(Re)framing rape: A sociocognitive discourse analysis of sexual violence at the intersection of white and male supremacy

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Abstract

The emergence of the Alternative Right (Alt-Right) redefined far-right extremism and enabled white male nationalists to unify online (Neiwert 2017, p. 258). While its racist rhetoric and white supremacist origins have received academic attention, the misogyny and explicit anti-feminist stance (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 181) expressed between members of these groups, specifically regarding sexual offences against women, remain underexplored. The affordances of the online environment have also united supremacist groups which blame feminism for a perceived degradation of men: collectively, this "loose confederacy of interest groups" is known as the *Manosphere* (Ging, 2019). While both the Alt-Right and Manosphere incorporate anti-feminism in their collective ideologies, there is a lack of linguistic analyses on the extent of this overlap and how these positions manifest in the groups' online discourses.

Utilising van Dijk's (2011) approach to critical ideological analysis—namely Epistemic Critical Discourse Analysis—as the underlying foundational theory, this thesis investigates how violence against women is (re)framed across 99 blog posts collected from Alt-Right sites and from the Men's Rights Activist (MRA) subcommunity of the Manosphere. Within this theoretical foundation, analytical frameworks relating to social actor representations van Leeuwen, 2008); legitimation strategies (van Leeuwen, 2007; Reyes, 2011); and narrative construction (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; 1997) are employed.

The findings indicate varying degrees of convergence in the ways anti-feminism and misogyny are articulated among the Alt-Right and MRAs, particularly around legal cynicism, male victimhood, and a shared alternative rape culture which excuses sexual violence against women while promoting white male protectionism. The study contributes to linguistic work on how in-group and out-group identities within the extreme right-wing are indexed; ideological stance is legitimised; and narrative discourses are constructed within extremist rhetoric. It concludes with suggestions on how this work can contribute to measures designed to counter violent extremism online.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Overview

Online spaces offer opportunities to share personal experiences, beliefs, and perspectives with likeminded people in way that cannot be accomplished offline. Virtual communities, with members given the freedom to remain anonymous, can take advantage of websites and blogs, forums, video-sharing channels, and podcasts to generate a social schema within which they can support each other and explore shared ideologies. While these virtual communities most often centre around benign or moderate ideological perspectives, those with more extreme views can also thrive. Mapping the extent to which extreme ideologies intersect can indicate what causes migration from one community to another and how extremist groups evolve, expand, and can be challenged (Marmie et al. 2021). This thesis examines two online extremist communities. The first, the Alternative Right (Alt-Right), is a far right, white supremacist collective (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 2). The second is known as the *Manosphere*, which comprises several interest groups (Ging 2019a) that are united in a range of men's rights issues: from those campaigning against the repression of traditional gender roles and identities, to extreme misogynistic groups which promote male supremacy and blame feminism for the perceived emasculation of men (Marwick and Caplan 2018; Ging 2019a; Johanssen 2022). Although both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere ostensibly focus on two different concerns (the former on race and the latter on men's rights), it has been argued that they overlap in the anti-feminist and misogynistic rhetoric they espouse. This intersection of ideologies and the schemata in which sexual violence is collectively understood and framed by these groups (Goffman 1974) forms the basis of this thesis.

This project was devised in 2017, when Donald Trump was newly elected and the Alt-Right were bolstered by Trump's presence in the White House (Neiwert 2017; Hermansson et al. 2020). During this time, the third wave of a similarly emboldened Manosphere was emerging (Hermansson et al. 2020), breaking into mainstream consciousness through the reporting of violence carried out by men associated with the 'involuntary celibate' ('incel') subcommunity of the Manosphere. Arguably the most high profile of these was that of Elliot Rodger, who, blaming women for his unhappiness and seeking retribution against them for rejecting him sexually, murdered six people and injured 14 in an attack in California in May 2014 (Blommaert 2019; Cockerill 2019). Between May 2014 and December 2020, there were 12 separate fatal or near fatal attacks on women in the United Kingdom and the United States, either explicitly stating Rodger as an inspiration or espousing incel ideology in their justifications (Bates 2020, pp. 40-47).

A key event in the United States helped galvanise the Manosphere communities and garner support from the Alt-Right. Brock Turner, a Stanford University student on a swimming scholarship, was found guilty of three counts of sexual assault in 2015. He was sentenced to six months in jail as a longer sentence was deemed to jeopardise his swimming career; he was then released after

three months (Ford 2016). Despite what many regarded as a particularly lenient sentence, sections of the Manosphere, along with the Alt-Right, portrayed Turner as a martyr, scapegoat, and victim of social justice warriors[1]. This stance supports conclusions drawn from research on Manosphere communities, in which rape culture is promoted as a feminist-produced moral panic. Gotell and Dutton's (2016) discourse analysis of Manosphere websites shows how more traditional rape myths are being perpetuated within the discourse, namely that women are responsible for their own sexual assault if they have been drinking, and that 'real rape' is violent stranger rape, not something committed by an acquaintance (2016, p. 75). This reliance on established rape myths mirrors findings from previous linguistic research on how rape is reframed in courtroom discourse (Luchjenbroers and Aldridge 2007; Ehrlich 2008) and in mainstream media (Clark, 1992; Ardovini-Brooker and Caringella-MacDonald, 2002), indicating that the discourses within the Manosphere do not just rely on extremist attitudes to rape but also incorporate what could be regarded as widespread institutional attitudes.

The case of Brock Turner and the injustice of the derisory jail sentence given to him had a profound personal effect on me. It also brought to my attention the relationship between hate speech generated by those positioned on the extreme right wing, (which I had researched for my Masters dissertation in 2016) and the misogyny of the Manosphere. The shared sympathies towards Turner and cases like his, within both the Alt-Right and Manosphere, indicated a shared ideology between these two groups. This point was highlighted by Romano (2016) in an article which suggested that misogyny can lead men from the Manosphere to the more extreme Alt-Right. The following sections outline how this thesis was subsequently designed around this context.

1.2   Study aims

Recruitment into extremist networks, which traditionally took place offline through marches, meetings, and organised events (Mudde 2000), is now reliant on online channels such as forums and websites which are endorsed by existing members or via algorithmically-generated recommended viewing. These online spaces depend on content designed for "affective intensity" (Lindgren 2017, p. 130), through emotional and personal storytelling; the reframing of news items along ideological lines; and the re-establishment of in-group bonds and out-group vilification (discussed in Section 2.4.2). By examining the shared representations of knowledge, beliefs and ideological stances in those accounts, and conducting a comparative analysis with those from other extremist groups, it is possible to map ideological convergence and divergence. This can help contribute to more nuanced and effective counter-extremism measures as well as provide insight into the possible evolution of groups and new forms of extremism.

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[1] See, for example, the Return of Kings blog post by Spengler, P: 'Sympathy for the White Devil: The Meaning of the Stanford Rape Case (6/7/16) at www.returnofkings.com/89751/sympathy-for-the-white-devil-the-meaning-of-the-stanford-rape-case

The intersection of ideologies linked to *white supremacy* (defined in Section 1.4.8) and *male supremacy* (defined in Section 1.4.5) is one such domain that has raised concerns in terms of migration from the latter to the former (Romano 2016; Lawrence et al. 2021; Marmie et al. 2021). The emergence of the Alt-Right has redefined what it means to be an extremist within the far right. The Alt-Right themselves describe their ideology as a more distinct variant of national socialism (Nazism) and white nationalism, combining elements of traditionalism, extreme libertarianism, anti-modernism, belief in human biodiversity (eugenics), European far right movements, and men's rights[2]. While remaining most active on the fringes of the dark web[3], the group came to mainstream consciousness through a series of high-profile online hate campaigns, such as #Gamergate (see Section 2.3.2) (Blodgett and Salter 2018; Wendling 2018), and offline during the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 where an anti-fascist activist was murdered by a member of the Alt-Right (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 251).

Regarding the Manosphere, the challenges of defining the groups within this loose, diverse community are discussed in detail in Section 2.4 but, to summarise the prevailing definition here, they can be described as being "united in their adherence to [a] "philosophy", which purports to liberate men from a life of feminist delusion" (Ging 2017, p. 638). Although it can be argued that some groups connected to the Manosphere offer a degree of necessary support for men, for example, in the form of self-help forums, campaign groups tackling issues of sexual abuse against boys, and those promoting fathers' rights in child custody issues (Wendling 2018, p. 62), there has been an evolution towards constructing online communities based on hate and hostility towards feminists, while promoting male victimhood to draw in men (Gotell and Dutton 2016, p. 72).

As yet, there is little consensus on the extent to which the ideologies of the Alt-Right and the Manosphere intersect, influence one another, and can be seen as converging. Similarly, the characterisation of 'misogynistic' - while widely used in discussions relating to white and male supremacists - is often used sweepingly and generically. This study aims to address the indistinction by providing a better understanding of how misogyny and anti-feminism is indexed and articulated in these two extreme right-wing communities; provide more insight into the overlapping ideologies of the Alt-Right and Manosphere and determine if there could be a "gateway" (Romano 2016) or "slip road" (Lawrence et al., 2021) from the latter to the former; and contribute to the growing body of work on the use and reliance of traditional rape myths in extremists' discourses (see, for example, Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Chang, 2020; Wright, 2020).

The following sections detail the research questions which inform the analyses in this project (Section 1.3); a glossary of the ways in which key terms in this thesis are conceptualised (Section

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[2] Brett Stevens' blog post 'What is the Alt Right?' (18/7/17) on www.amerika.org
[3] Referring to the part of the internet which largely hosts anonymous sites and which can only be accessed through specialised software (Gehl 2016)

1.4); a brief consideration of my positioning and own ideological perspective in relation to this project (Section 1.5); and finally the structure of the thesis (Section 1.6).

1.3   Research questions

In consideration of the issues outlined above, the thesis addresses the overarching research question: *How is rape and sexual assault framed in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses and what similarities and/or differences does this framing reveal about the ideologies of these two extreme right-wing communities?* This thesis considers *framing* in its non-technical, more generalised meaning, namely: "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for [that] described." (Entman 1993, p. 52).

To investigate the way sexual violence is framed in discourses produced by members of these extremist groups, the chapters focus on four sub-questions:

1.   *How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of **social actors** in discourses about sexual violence?*

The first of these sub-questions addresses the ways in which the social actors (van Leeuwen 1996) in discourses about rape and sexual assault are indexed and what this indicates in relation to the shared norms, values and beliefs of the members of the Alt-Right and the Manosphere.

2.   *How are **ideological standpoints** on sexual violence against women legitimised in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses?*

This second sub-question aims to investigate the relationship between ideology (van Dijk 2011b) and legitimation (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999) with a view of ascertaining how rape and sexual assault are reframed in blog posts to justify the groups' perspectives.

3.   *What role do **narrative discourses** play in the (de)legitimation and framing of sexual violence against women?*

Sub-question (3) investigates the use and structure of narrative discourses in the data. As well as aligning with the legitimation framework used in the study, i.e. legitimising through narratives, or *mythopoesis* (van Leeuwen 2007), the examination of narratives aims to build on previous work carried out on extremists' discourses (for example by Braddock, 2015, 2020).

4.   *To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the **narrative structure** affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?*

Bringing together evidence from sub-questions (1) and (3), the last sub-question looks at whether there is a change in focus throughout the narratives regarding the social actors taking prominence in the framing of sexual violence.

1.4 Glossary

The following key terms, listed alphabetically, are defined here to clarify the definitions being adopted in this thesis. While it is acknowledged that alternative definitions of these concepts can be considered, the following subsections explain how and why they are used throughout this study. The section also attempts to differentiate terms that often overlap in the literature.

