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Respect and Disrespect in Deliberation Across the Networked Media Environment: Examining Multiple Paths of Political Talk

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There is extensive research dedicated to civility in online deliberation, but empirical studies on mutual respect are still scarce. By adopting a systemic approach to deliberation, this study identifies different targets of disrespect (conversation partners, arguments, actors and groups involved in a certain conflict, profanity without a clear target), and investigates their relations with deliberation in different online contexts. This paper argues that the nature of digital affordances related to anonymity and homophily influences the expression of foul language, but not as significantly as was originally assumed. Analysis reveals that online social norms help to explain the configuration of interactions and practices of reasoning together in YouTube, blogs, and Facebook; and the extent to which profanity affects justification and reciprocity.

Keywords: Mutual Respect, Uncivility, Deliberation, Blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Deliberative System.

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In a healthy democracy, deliberative scholars expect that citizens engage in reasonable discussion and try to understand each other by recognizing basic principles such as pluralism and mutual respect (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Habermas, 1996; Mansbridge et al., 2012; Steiner, 2012). In practice, of course,

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people have to deal with hatred, intergroup hostility, and personal enmity in pluralist societies divided by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and so forth. Thus, offences and attacks are likely to be found in distinct contexts. This study aims to explore conditions under which mutual respect exists for online deliberation across various digital settings. We ask how disrespect, which is addressed to different targets, occurs in YouTube, blogs, and Facebook; and we analyse how this behaviour relates to other deliberative dimensions like justification and reciprocity.

While the systemic approach to deliberation has recently been provoking a lively debate, Mansbridge and colleagues (2012, p. 9) solely inquire into the role of "partisan media"; and they do not engage with the literature on interconnected media environment. In the digital era, some of the prominent forms of everyday talk and public engagement occur through diverse computer-based channels of communication. Studies on online deliberation have developed an ever more systematic analysis and have brought careful empirical evidence to warrant their claims (Coleman & Moss, 2012; Dahlberg, 2007; Janssen & Kies, 2005; Kies, 2010; Kim, 2011; Strandberg & Grönlund, 2014; Stromer-Galley, 2003; Stromer-Galley & Wichowski, 2011). Yet, most of these studies have been restricted to one forum, a type of institution or a single platform; and thus comparative studies across online settings remain underdeveloped. This study contributes to fill this gap. Looking at online discussions on the same topic, it unpacks platform designs and affordances as well as norms and cultures of communication in a collaborative user-generated online video platform (YouTube); a setting for discussing issues of common interest (Blogs) and a social networking site in which users usually interact with individuals from their network of friends, relatives, coworkers, and so forth (Facebook). This study then contributes to the most recent research on online deliberation that stresses "context and medium matter" for shaping conversation and deliberative behavior (Stromer-Galley, Bryant & Bimber, 2015; see also Grönlund, Bächtinger, & Setälä, 2014; Halpern & Gibbs, 2013).

Whereas benefiting from prior scholarship on civility in digital environment (Anderson, Brossard, Xenos, & Ladwig, 2014; Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014; Hill & Hughes, 1998; Hurrell, 2005; Ng & Detenber, 2005; Papacharissi, 2004; Rowe, 2014), this study taps into the concept of mutual respect. We argue that the criterion of mutual respect, which is more directly linked to a person's moral and social worth (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Habermas, 1995; Mansbridge et al., 2010; Steiner, 2012; Testa, 2012), allows scholars and practitioners to make important distinctions of targets of profanity; and this offers a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of what is at stake in the conflict. This study thus contributes to advance a novel analytical perspective for empirically assessing offenses and attacks in processes of deliberation.

To develop our study, we focus on an event that aroused indignation and broad mobilization in Brazilian society: a racist and homophobic statement made by Federal Congressman Jair Bolsonaro during a TV program. Findings suggest that the nature of digital affordances related to anonymity and homophily influences the expression of foul language, but not as significantly as was originally assumed. Disrespect on a personal level has a more deleterious impact on deliberation than offenses to others' opinions; and contrary to general perceptions, we find that disrespectful commenters are more likely to justify their claims than respectful commenters.

The first part of this paper briefly surveys the concept of mutual respect in deliberation, the role of everyday political discussion and the view of a networked media environment. Next, we characterize how the "Preta Gil and Bolsonaro" event prompted a public debate. Following this, we describe our method and examine the aspects of anonymity and heterogeneity in YouTube, blogs, and Facebook that shape users' expressions of foul language; as well as relations between this behavior and justification and reciprocity. The final section presents the conclusions and assesses the study's limitations and implications for future work.

Theory and Research Questions: Respect in deliberation across digital environments

In this paper, we have chosen to delve into the notion of "respect" instead of "civility," which is more widely used in political communication research. Previous studies have looked at how anonymity encourages flaming (Hill & Hughes, 1998) and some have researched the role of moderation in developing, maintaining and enforcing norms of civil discourse (Hurrell, 2005). Others have examined the impacts of impoliteness and uncivility on users' perception and intentions to participate in political discourse (Ng & Detenber, 2005; Papacharissi, 2004; Rowe, 2014). Other studies have investigated the effects of online incivility toward particular topics (Coe, Kenski & Rains, 2014) and opinion polarization (Anderson et al., 2014).

Civility is obviously an important part of social interactions in democratic contexts. We believe the notion of "mutual respect" contributes to scholarship in this field. By enabling identification of distinct targets of profanity, this concept produces insights into various levels of disrespect and contributes to our understanding of different types of conflict (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Mansbridge et al., 2010). Before exploring this question, we need to clarify the much-debated concept of civility.

A number of scholars attempt to distinguish between "civility" and "politeness" or "courtesy." The key argument is that the types of behavior associated with "politeness" and "proper manners" can be elite-driven and function as instruments for exclusion, despite creating the appearance of inclusiveness (Orbach, 2012, p. 447; Papacharissi, 2004). Furthermore, the behaviors labeled as "polite" could lead to a suppression of disagreement, and conformity to widely accepted views (Orbach, 2012; Papacharissi, 2004; Schudson, 2008).

