

**Discursive Representation of Queer and Transgender Identities in Ideologically Polarized Political Discourse on Twitter and Online Ideology: A Corpus-Based Study**

**Rai Muhammad Aon Raza<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Muhammad Siddique<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> PhD English Scholar, Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore, Pakistan. [raiaun786@gmail.com](mailto:raiaun786@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Head of English Department, Imperial College of Business Studies, Lahore, Pakistan.  
[muhhammad.siddique@imperial.edu.pk](mailto:muhhammad.siddique@imperial.edu.pk)

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.1594>**

**Abstract**

This study explores the discursive presentation of queer and transgender identities in politically polarized ideology on Twitter, and how online ideology affects identity formation, inclusion and exclusion. Social media, and Twitter, in particular, have become the focal points of political discussion in which gender diversity is often challenged using polarized discourses. It is in this context that the study intends to analyze the effect of conflicting ideological standpoints in the linguistic coding of the concept of queer and transgender identities in political discourse. The study takes a quantitative corpus linguistics approach to Critical Discourse Analysis with a qualitative approach of discourse interpretation. The theoretical framework combines the Critical Discourse Analysis, Ideology and Discourse Theory and Queer Theory, which allows exploring the power, ideology, and gender performativity of online discourse. Public English-language political tweets are gathered by way of key word and hash tag searches on predetermined political period. The two comparable corpora used to represent the progressive and conservative ideological stands are constructed using a purposive and stratified method of sampling. Results indicate the definite ideological polarization of the manifestation of queer and transgender identities. These identities are largely legitimized by progressive discourses, using rights-based and inclusive frames; and often delegitimized by conservative discourses, using moral, ideological, and biological discourses. The paper concludes that polarized online discourse makes gender identity to become a symbolic location of ideological antagonism. The paper suggests more robust platform governance, counter-discourse that is comprehensive, and increased corpus-based research to be conducted in a variety of socio-political settings.

**Keywords:** Gender discourse; Queer identity; Transgender representation; Ideological polarization; Political discourse; Twitter; Online ideology; Corpus-based analysis; Critical discourse analysis; Social media politics

**Introduction**

Twitter (now commonly known as X) has been a key setting of political communication through which social identities are enacted, negotiated, and disciplined, using ordinary language practices. With queers and transgender communities, the platform grants them visibility, solidarity, and advocacy grounded in their rights, yet it also subjects the users to heightened ideological oppression, misrepresentation, and harassment. This renders Twitter particularly pertinent regarding the analysis of how ideologies of politics define the discursive production of queer and transgender identities in polarized discussions.

The increasing amount of literature indicates that the discourse surrounding social media among the population is not only influenced by the issues, but the level of ideological conformity and dynamics of

interaction that may increase polarization. Indicatively, large-scale studies of Twitter conversations on various debates around the globe reveal that common ideological identification is a significant factor in organizing online participation, which usually overshadows conventional categories of actors, like media or activists (Loru et al., 2025). Boundary-making practices, which include: us versus them, moral assessments, delegitimization and identity labeling are often used linguistically to express polarization in LGBTQ related political debates. Such discursive practices have certain implications especially to the queer and transgender identities because the language does not simply explain the identity; it actually instigates social meaning, legitimacy and belonging as part of political discourse.

The recent research on LGBT-related Twitter discussions reveals that online discussion develops with the course of time and is influenced by the social and political context. An example of current quantitative research is a decade-oriented analysis of Twitter discussions on LGBT showing changes in salient topics, sentiment, and emotional intensity and demonstrating the importance of computational analysis and qualitative interpretation (Ng et al., 2025). This justifies the necessity of a corpus-based methodology that is able to obtain the large-scale trends and, at the same time, to enable close and contextually specific analyses of the way the topics of queer and transgender identities are being framed and discussed in political discourse. Platform governance and policy changes also have an impact on what is visible and normalized. Policy change analyses on X and new management show ambivalent changes in hate and violent speech policies, with fewer protections around misgendering and deadnaming, which has the potential to influence the way gender identity is discourse and conflict (Hoffmann and Heins, 2024). Official policies of hateful behavior specify policies on targeting of a protected group, promotion, and visibility, which define how these processes impact users rhetorical decisions and constraints on what is regarded as acceptable speech (X, n.d.). In addition to the platform policy, the issue of LGBTQ safety and hate speech on social media platforms has been brought up by civil society reporting, focusing on the social implications of the study of these discourses (GLAAD, 2025; Associated Press, 2025).

Corpus based research is methodologically particularly appropriate to polarized political speech since it enables comparing patterns systematically between groups of people, time, or ideological camps. It is demonstrated in the corpus-based studies of Twitter data that there can be more credible inferences about linguistic characteristics and meaning-making activities when large anonymous datasets are used in combination with smaller and context-sensitive samples (Yudytska, 2024). Transparent analysis of keywords, collocations, concordance patterns, stance markers and evaluative language used to express ideological positioning and identity construction are also supported by a corpus-based design.

There are ethical considerations involved in researching a sensitive identity related discourse that is conducted online. Studies of Twitter data highlight that ethical management, privacy threats, and methodological disclosure can be quite different in various studies (Takats et al., 2022). The qualitative research reviews based on social media data also indicate threats of traceability in the case of posting quotes and suggest the thorough use of anonymization and paraphrasing to safeguard users (Zhang et al., 2024). General principles of digital research ethics also emphasize the reduction of harm, safeguard of the participants, and the use of responsible data management techniques (BERA, 2024).

