Guidelines for Annotating Aporophobia in Textual Instances of Social Media

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Aporophobia is defined as "rejection, aversion, fear and contempt for the poor" [Cortina(2022)]. In order to annotate aporophobia in textual instances of social media, we make distinction between (1) direct instances of aporophobic beliefs and attitudes expressed by the speaker (toxic language) and (2) instances of aporophobic attitudes the speaker reports about others. Therefore, we have three main categories to be annotated: **'Direct Aporophobia'**, **'Reporting Aporophobia'**, and **'None'**.

We note that aporophobia can manifest through the different degrees of action resulting from prejudice [Allport(1954)]:

1. **Antilocution or verbal rejection:** when an in-group freely purports negative images of an out-group (negative stereotypes, jokes, negative statements).

2. **Avoidance and fear:** when members of the in-group actively avoid people in the out-group (expressing feelings of fear and the desire to avoid any contact).

3. **Discrimination:** when the prejudiced person makes active detrimental distinctions, by denying the out-group opportunities and services. Note that segregation is considered an institutionalized form of discrimination, enforced either legally or by tradition.

4. **Physical attack:** Prejudices can also lead to acts of violence or semi-violence, such as forcibly evicting families from their homes or neighborhoods, or physically attacking persons in a situation of homelessness.

5. **Extermination:** Lynchings, massacres are the ultimate degree of violent expression of prejudice. Even though we do not expect to see expressions of extermination directly linked to aporophobia on social media, we acknowledge that aporophobia can be an element in the prepared ground of previous hostility towards a particular group that is attacked and where other types of discrimination are intertwined.

Note that the categories 'antilocution' and 'avoidance and fear' can be expressed directly by the speaker on social media as well as reporting the attitudes of others, therefore, they can be labeled as either 'Direct Aporophobia' or 'Reporting Aporophobia'. In contrast, the categories 'discrimination', 'physical attack' and 'extermination', when they appear in textual instances, can only be considered 'Reporting Aporophobia'.

In reporting statements, we often find *benevolent* instances where the speaker opposes the stereotype, such as in the following examples: "*Most poor people manage to not commit violent crime.*",[1] "*I don't think you have to do drugs to be homeless*". We consider these as instances of 'Reporting Aporophobia' because, despite having a good intention, such messages indirectly acknowledge and reinforce the stereotype [Beukeboom and Burgers(2019)].

These guidelines are based on our position that associating poor/homeless people with negative behavior, like addiction or crime, even if based on factual information, perpetuates the negative stereotypes and hinders social and economic measures to reduce poverty. We draw parallels with racism and sexism where stereotypical associations based on current standings (e.g., more doctors are male) are considered not acceptable for a just society.

DIRECT APOROPHOBIA

Antilocution: includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Associating poverty with laziness and taking advantage of public resources: "*Homeless population don't pay taxes and get lots of freebees*"; "*Poor people always blame others for their misfortunes.*"; "*Rich people see opportunities and focus on rewards. Poor people see obstacles and focus on the risks*"; "*Most poor people don't want to try new careers or new business opportunities*".

- Associating the poor with addiction: "*Do you realize that most of these folks are homeless BECAUSE they're addicts and not the other way around?*"; "*If you don't subsidize drug users and the homeless issue will get cut in half overnight*"

- Associating the poor with mental illness: "*Most homeless are mentally ill, so put them into a home for the mentally ill. If there is a shortage of institutional homes, build more. Problem solved.*"; "*Let's be honest, illegals are at least normal people, homeless are usually mentally unwell junkies that would do anything for more crack.*"

- Associating the poor with crime, which can be divided into:

  - Overestimating the correlation between poverty and crime: "*Most of the students of such institutions are from poor families who are even willing to commit state organized crimes*"; "*But crime is a route that many poor people take just to survive.*"

  - The criminalization of poverty: "*put the homeless in jail and start work camps*"; "*ENFORCE THE LAW ON THESE CRIMINAL "HOMELESS" who refuse services.*"; "*Prison would be a lot more comfortable than cold pavements and begging for cash.*"

- Associating poverty with bad hygiene: "*you can stink like the poor*"; "*smells like poor people in here*"; "*I can't get the smell of Poor People out of my hands*"

Avoidance and fear: includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Exclusion, detachment and ostracizing: "*We gonna get the streets cleaned up and end the homeless invasion*"; "*That is the place to move!! No homeless and no migrants!!*"

- Fear of poor / homeless people: "*I check every room in my house for a homeless man who could be lurking in my carpet*"; "*homeless-phobia is a big reason things have changed.*"

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[1]All example tweets in these guidelines are paraphrased to preserve the anonymity of the users.