1.4.1 *Anti-feminism*

To disambiguate the potentially overlapping terms *anti-feminism*, *misogyny* and *sexism*, the primary definition of anti-feminism applied in this study is: a belief centred around opposition to the women's rights movement and the right of women to occupy and participate in the public sphere (Lin 2017, p. 82). The latter part of this conceptualisation is key to the feminist theoretical perspective taken in this thesis (see Section 1.5) regarding the opposition to women inhabiting the same space as men. This definition is supported by that put forward by Ging and Siapera, who summarise the concept by referring to anti-feminism as a reaction against a particular set of gender-political values (2019, p. 2). As the data in this thesis relate to views from the perspective of men, Mertz's (2005) interpretation of the term, which includes the disapproval of any critique of male dominance or effort to change it, is also incorporated into the definition applied in this study. Together, and with regard to the context of sexual violence against women in my research, the term is used to specifically refer to a resistance to the rights of women within social, cultural and legal domains. The definition is relevant for a number of the discussions in this study which focus on anti-feminism as a separate concept to *misogyny* and *sexism*, both of which can exist in the absence of feminism (ibid., p. 95) and are discussed in Section 1.4.6 below.

1.4.2 *Discourse*

To first clarify the definition of *discourse* used in this thesis in its most rudimentary sense, McEnery and Hardie's definition of "a stretch of language longer than a single sentence" (2012, p. 242) is sufficient to describe the concept used in the data analysis. Taking a wider view of discourse as relating to social practices, activities, beliefs and values (Fairclough 2010, p. 381), discourse within the context of this thesis is considered as: being a form of social interaction; revealing and reproducing power and domination, in particular impacting the knowledge and attitudes of language users; communicating beliefs among users; and as being contextually situated (van Dijk 1998, pp. 4-5). These properties are the most salient for the analysis of the data taken from extremists' sites in which discourse is used to define, reaffirm and perpetuate ideological stance among members. The concept of discourse being dialectical – in which the discursive event both influences and is influenced by discourse (Fairclough and Wodak 1997, p. 258) – is also relevant in

the way the historical, cultural and technological context of the online discourses shape the ideological stance promoted on the Alt-Right and Manosphere sites and, conversely, the discourses shape the evolving cultural and social norms and beliefs of the groups (ibid.; Flowerdew and Richardson 2018, p. 2). The approach of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) (van Dijk 1998; Wodak and Meyer 2016), as adopted in this thesis and expanded on in detail in Section 2.1, attempts to make explicit what is implicit in these discourses (Flowerdew and Richardson 2018, p. 1), particularly in terms of ideologies and how they influence the perception of reality in a specifically biased way (Renkema and Schubert 2018, p. 349).

1.4.3 *Identity*

The definition of *identity* used in this study relies on that put forward by Kiesling (2013), that identity relates to a relationship between the self and either a real or imagined other (p. 450). This position allows for analyses of identity at an individual and group level, which is relevant to this research project. Kiesling (2013) acknowledges the aspect of *process* in this definition, reflecting work done by individuals on the continual renewal of their identities through acts which make these identities appear stable (e.g. work by Butler, 1990).

1.4.4 *Ideology*

In line with the theoretical foundations in this thesis, the definition of *ideology* used in the following chapters is that of van Dijk's (2011). Although, throughout his works, the concept of ideologies is explored in intensive detail, van Dijk argues that they fundamentally consist of five key concepts: 1) they are belief systems; 2) these belief systems are social and shared among members of group and "are comparable to socio-cultural knowledge as it is shared by epistemic communities" as a form of social cognition (2011, p. 382); 3) these belief systems are relevant to the purposes of the group and the group's relationship with others; 4) they must be relatively general and abstract in order to be applied to a wide range of events and situations; 5) they are stable, develop over time, are learned, and can be applied to varying practices, actions, and discourses (ibid., pp. 382-384).

In his corpus analysis of hate on a white supremacist web forum, Brindle 2016b reframes van Dijk's (2011) definition of ideology to focus on its relationship to group representation and image. He states that "[t]hey may have a schematic structure that can be seen as representative of the self-image of a group." (Brindle 2016b, p. 6). This focus on ideologies effectively portraying a group, together with van Dijk's (2011) granular definition of the term conceptualises the way in which it is used in throughout this project.

1.4.5 *Male supremacy*

Ascertaining a clear definition of *male supremacy* in the literature is challenging, with authors seemingly accepting a generic understanding of the term without further clarification. The Southern Poverty Law Centre (SPLC), an organisation based in the United States which monitors hate groups, extremism, and provides services to educators to counter extremist ideologies, offers a comprehensive definition of this term. The SPLC summarises the ideology of male supremacy by

describing it as hateful and encompassing ideas based on representing women as genetically inferior, manipulative, and considered simply in terms of their reproductive capabilities or sexual function. They add that male supremacists consider sex as something owed to men by women and that its coercion from them is justified. Support for this definition is given by Jackson (2019; 2020), who also highlights that an element of male supremacist ideology is based on a supposed threat seen to be posed by feminism (2020, p. 13). The combination of these concepts of male supremacy is used throughout this study.

1.4.6 *Misogyny*

The term *misogyny* is defined throughout the study in relation to Manne's (2018) work. Unlike Ging & Siapera's definition, which relates misogyny simply to "a general set of attitudes and behaviours towards women" (2019, p. 2), Manne uses the metaphorical perspective of law enforcement, specifically the policing and enforcing of the patriarchal order (2018, p. 63) to frame her definition. She distinguishes the term from *sexism* by explaining that sexism is the belief system that *all* women are lesser and is used to justify the patriarchal order from the outset (ibid., pp. 79-80). In contrast, the acts, punishments, and physical and mental effects of misogyny are aimed at the women who are not considered to be in their right place as dictated by sexism (ibid.). This allows misogynists to differentiate between 'good' and 'bad' women and target those that need to be regulated, controlled, and brought back in line with patriarchal rule (ibid.). The conceptualisation of misogyny as law enforcement aligns with the theoretical perspective taken in this study, outlined in Section 1.5 below, and is applied due to the intense targeting of women by men in the Alt-Right and Manosphere to control online spaces (see, for example, Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Jane, 2017b; Massanari, 2017; Marwick and Caplan, 2018; Ging, 2019b)(Jane 2017b; Massanari 2017; Ging 2019b).

1.4.7 *Right-wing extremism* and the *far right*

The conception of right-wing extremism adopted in this thesis is based largely on Jackson's work, namely that *right-wing extremism* consists of three main overlapping categories of extremism: racist, nativist, and antigovernment (2020, p. 13). Of relevance to this study, he states that aspects of *male supremacy* (see Section 1.5) have been argued to fit into the definition of right-wing extremism although there is no clear consensus on this (ibid., p. 14). This project aims to explore this position with a view of contributing to that debate. Mudde offers a comprehensive analysis of the defining features of the extreme right which are also relevant to this study. He considers the extreme right as one half of the *far right*, that is, those on the right who are "anti-system" (2019, p. 7). The extreme right, he argues, "rejects the essence of democracy, that is, popular sovereignty and majority rule", infamously exemplified by fascism and, particularly, Nazism (ibid.). He contrasts this with the other half of the far right, the *radical right*, which is more reformist than revolutionary. This ideological perspective supports elements of democracy and the power of the people to bring

about change, while rejecting liberal democracy, minority rights, and the separation of powers (ibid.). This summary is extended in Section 2.3.

1.4.8 *White nationalism* and *white supremacy*

The terms *white nationalism* and *white supremacy* are considered together here due to the merging of the parameters of their definitions. While it is challenging to firstly ascertain definitions for these ideologies and, secondly, to determine any tangible difference between them, *white nationalism* has been argued to relate to the proactive advocacy of a white ethno-state, white civil rights, and separatism from non-whites (Neiwert 2017, p. 220). *White supremacy* is seen to have a different focus in that it relates to the degradation of non-whites and the belief that white people are superior to people of colour and should, therefore, dominate (Lopez Bunyasi and Smith 2019, p. 113). The term *white* is considered in the literature in this context as Caucasian and non-Jewish (i.e. Aryan) (Wong et al., 2015, p. 41).

In relation to the term adopted in this thesis, *white supremacy* is used to encompass the ideologies of both white supremacy and nationalism. This decision is based on the fact that my research questions do not require a consideration of nationalism or a white ethno-state *directly*. Also particularly relevant to this study is Ferber's observations that white supremacy is about redefining masculinity in line with rearticulating a white identity (1999, p. 60).

1.5   Positioning and perspectives

By way of demarcating the scope of this chapter and the thesis as a whole, the literature discussed is viewed from the social theoretical perspective of feminist theories of sexual violence and online misogyny. It synthesises and builds on work in feminist media studies by Jane, 2014, 2017; Banet-Weiser and Miltner, 2016; Banet-Weiser, 2018; Ging, 2018, 2019; and Manne, 2018. These leading scholars in the field have examined the impact anti-feminist and misogynistic rhetoric has on women within the online environment and how it limits not only the use of that online space but also the ways in which it affects women offline. This perspective reflects my own "personal positioning" (van Langenhove and Harré, 1994) as a liberal-leaning, cis-woman, feminist academic. This puts me in juxtaposition to the imagined audience (Marwick and boyd, 2011) of the texts analysed in this thesis, who are assumed to be predominantly extreme-right leaning and anti-feminist. My examination of the discourses in this study is set against that conflict (see Barber 2021, pp. 140-143 for further discussion on this, particularly with regard to emic and etic analytical approaches and the epistemological challenges which arose during this research project).

While there is scope for the topics covered in this thesis to be analysed and discussed from a political perspective, for example, with reference to the mainstreaming and normalising of the radical right (Mudde 2019, pp. 167-170), the focus of this literature review will bypass that analytical lens. Similarly, there is also scope here to adopt a legal perspective through discussions on online censorship, legal protection from harm, and enforced duty of care for internet companies.

However, it has been argued that censorship alone is not enough to counter extremist rhetoric given the multitude of ways it can be disseminated through constantly changing channels (Reynolds 2018; Siapera 2019). Instead of taking a political standpoint or discussing possible legal violations and deterrents, therefore, this thesis looks at the way in which extreme views on sexual violence manifest; how they are used to legitimise extreme ideologies; and how, ultimately, they construct barriers and threaten women's right to a safe online space.

1.6   Thesis structure

This thesis continues, in Chapter 2, with an overview of the discourse-analytical frame employed throughout this project, namely the social-cognitive discourse perspective within critical discourse studies. Specifically, van Dijk's (2011a) approach to critical ideological analysis - Epistemic Critical Discourse Analysis (CEDA) - is used as the underlying foundational framework. This model incorporates 1) *social context* (or 'cultural') analyses with those related to 2) *knowledge representations*. The literature review in Chapter 2 is conceptually structured around this framework by examining previous studies on 1) the social and cultural context, i.e. the evolution, membership and ideologies of the Alt-Right and the Manosphere, including representations of sexual violence produced by these two communities online, and 2) previous research on knowledge representations through the indexing of social actors (van Leeuwen 2008); legitimation strategies (van Leeuwen 2007; Reyes 2011); and narrative analyses (Labov and Waletzky 1997; Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010; Labov 2014).

In Chapter 3, the data collection method is outlined, including how I constructed the network analysis which highlighted the websites and blogs on which to focus this study. A corpus of 83,375 tokens was constructed for data analyses, representing a small, specialised corpus and a gateway into the discourse analysis (Flowerdew 2004; Koester 2010). The methodology underpinning the corpus construction and mark up is described in Chapter 3, along with the ethical considerations which were discussed and formalised before and during work on this project.

Chapter 4 is the first of the analysis chapters and explores the presence and frequency of gendered social actors in discussions on rape and sexual assault (research sub-question (1)). This investigation is based on van Leeuwen's sociosemantic inventory of social actor representation (2008, p. 23), which is applied to the representations of women victims and accusers of sexual violence and the representations of men who have been accused of and who are deemed to be perpetrators of sexual crimes.

To address the second research sub-question, Chapter 5 examines legitimation strategies used in discussions of sexual violence in blog posts defined as 'non-narrative', i.e. those that do not contain a narrative sequence of both temporality and causality (Hoffmann 2010) (see Section 2.8.2). Here, I present an examination of the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers' references to rape and sexual assault (henceforth referred to as R/SA) in line with the *authorisation*, *moral*

legitimation, and *rationalisation* strategies identified by van Leeuwen (2007) and with reference to the framework put forward by Reyes (2011).