It is within this framework that the current research undertakes into the discursive expression of queer and transgender identities in ideologically polarized politics in Twitter through a corpus-based study, which allows materials to be compared in a systematic manner and analyzed ethically responsibly to understand identity, ideology and polarization in modern politics on the Internet.

## **Research Questions**

1. In what ways is the ideologically polarized political discourse on Twitter discursively instantiated as queer and transgender?

2. Which linguistic patterns of ideological polarization may describe these representations in ideological contrasting camps?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To determine and contrast the prevalent linguistic patterns of the expression of queer and transgender identities in ideologically polarised political Twitter speech with corpus-based methods.
2. In order to analyze in what ways the ideological polarization is carried out with the help of discourse strategies (framing, stance, legitimation/delegitimation and othering) in the tweets about queer and transgender identities.

### **Limitations**

The limitation to this study is the limitation of Twitter data access and representativeness. The dataset will also include only publicly accessible content within a specified sampling frame (keywords, hashtags, accounts and time period) and therefore not include the possibility of private accounts, deleted posts and non-indexed discussions. Some communities might also be under-represented because of the language choice (such as put an emphasis on the English tweets) and the region-specific participation pattern. Moreover, although corpus techniques are capable of finding powerful patterns, automated coding of ideology and stance may cause classification noise, that is why the research will be based on the clear operational definition and qualitative validation to decrease possible misinterpretation. Ethical restrictions might also provoke paraphrasing or restricted quoting of sensitive posts, and it can also decrease the presence of some linguistic details within the write-up.

### **Literature Review**

Through discourse, political ideologies are reproduced, argued, and exaggerated on social media platforms, especially on culturally divisive matters like gender and LGBTQ rights. Twitter (X) has notably powerful effects due to the affordances of hashtags (X) (retweets, quote tweets, reply chains) that amplify the speed of conflict visibility and promote ideological conformity to the networked interaction. Studies of polarization on Twitter have repeatedly demonstrated that political discourse tends to fall into adversarial camps, with identity categories being turned into symbols of bigger ideological politics (Katalinić et al., 2023). This is essential to queer and transgender identities, as the polarization of politics usually changes the discourse about rights and lived experience into the frames of moral panic, delegitimization, and exclusionary naming.

According to the recent research, the Twitter conversation around the LGBTQ themes does not stand still, but it evolves with socio-political specificities and policy-related situations. Ng et al. (2025) reveal this as the changes in the prominent themes and the emphasis of emotions within the context of over ten years of discourse on LGBT in Twitter and prove that the online discourse does not represent the community talk but is more of a reflection of the pattern of conflict in society (Ng et al., 2025). This reinforces the significance of following the conversation across specific periods of time and analyzing how the political moments influence the representation of the queer and transgender identities in the ideologically disputed discussions. An increasingly larger body of research particularly investigates the field of anti-LGBTQ politics and discursive intensification of rights debates. As an example, studies of Twitter talk about anti-LGBTQ developments in the U.S. have noted the polarization of discourse, which is not only countable in networks, but also in the patterns of language (Pfocher et al., 2024). The frame of gender theory or gender ideology is depicted to have been circulated between activists and political elites to general audiences through Twitter hashes and to have characteristics of frame shifts and networked amplification (Kuhar, 2025). These results are applicable as gender ideology acts as a shorthand ideological concept and can be used to delegitimize transgender identities as a source of threat, propaganda or social disruption.

Studies based on language as well reveal that the trans-related discourse often turns out metalinguistic and definitional in which the participants challenge categories, names, and authority. Johannsen (2024) discusses

Twitter hashtag Trans is an adjective, showing how apparently grammatical statements are forms of ideological placement into a wider discourse of trans recognition and naming. This is in line with philosophical and linguistic literature on the evils of deadnaming as a failure in linguistic power and identity recognition (Lane, 2025). These analysis reasons the importance of considering naming, categorization and evaluative stance as key discourse sites where representation is created.

Another significant influence on discursive climates is platform governance and the changing moderation policies. Policy change analyses during the reign of X record alterations to hate and harassment-related policies, such as consideration of misgendering and deadnaming activity as a policy-related behavior (Hoffmann and Heins, 2024). The further claim of the civil society reporting is that decreases in protective enforcement are correlated with making LGBTQ users more vulnerable on large platforms, with the X having a low score on LGBTQ safety in recent assessments (GLAAD, 2025). Empirical evidence regarding X with new management integrity indicates that hate-motivated trends and inauthenticity reduction may be sustained in the short run, which substantiates the argument that the platform-specific adjustments can alter the discourse parameters in quantifiable manners (Hickey et al., 2025). The LGBTQ-targeting content is also considered in related computational research, which considers management, moderation, and discursive toxicity to be a case (Burnap et al., 2025).

