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## Is Political Correctness Morally Correct?

In the wake of Donald Trump's presidency, a man who has again and again forcefully demonstrated his hatred for political correctness, political correctness has become a pejorative in the media, under the belief that political correctness has 'gone mad' in instances where political correctness is exploited and no political change occurs, making it useless. Political correctness is the belief that language and actions which could offend disadvantaged groups (of race and sex) should be eliminated. The concept began to keep societies civil but is now seemingly tearing them apart. So where did it all go wrong? This essay will explore the use of political correctness in today's world and whether it is the way forward for our society.

Political correctness is seen in all kinds of media, specifically social media, where it is at its strongest causing fear they are being stripped of their right to free speech. Freedom of speech is the ability to speak your mind and criticize your government without persecution or censorship. Whilst there are some real limits as we can be arrested for committing a hate crime, online you can never be free from the social consequences of having an unpopular opinion. Social media gives voiceless people a chance to 'fight back' against injustice, usually in the form of public shaming, but does publicly shaming individuals who are overtly offensive take away their free speech? A totem example is Justine Sacco's case. She was a public relations executive who tweeted;

'Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!'

In moments her tweet was trending worldwide, she was receiving thousands of death threats and her employer has been pressured to fire her. Sacco, who was a South African herself intended the tweet to mock ignorance of Africa, but due to her low status and mere 170 followers she was misconstrued, and her life was turned upside down;

"Unfortunately, I (Sacco) am not a character on 'South Park' or a comedian, so I had no business commenting on the epidemic in such a politically incorrect manner on a public platform."

Sacco's incident clearly displays the power social media combined with relentless political correctness has. Whilst Sacco's case was a misunderstanding, if she had meant it, would her brutal shaming still be justified? Would the thousands of death threats she received have been reasonable? Whilst most people do not want those with offensive views to speak loud and proud, for us to have true freedom of speech we must allow others to say what they wish, what we do next, whether we educate and inform or belittle and shame, is up to us.

Political correctness is incredibly ingrained within our lives, as well as that of the corporate worlds', where it is often exploited for profit. During June, LGBT Pride month, it's hard to go long without spotting a rainbow pride flag. Shelves were stacked full of merchandise under the vague promise of a donation to charity and awareness, whatever that is, and some of the biggest brands were advocating pride such as Nike, H&M and Adidas. Whilst this helps normalize homosexuality, it's clear that these big brands are after money, which is expected, but what seemed a little off about Adidas' advocacy was their sponsorship of the world cup.

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The issue here is the fact that the last world cup took place in Russia, a country known for its strict laws on homosexuality. For example, Russia's federal law 'For the Purpose of Protecting Children from Information Advocating for a Denial of Traditional Family Values', also known as the 'gay propaganda law' which supposedly protects children from homonormativity. The hypocrisy is hard to ignore. It's also hard to pass off as an accident since the 2022 world cup is due to take place in Qatar, where it is illegal to be gay and the government prohibits people to campaign for LGBT rights. Brands such as Adidas love to wave their rainbow flags and show alliance when it results in profit, but they have yet to stand up for LGBT rights when it really matters and could result in change. It's difficult to please everyone, and for these brands, it's hard to know when to listen to the pressures of a politically correct society and when to stay silent. It gets to the point when it's hard to tell whether any of us truly believe or accept any of these ideologies, or if it's too much of a hassle to speak against them.

When it comes to the debate of political correctness, there's an obvious generational divide that needs to be addressed. Millennials are often portrayed as overly sensitive hippies whilst the baby boomers are lazy alt-right racists, but is it unrealistic to want older generations to have the same modernist views as most young people today?

Whilst it's obvious, older generations are, older, and have grown up around very different standards for what is and isn't offensive. Many older liberals will draw the line where issues become too foreign, like slut-shaming or gender fluidity, and defensive when the issue becomes personal. Even when our parents were young their environment was increasingly different. Older generations were raised consuming very different ideas about minorities through film and television which some would find hilarious and some disgusting today. Whilst being a bit older doesn't excuse avid intolerance, the generational gap isn't as immense as you'd think, and can easily be crossed.

In conclusion, political correctness plays a very large role in our lives which we don't always realize, and for us all to thrive in our modern world, we all need to reach be on the same page. Whilst political correctness is often exploited and overwhelming at times, when used correctly it guides our ignorance to understanding what is and isn't appropriate, and often we need that guidance. Whether you like it or not, we're all moving forward, some simply faster than others.