Chapter 6 details the final legitimation analysis of the study, that of narratives - or *mythopoesis* (van Leeuwen 2007) - to answer sub-questions (3) and (4). Social actor representations are then applied to the narrative structure to ascertain where they are placed and how this placement relates to the function of the components. These findings are discussed in line with literature on *narrative journalism* (Krieken 2019).

Finally, Chapter 7 brings the main findings of the study together and discusses them in line with the existing literature. The latter sections of this chapter bring the thesis to a close through critical reflections; a discussion of the wider implications of the findings; how they can be applied, including the possibility of contributing to inoculation narrative research (Braddock 2020); and ways in which this study can be extended in the future.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter reviews the theoretical foundations on which my research project is based and critically examines linguistic studies which contextualise the research questions (see Section 1.3). It begins with an exploration of the main tenets put forward in the overarching critical discourse studies (CDS) approach adopted in the research, namely the sociocognitive theoretical approach to discourse studies (SCDS), advanced by van Dijk (1984) (Section 2.1.1). The more specific SCDS framework used to underpin my research, *critical epistemic discourse analysis* (CEDA) (van Dijk 2011a), is then outlined in Section 2.1.2. Using the framework to conceptually organise this literature review, the chapter is then divided into two parts, as discussed at the end of this Introduction.

2.1.1   Sociocognitive Discourse Studies

To mediate between the social and cultural backdrop from which the data originated and the discourse level of analysis in this thesis, van Dijk's (1984) sociocognitive discourse studies (SCDS) approach to discourse analysis is adopted. This approach focuses on the cognitive interface between the syntactic and semantic analyses, and the social context which generated the discourses. It relies on the general theory of *social constructionism*, a philosophy "which holds that social and political 'reality' are constructions of social members" (van Dijk 2018, p. 28). These social members are variously described as social collectives or members of an epistemic community who share knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values (ibid., p. 31). van Dijk defines *ideologies* as clusters of beliefs, for example those relating to feminism or class, which are socially shared and relate to societal structures (1998, p. 26) (see also Section 1.4.4). More specifically, his subsequent discussions on *ideology* point to how the term can be defined as characterising the identities, values and goals of group members and legitimising (and resisting) domination over counter-ideologies (ibid. p. 97). In this study, the SCDS paradigm will be applied to provide a connection between the linguistic components, strategies and structures within the blog posts and the online, networked environment of the extreme right and the Men's Right Activist (MRA) faction of the Manosphere. This "bridging [of] discourse and society" (Wodak 2006, p. 182) ensures that instead of simply describing the structures present in the blog posts examined in this thesis, they will be contextualised with reference to the groups' ideological perspectives. Comparative commentary will then be given on how these perspectives converge or diverge to address the research sub-questions given in Section 1.3.

Koller (2005), another early contributor to the development of SCDS, notes the value of applying the concept of social cognition to how individuals understand themselves and others. This understanding, Koller argues, concerns how individual and social identities relate to group schemata and how in-groups and out-group identities can be represented, reproduced and

renegotiated in discourse (2005, p. 203). Koller's subsequent work on *collective identities* (see, for example Koller, 2012) further exemplifies the application of SCDS and its role in bridging discourse and its ideological context (see Section 2.6). The focus on identities within SCDS is particularly relevant to research sub-questions 1 and 4 in this thesis, which aim to investigate the similarities and differences between the identities being indexed in discussions on sexual violence and how these relate to the ideological positionings of both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere.

To identify shared ideologies among particular communities, a SCDS approach has been applied in research on sexism and in hate speech, two areas of relevance to the focus of this project. For example, regarding studies on sexism in discourse, Scotto di Carlo (2020) analysed a corpus of tweets containing negative appraisal of women sent by President Trump over a three-year period. The application of a SCDS perspective to the analysis showed how Trump's overt sexism, reinforcement of patriarchal norms, and appeal to hegemonic masculinities were used to engage those who share an ideological stance. This stance was seen to be linked to the ideals of physical power in men and the belief that women are weak, dishonest, vulgar, and mentally unstable in comparison to men (2020, p. 62). In a similar study on denigrating rhetoric, Sunday's (2021) SCDS analysis of hate speech in campaign speeches demonstrated an appeal to shared cultural knowledge to invoke alarmist ideologies on ethnic and religious issues as propaganda. Hate speech in more mainstream discourse, specifically in the comments section of an online newspaper, were analysed in Dordevic's (2020) SCDS work. The findings highlighted the way common ground was established through hate and how *mental models* - personal, biased, and highly subjective interpretations of events based on long-term memory (van Dijk 2018, p. 31) - were shared by a group of readers who were negatively reacting to particular news stories.

A key aspect of the sociocognitive approach to CDS depends on context models. *Context* is defined by van Dijk as having a pragmatic function and, specifically, as "the structured set of all properties of a social situation that are possibly relevant for the production, structures, interpretation, and functions of text and talk" (van Dijk 1998, p. 211). However, van Dijk's sociocognitive approach extends this view by focusing on how context models allow discourse to be subjectively constructed by language users to ensure that their discourses are appropriate to the particular communicative situation and its affordances (2014, p. 54). In an attempt to apply some parameters to his concept of context models, van Dijk offers possible dimensions (van Dijk 1998, p. 214-227), some of which overlap with other analytical frameworks. For example, a number of these dimensions relate to the purpose, intention, and type of speech event which, as van Dijk clarifies, correspond to 'genre' and its focus on communicative aim (Swales 1990; Lee 2001; Myers 2010). Similarly, the categories which focus on social others and social representations arguably share a degree of affinity when considering areas of analysis such as identity construction and referential strategies. They also relate to alternative analyses such as Blommaert's (2005) inhabited and ascribed identities categorisations and Bamberg's (2011) notion of sameness and difference in identity navigation and construction.

Within the context model put forward by van Dijk (2008), *social representations* is perhaps the most complex analytical scheme. It incorporates what van Dijk calls a *knowledge device* (K-device) (van Dijk 2008, p.83). This regulates how participants negotiate the common ground between them to make the discourse epistemically appropriate in any given situation, what needs explicit communication and what is presupposed and requires only implicit reference (van Dijk 2014, p. 54). K-devices establish "at each point in the discourse, what speakers or writers know or believe about the various kinds of knowledge of the recipients, and adapt their text or talk to such shared knowledge or *Common Ground*" (original emphasis) (ibid., p. 23). This focus on shared knowledge was later developed by van Dijk (2011) and is outlined in the following section.

2.1.2 Critical Epistemic Discourse Analysis (CEDA)

The more targeted theorisation of how sociocultural factors and knowledge representations relate has been coined by van Dijk (2011) as *critical epistemic discourse analysis* (CEDA). It is described as a study of the expression and implication of shared knowledge in text when particular social groups are directly associated with how that knowledge is represented (ibid., pp. 35-36). The application of CEDA will address how ideological stance on sexual violence is expressed in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts in the present study, determining possible common ground between those two groups.

van Dijk proposes that a study of critical epistemic knowledge takes into account: 1) the *context models* of participants, and 2) the discourse structures and strategies which constitute the *knowledge representations* (2011a, p. 36). Context models in CEDA include the shared historical cultural ties between members; current social and ideological affiliations and memberships; as well as the discourse context (e.g., in this thesis, online blogs written in 2016 and 2017), which influences the appropriacy of the communicative situation (ibid., pp. 31). Regarding knowledge representations, fourteen aspects of discourse analysis are identified by van Dijk (2011, pp. 37-39). These are listed and described in Table 2.1 below. van Dijk admits that the approach towards applying these strategies is flexible and those chosen for examination will depend on the research goals (2011, p. 39). For example, in Akbar and Abbas's CEDA study of President Trump's speeches on immigration and Syrian refugees, eight of the fourteen structures and strategies, were employed in the analysis of the "negative other" (2019, p. 116).

The fluidity of van Dijk's CEDA framework and relative lack of focus on *how* the discourse structures and strategies are applied to analyses has generated criticism. In a particularly critical response to van Dijk's analysis of a political speech, Tabbert describes the lack of a systematic tool-kit for applying the strategies as preventing his analysis from being replicable, objective and rigorous (2015, p. 37). To address this issue and adopt a more methodological and systematic approach to the examination of discourse structures and strategies in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts, three linguistic frameworks will be incorporated. These are included in the summary of the strategies and structures relating to knowledge representations, together with the

relevant sub-research question, in Section 1.3. The final two strategies listed, 'grammar' and 'non-verbal structures', are noted as not being applied in this thesis as they consider strategies which are unrelated to the research sub-questions.

	Discourse strategy	Structure/Strategy description (paraphrased from van Dijk 2011, pp. 37-39)	Application to study (and relevant research sub-question)		Analytical framework applied
1	Topic	• Indicates what the discourse producers deem to be the most significant information in the discourse. • Ensures those topics are more readily recollected in the mental models of the receivers of the discourse, strengthening their shared general knowledge	The data are situated within the overarching theme of sexual violence against women. However, this knowledge representation strategy will be analysed throughout the thesis to ascertain which sub-topics and themes within the discourses on R/SA emerge, for example, sub-themes relating to the legal system.	RQ1 RQ2 RQ4	n/a
2	Actor description	• Comprises the analyses of *inter alia* identities, roles, relationships, genders, class, and appearance	The analysis of this strategy will be applied to representations of actors involved in R/SA (e.g., perpetrators, accused and victims of sexual violence).	RQ1	van Leeuwen's (2008) sociosemantic inventory of social actors
3	Implications and Presuppositions	• Indicate shared assumptions and what may be classed as being implicitly "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103)	In the sexual violence discourses, the presence of this strategy will identify assumptions relating to sexual violence and those manifest in established rape myths (Aldridge and Luchjenbroers 2007; Ehrlich 2008; Leverick 2020).	RQ2	Legitimation frameworks put forward by van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011)
4	Definitions	• Frame new concepts in line with ideological stance	This relates to the definition of *rape* and *sexual assault* in the data: a key strategy in determining what is deemed to constitute sexual violence.	RQ2	
5	Evidentiality	• Relates to how credible the knowledge representation is, for example by referring to expertise or authority	Regarding sexual violence, this strategy analyses the ways in which it is (dis)believed, proven, and how those accused of sexual crime consider the credibility of the legal system or accusers.	RQ2	
6	Argumentation	• Focuses on 'facts' and how structures are organised to defend opinions	This will be applied to the sexual violence data by analysing what is regarded as fact in cases of R/SA assault, indicating members' attitudes to sexual crime. It will also apply to the analysis of narrative discourses (frequency and structure).	RQ2 RQ3	
7	Metaphor	• Represents our "embodied, experiential conceptualisation of abstract and complex knowledge of the world" (p. 38) to unveil social and political understandings	In this research project, the ways R/SA are indexed will be marked up for analysis, including any metaphorical references.	RQ2	
8	Modalities	• Refers to the ways an event is presented in terms of its probability, either as particularly likely or unlikely to occur	This will be applied to the ways in which sexual violence is discussed in terms of probability and prevalence.	RQ2	

	Discourse Strategy	Structure/Strategy Description (paraphrased from van Dijk 2011, pp. 37-39)	Application to Study (and relevant research sub-question)		Analytical Framework Applied
9	Lexicon	• Refers to the lexical choices made when representing ideas and consequently revealing the attitudes, values, and beliefs held by those producing the discourse.	The way sexual violence is referred to is examined in the moral legitimation aspect of van Leeuwen's 2007 legitimation framework.	RQ2	(cont. from above)
10	Granularity	• Analyses the levels and precision of the discourse in terms of detailed description or vagueness.	This is examined in relation to the legitimation of ideas and beliefs on sexual violence, through the theoretical rationalisation legitimation strategy in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework.	RQ2	
11	Rhetorical devices	• (De)emphasise knowledge representations and may include examples of hyperbole and euphemisms.	In the sexual violence discourses from the extremist groups in this study, the analysis of this strategy includes looking at euphemism and dysphemism (where particularly derogatory language is used to discuss sexual violence). It also includes an analysis of how the components in narrative discourses are organised and the functional effect of their organisation.	RQ2 RQ3	Legitimation frameworks put forward by van Leeuwen (2007) and Reyes (2011) The sociolinguistic approach to narrative analysis put forward by Labov and Waletzky 1967; and Labov 1972; Labov and Waletzky 1997
12	Local coherence	• Refers to the sequence of propositions and the organisation of knowledge representations, local coherence analysis can reveal how an event is explained and framed for the readers.	This relates to the analysis of components in narratives on sexual violence and how they are organised. It also relates to the analysis of the placement of social actor representations within the narrative.	RQ3 RQ4	The sociolinguistic approach to narrative analysis put forward by Labov and Waletzky 1967; and Labov 1972; Labov and Waletzky 1997
13	Grammar	• Refers to differing syntactic constructions such as passive and active structures, cleft sentences and the use of embedded clauses	Constructions at the clausal level will be analysed in the narrative discourses and further grammatical analysis is not necessary to answer the research questions.	-	n/a
14	Non-verbal ('semiotic') structures	• Relates to non-textual semiotic modes, for example, pictures and audio.	As my data does not contain multimodal features, this strategy will not be considered in the analysis.	-	n/a