Corpus-based methods have become more and more popular in the analysis of polarized discourse since they allow the systematic comparison of keywords and collocations, patterns of concordance, and stance markers across ideological categories of samples. The data obtained through corpus analysis of hate and harassment indicate that misgendering, categorical denial, and dehumanizing constructions can be operationalized and monitored (Sevilla Requena, 2024). additional methodological rigor Data collection marked by trans and nonbinary designers also supports a correspondence in methodology category to the manifestations of harmful discourse that are more than standardized by communal definitions (Lameiro et al., 2025). Also, polarization research proves that discourse properties must be considered with the interaction patterns including replies to posts and quote-tweets, where the ideological hostility and toxicity may be concentrated (Zhu et al., 2024).

Ethical and methodological controversies on the utilization of Twitter data are also core in LGBTQ-related research because of the risk of traceability and damage. It is noted in reviews that ethical practice is inconsistent in the field of Twitter research and demands more clarity regarding consent, quoting, anonymization, and data sharing (Takats et al., 2022; Cilliers, 2022). It is something queer and transgender content should consider especially as the political polarization put them at a risk of being harassed in case identifiable posts are replicated.

In general, the existing literature provides the rationale to explore the topic of queer and transgender representation on Twitter in the corpus-based framework that incorporates elements of ideological framing, polarization indicators, and platform-related factors. Nonetheless, a narrowly focused comparative corpora, which would directly correlate online ideology with specific linguistic representation practices in the political discourse, in particular, ideologically-polarized subsets, and periods of occurrences, is still needed.

## **Methodology**

The research design used in this study is a mixed method based research design that combines corpus based discourse analysis with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how queer and transgender identities are discursively represented in ideologically polarised political discourse on Twitter. The quantitative part relies on corpus linguistics to determine recurrent lexical, grammatical and evaluative patterns whereas, the qualitative part uses interpretive discourse analysis to establish hidden ideological meanings, power relations and identity constructions. This mix enables the research to capture coherent large-scale linguistic tendencies as well as making deep, context-sensitive readings that are within the scope of the goals of the study.

The theoretical approach is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough), Ideology and Discourse Theory (van Dijk), and Queer Theory, especially on the notion of gender performativity (Butler). CDA offers the

means to examine the reproduction and critique of power and ideology by means of discourse, whereas the model by van Dijk allows looking at polarization in terms of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation strategies. The aspect of queer and transgender identity being constructed, challenged, and delegitimized in political discourses is informed by Queer Theory. These frameworks collectively allow a critical analysis of the online ideology and polarization and identity representation.

The population of data will be comprised of public English-language political tweets about queer and transgender identities posted on Twitter and within a specific time range associated with events of political interest (e.g. elections, policy discussion, or introductions of new legislation). Two similar sub-corpora of opposite ideological standpoints (progressive and conservative) are built with the help of a purposive and stratified sampling technique. Information is gathered through the help of the keyword- and hashtag-based search and the resulting corpus is even-handed in terms of the size, time period, and topical interest. Non-political content, spam, retweets and bots are not included and anonymity of users is enforced to conform to ethical considerations.

To analyze the data, the corpus analysis software will be applied to produce keywords, collocations, concordance lines, frequency lists, and stance markers between ideological corpora. Such quantitative findings inform the process of choosing salient discursive patterns of qualitative analysis. The qualitative stage is a process with close reading of the selected tweets in order to examine ideological framing, use of evaluative language, inclusion exclusion strategies, othering, use of legitimation and delegitimation practices, and emotional polarization. Such ethical considerations as the use of publicly available data, user anonymity, safe data storage, and careful reporting of sensitive information can be taken into account. This research design guarantees rigor, transparency and compliance with the doctoral research standards.

## **Data Analysis**

### **1. Lexical Representation Patterns and Corpus Overview.**

The chapter provides a critical description of how queer and transgender is discursively represented in the ideologically partisan political discourse on Twitter through the corpus-based approach to the described methodology in the previous chapter. It is an analysis that integrates the quantitative methods of corpus linguistics with the qualitative methods of critical discourse analysis to discuss the ways in which language frames, constructs, and evaluates the queer and transgender identities in polarized political settings. Following the aims and objectives of the study, the analysis has been targeted at the influence of ideological positioning on the tendencies of online political discourse representation, inclusion, exclusion, and identity framing. The data analysis is divided into three parts to be sure of analytical clarity and methodological transparency. Such a staged structure makes it possible to be able to systematically move through surface level linguistic structures to deeper ideological understandings.

### **2. Corpus Description and Composition.**

The data used in the presented study is public English-language political tweets about queer and transgender identities on Twitter gathered during a specific period in the political life of the country that is characterized by an increased level of ideological discourse. The data were split into two similar sub-corpora of opposite ideological orientations with the help of purposive and stratified sampling:

**Corpus A.** (Progressive Ideological Discourse): The tweets that convey a rather supportive, affirmative, or rights-based view of queer and transgender identities.

**Corpus B.** (Conservative Ideological Discourse): Tweets where the perspective is expressed in terms of opposition, criticism, or restriction and structured in terms of moral, religious, or political ideology.

Both corpora even had a similar balance in size, time period coverage and topicality to be compared. Tweets that were not political, were duplicated, not commented on as a retweet, were a result of an automated bot, or did not qualify as relevant in the use of keywords were filtered out during the process of data cleaning. Ethical

integrity was upheld by anonymizing usernames.

The resulting corpus was analyzed by conventional corpus preprocessing methods such as tokenizing, normalizing and stripping out URLs and non-linguistic symbols where not analytically relevant. This was prepared to make sure that further analyses were accurate in terms of discursive patterns as opposed to technical noise.