- Fear of being poor / homeless: "*Being homeless is the scariest thing ever.*" Note: expressing concern about being in a situation of poverty is understandable since one might not have the necessary resources to cover one's needs and conduct a meaningful life with dignity. We consider specific expressions in this category when we believe they also imply social stigma or ostracism.

REPORTING APOROPHOBIA

Antilocution: includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Associating poverty with laziness and taking advantage of public resources: "*Me or anyone on social welfare is not a burden. Our situations are not unique, this could happen to anyone.*"; ""*Should we throw more taxpayers money at them?" You seem to be blaming the entire 'disadvantaged' community*"; "*it's the 'being homeless is their own fault and I should be allowed to shoot them with a gun' part that turns people off.*"

- Associating the poor with addiction: "*not everyone is homeless due to addiction*"; "*the guy uses that hateful term 'open air drug markets' to refer to homeless encampments*"; '*It's wrong to assume people become homeless due to drugs, I've never touched drugs in my life, but was homeless for a year after my divorce.*"

- Associating the poor with mental illness: "*This man is talking about how homeless people should just all be thrown into insane asylums.*"

- Associating the poor with crime, which can be divided into:

  - Overestimating the correlation between poverty and crime: "*So a theft automatically equates to a homeless person?*"
  - The criminalization of poverty: "*if it were up to you, you'd fill up every jail with the homeless*"; "*For them, the law is for the perpetual enslavement of the poor*"; "*The reality is that American law and order is brutal on the poor.*"

- Associating poverty with bad hygiene: "*If a homeless person shits on the street because they can't access a bathroom, it's an excuse to evict and attempt to exterminate*"; "*Unless you want people to think the poor are dirty and smelly...which they are not!*"

Avoidance and fear: includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Exclusion, detachment and ostracizing: "*The obsession with trying to "improve" the lives of the disadvantaged, without those being discussed having a say.*"; "*Humane society takes dog from homeless person arguing it deserves a better life and leaves person on street*"; "*No one left behind" Except the poor, the disabled and the asylum seekers*"

- Fear of poor / homeless people: "*Nah. It's just political opportunism. ABC has staked their entire campaign on fear of poor people*"; "*Hating homeless addicts is literally based on a childish fear of them*"; "*There is no crime or homeless problem. There is only fear-mongering.*"; "*If you find homeless people 'scary and uncomfortable', give them homes.*"

Discrimination: includes, but is not limited to the following topics:

- Bullying: "*Blaming the poor is a great tactic to get people on your side.*"; "*They want to grind homeless addicts under the boot or ship them somewhere else*"

- Over-policing and criminalization: "*All he does is harass homeless people and the local chapter/other leftist orgs*"; "*it is a horribly broken system of police training environment that prioritizes policing the poor, leading to brutality and overreactions*"

- Law / regulation enforcement: "*Those kinds of people never do time. Prison is for poor people.*"; "*It is more profitable to try, convict, and incarcerate poor people*"; "*Too many poor people in jail for minor offenses and it has nothing to do with community safety.*"

- Military / war service: "*A lot of poor people joined the military in the day as Black and White ghetto kids often had poor nutrition at home*"; "*They are actually admitting that the military depends on recruiting poor people.*"

Physical attack: includes examples such as "*Police charged for pouring oil on the homeless*"; "*Two arrested for beating and looting a homeless old man around midnight 2 days back.*"; "*That is a clever little plan to pay young people to beat up homeless people*"; "*Maybe concentrate on stopping the homeless being abused on the streets.*"

Bias Aggravation

It is important to highlight that aporophobia can act as an aggravator of other types of discrimination (namely, racism, xenophobia, and sexism) and in many instances these different types of discrimination appear intertwined. For example, a recurrent argument that appears on social media is the "need to take care of our homeless first" as an argument to reject migrants and ethnic minority groups. We consider the following examples as 'Direct Aporophobia' because, in this case, poverty is part of the argument to reject ethnic minority groups and migrants (i.e., if these population groups were rich, they would not be rejected with the argument that they are competing for resources with the local population). In other words, when the minority group is poor, this contributes to racism or xenophobia. Some examples are as follows: "*We don't want them! Can't help our homeless, but sure let's put a roof over migrants heads. No thanks, send them back where they came from or dump them elsewhere.*"; "*They spend millions to house, feed and educate immigrants all across America in ways which they do not do for the Homeless Americans in their own cities*"; "*BLACK people are more likely to be homeless and need financial support.*"

References

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