Table 2.1: Summary of discourse structures and strategies relating to 'knowledge representations' (van Dijk, 2011) and their application to the study

In sum, utilising linguistic frameworks for social actor representation, legitimation strategies and narratives provides a more systematic and methodological approach for the combined analysis of *knowledge representation* discourse strategies put forward in van Dijk's (2011a) CEDA framework. This framework, in turn, provides the *contextual* analysis needed to determine ideological stance on sexual violence against women in the blog posts, from both an intragroup and intergroup perspective. Figure 2.1 summarises this theoretical foundation and indicates the sections of this chapter in which more detailed considerations of the strategies are given.
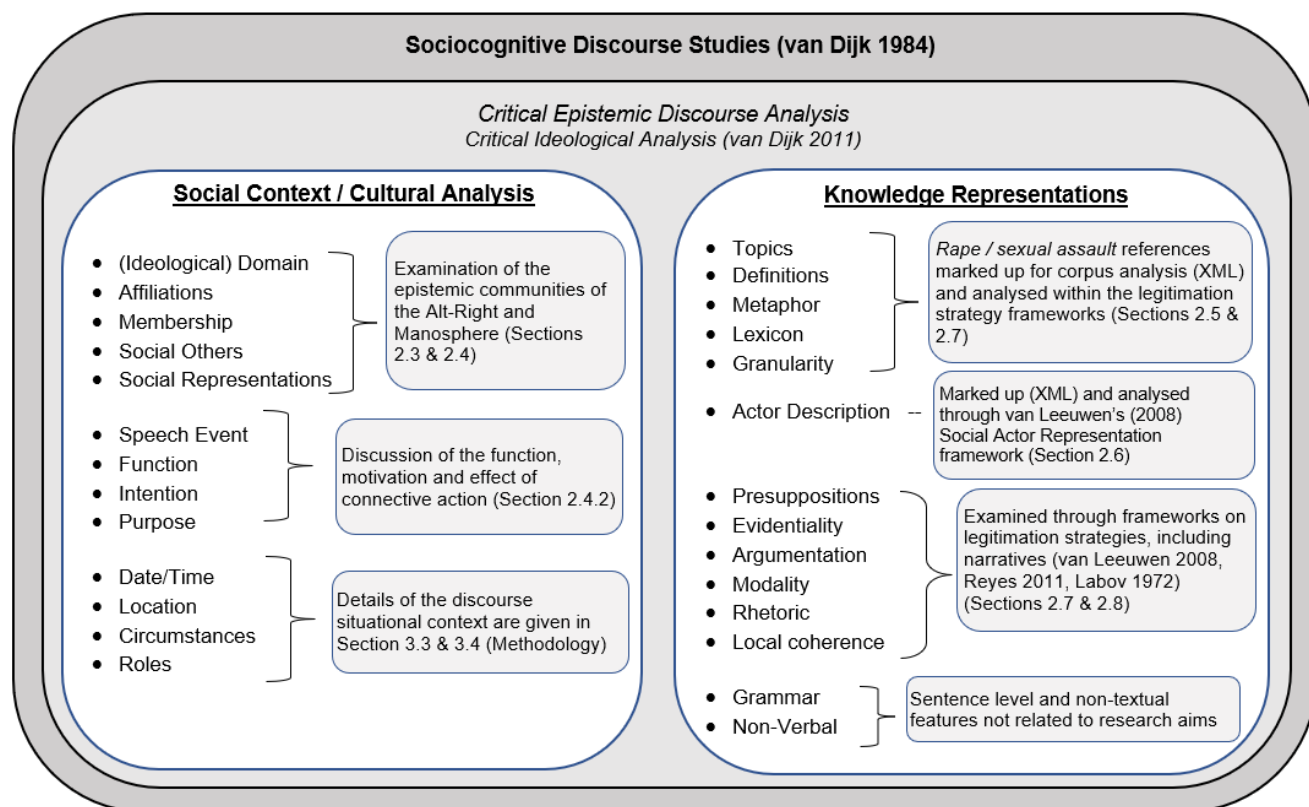
Figure 2.1 The theoretical map: overview of how the Critical Epistemic Discourse Analysis approach (van Dijk 2011) is adapted for this thesis

The following sections are organised in line with this theoretical map. **Part 1** provides an examination on the social context of the thesis through a review of studies on the Alt-Right and Manosphere (Sections 2.2 to 2.4). **Part 2** presents the linguistic theories, frameworks and research which relate to the knowledge representations relevant to addressing my research questions (Sections 2.5 to 2.8). Finally, Section 2.9 summarises the review and reiterates how this research project builds on previous work to underline the original contribution of this thesis.

Part 1: Social Context / Cultural Analysis

2.2 The extreme right: a networked ecology

The extreme right has been described as an *ecology* (Conway 2020) of a complicated, ever-changing blend of individuals, groups, political parties and media outlets. Far from being a homogeneous mass, Mudde argues that it should be considered heterogeneous and "plural, rather than singular" (2019, p. 163). The combination of entities included in the ecology promote ideologies based on a spectrum from extreme nationalist to those of fascism, white nationalism, the Alt-Right and National Socialism [Nazism] (Conway 2020, p.108). While, theoretically, there is clear value in conducting a comparative analysis across groups, unpicking the ecology of the extreme right, however, and determining a group's *entitativity*, i.e. "that property of a group, resting on clear boundaries, internal homogeneity, social interaction, clear internal structure, common goals, … which makes a group "groupy" (Hogg et al. 2007, p. 136) is less straightforward. It is particularly challenging regarding movements that organise and mobilise online. As Angouri points out, it is often unclear what exactly constitutes an online community as the conceptualisation of 'community' is often changing (2016, p. 324). This was most recently manifested in the storming of the United States Capitol on 6th January 2021 in Washington DC, where a group described as "an ideological jumble of hate groups and far-right agitators" (MacFarquhar et al. 2021) were united in their motivation to assault the building and democracy, having organised this attack online (Frenkel 2021).

Academic discussions generated from the events of the 6th January 2021 included the need to focus less on individual groups and more on a more comprehensive and integrated approach to analysing the crossovers between them (Miller-Idriss cited in Valentino-DeVries et al., 2021). This view reflects those put forward by Conway (2017), namely that more comparative research needs to be conducted across extremist groups in order to progress understanding of radicalisation, particularly online. The research in this project, therefore, observes these suggestions and focuses on two groups within the extreme right: the Alt-Right and the Men's Rights Activist subcommunity of the Manosphere, identified as having a symbiotic relationship within this ecology (Romano 2016; Anti-Defamation League 2018).

2.3 The Alternative Right (Alt-Right)

The Alt-Right has been placed on the far right of the right-wing spectrum (Burley 2017; Wendling 2018; Hermansson et al.. 2020). Having remained very much on the fringe of public and political consciousness until 2015 and only emerging into mainstream discussions in 2016, very little academic research has been published on the Alt-Right. Hawley (2017), one of the first academics to write on this movement, points out that getting any reliable information on such a loosely-defined group, whose default is to cause chaos, confusion and deliberate distortion of the truth, makes even what is supposedly known about the Alt-Right fallible (ibid., p. 75). With that caveat, this section

attempts to provide an overview of the literature on this movement, with a particular focus on the anti-feminist aspects of its ideology.

2.3.1   Historical influence

A cultural analysis of the Alt-Right's social context includes briefly establishing the historical origins of the faction. Discourses produced by its members include intertextual references to texts deemed influential in its ideology, for example antisemitic material produced by the National Socialist (Nazi) party and in webzines published by traditional white nationalist websites (Brigley Thompson 2020, p. 112; Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 47).

Academic writing on the Alt-Right pinpoints the relationship between the paleoconservative[4] Paul Gottfried and a graduate student called Richard Spencer as being influential in its emergence. In November 2008, Paul Gottfried, an academic who had started a society to expound paleoconservative views, made a speech entitled 'The Decline And Rise of the Alternative Right', which promoted the ideals of an intellectual Right and which attempted to appeal to younger followers (Wendling 2018, p. 20). Paleoconservatives were strict traditionalists who looked to the past (often in a religious context) when considering gender roles, ethnicity, and the hierarchy of race and social order (Wendling 2018, p. 18). Gottfried advocated against the established conservative and Republican order and appealed to identify black nationalists, radical feminists and those in favour of open borders as the enemy. At the same time, Gottfried employed the rhetoric of victimhood when he explained how those in the room were considered by the establishment as being "subhuman infidels" (Gottfried 2008). Although Gottfried now distances himself from the Alt-Right (Hawley 2017, p. 52), those he addressed in the room went on to publish online material furthering his ideas until, in 2010, Richard Spencer launched his own website, AlternativeRight.com (ibid., p. 57). These paleoconservative themes frequently appear in Alt-Right rhetorical narratives and in the construction of strictly lineated in- and out-group identities. In one of the few linguistic studies on the faction, Lorenzo-Dus and Nouri's (2020) corpus-assisted discourse analysis examined blog posts produced by the Traditionalist Worker Party, a self-identifying subgroup of the Alt-Right. The study found that in-group identities and discourse centred around the group's entitativity was "characterised by clear boundary demarcation between homogenous, victimised in-groups and multiple, blameworthy out-groups" (ibid., p, 417), particularly with reference to families and tradition, thus reflecting paleoconservative ideologies.

Further historical influences on the ideology of the Alt-Right stem from movements considered intellectually and philosophically idealised by the faction. The Neoreactionaries (NRx), later called Dark Enlightenment, influenced the Alt-Right's ideology on human biodiversity (more commonly referred to as *eugenics*). This generated an ideological position of genetic racial inequality (specifically that black people have inferior genetic qualities and a lower IQ than white people) (Burley

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[4] Paleoconservatism is a radical form of extreme right-wing conservatism, which is based on traditionalist, religious, and anti-establishment ideologies (see, for example, Drolet and Williams 2020)

2017, p. 73). Rhetorical strategies based on metaphors of disease and infection were introduced into Alt-Right discourses by the NRx, who regarded social inequalities as a disease that needed to be cured (ibid., p. 64). Significantly, he introduced the idea of being 'red pilled', a reference taken from the 1999 film *The Matrix*, and refers to the choice given to the central character in the story - to either take a blue pill and continue living in ignorance or to take a red pill which, although difficult to swallow, will offer liberation and the ability to see the 'truth' (Wendling 2018, p. 29). This red-pill metaphor has become a central philosophy of the Alt-Right and the Manosphere, particularly in relation to the movement's anti-feminist and pro-masculinity rhetoric.

