mierda*” as something natural. Furthermore, these speakers dared to point out the hypocrisy and the double standard with which events are measured according to whether they involve whites or non-whites and to claim that racism exists, is real, is palpable, concrete and has consequences. Moreover, they have the courage to detach themselves from whiteness, rejecting that it was a normal way of conducting themselves as a society, and they refused to continue contributing to the exclusion structures, declining to use the keywords and to continue

repeating them. In that sense, it seems valuable as future research to amplify the scope to observe these types of speakers who perhaps belong to younger generations,⁸⁸ as their behavior seems significantly different from previous generations⁸⁹ where Whiteness and ideas around progress, order and evolution were fundamental for their class constructions. I argue that these new generations that I think I perceive in the samples stating counterarguments and problematizing whiteness are more related to the devastating results of neoliberalism of the 1990s and to the successive economic and social crises that preceded those years that plunged Mexico and Argentina in an endless escalation of social unrest where the irruption of drug cartels, unemployment, the fall of pension systems, the precariousness of public health systems, and the growth of poverty among other problems dismantled the myths about the supposed exceptionalism of the ‘Mexican race’ and the ‘Argentine race’ that dominated during the 20th century. Given the circumstances, it no longer seems feasible that the dream of the cosmic race of Vasconcelos will be fulfilled and it does not seem logical to continue supporting the idea that Argentines are expatriate Europeans, as Borges (2018) and recently President Fernández claimed.⁹⁰

Maybe this young generation whose ideas I argue are recorded in part of the samples finally will understand that there is no magic formula to become a world power if the satellite countries are under the exploitation models the dominant countries apply. Even more, considering that none of the central countries is eager to share power it is possible that neither Mexico nor Argentina can have sustained economic growth while power is divided between the United

⁸⁸ I claim that I am finding traces of the attitudes of Generation Z in relation to whiteness.

⁸⁹ Baby boomers and Generation X.

⁹⁰ President Alberto Fernández claimed, citing a song that Mexicans come from ships, Brazilians from the jungle and Argentines from ships, which triggered a wave of criticism and memes on Twitter (Redacción El Diario, 2021).

States and Europe. In that sense, I believe that this new Generation Z who are just entering the labor market is not only worth studying as proposed by marketing to attract them as consumers, but the most interesting, important and valuable purpose is to explore how they will change the world, what they will project differently, how they will modify reality and through which tools.

Me, as an emerging scholar,

Hispanic American,

Argentine,

female,

foreign,

Millennial,

I am eager to know how I would be able to contribute with
my work, my ideas, my analyses, my problematizations
in such way that in the next 20 years
this new generation in which today I deposit my hope,
will be able to shape a world to be
a little less unequal
and
a little more human.

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