In response to these difficulties, Papacharissi (2004, p. 262) has distinguished between politeness, defined as "interaction that flows smoothly" related to etiquette and formality, and civility, specified as type of interactions that "strengthens our relationship with each other and our ties to democracy" (Papacharissi, 2004, p. 263). Papacharissi tracks the relationships between civility and dialogue in the public sphere; and civility as a support of citizenship, conceived as tie that links the individual to a larger political community. Nevertheless, in this context, it seems unclear what type of mutual moral obligation is required in an interaction that "fosters democratic goals" (Papachirissi, 2004, p. 262) or that shows "respect for the collective traditions of democracy" (Papachirissi, 2004, p. 260).

While the notion of civility has a broader origin, seen as the associational life articulating the civil society and the state, the notion of respect is more directly related to a person's moral and social worth within a communication-community. For the purpose of this paper, we find it theoretically and empirically promising to analyze mutual respect by distinguishing between respect for other persons and respect for arguments (Bohman & Richardson, 2009; Steiner, 2012; Testa, 2012). The stance of mutual respect toward a conversation partner is different from the cognitive assessment of opinions, values, and interests. People, while respecting one another as moral arguers, can recognize differences of views or positions that might or might not be morally respectable. The definition of civility does not allow one to make such a distinction. A person can be civil to other persons but not toward opinions and arguments.

Respect for persons involves a set of dispositions to act (and to refrain from acting) in order to recognize others as moral agents and competent and "intelligent" interlocutors (Bohman & Richardson, 2009). This idea involves an important Kantian component, as we owe every person the recognition and respect of his or her status as a morally responsible agent. Habermas (1995, 1996) recasts this concept as the agent's capacity to participate in public deliberation; to raise and defend claims discursively, or more precisely, to engage in what he calls the "discursive will-formation." It is important to keep in mind that in the Habermasian theoretical framework, the notion of respect cannot be solely derived from the ontological concept of a person, but it comes into play as the result of historical development. For

example, being accorded rights is crucial for granting the individual the status of a fully-fledged citizen; for recognizing that one' s participation in decision-making counts as being legitimate; and for ensuring real opportunities for an individual to fully engage in collective or personal self-determination.

For deliberative processes, Mansbridge et al. (2010, p. 2 – 3) argue that "participants should treat one another with mutual respect and equal concern. They should listen to each other and give reasons to one another which they think the others can comprehend and accept." Gutmann and Thompson claim that "Mutual respect requires more than toleration or a benign attitude toward others. It requires a favorable attitude toward and constructive interaction with people with whom one reasonably disagrees when those persons are similarly willing and able to adopt such an attitude" (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004, p. 151).

Respect for arguments is a distinct matter. When it comes to reflecting together on their preferences, values and interests, participants often face some differences that they might or might not consider respectable. As Gutmann and Thompson have put it "much of moral disagreement will persist even among good-willed and intelligent people" (2004, p. 151). There will always be views – such as commitments related to racism, homophobia, xenophobia, for example – that we do not consider respectable; and this is not a bad thing in itself (Testa, 2012).

To recognize the merit of certain claims, we endorse Rostbøll's (2011, p. 12) argument built on the Habermasian position that respect, as a practical matter, should not be placed outside the process of public deliberation. As this scholar observes, "we cannot know how to live on mutually respectful terms without engaging in common deliberation" (Rostbøll, 2011, p. 21). While we need a minimum commitment to respect others before we enter into deliberation, we only know what respect means and implies in particular situations when we gain concrete insight, as is determined in common deliberation by the affected parties.

This study hypothesizes that the *manner* in which disrespect is presented produces different effects on deliberation. Since profanity can address diverse objects, little is known about how this behaviour is related to deliberation in distinct contexts. We depart from the premise that "context and medium matter" (Grönlund, Bächtinger & Setälä, 2014; Stromer-Galley, Bryant & Bimber, 2015). Previous research has suggested that anonymity in online settings is likely to encourage verbal attacks and insults (Hill & Hughes, 1998; Janssen & Kies, 2005; Papacharissi, 2004; Rowe, 2014). Douglas and McGarty (2001) identified the importance of an in-group audience for the expression of stereotypical views in digital settings. When participants are among like-minded partners, they share similar views and are likely to treat one another with mutual respect and equal concern (Gervais, 2014; Mutz, 2006; Sunstein, 2001; Stromer-Galley & Wichowski, 2011). However, the stance of respect may not be extended toward participants who think otherwise or are members of other groups. Furthermore, we should be attentive that disrespect addressed to distinct targets can have varying effects on individuals' motivations to provide justifications for their positions and keep conversation as a reciprocal interaction. With these considerations in mind, we ask: How is disrespect (foul language) influenced by anonymity and homophily in communicative contexts of YouTube, blogs, Facebook (RQ1)? How does disrespect (foul language) relate to other deliberative dimensions like justification and reciprocity (RQ2)?

A caveat is in order. We assume that deliberation is quite demanding, but it can be approached as an episodic practice that takes place in more general interactions and casual conversations. We understand political discussion to be an informal, casual, and spontaneous exchange of views and opinions to express judgments, solve problems, and form conclusions or decisions, without the restrictions of formal procedural rules or a fixed agenda (Conover & Searing, 2005; Laden, 2012; Maia, 2012; Mansbridge, 1999). Moments in which citizens engage in an argumentative exchange do not reflect the standard concept of "deliberation"[1]. We align our perspective with scholars who adopt Habermas' discourse ethics as grounds for conceiving the deliberative norms as a regulative ideal. While deliberation should meet

several criteria, exchanging reasons in everyday life is a rare phenomenon, and is fragile in face of several threats that can put an end to this practice (Habermas, 1996, p. 323; see also Bächtiger, Niemeyer, Neblo, Steenbergen, & Steiner, 2010; Steiner, 2012). This consideration has motivated us to examine how disrespect is shaped in digital settings characterized by anonymity and homophily, and how this practice relates to the dimensions of justification and reciprocity of deliberation.