Other established movements relevant to the social context of the Alt-Right include the European New Right and the anti-immigration movement. The first, a philosophical-based group headed by Alain de Benoist, promotes 'fascist cultural theory' and calls for racial separatism, opposition to the religious influence of conservatism and white identity over 'white guilt' (Burley 2017, p. 65). Essays written by leading academics from this movement have been, and still are, regularly posted on key Alt-Right websites. The anti-immigration movement also provides a copious amount of material for Alt-Right sites (Neiwert 2017, p. 77). This ideological stance results in explicitly racist discourses and is likely to inform the indexing of identities in the blog discourses. Related to the influence of the anti-immigration movement, traditional white nationalism (see Section 1.3) shaped the Alt-Right and the ideologies present in its discourses. However, while white nationalism and its racist ideologies certainly overlaps with the Alt-Right's belief in a white ethno-state, there are key differences between them which arguably led to the relative popularity of the Alt-Right. Firstly, Spencer attempted to distance the Alt-Right from the traditional working class, which is commonly associated with white nationalism (Burley 2017; Hawley 2017; Wendling 2018). He also created Radix Journal, an online hub of information aimed at a wider section of the far-right community (Wendling 2018) and, crucially, appealed to a much younger generation than that previously associated with white nationalism (see Section 2.3.2). This pushed against the traditional white nationalist label and shaped the Alt-Right into a more dangerous movement with supporters who prefer anonymous, internet-based edginess (Hawley 2017 p. 25).

2.3.2 Current perspectives on the Alt-Right

Defining the Alt-Right's current policies and ideologies is particularly difficult. Unlike traditional right-wing groups which may have dedicated websites (e.g. *The Daily Stormer* for the white nationalists) or which may have produced leaflets containing ideological discussions (e.g. *The Klansman* for the White Separatists), the Alt-Right has no written manifesto and defines itself more by what it does than by what it says. As Wendling points out: "It is an oppositional force with no real organisational structure. It's a creature of the internet, where many of its members, even some of the most prominent, are anonymous…it's a movement with several factions which shrink or swell according to the political breeze" (2018, p. 5). The central conception of the Alt-Right is that it is countercultural' (Wendling 2018, p. 8). This is reiterated by Nagle (2017), who puts the appeal of the Alt-Right down to its transgression, non-conformity, its claim that nothing should be forbidden. In defining itself against

others and reacting to the liberal establishment and leftist identity politics, the Alt-Right is naturally an ever-changing entity. Ebner (2017) describes the movement as being like 'shoaling fish' (p. 70): they move in the same direction but with no official leader, have an ever-changing form and react to whatever is in front of them.

Despite its amorphous form and lack of discernible policy, repeated rhetorical discourses often surface on Alt-Right sites, with immigrants and feminists as their main targets. Rhetoric relating to R/SA includes opposing the concept of rape within marriage (Nagle 2017, p. 93); men being deliberately targeted by ''systemic' false rape allegations' (Burley 2017, p. 84); and denying that date rape exists (Wendling 2018, p. 70). Looking through online sites which identify as Alt-Right, readers are also presented with the regular tropes of the sexually-deviant and dangerous immigrant (Ferber 1999), most often referred to as a 'rapefugee', and the sexually-frustrated feminist who is asking to be raped.[5] To date, no research has looked at how these discourses on sexual violence are organised or how identities are constructed within them. This study aims to fill that gap to gain greater insight into how to challenge these views.

Preliminary research on the Alt-Right has determined that it is a significantly male-dominated movement, with women making up only one-fifth of the membership (Wendling 2018, p. 149). Most academics in the field also suggest that most of its members are particularly young, certainly younger than previous far-right groups and traditional white nationalists (see Burley 2017; Hawley 2017; Nagle 2017). Wendling (2018), however, who has interviewed a number of men who identity as Alt-Right, argues that the average age of its members is perhaps older than originally thought, with many from the traditional groups having been drawn to the anonymity, transgressive activities and anti-establishment world view of the Alt-Right (2018, p. 8). Regardless of the age range, their online discourses are likely to reflect how men who participate within this movement identify in relation to current sexual politics (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 181) and, in relation to this study, how they position themselves in discussions of sexual violence against women.

Central to a discussion on the form of the Alt-Right is *4chan,* the online image board that is simultaneously the engine of the Alt-Right and testing ground for the Alt-Right's memes, jokes, and counter-culture campaigns (Wendling 2018, pp. 51-52). The 'politically-incorrect' board (/pol/) is considered the closest the Alt-Right has to a headquarters (ibid., p. 51) and is used by anonymous posters to push the boundaries of racist and sexist expression in a forum founded on a very liberal application of free speech laws. Very little regulation or censorship takes place here although, in theory, any attack or threat on identifiable individuals can be taken down. These sites contain the most extreme forms of offence one can imagine as an 'ordinary' user of the internet. They are full of *shame* posts (sexually explicit photos of women deemed by members to be worthy of public humiliation); *doxxing* (revealing personal details of women for trolls to target offline) (Lee 2020); and

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[5] for example, content on *mattforney.com*, *AltRight.com*, *voxday.blogspot.com* and *Amerika.org*

other incredibly explicit content relating to R/SA. Alongside this sits Nazi imagery and material (e.g. links to *Mein Kampf*) as well as racist memes and offensive animation.

Although these /pol/ boards do not contribute directly to the data in this study, they are relevant to mention here for two key reasons. First, they indicate a relationship between the Alt-Right and extreme, violent misogyny; the connection between the two being the focus of this study on the extent of overlap of white and male supremacism. Second, the Alt-Right's most effective campaigns started on /pol/, including those that brought the movement out from the fringe and into the consciousness of the mainstream media. The most famous of these were #Gamergate[6] and the Ghostbusters backlash, both of which targeted and damaged women (Blodgett and Salter 2018; Wendling 2018; Hermansson et al. 2020). Their success gave the Alt-Right not only the blueprint for future trolling campaigns but also brought them public notoriety. These campaigns also helped unite the Alt-Right and the Manosphere (Burley 2017, p. 86), as examined in the following section.

2.4   The Manosphere

Unlike the Alt-Right, characterising the Manosphere is more straightforward, largely because it has received more academic attention but also because it consists of relatively distinct self-identifying subgroups. Even so, giving an actual definition of the Manosphere is far from unproblematic as it is as equally nebulous as the Alt-Right and even more politically diverse (Wendling 2018, p. 62). The term *Manosphere* was originally used on 'Blogspot' in 2009 (Ging 2017, p. 639) but was later used by Ian Ironwood, a porn marketer in 2013 (ibid.). Ironwood used the term to refer to emerging blogs which discussed issues relating to masculine interests, men's issues, and what it means to be a man "in the face of a culture irrevocably changed by feminism" (Tomkinson et al. 2020, p. 153). Since then, however, the Manosphere has evolved into a much larger entity.

The generic definition put forward by Jones et al. for the current incarnation of the Manosphere implies a migration of an existing offline movement to an online medium: "the digital manifestation of the contemporary Men's Rights Movement [MRM]" (2019, p. 2). While it is true that the Manosphere includes aspects of the MRM, which was founded well before it expanded online (as discussed in Section 2.4.1 below), this definition underplays its complexities and overlapping but disparate subcultures. Hermansson et al. focus their definition on the unifying motivation of the Manosphere by describing it as "a loose collection of websites, forums, blogs, and vlogs concerned with men's issues and masculinity, oriented around an opposition to feminism" (2020, p. 163). The unity around this common contempt for feminism is a prevalent defining feature of the Manosphere in the literature (see, for example, Gotell and Dutton 2016; Marwick and Caplan 2018; Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019; and Moonshot CVE 2020). However, categorising the Manosphere as simply a collection of

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[6] #Gamergate refers to an extreme harassment campaign by men online against women in the gaming industry (game developers and journalists), motivated by a perceived lack of ethics in the industry but which expanded to a general backlash against women in technology (see Massanari 2017; Harmer and Lumsden 2019, p. 4)

websites and online channels ignores the vital connective force between them, one which emboldens those identifying as members to espouse the views and vitriol they do.

Ging's (2017) exploration of masculinities within connected anti-feminist sites gave rise to the often cited description of the Manosphere (examples include: Siapera 2019; Koller and Heritage 2020; Krendel 2020; and Wright 2020) and the one on which this thesis is based. Ging describes the Manosphere as "a loose confederacy of interest groups united in their adherence to Red Pill "philosophy", which purports to liberate men from a life of feminist delusion" (2017, p. 638). Through the red pill philosophy (see Section 2.3.1), feminism is seen to equal misandry and requires men to fight against it (Siapera 2019, p. 27). The Manosphere definition put forward goes on to acknowledge that these interest groups have established an interconnectedness and complexity over multiple online platforms such as blogs, forums, YouTube channels, and subreddits, signalling a significant shift in the way men's rights are communicated, and which allows for a particularly malicious view of anti-feminism to be expressed (Ging 2017, p. 639). Nagle takes this further by highlighting the level of vitriol present in the Manosphere as coming from: "hate-filled, resentment-fueled cultures of quite chilling levels of misogyny'' (2017, p. 86).

While a detailed examination of the history of the Manosphere is not necessary to understand its current form, some contextualisation of its evolution, particularly the shift from being an offline movement to one thriving online is particularly relevant to the research questions in this thesis. The following sections, therefore, give an overview of this progression (Sections 2.4.1and 2.4.2), before focusing on the sub-community discussed in this thesis, the Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) in Section 2.4.3. Finally, a brief summary of other subgroups in the Manosphere, which the MRAs position themselves against and which have informed some of the linguistic studies on Manosphere discourses, is given in Table 2.2.

2.4.1 The evolution of the Men's Rights Movement

There are clear links between the Manosphere in its current form and its previous incarnation as an offline movement which promoted men's rights. The Men's Rights Movement (MRM) evolved in the 1980s as a reaction to the second wave feminist ideologies of the 1960s and 1970s (Kimmel 2013, p. 103-107) and focused on re-masculising men, celebrating masculinity and fighting against those seen as taking rights away from men (ibid., p. 107). As Kimmel argues, those in the MRM felt they had lost their power while feeling entitled to feel powerful, leading to what he describes as a shared sense of "aggrieved entitlement" (2013, p. 111). From the MRM perspective, feminism was seen as hiding the truth that, in reality, it is men who are the most oppressed in society and not women (Messner 2000, p. 41). As evidence of this, statistics regarding men's shorter life-span, their military obligations, divorce and child custody laws, bias towards the education of girls at school, and the poor state of men's health were given by the MRM to justify this reaction against feminism (ibid., Ging 2019b, p. 45-46). This position developed in the 1980s into an ideology of victimhood, driven by men's rights activists, to claim that "men are the true victims of prostitution, pornography, dating rituals, sexist

media conventions, divorce settlements, false rape accusations, sexual harassment and even domestic violence" (Messner 2000, p. 42).

The perceived prejudice against men and men's rights encouraged men to mobilise through gatherings and protests. This type of *collective action* was "associated with high levels of organisational resources and the formation of collective identities" (Lance Bennett & Segerberg 2012, p. 739). Examples of this include the Million Man March in 1995 where 837,000 African American men demonstrated at the US Capitol Building in Washington DC against the treatment of Black men (Messner 2000, p. 64) and, more recently, the Fathers 4 Justice campaign. This latter group, founded in the UK in 2002 to champion fathers' rights and petition against perceived inequalities in family law (Jordan 2009), were particularly successful at making their cause visible to the public and mainstream media through their tactics of direct action, for example climbing on famous buildings[7] (Jordan 2014, p. 93) and disrupting television broadcasts (Kimmel 2013, p. 135). The campaign spread internationally and led to father's rights groups around the world enacting protests in an attempt to achieve their objectives (ibid., p. 136).

2.4.2   From collective to connective action

The MRM was galvanised through the drawing of attention to men's rights and opposition to feminism by directly mobilising; acting together to promote common causes; and using conventional activism strategies such as demonstrations, petitions and posters (Ging 2019b, p. 46). However, this reliance on collective action was also deemed by some in the movement to have disadvantages. As Lance Bennett and Segerberg point out, collective action is difficult, time-consuming, hierarchical in nature, expensive to organise and requires socialisation (2012, p. 748). As an individual's contribution to the collective is also often lost, it can be demotivating, leading to a temptation to rely on others to contribute to the effort (ibid., p. 752). With these issues in mind and with the development of online platforms, social media, and increasingly accessible internet access in the 2010s, collective action within the MRM was superseded by "personalised content sharing across media networks", or *connective action* (Lance Bennett and Segerberg 2012, p. 739).