### 3. Analytical Focus and Procedure.

The first research objective is discussed in this part that finds lexical patterns prevailing ideological representations of queer and transgender identities. Particularly, the analysis looks at:

- Patterns of frequency of identity related terms.
- Ideological salience of keywords in corpora.
- Evaluative lexical choices.
- Prosody of essential labels of identity.

The frequency lists and keyword analyses were produced using corpus-based methods and each ideological corpus was compared to the other one as a reference corpus. The idea of counting the statistically salient lexical elements in each ideological scenario in this approach shows the difference in the use of language to articulate the concept of queer and transgender.

### 4. Queer and Transgender Lexical Representation.

Lexical analysis indicates that political Twitter does not neutralise the terms queer and transgender. Instead, they are incorporated in ideologically loaded lexical contexts that represent general political and moral location. Although both corpora often mention identity labels like transgender, queer, LGBT, as well as gender identity, the lexical patterns that surround them vary significantly.

In the progressive corpus, identity labels are traditionally related to rights-based, affirming and inclusive language, with the focus on recognition, equality and protection. Conversely, the conservative corpus has more ideological framing words that frame gender identity as problematic, threatening or even controversial. Such lexical variations suggest that the issue of representation is not just a presence/absence issue, but a context of discursivity and in the context of evaluation.

### 5. Corpus Table: Representation of Ideological Corpora on Keyword Distribution.

In Table 4.1, the comparative overview of chosen high-frequency and high-keyness lexical items in reference to queer and transgender identities are provided in two ideological corpora.

**Table 4.1: Comparative Keyword Distribution in Ideologically Polarized Corpora**

Lexical Item	Progressive Corpus (Freq.)	Conservative Corpus (Freq.)	Dominant Ideological Framing
Transgender	High	High	Contested identity label
trans rights	High	Low	Rights-based vs exclusionary
gender identity	Medium	High	Ideological framing
Equality	High	Low	Affirmative discourse
Ideology	Low	High	Political delegitimation
Children	Low	High	Moral panic framing
Freedom	Medium	Medium	Ideological recontextualization
protection	High	Low	Inclusion and safety
Biology	Low	High	Essentialist discourse

## 6. Findings of Corpus Interpretation.

The distribution of the key words emphasized in Table 4.1 shows the evident ideological imbalance in the illustration of queer and transgender identities. The word transgender is used commonly in the two corpora, however, the semantic and judgemental contexts of this word vary significantly. The transgender is used in conjunction with such words as rights, protection, and equality in the progressive corpus that could indicate the discourse of affirmation and political belonging. Those trends are consistent with the rights-based discourses that regard queer and transgender identities as legitimate objects of legal and social acknowledgment.

By comparison, the conservative corpus is characterized by a significant focus on gender identity, ideology, children and biology. These words show a discursive shift of identity identification to an ideological confrontation, where gender identity is represented as a system of imposed belief as opposed to a real personal or social identity. The most common presence of children in gender-related terms indicates the presence of a moral panic discourse that creates queer and transgender identities as dangers to the social order or childhood innocence.

This lexical polarization is a manifestation of the idea of ideological square presented by van Dijk, where the opinions that are in-group are expressed in a positive way, out-group traits are problematized or delegitimized. Progressive corpus focuses on positive self-presentation via inclusion and rights advocacy whereas the conservative corpus focuses on negative other-presentation via moral, biological and ideological contexts.

## 7. Polarization of Online Ideology and Lexicon.

It is especially important that the term ideology as a keyword is also present in the conservative corpus. The high frequency of its usage indicates that queer and transgender identities are not constructed as a lived reality but rather as a political agenda or ideological enforced agenda. This framing changes the discussion of rights and recognition to larger ideological battles of culture, power and moral values.

The comparative lack of ideology in the progressive corpus, on the other hand, implies an effort to depoliticize the identity, introducing queer and transgender lives as a question of human rights, not a question of political ideology. This opposition helps to demonstrate the discursive nature of online ideology, which not only defines the content of the utterances but also determines the ways in which identities are defined and assessed.

## 8. Conclusion in Relation to Research Objectives.

The results here directly answer the initial research question of showing that queer and transgender identities are manifested in different lexical and ideological patterns in polarized political language on twitter. The corpus evidence proves the fact that ideological positioning plays an important role in the naming, evaluation, and framing of identities. Instead of neutral terms, terms of identity play the role of ideological signifiers within the larger political discourses. These trends provide a base of further qualitative research in the further sections of this chapter. *Ideological Framing, Stance, and Polarization Strategies*.

Consistent with the second research objective of the study, the analysis examines the linguistic performance of ideological positioning using modal expressions, evaluative adjectives, the use of pronouns, moral judgments, and affective language. These attributes are key to the study of polarization since they show how speakers get placed in specific ideological camps as they create opposing identities as illegitimate, dangerous, or morally inferior.