Research Design and Hypothesis

Given the abstract character of the mutual respect concept, how can it be operationalized for empirical research? While we cannot do justice to the complexities of the issue at stake, we shall suggest a way of observing lack of respect empirically. To start with, this study has benefited from previous studies on civility that operationalized the use of foul language in discussions, referring to *ad hominem* attacks, aspersion, name calling, pejorative hyperbole, vulgarity, and rhetorical cues that indicate hostility (Coe, Kenski, & Rains, 2014; Papacharissi, 2004). Since our analysis seeks to reappraise the link between disrespect and different targets (Steiner, 2012; Testa, 2012), we distinguish between the use of foul language to address: (i) other participants on a personal level; (ii) other participants' arguments (iii) persons and groups related to the conflict at stake; and (iv) offense without a clear target. As the concept of disrespect is context-dependent, this distinction helps to clarify when hostility and offense imply a direct assault on a person or their opinions and when the attack is addressed to certain groups and collective ways of life.

We developed a two-step strategy to examine the expression of disrespect (foul language) in diverse online settings and to capture the relation of this behavior with the deliberative quality of discussions. First, to dissect the ways in which online discussions are organized in different settings, we look at foul language (dependent variable) and correlations to design platforms that favor (i) identifiability/anonymity and (ii) homophily and heterogeneity of opinions (independent variables).

Anonymyty/identifiability

Previous studies have shown that anonymity and absence of social cues of participants – such as in regard to gender, race, rank, and so forth – encourage flaming (Hill & Hughes, 1998; Papacharissi, 2004). Anonymity contributes to participants bringing hostility, vulgar words and verbal attacks into a discussion (Janssen & Kies, 2005; Rowe, 2014). Based on these previous studies, we expect that:

> **H1:** Comments made in platforms with more anonymity will reflect more foul language than comments in identifiable platforms.

Heterogeneity/homophily

Interactions among people who share similar political perspectives, beliefs and interests might easily echo their prior perspectives; and these practices are likely to produce a "safe ground" for discussion (Gervais, 2014; Hill & Hughes, 1998; Sunstein, 2001). Exchanges between people who have opposing ideological views are likely to lead to disagreement, which ultimately generates negative emotions, disrespect and aggressive expressions. Thus, we hypothesize that:

> **H2:** Comments made in homogeneous platforms will show more respect within groups, but less respect towards other groups as compared to heterogeneous platforms.

Further research is needed to clarify how foul language affects the quality of deliberation. Two criteria are used to assess the effects of disrespect on: (i) the level of justification and (ii) reciprocity. Note

that in this part of our research, foul language is considered a predictor (independent variable) of other behaviors.

Justification is a crucial dimension of deliberation. Within the Habermasian theoretical framework, participants are expected to explain their claims that are subject to the criticism of all participants and bring warrants to these claims; justification is required to motivate and resolve disputes (Bächtiger et al., 2010; Habermas, 1996; Steiner, 2012). *Reciprocity* is a requisite that indicates participants should listen to others and engage with their arguments (Habermas, 1996, p. 305–306; Kies, 2010, p. 42).

Before we explain our method, we will characterize the environments chosen in this study: YouTube, blogs, and Facebook.

YouTube, despite being a private company owned by Google, is essentially public in nature; it encompasses a heterogeneous mix of political positions and massive participation. It is a mostly anonymous environment and participants are only asked to register an e-mail address to log in. In this user-generated online video platform, participants can comment, rate videos, and share, endorse, or contest comments into a network-shaped discussion. Participants are usually aware that they stand before an "imagined 'mass' of ordinary users" (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 8), including a large number of passive observers.

Blogs are usually defined as platforms that feature regular comments related to information and opinions; and frequently have a collaborative modus operandi. Quantitative and qualitative studies have shown that blogs, in spite of their distinct structure and purposes, tend to be spaces for sharing ideas and interpreting issues of common interest; and they are mostly self-referential (Papacharissi, 2010; Thorseth, 2011). Research has shown that bloggers usually form small communities in which members reference other blog entries, as if "a public conversation [is] being carried on in a public square, but involving details of the lives of the people in the small blog community" (Davis, 2013, Kindle Locations 542–551). Usually, bloggers express themselves having their "audience" in mind (Thorseth, 2011, p. 14), and they cautiously produce thoughtful messages, as in a "public pulpit" (Papacharissi, 2010, p. 145).

Facebook is a social networking site (SNS) in which users usually interact with individuals from their circle of friends, family, school, work, etc. as well as a network of mutual friends (Grasmuck, Martin, & Zhao, 2009; Stromer-Galley & Wichowski, 2011). This platform offers its users visual tools and descriptive and narrative techniques to create their self-representation; the possibility of blocking the access of certain users to certain parts of their accounts allows people to express differently to distinct audiences; and viewers can traverse this network of publicly displayed connections (Ellison & boyd, 2013; Grasmuck, Martin, & Zhao, 2009). Since individuals tend to adopt a personal-intimate tone while publicly sharing comments, O'Sullivan (2005) has named the posts in Facebook "mass personal communications"; and Papacharissi (2010, p. 143) remarks that users "delineate private space in public domain."

Case study

To develop this study we focus on an event involving the racist and homophobic statements of Federal Congressman Jair Bolsonaro on a TV Show – "Custe o que custar" ("CQC" on Brazil's Band TV), which attracted a large audience[2]. On 28 March 2011, a famous black Brazilian singer, Preta Gil (daughter of another prominent singer and former Minister of Culture, Gilberto Gil) asked Bolsonaro: "If your son fell in love with a black woman, what would you do?" The congressman, who is a former military official known for his extreme right-wing values and antiprogressive causes, replied: "Preta, I am not going to discuss promiscuity. This just won't happen; my children have never lived in a milieu regrettably like yours."

As the congressman spoke on television, what he said had huge repercussion. After the TV show, Preta Gil posted outraged messages on her Twitter account. Jair Bolsonaro claimed in an interview next

morning to have misunderstood the question: "I understood that she was asking me what I would do if my son dated someone who was gay (…) I'd have replied: 'my son can date any woman, as long as she doesn't behave like you do.' Even if I were a racist, I would not be crazy to say that on television." Since racism is crime in Brazil, the congressman tried to avoid any imputation of racism, but reinforced his position against same-sex relationships.