Lance Bennett and Segerberg argue that connective action allows for individual expression, self-validation, and the sharing of personal experiences, all of which provides greater motivation for contributing to a common goal (2012, p. 752). Motivation is further increased by the fact that personal and emotive expressions are more easily spread online than views expressed with less affect (ibid.). These sentiments are said to have an emotional contagion effect which has a significant impact on the mental state of others (Ferrara and Yang 2015). The desire of social media users for "affective intensity" (Lindgren 2017, p. 130), means that algorithms embedded in online platforms preferentially facilitate the spread of personal and emotional storytelling, even when associated with an ostensibly political motive (Ging 2017, p. 643). This may be through linguistic means, for example through

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[7] For example, Buckingham Palace and the London Eye in the UK

flaming: the expression of affect "in the form of aggression, insults, and hatred towards other users" (Lindgren 2017, p. 132). This is made sharper and assertions less nuanced through the affordances and limitations of computer-mediated communications (ibid., p. 133). The design of websites may also motivate affective intensity. Reddit, an online platform which has become notoriously associated with the online MRM (see Massanari 2017; Ging 2019b; and Lumsden 2019), for example, has been argued to be proactively designed, through features and accessibility on the site, to enable and encourage flaming, particularly misogynistic invective (Massanari 2017, p. 330). The move to a more networked individualism (Ging 2019b, p. 48) based on the sharing of personal emotions and expedited by algorithmic networks, transformed the MRM. From a collective fight against feminism and the perceived systemic, legal, and societal injustices it was seen to cause men generally, the focus of this online manifestation of the MRM was on the perceived injustices against individual men, on victimhood, on emotion, and on waking others up to the "feminist delusion" (see Ging's (2017) definition above) by directing hatred, not at a system but at women.

Because of the focus on individualism, separate subcultures were able to evolve under the generic anti-feminism espoused in the Manosphere, all focusing on particular deficiencies and deficits seen to be caused by an increase in women's equality. The backlash against women in the Manosphere was/is propelled by a similar shift in the dynamics of feminism as was seen in the MRM. Where the second and third waves of feminism, emerging in the 1970s and 1990s respectively, employed collective efforts to force change in deep, systemic inequalities, *postfeminism* (present in the 1980s but at its peak in the 2000s) emphasises women's "individualism, choice, and agency" (Gill 2016, p. 613). The focus on personal responsibility and freedom rejects narratives of women's victimisation and, instead celebrates individual control, needs and desires (Gamble 2006, p. 36). Postfeminism's media exposure and exaggerated declarations of female power, Ging argues, created the conditions for the anti-feminist backlash to take hold (2019, p. 52). Discourses on exposing the truth about feminism dominate discourses on Manosphere sites (Ging 2019b, p. 46; Bates 2020, p. 16) and has been studied academically by researchers such as (Ging 2017; Nagle 2017; Mountford 2018; Ging 2019b; Jones et al. 2019; Wright et al. 2020) among others.

As alluded to at the beginning of this section, subcultures evolved through individualistic takes on anti-feminist 'injustices'. While these subgroups are united in their red pill philosophy, they are ideologically distinct; a factor which shapes their more specific political discussions, aims and actions (Wright et al. 2020, p. 909). The subgroup most relevant to the linguistic analysis in this thesis is the Men's Rights' Activist (MRA) group (see the data collection methods in Section 3.2), an overview of which is given below.

2.4.3   Men's Rights' Activists (MRAs)

The MRAs represent the largest and most generic subculture in the Manosphere (Ribeiro et al. 2020) and have been designated a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Centre in the United States (Lumsden 2019, p. 98). MRA sites offer guidance on personal growth, self-improvement, adopting

discipline and a strong mindset, as well as prescriptive advice on dating (Mountford 2018). Women are portrayed on these sites as despised objects, and personal relationships are discussed in terms of gender wars, manipulation and power (ibid.). Explicit pro-rape discussions; supposed evidence that all women want to be raped; and the promotion of domestic violence against women have also been linked to online MRA rhetoric (Bates 2020, pp. 122-123). As far as can be established, linguistic analyses of discourse features specifically relating to sexual violence on MRA sites has not been carried out, indicating an area of contribution from this thesis.

Focused linguistic research on the MRAs has arguably been confused by the difficulties in delineating MRA sites from those associated with other Manosphere subcommunities (see Table 2.2). An example of this is the study undertaken by O'Donnell (2019), in which the analysis of chat messages collected from an unspecified site was framed as an examination of MRA discourses. As the site was found to be used by other subcommunities of the Manosphere, as well as the Alt-Right, the framing of the findings can be questioned. Despite this, the analysis reveals a high frequency of military metaphors and militaristic language (e.g., *end-game, enemy forces, fighting, going undercover, war*) used in the chat, which conflates the members' operational actions and a war against feminism. As will be seen throughout this section, this metaphorical trope is often utilized within MRA subcommunity rhetoric.

Lumsden's (2019) qualitative study of comments taken from a specific MRA forum, on the MRA subreddit r/MensRights, provides a more reliable insight into the themes being discussed by MRAs. Within the 1931 comments, written in 2016, three overarching themes emerged: 1) women have underlying motives for claiming they are victims of R/SA, abuse and/or harassment, for example, in order to be rescued, for attention, or for money; 2) men are the real victims of online abuse; and 3) while online abuse is genuinely suffered by men, it does not exist at all for women (2019, pp. 102-109). Two features to emerge from Lumsden's (2019) findings are particularly relevant to my research project. First, is the catastrophising language allegedly used by women in relation to the first theme which denies women as victims. The author refers to this as genocidal rhetoric (2019, p. 104) and explains that discourse within this category references metaphors of terrorism, torture and the holocaust. These are used to describe, and delegitimise, the 'exaggerated' claims women make about the violence they suffer at the hands of men, which is a particular area of interest in my thesis. This finding is also significant in that it shows a subtle distinction in the use of military metaphor found in O'Donnell's (2019) study mentioned above. While O'Donnell's findings identify metaphorical references to a generic concept of militarisation to fight woman and feminism, Lumsden's (2019) study shows the rhetoric of military action being focused on the characteristics of the women being targeted. These characteristics are framed in terms more commonly associated with Islamic state and Nazism; the implication being that they are recognised enemies and therefore their destruction is justifiable.

The second finding from Lumsden's (2019) study which is relevant to my own relates to the prevalence in the discourses of traditional (offline) rape myths; disbelief in rape victims' testimony; and the belief that women "throw around rape accusations" (2019, p. 104). These findings offer updated support for those found in Gotell and Dutton's (2016) work on anti-feminist discourses on R/SA on MRA sites. Their exploratory study, one of the first on this area of research and which incorporated cyber-ethnography and discourse analysis, monitored the changing themes around R/SA posted on three MRA sites[8] over an 18-month period in 2013 to 2014. They found that discourses on R/SA were becoming more prevalent within the Men's Rights movement, as discussed in more in more detail in Section 2.5.

While the MRAs provide the main focus in this thesis, other subcultures of the Manosphere inform linguistic research reviewed in this chapter and are relevant to the analyses throughout. As such, the distinct subcommunities: Pick-Up Artists (PUAs), involuntary celibates (incels), Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), Gamer Geeks, and NoFap, are listed in Table 2.2, together with an overview of their tenets and the key studies investigating their discourses (see also Han and Yin (2022); and Krendel et al. (2022) for comparative studies of these subcultures).

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[8] The sites, two of which were based solely in Canada, do not appear on my network analysis, possibly due to the differing time periods for data collection

Manosphere subcommunity	Summary	Key studies
Pick-Up Artists (PUAs)	The red pill philosophy adopted by PUAs is seen and enacted through the lens of fighting back against men's "diminished power in society" (Siapera 2019, p. 27). This is achieved by reclaiming sexual and reproductive rights from women through "game", that is employing techniques on how to pick up women, (Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019, p. 5012) and circumvent possible resistance (Wright 2020). Hierarchical masculinities feature heavily in the PUA community, with men who are deemed masters of game and desired by women considered *alphas* and those that are ignored by women as *beta* males (Nagle 2017 p. 89). PUA tactics are marketed towards betas, often through a heavily commercial seduction industry (Ging 2017, p. 644; Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 165), and regard women as objects with a sexual market value (SMV) (Kelly et al. 2021, p. 9).	Dayter and Rüdiger 2016; Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019; Dayter and Rüdiger 2019; Siapera 2019; Wright 2020; Kelly et al. 2021; Dayter and Rüdiger 2022
Involuntary Celibates (incels)	The movement emerged as a direct result of resentment felt by 'beta males' at the exploitation and commercialisation found in the PUA community (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 165). The website PUAHate.com was set up by those who felt they had been failed by the promise of sexual success with women and soon became the go-to site for men who considered themselves involuntarily celibate (Kelly et al. 2021, p. 10). The subgroup is connected to several high-profile cases of violence against women, most notably by Elliot Rodger (see Bates (2020), pp. 40-48). The incels are the only subgroup of the Manosphere who also explicitly target men (known as Chads) in their hatred, although to a lesser extent than their female targets.	Bratich and Banet-Weiser 2019; Ging 2019b; Chang 2020; Hoffman et al. 2020; Koller and Heritage 2020; Liggett O'Malley et al. 2020; Tomkinson et al. 2020; Cottee 2021; Kelly et al. 2021; Tranchese and Sugiura 2021; Sugiura 2022
Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW)	A men's separatist group (Nagle 2017, p. 94) who believe the system, seen as being against men, cannot and will not change. This has led to this sub-faction encouraging men to be more self-sufficient and to turn away from women to embrace a more individualistic lifestyle (Wright et al. 2020, p. 908). This defeatist stance put them in direct opposition to the more proactive MRAs, leading to in-fighting among these two anti-feminist factions (Nagle 2017, p. 95)	Jones et al. 2019; Wright et al. 2020; Marmie et al. 2021; Ribeiro et al. 2021
Gamer Geeks	Ging (2017) identified gamer/geek culture as a slight outlier of the original Manosphere, Salter and Blodgett describe geeks as beta males: "physically weak, typically unattractive or unconventionally unattractive, extremely intelligent, and socially poor and awkward" (2017, p. 32). Geeks position themselves as outsiders, freeing themselves from and rallying against the classical hierarchical identity structures of the Manosphere (ibid.; Ging 2017, 650). With their domination of technological spaces and assumed hyperintelligence, they perceive themselves as privileged and hypermasculine within their own subculture (Salter and Blodgett 2017, p. 33)	Ging 2017; Massanari 2017; Salter and Blodgett 2017; Banet-Weiser 2018; Blodgett and Salter 2018
NoFap	This relatively new and fast-expanding community is defined by its 'no masturbation' policy (otherwise known as a *no fap* policy) in order to reserve focus for other causes, self-control and personal growth (Han and Yin 2022). Followers of this group view masturbating to pornography as emasculating and aim to reach a more superior manifestation of masculinity (Hartmann 2021, p. 410).	Burnett 2021; Hartmann 2021; Han and Yin 2022

Table 2.2: Overview of the subcultures of the Manosphere (with the exception of Men's Rights Activists) and key studies

A number of Manosphere sites[9] have been shut down (*deplatformed*) since 2017, either through regulation and censorship by the platform owners or indirectly through a drop in generated revenue. These have mostly affected the PUA and incel subgroups. This has led to an increase in *digital refugees* within the Manosphere: "users who migrate from one online space to another as a result of the initial space being closed down" (Wright et al. 2020, p. 909). It has been suggested that there will be a migration towards the MRA subculture (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 173). In her examination into the lives of extremists, Ebner predicts that politicised violent misogyny is a real and growing threat for the next decade (2020, p. 270). Similarly, Mudde states that the toxic masculinity in the Manosphere, which manifests in men taking out their mental and sexual frustrations on women deemed to be politically powerful, is increasingly prominent during the fourth wave of far right politics we are currently experiencing (2019, p. 172). This fourth wave started in 2000 and is characterised by the mainstreaming of the far right (ibid., p. 20). It follows that, as long as this mainstreaming continues, the threats posed by the toxic masculinity in the Manosphere will continue.