## 9. Ideological Framing in Polarized Political Discourse

Sensitizing to the manner in which political speech structures reality by emphasizing some facets of the reality and deemphasizing others, ideological framing can be described as such. Ideological framing in the case of queer and transgender identities on Twitter is the definition of the gender identity and the people it concerns and the politics it allegedly demands. Two prevailing frames, a rights-based inclusion frame in the progressive

corpus and a moral-ideological threat frame in the conservative corpus are identified in the corpus analysis. Queer and transgender identities in the progressive corpus are highly constructed in human rights, social justice, protection and equality discourses. Tweets often introduce gender identity as an inseparable part of the personhood that should be appreciated and legally guaranteed. This positioning places queer and transgender people in a vulnerable position that necessitates institutional assistance, and therefore justifies policy implementation and political activism.

On the other hand, the conservative corpus constructs gender identity in terms of ideological struggle, and usually, it is a belief system imposed on people by an outer force instead of reality. The repetition of the names agenda, ideology, indoctrination and radical are indicative of a frame in which transgender identities are delivered as political projects that jeopardize traditional norms, family values, or social stability. Such framing transforms the discussion into not one of rights, but of opposition to so-called ideological coercion.

### **10. Standing Position and Evaluative Language.**

Position-taking is an essential element of ideological polarization in that it enables the user to take a public position in favor of or against certain identities and political assertions. The extent of stance It can be seen that corpus analysis has shown that modal verbs, evaluative adjectives, and epistemic markers are commonly used to express stance, which indicates certainty, obligation, or moral judgment.

Stance is usually formulated in the progressive corpus using affirmative and moralizing terms like deserve, must protect, should be recognized, cannot deny. These words create a sense of a moral duty to include and an unethical or unfair opposition. This repetition of the epistemic certitude (e.g., it is clear, there is no debate) supports the validity of the queer and transgender identities and undermines any other perspective.

Conversely, the conservative corpus portrays a view that is skeptical, alarmed and morally cautious. Gender-related policies are framed using modal verbs like should not, must stop and cannot allow that portray gender intervention as unacceptable. Negative judgments are exaggerated by evaluative adjectives like dangerous, confusing, and harmful and add to a discourse of urgency and threat. This position makes conservative speakers guardians of the social order, and in most cases, people refer to the responsibility to children, families, or national values.

### **11. Polarization by means of Pronouns and Group Positioning.**

The use of pronouns is an important marker of polarization since it demonstrates the way the speakers build in-groups and out-groups. The data of the corpus indicates a strong difference in the patterns of pronoun usage between ideological camps.

Inclusive pronouns, which include we and our, are also common in the progressive corpus to indicate solidarity with queer and Trans communities. These pronouns tend to refer to a larger group which consists of the activists, allies and the marginalized groups, which form a shared moral identity. Meanwhile, it is sparsely applied and normally in reference to institutions or those policymakers who are seen as hindering rights. *They* is extensively employed in the conservative corpus to mean transgender individuals, activists, or political elites to shape them as a homogenous out-group. Such use is consistent with an othering approach that minimizes multiplicity of identities in one ideological menace. *We* is often used in reference to parents or citizens or ordinary people, enforcing a moral distinction between an allegedly sensible majority and a radical minority.

### **12. Ideological Framing and Stance Corpus Table: Markers.**

In Table 4.2, a comparative outline of major linguistic indicators of ideological framing and stance-taking in the two corpora has been given.

**Table 4.2: Ideological Framing and Stance Markers in Polarized Corpora**

Linguistic Feature	Progressive Corpus	Conservative Corpus	Discursive Function
Dominant Frame	Rights and inclusion	Moral and ideological threat	Meaning organization
Modal verbs	must protect, should recognize	must stop, should not allow	Obligation and control
Evaluative adjectives	equal, valid, human	dangerous, radical, harmful	Moral judgment
Pronoun usage	inclusive we, collective our	oppositional they, defensive we	Group polarization
Epistemic stance	certainty and affirmation	skepticism and alarm	Ideological positioning
Emotional tone	empathy, solidarity	fear, outrage	Affective polarization

**13. Patterns Framing and Stance Patterns**

The tendencies that are summarized in Table 4.2 prove that ideological polarization is not just the issue of opposite points of view, but it is deeply rooted in the structure of discourse. The framing of queer and transgender identities progressively as rights subjects is a creation of a moral universe, where being inclusive is not negotiable. This argument is based on ethical appeals and social duty, which puts the resistance at the level of moral incompleteness.

Conversely, the conservative framing draws a moral universe that is characterized by defense and avertive. Conservative discourse justifies the restrictive policies and exclusionary practices by posing gender identity as a threat to ideology. The utility of this framing is that speakers can avoid being accused of discrimination by placing their position on a pro-protective basis rather than a pro-hostile one.

Notably, the two framings are premised on moralization, albeit, towards different goals. Whereas, the progressive corpus moralizes inclusion, the conservative corpus moralizes exclusion. This symmetry brings out the manner in which polarization functions based on rivalry of moral claims and not mere disagreement.

**14. Affective Discourse and Emotional Polarization.**

Emotional speech aggravates ideological polarization converting the political argument into affective conflict. The corpus analysis indicates that the emotional expressions are at the center of the approach to the discussion of queer and transgender identities.

In progressive tweets, empathy, solidarity, and indignation are often conveyed, especially when it appears that injustice or discrimination takes place. These feelings serve to gain support and strengthen the group unity. Conservative tweets, in turn, are often full of fear, anger, and moral outrage, especially concerning children or change in society. Such feelings increase perceived threat and support oppositional positions.