Brazilian civic and political entities sued the congressman for breach of parliamentary decorum and crime of racial intolerance; and this episode became major news for mainstream media and independent media alike. It provoked abundant discussions across traditional and digital networked environments and prompted mobilizations on Facebook - a movement known as "*Evento Fora Bolsonaro*" ("Event Out With Bolsonaro") that involved 43,808 participants.

This is an appropriate case for analyzing disrespect in deliberation because it explicitly deals with conflicting assertions of identity; and obligations regarding how people should treat each other and find means to live in mutually respectful ways in democratic societies. It evinces the radical character of political representatives who may incentivize a discriminatory sort of behavior; and it taps into claims for recognition of rights and collective ways of living that are recurrently disputed through free debates in the public sphere, including online settings.

Method

Sample - We selected three digital environments: a) the YouTube page displaying the "CQC"[3] video; b) Blogs, with cross-cutting views, "Papo de Homem"[4] (Man's Talk) or PdH Blog; and a feminist blog "Escreva Lola Escreva"[5] (Write Lola Write) or Lola Blog; c) two Facebook spaces, one protesting the congressman, called "Evento Fora Bolsonaro"[6] ("Event Out With Bolsonaro") or FB Event, and another unofficial page supporting him, "Jair Bolsonaro Page"[7] or FB Page. In our study, only Lola Blog demonstrated previous moderation. Identification of gender was not possible in 20.4% of overall comments. The participation of men was higher in most settings: 71% in PdH; 64.1% in Facebook Page; 49.9% in YouTube. Facebook Event and Lola Blog were the platforms where the participation of women was higher than that for men (53.6%; 44.9%). While we consider gender inequality worth investigating, as it continues to be a dimension of political underrepresentation, sorting out implications of gender roles would add greater complexity to the theoretical and analytical framework of this study.

Table 1 Research universe

	YouTube	PdH Blog	Lola Blog	FB Event	FB Page	Total
Research universe	485	162	49	140	610	1446
Identifiability	anonymous	identifiable	anonymous	identifiable	identifiable	-
Viewpoints	heterogeneous	heterogeneous	homogeneous	homogeneous	homogeneous	-

The totality of comments from 29 March 2011, available in the aforementioned platforms, was manually collected. Data collection occurred from 20 September to 20 October 2013. Exceptionally, due to the great number of posts to the FB Page, we chose to only collect comments available on 31 March 2011. In "FB Event," we collected 140 messages because a technical problem obstructed visualization after 8 April 2011. We worked with the universe of aforementioned data.

Procedure

Operationalization of Variables

In order to analyze the content of posts and comments, we elaborated an 11-variable codebook. Most of our categories were shaped according to the *Discourse Quality Index* (DQI) (Steiner, 2012) and strategies for operationalizing deliberative criteria in online environments (Janssen, & Kies, 2005; Kies, 2010). In this study, we considered the following variables: i) participants' *positioning* in the debate; ii) *disrespect* (foul language) broken into 4 targets (referring to attacks on: persons; arguments; actors involved in the conflict and offenses without a clear target); iii) participants' *claim justification*; iv) *reciprocity*. To gain a clearer insight into the intensity of negativity, we distinguished between *moderate attacks* (implying mild assaults, e.g. "you seem a little confused," "this is not truth worth," "this is a naïve idea") and *aggressive* attacks (involving *ad hominem*, aspersion, name calling, pejorative hyperbole and vulgarity, e.g. "you are an idiot," "bitch," "crap," "liar," "what a stupid idea") (Kenski et al., 2012; Papacharissi, 2004). A summary explaining how the variables were coded is available as a supplementary file.

For coding purposes, we considered individual posts and comments[8] as the unit of analysis. Two independent coders coded the comments according to the procedures described by Krippendorff (2004). An inter-coder reliability test of 10% of the 1446-post sample was carried out, using Krippendorff's Alpha protocol. No variable fell short of the minimum recommended reliability level of 0.667 (Krippendorff, 2004) (see Table 2).

Table 2 Krippendorff's Alpha reliability estimate

			Foul language				
	Posi -tioning	Justification	other participants on a personal level	other participants' arguments	persons and groups related to the conflict at stake	offense without a clear target	Reci -procity
KALPHA	.77	.70	.74	.82	.93 (a); 1 (b); .73 (c); .89 (d)	.72	.95

Persons and groups related to the conflict at stake: (a) Jair Bolsonaro; (b) Preta Gil; (c) minority members; people ideologically on the left spectrum; (d) persons from the right, conservatives and those who generally stand up for Christian family values.

Results

To answer the first question on how disrespect (foul language) is influenced by the different contexts of YouTube, blogs, Facebook (RQ1), we used chi-square tests between foul language and identifiability; and foul language and heterogeneity.

H1. As was expected, in settings that require participant identification (PdH, FB Event, FB Page), the use of foul language was less frequent than in anonymous platforms (YouTube; Lola Blog). Taking into consideration the total number of comments displayed in identifiable online settings (see Table 3), 75.4% used foul language, whereas this percentage dropped to 45.4% in identifiable settings. According to the chi-square test, we found a statistically relevant association between the expression of foul language and anonymity ($p < 0.01$). Thus, our first hypothesis was supported. By observing the manifestation of foul language in each platform, we noticed strong variation. YouTube was the platform with the highest percentage of comments with foul language (75.5%); followed by Lola Blog (72.3%), PdH (50.0%), FB Page (46.1%) and FB Event (36.7%).

Table 3 Distribution of disrespect (foul language) in identifiable and anonymous platforms

		Anonymous	Identifiable	Total
Foul language	No	131 (24.6%)	485 (54.6%)	617 (43.4%)
	Yes	401 (75.4%)	404 (45.4%)	804 (56.6%)
Total		532 (100 %)	889 (100 %)	1421 (100 %)

$\chi 2 = 117.43$ Pr = 0.00.

H2. predicted that comments made in homogeneous platforms (Lola Blog, FB Page, FB Event) would show more respect within groups, but less respect towards other groups as compared to heterogeneous platforms (YouTube, PdH). To test this hypothesis, we first investigated the use of foul language in homogeneous and heterogeneous platforms. In the sequence, we explored the different ways in which disrespect was related to participants (addressed to speakers on a personal level and to speakers' opinions) in homogenous and heterogeneous settings. Then, we compared expression of disrespect toward groups involved in the conflict at stake (Bolsonaro and conservative people on one side and Preta Gil and minorities on the other side) in these types of environments.