Part 2: Knowledge Representations

Having established the social context of this study in Part 1, as informed by van Dijk's (2011) critical epistemic discourse analysis (CEDA) framework (see Figure 2.1.1), Part 2 focuses on *knowledge representations*. As noted in Section 2.1.2, these are the discourse structures and strategies which communicate the sociocultural knowledge between group members (ibid., p. 36). The first section in Part 2, Section 2.5, considers the strategy of *topic* (see Table 2.1), whereby particular themes are made more salient in the discourse to indicate importance and for easy recollection in the mental models of its receivers. Section 2.6 looks at knowledge representations through actor description via previous studies of social actors indexed within on Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses. Section 2.7 examines studies on legitimation, which incorporates eight of van Dijk's (2011a) knowledge representation strategies (see Table 2.1). Finally, Section 2.8 critically reflects on studies examining legitimation through narratives and those that have informed the theoretical framework adopted for the analysis of the discourses in this thesis.

2.5   Topic: Rape and Sexual Assault (R/SA)
The first of the discourse strategies related to knowledge representations considered here is topic choice, or *semantic macroproposition* (van Dijk 2011a, p. 36). In this thesis, an investigation of this strategy relates to the subtopics and themes discussed in the blog posts in relation to R/SA; the subject of the overarching research question informing this study (see Section 1.3). This section of

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[9] For example, www.tomtorero.com, www.puahate.com, www.sluthate.com, and the subreddits r/incels and r/braincels

the chapter examines studies which have identified subtopics and themes of R/SA in white and male supremacy discourses.

A prevalent theme relating to sexual violence against women, found in studies on discourses produced by the far right, relates to the stereotype of the heroic, white male saviour. This trope is positioned in opposition to that of the aggressive, black rapist (see, for example, Daniels 1997; Ferber 1999; Brindle 2016; Brigley Thompson 2020). Ferber argues that this dynamic originated from the segregation laws in place from the 1860s to 1950s in the Southern United States, whereby black men were regularly falsely accused of raping white women (1999, pp. 37-39). This myth of the black male rapist served to justify lynchings and other race-based violence against black men; the rape of black women; and, simultaneously, protect the supposed purity of white womanhood (ibid.). The trope of white saviourhood is seen in discourses from a more modern incantation of the far right, e.g. on the *Stormfront* online forum. Brindle's (2016) corpus linguistic and critical discourse study analysed comments posted on this forum, a white supremacist site that has direct links to the Alt-Right (Wendling 2018, p. 53). The analysis of the lemma RAPE produced results that showed black, Latino and Jewish men were perceived to be sexually violent; raping white girls (Brindle 2016, p. 94); and "taking white women away from white men, indicating a patriarchal belief that white women are the property of white men" (ibid., p. 95). These findings strongly echo the depictions of immigrants in Alt-Right propaganda as 'rapefugees'. The analyses in this thesis will help determine the extent to which these ascribed identities inform the (re)framing of R/SA within the shared discourses on the blogs and whether these overlap to any degree with those of the Manosphere.

Another key subtheme in the literature on sexual violence against women, particularly in Manosphere discourses, concerns masculinity in crisis as a direct result of feminism (see Kimmel 2013; Gotell and Dutton 2016; Jane 2017; Siapera 2019; Brigley Thompson 2020). This supports findings from Gotell and Dutton's (2016) research on MRA sites, which showed men depicted as the victims of feminism and discourses on sexual assault being used to further an anti-feminist ideology among young men. Their research outlines a number of key themes relevant to this study, for example how "rape culture" is seen as a feminist-produced moral panic, and how feminists are constructing men as rapists while removing any acknowledgment of men's own experiences with sexual violence. They also found that 'traditional' rape myths were present on the sites, particularly those concerning victim-blaming (e.g., the victim was drunk), and that genuine instances of R/SA are only those committed by strangers rather than acquaintances (2016, p. 75). The findings mirror those in linguistic research based on courtroom interactions and how the defence of R/SA relies on established rape myths to discredit the women complainant (see, for example, Aldridge and Luchjenbroers 2007; Ehrlich 2008b; Leverick 2020; Viehbeck 2020). The extent to which mainstream rape myths are exploited in both Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses is unclear and

will be investigated within the analysis of how sexual violence is framed in the blog posts in this study.

Siapera suggests that, for those aligned with the Manosphere, the red pill philosophy (see Section 2.3.1) is seen and enacted through the lens of fighting back against men's "diminished power in society" (2019, p. 27) by reclaiming sexual and reproductive rights from women. This fight back can manifest as R/SA threats against women, the pervasiveness of which has been observed and examined in a range of studies focusing on anti-feminist hate speech online. As the focus in this thesis is intracommunity discourses and not threats from in-group men to out-group women, further discussion of R/SA threats here is not relevant. However, the prevalence and level of vitriol seen in the threats indicates how R/SA is regularly weaponised against women online (see for example, Hardaker and McGlashan 2016; Jane 2017a; Banet-Weiser 2018; Manne 2018; Moloney and Love 2018).

In line with R/SA threats against women, research on websites aligned with the Manosphere have identified advice on how to commit R/SA without being prosecuted. One view on how to do this, expressed on the *Return of Kings* website (included as a data source for this thesis), was through a change in law to legalise rape.[10] Another suggestion prevalent on Manosphere sites relates to how to circumvent the issue of consent. Wright's corpus-assisted discourse analysis of data from a Pick-Up Artist (PUA) discussion forum analysed the construction of *last minute resistance* (LMR), seen by the subcommunity as a disingenuous attempt by women to stop sex from happening (at the last minute) (2020, p. 4), and how PUAs consider the extent to which this resistance can be overcome. The analysis of the 26 million-word corpus showed discursive strategies in the data which refer to LMR as something that can defeated with perseverance (ibid., p. 4), identified through the use of collocates of LMR such as *push through*, *plow through*, *get past* (ibid., pp. 4-5). The study also found LMR being framed as inauthentic and as being tokenistic (ibid., p. 5). As Wright points out, the effect of this language within the community is one of creating a game and a competition, and something to win. It portrays women as immature, deceptive, manipulative and testing men, while removing any genuine consideration that consent is being genuinely withheld (ibid., p. 6).

The exploration of the literature supports Berger's observation that the topic of rape in extremist discourses is ubiquitous (2018, p. 42). This seems to be either through the threat of R/SA towards women; through discussions on what constitutes R/SA; and includes ways in which men in these communities can avoid accusations of R/SA or reframe the consequences of sexual violence to focus on their own suffering. Examining how R/SA is (re)framed in the discourses in this thesis will build on these studies.

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[10] https://www.rooshv.com/how-to-stop-rape

2.6   Social actor representations

The second key discourse strategy to examine in relation to van Dijk's knowledge representation component of his CEDA framework (Table 2.1), is 'actor description' (2011, p. 37). Consideration of this strategy relates directly to the first of the research sub-questions outlined in Section 1.3, namely: *How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of social actors in discourses about sexual violence?* This element of van Dijk's (2011a) CEDA framework focuses on how predicative strategies through positive or negative evaluation are assigned to social actors (Wodak 2001, p. 72) and includes the indexing of their roles, occupations, genders, ethnicities, memberships and appearance, among other characteristics (van Dijk 2011a, p. 37). These representations of the "participants of social practices" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 23) reveals ideological stance and divergence between in-groups and out-groups (ibid.); reinforces assumptions between members as collective identities in common ground understanding (van Dijk 2011a, p. 31); and, simultaneously, influences future interactions (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Breeze 2018). Identifying how participants in R/SA cases are discussed in the blog posts in this study will determine how sexual violence is framed around ideological perspectives. For example, ascertaining how victims, perpetrators, claimants and defendants are represented will indicate collective moral values as to how these participants should be treated, held responsible, or vilified.

Collective identities are defined by Koller as "sociocognitive representations, which are held by people who identify as members of a group [and] as being constructed, negotiated and changed through discursive interaction within and between groups" (2012, p. 20). Koller adds that the construction of collective identities can be translated from a text producer who identifies as being part of that group (ibid.); a key consideration regarding the data used in this thesis. A model for the analysis of collective identities within a socio-cognitive perspective to critical discourse analysis, which underpins the CEDA framework, has been put forward by Koller (2012). At the text level (*micro-level*) (ibid., p. 23) the model posits that van Leeuwen's (2008) sociosemantic inventory of social actor representation is used to analyse which social actors the text producers foreground and background, and which they represent through specific or more generalised linguistic strategies to demonstrate shared beliefs, knowledge and attitudes towards participants in social practices (ibid.). Koller's (2012) model integrates this micro-level analysis with contextualisation at the meso-level (discourse context and production) and the macro-level (social context) (ibid. p. 24), mirroring van Dijk's (2011a) CEDA framework and the approach taken in this thesis. Thus, the analysis of actor description (ibid., p. 37) will adopt van Leeuwen's (2008) sociosemantic inventory (herein referred to a *framework*) of social actor representation, the specific details of which are given in Section 4.2.

2.6.1 Participants in legal practices

A number of studies have employed van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor framework to identify representations in discourse contexts aligned with those in this thesis, for example discourses relating to the legal system. For example, Chaemsaithong (2019) investigated social actor representations in a criminal trial in the United States. The study found that the prosecution used personalised, relational and classification representations to index the victims (e.g., *husband* and *woman*), whereas those being prosecuted were referred to through functionalisation (e.g., *defendants*) to depersonalise them. The defence team in the trial used the opposite categorisation of social actors to personalise the defendant and assimilate the victims (ibid., p.250). In Breeze's analysis of the *Daily Mail* reporting of *Miller v Secretary of State for Exiting the EU*, known as the "enemies of the people" case (2018, p. 60), the representation of social actors showed how the newspaper indexed Gina Miller through negative gender representations and frequently referred to her as an *ex-model* or *former model*, to invoke the stereotype of a woman who is appraised for her appearance rather than her other qualities including, in this case, her work as an investment banker (ibid., p. 62). Populist rhetoric was also identified in the frequent use of collectivisation and assimilation through references to the 'British people', a tactic argued to increase the bond between the Brexit-voting public and the *Daily Mail* newspaper in the role of defender of the people (ibid., p. 64). Social actor analysis of the representations in the extreme right-wing blog posts in this thesis will be compared to the mainstream depictions shown in Breeze's (2018) study.

The representation of out-groups has also formed the focus of studies using van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. Smith-Khan (2017) found that the credibility of asylum-seekers, in their appeal applications in the Australian immigration tribunals, was questioned through the use of functionalisation categorisation (e.g., *applicants*). This categorisation of asylum-seekers, Smith-Khan argues, indexes them as being the creators of their own narrative and, effectively, gives them full responsibility for the appeal decision (ibid., pp. 516-517). Later work on similar data identified a woman refugee whose rape was reported in the press (Smith-Khan 2019). The woman was frequently referred to, inaccurately, as an asylum-seeker – a reference which undermines her status. The generic gendered representation *woman* was also used to describe the victim which the author argues diminishes her credibility in a way that using a more specific naming strategy denoting social or relational significance would not (ibid., p.22) (see also Chaemsaithong (2019) noted above). The social actor analysis of out-groups in my data will likewise establish the degree to which they are regarded as credible in the context of sexual violence.

2.6.2 Participants in Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses

The analysis of gendered identities in Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses, using a range of theoretical frameworks, have found predominant themes. These are discussed in the following two subsections.