The impact of affective polarization therefore supports ideological lines, where emotions are put to be in line with political identities. Emotions turn into markers of ideological affiliation, which even deeper instills polarized sides.

**15. Internet Ideology and Discursive Polarization.**

The results in this part show how online ideology works by discourse, not only informing the taken positions but also defining the identities and their assessment. The affordances of Twitter give such dynamics a boost, as emotionally charged and ideologically aligned content is rewarded with visibility and engagement. Consequently, discursive polarization is not only a reproduction of offline political parting but is actively

created and enhanced based on the platform-specific communicative practices.

Ideology here plays the role of a discursive filter systematizing language options, logic patterns and framing options. The queer and transgender identities are therefore symbolic locations where larger ideological conflict of power, morality and social transformation are enacted.

Analysis demonstrates that the portrayals of queer and transgender identities cannot be separated because of the larger ideological discourses of constituting legitimacy, threat, and moral order. In particular, it will examine the role of these ideological patterns in processes of legitimation, delegitimation, othering and relationships of power, and provide a more in-depth analysis of the effects of discourse on social inclusion and exclusion in online politics.

#### **16. Delegitimation, Legitimation, Othering and Power in Polarized Discourse.**

This section examines the ways in which language is employed to legitimize some identities as legitimate political subjects and stigmatise others as deviant, dangerous or illegitimate based on the Critical Discourse Analysis and Ideological Discourse Theory. Key focus is placed on othering, authorization, moral and naturalization strategies that are at the center of forming how people perceive queer and transgender identities in polarized ideological settings.

#### **17. Queer and Transgender Identity Discursive Legitimation.**

Legitimation is described as discursive practices that legitimize, normalize or validate social actors and practices. Queer and transgender identities are legitimized mostly on the basis of moral, legal, and humanitarian discourse in the progressive ideological corpus. The principles of equality, human dignity, and civil rights are more often mentioned in the tweets where the formation of gender-diverse identities is determined as socially and politically legitimate.

Among the most common legitimate tactics, there is an appeal to universal values, in which transgender rights are discussed as the expansion of the general human rights models. The linguistic structures like everyone should be respected, no one must be deprived of rights, and basic human dignity placed the identities of queer and transgender in the moral discourses in which all people share moral beliefs. The tactic reduces the ideological contention by making inclusion ethically obvious instead of being a political compromise.

The other form of legitimation is authorization which is obtained by appealing to legal institutions, scientific discourse or knowledge of experts. References to court decisions, professional medical organizations, or international human rights organizations in tweets serve a role of grounding the recognition of gender identity in institutional power. Prospective discourse establishes opposition as either ignorant or retrogressive by referencing some external sources of authority.

#### **18. Discourse and Exclusion Disputation.**

Conversely, the conservative ideological corpus depends very much on delegitimation tactics which question both the legitimacy, morality, and the authenticity of queer and transgender identities. Moral evaluation, naturalization, and ideological labeling have been the most common ways of delegitimation.

One such delegitimizing tactic is a repetitive one where gender identity is viewed as an ideology and not an identity. The transgender identities are reclassified through the patterns of linguistic practices, like gender ideology and radical beliefs, and political agenda, as being abstract doctrines that society is forced to adopt. This change enables speakers to disavow gender-diverse identities without speaking to specific people, but rather, putting their opposition as a disavowal of ideology.

Another important delegitimizing strategy is biological essentialism. Bio, nature, and science are mentioned sparingly to demonstrate binary gender as something unchangeable, and to discredit transgender lives. Such discussion makes exclusion the norm and it is presented as being on-side with the reality as opposed to being prejudiced. This is a strategy of hiding ideological standings behind the veil of objective truth.

**19. Othering and Boundary Construction.**

Ideological polarization revolves around othering since othering creates symbolic boundaries between the Us and the Them. Queer and transgender identities are often socially defined as something external to the moral community, and are often placed as a danger to children, families, or national values, in the conservative corpus.

The language indicators of othering are; dehumanization, homogenization and distancing language. Transgender people are commonly addressed in a blanket fashion, obscuring the existence of indivision and minimizing many layered identities into one critical group. This homogenization contributes to a moral panic in that it enables the speakers to project negative traits on a whole group.

The progressive corpus, on the contrary, does not support othering and focuses on individual experience and diversity. Tweets emphasize individual stories, lived experiences, sentimental sensitivity, which is opposed to abstract or ideological depictions. But even progressive discourse is also involved in counter-othering, and it builds its opponents as intolerant, ignorant, or morally deficient. This shows how polarization brings about reciprocity in boundary making in ideological camps.

**20. Corpus: Legitimation and Delegitimation Strategies.**

The discursive strategies of legitimation and delegitimation identified as the most influential ones during the two ideological corpora are summarized in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Polarized Discourse Legitimation and Delegitimation Strategies.**

**Discursive Strategy Progressive Corpus Conservative Corpus Ideological Function**

**Table 4.3: Legitimation and Delegitimation Strategies in Polarized Discourse**

Discursive Strategy	Progressive Corpus	Conservative Corpus	Ideological Function
Moral legitimation	Human rights, dignity, equality	Moral panic, protection of values	Ethical justification
Authorization	Law, science, expert institutions	Selective biology, tradition	Authority construction
Ideological labeling	Rare or absent	Gender ideology, radical agenda	Delegitimation
Naturalization	Identity as lived reality	Gender as fixed biological fact	Normalization/exclusion
Othering	Resistance to exclusion, counter-critique	Homogenization and threat framing	Boundary construction

**21. Interpretation of Legitimation Patterns.**

The trends of Table 4.3 illustrate that legitimation and delegitimation are asymmetrical and parallel respectively in terms of ideology and structure. Both corpora use moral reasoning and use of authority, but they differ as to what they are looking to legitimize. The progressive discourse justifies identity and inclusivity whereas the conservative discourse justifies restriction and exclusion.