Table 4 Distribution of disrespect (foul language) in homogeneous and heterogeneous platforms

		Homogenous Platforms	Heterogeneous Platforms	Total
Foul language	No	418 (53.9%)	198 (30.7%)	617 (43.4%)
	Yes	358 (46.1%)	447 (69.3%)	804 (56.6%)
Total		776 (100%)	645 (100%)	1421 (100%)

$\chi 2 = 75.93$ Pr = 0.00.

First, we detected that the use of foul language was more frequent in heterogeneous settings. This could be affirmed with a statistical significance of $p < .01$. As shown in Table 4, we found foul language in 69.3% of the messages displayed in settings harbouring participants with different perspectives, whereas this percentage dropped to 53.9% in homogeneous environments. Thus far, these findings might indicate that people are more motivated to use foul language when interacting with those who hold different views.

Table 5 Targets of disrespect (foul language) by online settings

		YouTube	PdH Blog	Lola Blog	FB Page	FB Event	Total
Other participants on a personal level [a]	No	397 (81.9%)	150 (93.8%)	47 (100%)	478 (79.3%)	116 (90.6%)	1188 (83.5%)
	Yes	88 (18.1%)	10 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	125 (20.8%)	12 (9.4%)	235 (16.5%)
Other participants' arguments [b]	No	471 (97.1%)	150 (93.8%)	45 (95.7%)	566 (94.0%)	128 (100%)	1360 (95.6%)
	Yes	14 (2.8%)	10 (6.2%)	2 (4.3%)	36 (6.0%)	0 (0%)	62 (4.4%)

Table 5 Continued

		YouTube	PdH Blog	Lola Blog	FB Page	FB Event	Total
Persons and groups related to the conflict at stake							
Bolsonaro[c]	No	302 (62.3%)	134 (83.8%)	24 (51.1%)	579 (96.2%)	108 (84.4%)	1147 (80.7%)
	Yes	183 (37.7%)	26 (16.3%)	23 (48.9%)	23 (3.8%)	20 (15.7%)	275 (19.3%)
Preta Gil[d]	No	463 (95.5%)	158 (98.8%)	47 (100%)	593 (98.5%)	126 (98.4%)	1387 (97.5%)
	Yes	22 (4.5%)	2 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	9 (1.5%)	2 (1.6%)	35 (2.5%)
Minority members[e]	No	429 (88.5%)	134 (83.8%)	43 (91.5%)	523 (86.9%)	122 (95.3%)	1251 (88.0%)
	Yes	56 (11.6%)	26 (16.3%)	4 (8.6%)	79 (13.2%)	6 (4.7%)	171 (12.0%)
Conservatives[f]	No	438 (90.3%)	151 (94.4%)	36 (76.6%)	591 (98.2%)	119 (93.0%)	1335 (93.9%)
	Yes	47 (9.7%)	9 (5.7%)	11 (23.4%)	11 (1.8%)	9 (7.1%)	87 (6.1%)
Offense without a clear target [g]	No	391 (80.6%)	134 (83.8%)	46 (97.9%)	539 (89.7%)	123 (96.1%)	1233 (86.8%)
	Yes	94 (19.4%)	26 (16.3%)	1 (2.1%)	62 (10.3%)	5 (3.9%)	188 (13.30%)

[a] $\chi 2 = 42.48$ Pr = 0.00. [b] $\chi 2 = 18.26$ Pr = 0.02. [c] $\chi 2 = 231.17$ Pr = 0.00. [d] $\chi 2 = 18.58$ Pr = 0.02. [e] $\chi 2 = 10.82$ Pr = 0.03. [f] $\chi 2 = 56.71$ Pr = 0.00. [g] $\chi 2 = 40.14$ Pr =0.00.

To identify the ways in which targets of foul language are related to in-group audiences (see Table 5), we present a chart that summarizes data about each platform. We use a descriptive strategy to observe if the platforms may attend the expectations announced in H2.

Chart 1-Summary of findings in each setting as related to H2

Homogeneous platforms	H2 √
Lola Blog- the vast majority of posts were explicitly against the congressman (76.6% against *vs* 2.1% in favor – 21.3% neutral), users completely refrained from attacking in-group participants on a personal level and very few moderate attacks were targeted to their arguments (4.3%). Almost all comments containing foul language assailed "the other side" – i.e., 48.9% the congressman (40.4% aggressive) and 23.4% conservative groups (17% aggressive).	
FB Event- many posts were explicitly against the congressman (46.1% were against Bolsonaro *vs* 10.9% in favor – 43.0% neutral), 15.7% of comments attacked Bolsonaro (9.4% aggressive) and 7.2% (5.5% aggressive) targeted conservative people. It should be noted that 9.4% of comments contained offensive words (4.7% aggressive) directed at conversation partners on a personal level – particularly the small number of people who supported the congressman, but no remarks referred to their arguments.	H2 √

Chart 1-Continued

FB Page- many posts were explicitly in favor of the congressman (42.6% of comments in favor Bolsonaro *vs* 11.6% against – 45.8% neutral) – 13.2% of comments with foul language targeted minorities (10% aggressive), but rarely Bolsonaro (1.3% moderate and 2.5% aggressive). In FB Page, we found a large number of attacks directed on a personal level (20.8%) – addressed to the small number of users who criticized the congressman.	H2 √
Heterogeneous platforms	
YouTube- considered a heterogeneous platform (29.5% of comments in favor Bolsonaro *vs* 49.5% against – 21.0% neutral), YouTube reflected the use of the most foul language (75.5%). Compared to sites harboring like-minded people, in this case, profanity addressed a plurality of targets. For example, insulting comments were directed as follows: 18.1% other users and 2.8% their arguments; 37.7% Bolsonaro; 4.5% Preta Gil; 9.7 % conservative groups; 11.6% minorities; 19.4% did not have a clear target.	H2 √
PdH- considered a heterogeneous platform (20.0% of comments in favor Bolsonaro *vs* 41.3% against – 38.8% neutral). In PdH Blog, profanity also focused on different targets, but often at a lower percentage than in YouTube (16.3% Bolsonaro; no attacks to Preta Gil; 5.7% conservative). The exception is the use of foul language to attack minorities (16.3%). It should be noted that PdH was the environment with the lowest volume of profanity used to insult others on a personal level (6.3%), after Lola Blog. The low volume of profanity used to insult others on a personal level was unexpected considering our hypothesis (H2). In this setting, the use of foul language aimed at arguments was considerably low (3.1% moderate; 3.1% aggressive), but a little higher than in other settings: FB Page (3.3% moderate; 2.7% aggressive); Lola Blog (4.3% moderate; none aggressive); YouTube (1.6% moderate; 1.2 % aggressive).	H2 ×

To test H2, we used a chi-square test between foul language in both settings and targets addressed to: (i) other participants on a personal level; (ii) other participants' arguments (iii) persons and groups related to the conflict at stake; and (iv) offense without a clear target.

Table 6 Targets of disrespect (foul language) in homogeneous and heterogeneous platforms

		Homogeneous	Heterogeneous	Total
Other participants on a personal level [a]	No	641 (82.4%)	567 (87.9%)	1208 (84.9%)
	Yes	137 (17.6%)	78 (12.1%)	215 (15.1%)
Other participants' arguments [b]	No	739 (95.1%)	624 (96.7%)	1363 (95.9%)
	Yes	38 (4.9%)	21 (3.3%)	59 (4.1%)

Table 6 Targets of disrespect (foul language) in homogeneous and heterogeneous platforms

		Homogeneous	Heterogeneous	Total
Persons and groups related to the conflict at stake				
Bolsonaro[c]	No	711 (91.5%)	479 (74.3%)	1190 (83.7%)
	Yes	66 (8.5%)	166 (25.7%)	232 (16.3%)
Preta Gil[d]	No	766 (98.6%)	626 (97.1%)	1392 (97.9%)
	Yes	11 (1.4%)	19 (2.9%)	30 (2.1%)
Minority members[e]	No	688 (88.5%)	581 (90.1%)	1269 (89.2%)
	Yes	89 (11.5%)	64 (9.9%)	153 (10.8%)
Conservatives[f]	No	746 (96.0%)	601 (93.2%)	1347 (94.7%)
	Yes	31 (4.0%)	44 (6.8%)	75 (5.3%)
Offense without a clear target [g]	No	708 (91.2%)	546 (84.7%)	1254 (88.2%)
	Yes	68 (8.8%)	99 (15.3%)	167 (11.8%)

[a] $\chi 2 = 8.36$ Pr = 0.004. [b] $\chi 2 = 2.36$ Pr = 0.124. [c] $\chi 2 = 76.74$ Pr = 0.000. [d] $\chi 2 = 3.99$ Pr = 0.046. [e] $\chi 2 = 0.86$ Pr = 0.353. [f] $\chi 2 = 5.65$ Pr = 0.017. [g] $\chi 2 = 14.73$ Pr = 0.000.

According to H2, we expected that commenters would use less foul language to attack participants on a personal level than commenters in heterogeneous platforms. Yet, we found that homogenous settings have 17.6% of this type of insult whereas heterogeneous have 12.1%. This difference is considered statically relevant ($p < 0.01$). These findings do not confirm our second hypothesis. Nevertheless, much of our expectation was ratified. In homogeneous forums, participants typically showed respect toward members of the same group and attacked "the other groups." Whereas commenters on Lola Blog insulted opposing groups from a third-person perspective (they were not present in this forum), participants in FB Event and FB Page met a small number of opponents and affronted them on a personal level (from a second person perspective). Contradicting our expectation, commenters on PdH blog, while interacting with users with conflicting values and opinions, showed the lowest level of disrespect to persons (after Lola Blog). Our findings thus urge caution for explaining how the expression of disrespect relates to homophily and heterogeneity in online platforms; and suggest that culture or norms in the context of communication pose important constraints to discussants.

To answer how the deliberative dimensions of reciprocity and justification are related to the use of foul language (RQ2), we used descriptive statistics to map the general context of dialogue in each setting. We then ran bivariate tests to describe and analyse the co-variation of the dependent variables (justification and reciprocity) in relation to the variable of foul language. When considering all settings, we observed that 60.5% of comments showed some kind of reason backing up a claim – 36.6% presented a simple justification (one reason) and 23.9% showed a complex structure of justification (two or more reasons). Blog users elaborated more messages with justifications when regarding each environment separately – 74.4% in PdH Blog, 70.2% in Lola Blog; 62.5% in YouTube, 54.6% in FB Page, 33.6% in FB Event. Bivariate analyses (see Table 7) demonstrated a significant positive relationship between justification and the use of foul language. Counterintuitively, our findings also showed that commenters who used foul language are more likely to present more justifications to support their claims than commenters who did not use foul language. According to a Pearson's chi-square test, we can say that there is a statistically relevant association between these two variables ($p < 0.01$). When we focus on the targets of negativity, we notice that in all cases the percentage of comments that present foul language, as well as justification (at least one reason), remains higher than comments containing profanity without justification.

Table 7 Level of justification in comments expressing disrespect (foul language)

	Foul language		
Level of justification	No	Yes	Total
Without justification	337 (54.6%)	257 (32.0%)	594 (41.8%)
One justification	224 (36.3%)	429 (53.4%)	653 (46.0%)
Two justifications	56 (9.1%)	117 (14.6%)	173 (12.2%)
Total	617 (100%)	803 (100%)	1420 (100%)

$\chi 2 = 73.538$ Pr = 0.000.

Regarding all settings, we found that 56.5% of comments showed reciprocity, i.e., some kind of attunement with other messages in order to provide answers, complementation and/or rebuttals. FB Page (76.1%) was the setting with the highest level of reciprocity, followed by PdH Blog (70.4%), FB Event (62.1%), Lola Blog (44.7%), and YouTube (26.7%). Posts initiating a conversation tended to present foul language less frequently than those inserted in ongoing debates (see Table 8). When taking the comments that started a debate into consideration, 48.3% used foul language. This percentage increased to 51.7% in comments that were part of a current debate. According to a Pearson's chi-square test, we can say that there is a statistically relevant association between these two variables ($p < 0.01$).