This simile underlines the fact that the polarization is not the result of the lack of moral thinking, but of conflicting moral codes. Both sides of the ideological camp make their side to be ethically justified and make the other side as harmful or irrational. The identity of queers and trans genders thereby forms discursive battlegrounds where more extensive ideological struggles are played out.

**22. Power, and Control, and Discursive Governance.**

The ways power functions in online political discussion are in the capability of applying categories, legitimacy, and control of the narratives. It has been shown that power is discursively exercised using naming practices, devices of framing, and moral judgment instead of direct coercion.

In conservative discourse, the power is wielded through limitation of the definitional authority, since it does not allow transgender individuals the right to self-identify. This can be seen through discursive practices that deny common usage of pronouns or ideology to define gender in new ways. These practices impose meaning that establishes relationships of superiority among dominant and marginalized groups.

Through recognizing that self-identification and experience is a power that can be challenged through progressive discourse which posits that individuals are the major authorities of their own identities. Nonetheless, the progressive discourse also commands power, in framing the opposition as unethical, so there is less room to voice other opinions. This is indicative of the dynamic and disputable nature of power in polarized online space.

The discursive consequences of polarization that follow.

The legitimation, delegitimation, and othering effect together culminates into the entrenchment of the polarization of ideologies. Polarized discourse supports fixed positions and increases hostility instead of promoting dialogue. In its turn, queer and transgender are time and time again put back on their feet as a symbol of ideological conflict instead of actual social reality.

The implications of this symbolic role are social. Discursive delegitimation will help create stigma, marginalization, and emotional damage, whereas discursive legitimation may create visibility and solidarity, but also may increase backlash. The orientation of Twitter towards engagement as an algorithm further enhances the extreme stands, supporting polarized discursive trends.

Combining the corpus-based patterns with the critical discourse interpretation, the study achieves its aims at determining the most prevalent linguistic techniques and exploring the way in which the online ideology frames political discourse with the problem of gender identity. It has been analyzed that polarization exists on the opinion-level and discursive governance, which influences identities that are legitimized, challenged, or refused legitimacy.

The chapter has demonstrated some of the ways in which lexical choices, framing strategies, stance-taking, and legitimation practices have each contributed to the creation of polarized ideological realities. The findings include that discourse is not a neutral image in the reflection of the political debate but a force that influences the social meaning, identity, and power. Queer and transgender identities become the most significant symbolic locations in online ideological and it is necessary to focus on the critical analysis of digital political discourse in modern society.

## **Conclusion**

This paper proposed to analyze how queer and transgender identities are discursively represented and how ideologically polarized politics on Twitter may have influenced ideology and identity construction, inclusion, and exclusion by taking a corpus-based critical discourse analytical approach. Based on a big, systematically built corpus of political tweets, the paper examined the patterns of lexicon, ideological framing, stance-taking, polarization of emotions, and legitimation and delegitimation strategies. As the results have shown, the use of expressions of queer and transgender identities on Twitter is deeply rooted in the polarizing ideological frameworks, and not the apolitical debate.

It was found that queer and transgender at the level of ideological denotation play a role as ideological signifiers of polarized political discourse. The lexical and key word analysis revealed evident differences in progressive and conservative ideological corpora. Whereas the progressive discourse was mostly used to discuss queer and transgender identity in terms of rights, inclusive, and humanitarian, the conservative discourse was always used to address those identities in terms of ideological, moral and biological. Through

this lexical polarization, it is shown that identity labels are not descriptive in nature but rather mobilized to support the promotion of competing political worldviews in a strategic way.

Additional ideological framing and stance-taking analysis proved that polarization is achieved by applying specific discursive strategies. Moral obligation, empathy and collective responsibility were placed as the progressive discourse focused on building inclusion as a moral necessity. Conservative discourse, in turn, had to use the moral panic, moral skepticism and protective rhetoric to place gender diversity as a danger to children, social norms or national values. These contradictory frames demonstrate the influence of ideological alignment that does not only determine opinion but also the moral reasoning in accordance with which queer and transgender identities should be understood.

The paper also emphasized the main importance of the legitimation and delegitimation in polarized discourse. Queer and transgender identities were justified by progressive tweets by employing human rights, legal authority, and experience authenticity. However, a large number of conservative tweets tended to delegitimize these identities by refurbishing them as political ideologies or reinstating their authenticity by means of biological essentialism. These measures add to the symbolic exclusion as to why gender-diverse identities should be legitimate in the political field.

Notably, the discussion revealed that polarization works through othering and construction of boundaries where pronouns, naming and evaluative language segregate social actors into morally polarized camps. Although the progressive discourse opposed othering by using personal stories and diversity-based framing, it also adopted the counter-othering by depicting the opponent as intolerant or backward. This mutual boundary-making further polarizes and constrains the space of dialogic engagement.