Table 8 Relation between disrespect (foul language) and reciprocity

		Foul language		
		No	Yes	Total
Reciprocity	Post starts a debate	223 (36.1%)	387 (48.3%)	610 (43.0%)
	Post is part of a debate	394 (63.9%)	415 (51.7%)	809 (57.0%)
Total		617 (100.0%)	802 (100.0%)	1419 (100.0%)

$\chi 2 = 20.873$ Pr = 0.000.

We could not find expressive differences regarding reciprocity and the target of foul language in the various settings. Nevertheless, we detected the following pattern. Foul language addressing other participants and their arguments on a personal level predominantly happened in the flux of a discussion (the comment is part of a debate). Whereas, foul language that targeted actors and groups involved in the conflict, mostly occurred at the beginning of a discussion (the comment starts a debate). These results achieved statistical significance ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore conditions for mutual respect regarding deliberation in different contexts of online everyday talk, marked by identifiability/anonymity, as well as heterogeneity/homophily. We employed the use of foul language to operationalize different targets of profanity and impacts on justification and reciprocity – two important dimensions of deliberation. While supporting previous studies that assert the digital media's design and affordances help to shape online discussion, our findings advance a deeper understanding of the importance of the culture and norms that are defined and followed in particular online contexts.

As was expected, people are more likely to use foul language when interacting in anonymous settings in comparison to more identifiable ones; and the absence of social cues encourages verbal attacks and uncivil behavior (Hill & Hughes, 1998; Papacharissi, 2004; Rowe, 2014). Further examination of who is talking to who complicates this argument in several ways.

In YouTube, an anonymous setting with cross-cutting views, we found the highest rates of foul language, as well as insults on a personal level, compared to other settings. Many participants identify themselves by using bizarre pseudonyms ("Isaywhat Iwant and screwyouifyoudon'tlikeit", "Hardrockanchorthat'sme", "Tellmelies") and identify other speakers as "idiots," "imbeciles," "clowns," "fairies," or "narrow-minded". Insults addressed to interlocutors on a personal level can be viewed as a symptom that someone is not considered a morally responsible agent; they are not "intelligent" and capable arguers or they are second-class citizens (Bohman & Richardson, 2009; Habermas, 1995; Honneth, 1996, 2007; Maia, 2014). If respect for a person is a precondition for entering into a dialogue, participants in YouTube indeed rarely considered what others said; and attacks on arguments were very scarce (behind FB Event).

A sharp contrast was seen in Lola Blog, also an anonymous setting, but designed for discussion among like-minded people, where participants fully respected their conversation partners. There were no attacks on a personal level and only some moderate outbreaks addressed what was said. Participants in PdH blog (a heterogeneous setting where users could be identified) voiced expressions laden with emotion, outrage or irony to address others' claims, but systematically avoided insulting their character or dignity. This attitude in blogs signifies that participants mutually acknowledge the other's equal status as a source of reasons and claims.

In Facebook settings, where people self-selected into groups with partisan views, participants formed "polarized crowds" of two distinct groups that rarely interacted with each other (Dahlberg, 2007; Smith et al., 2014; Sunstein, 2001). Participants in FB Event (43,808 members) and FB Page (1,746 members) showed mutual respect for partisan fellows. Yet, they typically offended (in "your face style") those from "the other side," who were treated as "intruders" rather than conversation partners, and thus invited to withdraw from dialogue. This behavior was found in FB Page ("*only those who support Bolsonaro should be interacting in these posts- that was the intended idea*") as well as FB Event ("*Some people think like you. Join them and support whoever you see fit).*

Thus far, our findings corroborate the prediction that the use of foul language is related to self-presentation in particular contexts (Gervais, 2014). When people are discussing issues such as conflictive claims of identity, they strategically choose targets of profanity depending on in-group and out-group audiences. Our data further show that individual actors (like Bolsonaro and Preta Gil) and groups (such as conservative people and minorities) become targets of pejorative words and vulgarity in all settings. This fact does not necessarily disconfirm the importance of respect for deliberation. More specifically, it suggests that negativity towards certain persons and groups, when expressed in the third person within the debate context, may fall within the range of justifiable claims. Making angry claims that someone's specific character or features are bad, or a position is repulsive ("Bolsonaro is a racist"), or that certain demands are not worthy of respect can be linked to critical judgments.

These results pose a distinctive analytical framework to examine how disrespect is related to deliberative dimensions of reciprocity and justification (RQ2). Our study suggests that disrespect impacts argumentation in a more complex way than previously assumed. Counterintuitively, our findings showed that the sets of comments with foul language also frequently presented justification. Coe, Kenski & Rains' (2014) analysis of newspaper website comments also found the same tendency. Our results point out that in hot discussions with cross-cutting cleavages – in our case, conflicting assertions of identity, disgusting behaviors and a group's demands – participants can use vulgarity and verbal attacks, and still

justify their views and preferences. Disrespectful comments are not necessarily blind reactions, hollow or irrational.

Regarding reciprocity, our results suggest that forum participants were more willing to use profanity to downgrade opposing groups or arguments in messages that started a debate than in comments made during an ongoing discussion. In contrast, attacks to individuals on a personal level were more common during the flux of a debate. Our results again indicate that respect for others' moral standing may enable dialogue; and speakers can advance their claims and continue to differ about values, preferences and interests (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Rostbøll, 2011).

In YouTube, the high level of *ad hominem* attacks disrupts the equalization of assumptions about one's partner, and this practice seems to block dialogic cooperation. In this setting, our data showed that users did present some justification (a simple one) to back up their positions, but had the lowest rate of reciprocity in comparison to other environments. Arguably, aggressive YouTube speakers provided reasons to assert inequalities among participants in front of an "imagined 'mass' of ordinary users" (Burgess & Green, 2009, p. 8), but were most likely indifferent and uninterested as to whether or not others would respond to them.