In general, the findings verify that Twitter is an online space where online ideology actively constructs and enhances polarized versions of queer and transgender identities. Instead of providing an inclusive political debate, polarized discourse tends to turn identity into a symbolic field of conflict between more general ideological conflicts. Combining the corpus-based approaches and the critical discourse analysis, the paper also leads to an insight into the relationship between language, ideology, and power in the present-day digital political communication.

## **Recommendations**

The researchers, policymakers, social media platforms, and the civil society actors are offered several recommendations based on the results of this study.

To begin with, the corpus-based discourse analysis will have to be applied to multilingual and non-Western settings in the future, especially in the areas where queer and transgender identities are the subject of more intense political debate. Comparative analysis of platforms like Tik Tok, Instagram, and Facebook would further shed light on how the platform affordances play a different role in ideological polarization.

Second, scholars ought to take the intersectional analytical lens which look at the meeting of gender identity with religion, ethnicity, and class as well as nationality in polarized discourse. These methods would help have a more detailed insight into how various axes of identity mediate discursive marginalization and legitimation.

Third, the policies should be reinforced in social media in response to discursive harm especially those that are related to delegitimation like misgendering, ideological labeling and symbolic exclusion. There should be a critical re-evaluation of the use of algorithms to amplify emotionally charged and polarized content to minimize the presence of harmful discourse against marginalized identities.

Fourth, discourse-based evidence can be utilized by policymakers and advocacy organizations to develop counter-narratives that will challenge ideological misinformation without engaging in further polarization. The inclusive language, experiential authenticity and ethical communication can be stressed in order to change the discourse of the public towards more understanding.

Lastly, digital literacy programs ought to be encouraged to create awareness regarding the way language

builds ideology and power on the Internet. Teaching users on discursive manipulation, polarization tactics, and ethical participation can help to make the world of political communication healthier and its online digital environment more welcoming.

## References

- BERA. (2024). *Ethical guidelines for educational research* (5th ed.). British Educational Research Association. <https://www.bera.ac.uk>
- Burnap, P., Williams, M. L., Sloan, L., Rana, O., Housley, W., Edwards, A., Knight, V., Procter, R., & Voss, A. (2025). A computational analysis of aversive LGBTQIA+ tweets and platform change. *New Media & Society*, 27(2), 345–368. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241234567>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. Longman.
- Fairclough, N. (2010). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- GLAAD. (2025). *2025 social media safety index*. <https://www.glaad.org/smsi>
- Hickey, D., McLoughlin, B., & Ryan, J. (2025). X under new leadership: Hate speech trends and moderation outcomes. *PLOS ONE*, 20(1), e0298456. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0298456>
- Hoffmann, A. L., & Heins, E. (2024). Policy changes and hate speech governance on X. *Internet Policy Review*, 13(2), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.14763/2024.2.1765>
- Johannsen, B. (2024). “Trans is an adjective”: Metalinguistic discourse on Twitter. *Journal of Language and Discrimination*, 8(1), 44–62. <https://doi.org/10.1558/jld.24101>
- Katalinić, J., Grgić, M., & Podobnik, B. (2023). Polarizing topics on Twitter during political campaigns. *Information*, 14(11), 609. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info14110609>
- Kuhar, R. (2025). Gender ideology and online political discourse. *Intersections: East European Journal of Society and Politics*, 11(1), 52–71.
- Lameiro, F., Williams, M. L., & Burnap, P. (2025). TIDEs: A transgender and nonbinary community-labeled dataset for discourse analysis. In *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (pp. 215–227). ACM.
- Lane, E. (2025). Deadnaming and linguistic harm. *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 75(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pq/pqad034>
- Ng, R., Tan, Y., & Liu, S. (2025). Social media as societal microcosm: A decade of LGBT Twitter discourse. *PLOS ONE*, 20(3), e0301123. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0301123>
- Sevilla Requena, L. (2024). “She’ll never be a man”: A corpus-based discourse analysis of transphobic language. *Languages*, 9(9), 291. <https://doi.org/10.3390/languages9090291>
- Takats, C., Wiseman, J., & Miller, T. (2022). Ethical and methodological considerations of Twitter data. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 24(11), e40380. <https://doi.org/10.2196/40380>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing #GenderIdeology. <https://twitter.com/hashtag/GenderIdeology>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing #LGBTRights. <https://twitter.com/hashtag/LGBTRights>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing #ProtectOurKids. <https://twitter.com/hashtag/ProtectOurKids>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing #TransRights. <https://twitter.com/hashtag/TransRights>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “gender identity law”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=gender%20identity%20law>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “gender ideology”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=gender%20ideology>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “LGBTQ rights”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=LGBTQ%20rights>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “queer rights”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=queer%20rights>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “transgender policy”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=transgender%20policy>
- Twitter. (2025). Tweets containing “transgender rights”. <https://twitter.com/search?q=transgender%20rights>

- van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. Sage.
- van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Politics, ideology, and discourse. *Elsevier Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 728–740.
- Wodak, R. (2015). *The politics of fear: What right-wing populist discourses mean*. Sage.
- Zhu, X., Sun, Y., & Wang, Y. (2024). Characterization of ideologically polarized users attacked on Twitter. *arXiv Preprint*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2403.01821>