In contrast, PdH Blog participants, who were also interacting within an adversarial setting, showed mutual respect for the interlocutors' status as political equals. This seems to create an environment in which each side feels responsible for keeping the conversation going as a joint activity (Davis, 2013; Thorseth, 2011). PdH Blog is the setting with the highest rate of comments with justification (also qualified justifications) and high reciprocity (second only to FB Page). Our qualitative reading suggests that participants attacked minorities and conservative groups alike when commenting about freedom of speech, minority rights and public policies for protecting disadvantaged groups. However, they not only expressed their opinions, they took the opponents' opinions seriously enough to "correct" misinformation and wrong or shortsighted views. Interrogating, disputing, and arguing in front of a skeptical, but attentive heterogeneous audience (Bächtiger et al., 2010) seems to lead to an improvement in opinions within this "small blog community."

Our data showed that, after PdH Blog, Lola Blog presented the second highest level of comments with justification. We believe we were not able to capture higher levels of reciprocity in this setting due to the fact that the tool 'reply to' was not available. This option was offered in all settings. Yet, our qualitative analysis suggests that participants in Lola Blog, while unanimously condemning the congressman, did not support the same point. They disputed propositions of alleged shared goals and negotiated varying means to combat discrimination or other perceived problems. Contrary to the view that people do not engage in discussions in like-minded groups (Mutz, 2006), our findings support studies that assert individuals are exposed to dissimilar views across partisan groups (Kim, 2011). In this aspect, our work corroborates Thorseth's (2011) view that communication in blogs focused on issue-specific topics related to personal experiences tend to generate reflective thinking and judgement on collective problems.

A different picture is found in Facebook. Our findings suggest that awareness of being in a large group with similar political views may reinforce predilections (Coleman & Moss, 2012; Mutz, 2006; Stromer-Galley & Wichowski, 2011) and lead to the perception that one does not need to negotiate their values, beliefs, and preferences with others. FB Page and FB Event were the environments with the lowest volume of comments with justification, but with high levels of reciprocity. This most obviously means that sharing time and space with others supports relational attunement – which does not necessarily mean a discursive engagement. In these large groups, participants in FB Event in particular seemed motivated to publicly express their preferences and document them, without further explanations and justifications. They often shared links to websites of influential leaders, organizations and news outlets with a similar political message; and instructed one another on how to shape personalized messages

to encourage mobilization. In FB Page, participants seemed willing to justify their views. Nonetheless, several participants were active in stating insults and disparaging perspectives to the small number of people who criticized the congressman. Within a community of the like-minded, attacks to members of "the other side" provoked a heated reaction from discussants[9], without shaping further reflection on the challenging claims (Dahlberg, 2007; Sunstein, 2001).

Conclusion

Public debates that play out freely in everyday life help citizens to process what should be respected and the reasons behind individuals' commitments (Bohman & Richardson, 2009; Conover & Searing, 2005; Laden, 2012; Maia, 2012, 2014; Mansbridge, 1999; Rostbøll's, 2011). The objectives of this article have both empirical-analytical and theoretical implications. First, the empirical contributions of this article involved investigating conditions for mutual respect in three online settings. Researchers have examined online deliberation in separate contexts, but there are few studies that make comparisons across contexts. While supporting previous studies that assert platform designs influence users' interactions, our comparative analysis shows that online norms are also important. A combination of online platform affordances, norms and participants' expectations form the conditions necessary to create mutual respect in the digital environment.

This study's contributions go one step further. Our research took several variables into account and relied on users' discussions in YouTube, blogs, and Facebook to measure targets of profanity. As was expected, aggression on a personal level, affecting people's dignity and rights (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004; Mansbridge et al. 2010; Habermas, 1996), is more likely to provoke negative reactions and outrage than attacks to arguments or the demands of groups. When people talk within groups that embrace similar values and opinions, they tend to show mutual respect towards their partners; and are likely to focus their negativity on other groups. Our analysis also demonstrates how targeted foul language has mixed consequences in shaping justification and reciprocity within distinct communication contexts.

This article also has analytical implications on the systemic approach to deliberation. Taking the view of the hybrid and interconnected media environment into account may allow researchers to systematically observe how citizens engage in highly distinctive and sometimes complementary practices. For instance, users can engage in playful or aggressive interactions in YouTube, jump over to a blog discussion to examine their opinions with opponents or like-minded people, or simultaneously promote mobilization and political activism via Facebook. Future research could examine how this complex network of connectivity relates to institutional forums or dissects the linkage between horizontal communication among citizens and vertical communication with political representatives. Sociodemographic variables could be incorporated to investigate the distinct political attitudes of participants, as well as their use of SNS. Moreover, additional analyses could explore different digital platforms and unpack deliberative discussion in relation to varying types of conflict. Despite these limitations, this study suggests that scholars should pay more attention to the subtle and complicated ways of how disrespect is showcased in distinct online settings. As digital environment has become increasingly incorporated into "ongoing everyday politics," it is important to further investigate how insults address persons, arguments or other groups, in regard to an actual or absent audience.

Notes

1 In brief, the normative principles are: (a) participants should mutually provide reasons that they think others can comprehend and accept; (b) and consider their conversational partners as free and equal persons; (c) interaction should be free and unforced, and (d) potentially include all those

who might be affected or concerned; (e) participants should speak sincerely and treat one another with mutual respect; (f) there should be no restrictions regarding topics and contributions; (g) the possibility of participants transcending their initial preference and the chance to reverse outcomes must exist (Habermas, 1996, p. 305–306).

2 "CQC"'s average audience was five IBOP points (a Nielsen-type of TV rating).

3 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8imZAGzO_c

4 http://papodehomem.com.br/bolsonaro-meu-bom/

5 http://escrevalolaescreva.blogspot.com/2011/03/bolsonaro-e-seu-nicho-de-mercadoreaca.html

6 https://www.facebook.com/events/103062809777752/

7 https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jair-Bolsonaro/145284638861357comunidade

8 For YouTube and Blogs we coded comments; and for Facebook both comments and posts.

9 FB Page had the highest number of super-posters (more than 10 comments), who were responsible for 58.4% of all comments, including attacks on persons (24.7%) and other targets (30.1%). Overall, the super-posters were responsible for 48.6% of posts and comments in FB Event, 13.6% in YouTube, 6.5% in PdH and none in Lola Blog.

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Supporting Information

Additional supporting information may be found in the online version of this article:
Appendix. Summary of codes for the variables

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