Naming strategies: Men

As indicated in Part 1 (particularly sections 2.3.1and 2.4.1 to 2.4.3), men in the Alt-Right and Manosphere are often identified through naming strategies associated with victimhood (see, for example, Jordan 2009; Kimmel 2013; Jordan 2014; Brindle 2016b; Brindle 2016a; Schmitz and Kazyak 2016; Ging 2017; Kelly 2017; Marwick and Caplan 2018). Another key naming strategy used to describe men in both factions relates to masculinity. Burley's analysis of current extreme right-wing movements, including the Alt-Right, argues that the traditional, aggressive, 'warrior' image is still held as an ideal version of masculinity within the far-right (2017, p. 55) (see also Daniels 1997; Blee 2017; Wendling 2018). The image epitomizes 'hegemonic masculinity', the variety of masculinity capable of marginalizing and dominating not only women, but also other men due to class, race or sexuality (Brindle 2016, p. 11). A hierarchy of masculinities has also been found in discourses on Manosphere subcommunities, with men who are deemed masters of 'game' (see Table 2.2) and desired by women are considered *alphas* (Dayter and Rüdiger (2016)) and *chads* (Koller and Heritage 2020), and those that are ignored by women as *beta males* and *faggots* (ibid., respectively). With the exception of Jordan (2009; 2014), who analysed identities in 'Fathers 4 Justice' groups, linked closely to the evolution of the men's rights movement (see Section 2.4.1), there is a lack of research on the identities of men in the MRA subcommunity of the Manosphere. As far as can be established, there are no studies on specific identities in relation to sexual violence cases. This study aims to contribute to an understanding of the nuances of identity in the MRA subgroup, particularly in the ways in which participants in R/SA are discussed.

Naming strategies: Women

Identities and representations of women in Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses fall into the *mother/whore dichotomy* (see, for example, Daniels 1997; Mudde 2019; Latif et al. 2020) or, in Manosphere discourses alone, are represented as dehumanised (Chang 2020). The first of these overarching portrayals, the *mother/whore binary*, "denotes polarised perceptions of women as either good and chaste or as bad and promiscuous", primarily as a patriarchal tactic of policing women (Kahalon et al. 2019, p. 348). As Mudde (2019) points out, women in the far right are revered as mothers, or potential mothers and protected under the guise of protecting the white race. They are then simply tolerated when they are no longer able to have children (2019, p. 149, see also Latif et al. 2020). According to Daniels (1997), out-group women in far-right discourses are represented in opposition to the portrayal of the revered, protected mother. Daniels notes that Jewish women, for example, are frequently depicted as lesbian (1997, p. 117) and through representations associated by the group with masculinity (e.g. well-built, tattooed and with shaved heads) (ibid., p. 118). These representations are then conflated with them being a threat to white children and white femininity (ibid. p. 117).

Regarding representations of women in Manosphere discourses, identities related to the failure to conform as a 'good' mother are also prevalent. Studies on websites produced by fathers' rights

groups, show that women are portrayed as perpetrators of domestic abuse and single mothers as child abusers (Rosen et al. 2009, see also Boyd 2004; Jordan 2009; Weaver and Morris 2021). In other Manosphere subcommunities, for example the PUAs, representations of women at the opposite end of the 'mother/whore binary' distinction dominate. Women are indexed as objects with a sexual market value (SMV) based on their physical appearance, age and level of fitness, and social class (Kelly et al. 2021, p. 9). In incel discourses, Koller and Heritage found little evidence of individuality in the representations of women in their corpus other than in their SMV and in their relational representations with men (2020, p. 174). Finally, in Manosphere discourses where women are indexed through dehumanised, abstract representations, studies have focused on discourses produced by the PUA and incel subcommunities. Dayter and Rüdiger's corpus study of PUA advice shows just under a quarter (23.6%) of the terms used to refer to women relate to a military frame (2019, p. 15), including women being referred to as *targets* and *obstacles* (ibid., p. 14). This framing, while under the guise of advice for flirting and seducing women, suggests an overlap with MRA discourses, whereby military metaphors were used to justify the elimination of women and feminism (see Section 2.4.3). The dehumanisation of women in relation to body parts and objects relating to sex (e.g. "cumrag") was also found in representations in Tranchese and Sugiura's (2021) analysis of incel discourses. They found that the indexing of women related directly to the influence of pornography in the communications between members and how this contributes to fueling and justifying rape culture in the subcommunity (2021, p. 12) (see also Andreasen (2021) for representations of women considered 'rapeable' and unrapeable' in internet memes). In a different study of incel discourses on the subreddit r/Braincels, women were represented as monstrous, dehumanised *femoids* (female humanoids) who oppress men (Chang 2020).

To conclude, these studies indicate that there has been a lack of focus on representations of social actors in discourses of sexual violence, particularly from discourses associated with the Alt-Right and Manosphere. The analysis in this study will focus on whether, and to what extent, these overarching identity tropes are developed in the Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses, and how they inform the subcommunities' knowledge representation of sexual violence. In terms of the blog posts classified as narratives, the position of these social actor representations will also be analysed to address research sub-question 4 (see Section 1.3).

2.7   Legitimation

Of the 14 discourse structures and strategies relating to knowledge representations in van Dijk's (2011) CEDA framework, nine can be analysed in relation to legitimation strategies (see Table 2.1). Acts of legitimation are predominantly discursive (Rojo and van Dijk 1997, p. 527) and, from a pragmatic perspective, are connected to "the speech act of defending oneself" from possible attacks or challenges (van Dijk 1998, p. 255). Reyes defines the process of legitimisation as authorising or licensing certain social behaviours by supplying them with explanations for social

actions, ideas and thoughts (2011, p. 782). The motivations for this process of explanation are often connected to political acts by institutions seeking approval for political action (Rojo and van Dijk 1997, p. 258) but are also connected to the desire for social acceptance, to build inter-community bonds, or to gain popularity (Reyes 2011, p. 782). This has also been described as invoking a type of collectivity which binds members who share common norms and values (von Haldenwang 2017, p. 271).

2.7.1 Legitimation and ideologies

The process of legitimising ideas, thoughts and declarations, also referred to as *justification* (van Dijk, 1998 p. 255), relies heavily on accessing shared cognitive structures, beliefs and collective memories (Reyes 2011, p. 789). As van Dijk states, "legitimating discourses presuppose norms and values. They implicitly or explicitly state that some course of action, decision or policy is 'just' within the given legal or political system, or more broadly within the prevalent moral order of society." (1988, p. 256). These norms and values equally determine the *de*legitimation of actions and policies within a given system, with legitimisation strategies providing the framework for critique by those who question the prevailing moral order and seek to undermine its supporters (van Dijk 1998 p. 259). This bottom-up perspective of legitimation allows for a negative presentation of 'the other' by focusing on difference and through speech acts of denigration, blame and accusation (Chilton and Schaffner 2011, p. 312). Following van Dijk's argument noted above that legitimating discourses include an assumption of shared norms and values (van Dijk 1998, p.256), *de*legitimising discourses therefore also reflect the norms and values of those challenging accepted social practice, expectations, and beliefs. Thus, "ideological and social conflict take the form of a struggle not only over ideas…but also over legitimacy." (ibid., p. 258).

2.7.2 Theoretical frameworks and studies

A number of frameworks for identifying and analysing legitimation strategies have been suggested by discourse analysts (see, for example, Rojo and van Dijk 1997; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; van Leeuwen 2007; and Reyes 2011). The development of these frameworks indicates an evolution of strategies and a degree of overlap between them. Combining them allows for a more precise approach to legitimation analysis, which can be applied to the discourse context. In this thesis, two frameworks are used to analyse the legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog post discussions on R/SA. The first, put forward by van Leeuwen (2007) takes into account both non-narrative and narrative discourses, both of which are relevant for the data in this project. van Leeuwen's (2007) framework derives from an earlier discourse analysis of official letters sent to immigrant workers informing them that their application for family reunion had been rejected (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999). The authors lay out four categories of legitimation[11]: *authorisation*, *rationalisation*, *moral legitimation*, and *mythopoesis* (1999, pp. 104-111). These are

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[11] These categories were originally put forward by van Leeuwen in an unpublished 1996 manuscript (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999, p. 104)

discussed in detail in Sections 5.5.1 and 5.5.2. Of the four in van Leeuwen and Wodak's study, they found that, within the texts aimed at justifying, or legitimising, the reasons for the denial of the applications, legitimation through *moral abstraction* was the most frequently employed (1999, p. 111). Relating this to van Dijk's (2011) CEDA framework, this legitimation strategy relies on definitions, metaphor, and rhetorical devices (see Table 2.1) (see also Bednarek 2006; Hart 2011 for discussions on how these features relate to legitimation). van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1999) study provides a frame of reference for the analysis in this thesis as the prevalence of each legitimation strategy in the framework will be quantified. This will determine if the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts contain a comparable frequency of moral legitimation to frame their discussions of R/SA.

van Leeuwen's (2007) framework has also been applied in critical discourse analyses on related themes in the analysis of in-group and out-group divisions (Oddo 2011), socio-political divisions in Europe (Vaara 2014), and discourses around violence against women (Elharraki 2019). In this latter study, the strategy of moral evaluation was found to be utilised by women talking about sexual violence committed against them, particularly to legtimise themselves as victims. The use of this strategy though the women's voices, will be considered in relation to the analysis in this thesis to determine if the same strategy is used in blog posts written from the perspective of men to portray victimhood in discussions of sexual violence.

An extension of van Leeuwen's (2007) framework on legitimation strategies has been proposed by Reyes (2011). This framework, exemplified through an analysis of political speeches by United States presidents, builds upon van Leeuwen' s (2007) and proposes five further categories of linguistic devices for legitimation: those relating to 1) the expression of emotion, 2) a hypothetical future, 3) rational decision-making, 4) voices of expertise, and 5) altruism. While not all of these strategies will be applicable in the analysis is this thesis (e.g., altruism), others are likely to be present, particularly strategies relating to emotion. In their analysis of discourses on the proposed legalisation of abortion in Ireland in 2018, for example, O'Donovan and Siller (2021) employ Reyes' (2011) frameworks to determine how ideological stance in the referendum campaigns is legitimised through employing emotional language and terminology, particularly connected to shame and guilt. The analysis also found that emotion was used to strengthen in-group and out-group boundaries through 'othering'. Those on the side of the debate voting in favour of legalisation of abortion, for example, were deemed by those on the opposing side to be responsible for murder and guilty of putting women in danger (2021, pp. 8-9). In Wang's (2022) analysis of legitimation strategies in political rhetoric, Reyes' (2011) framework is combined with that of van Leeuwen's (2007). The political rhetoric examined is taken from speeches made by Donald Trump in the United States and Xi Jinping in China on the Covid 19 pandemic, specifically on action taken by the governments to contain the spread of the disease. It was found that the legitimation strategy of appeal to emotions (Reyes 2011) was prevalent in the speeches to instill a sense of fear and to describe a terrifying

situation. This was combined with all four legitimation strategies in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework to justify action being taken to address those fears. Given the focus on sexual assault against women in this thesis and the underlying rhetoric of victimhood in discourses produced by the Alt-Right and Manosphere, it is predicted that legitimation based on discourse features pertaining to emotion will be present in the data (see also Lundgren and Nilsson (2018) for the analysis of legitimation strategies concerning 'emotion').

2.8   Mythopoesis and narrative analysis

The fourth legitimation strategy in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework is *mythopoesis,* that is, legitimation through narratives. Within this category of legitimation, van Leeuwen distinguishes between two types of narrative. In the first, moral tales, the protagonist is seen to be rewarded for doing the right thing and participating in what is seen as legitimate social practice (2007, p. 105). In their analysis of rhetorical discourse around conflicts between government and unions, Reshef and Keim interpret this strategy as showing the audience "exemplary behaviour that enforces social norms vis-à-vis an experience to which they can relate" (2014, p. 151). The second type of mythopoesis, that of cautionary tales*,* are narratives which lead to unhappy endings for protagonists who have not adhered to social norms (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 106). van Leeuwen (2007) does not define 'narrative' in his framework or offer specific linguistic strategies to identify mythopoesis but relies on the readers' interpretation of 'storytelling' to place legitimising language in this category. In an earlier discussion of this strategy, van Leeuwen and Wodak note, however, that only negative stories provide this function of legitimation (1999, p. 110). Ascertaining what constitutes a 'negative' story, however, is again left to the receiver. This legitimation strategy therefore seems to rely on the process of the storytelling itself, rather than specific linguistic markers to legitimise actions and beliefs. As Tiainen points out, this strategy stands out as being distinct to the other three in the legitimation framework (i.e. *authorisation*, *rationalisation* and *moral legitimation*) as it is, fundamentally, based on genre, rather than linguistic features (2017, p. 407)

Despite the differentiation in the moral and cautionary outcomes of the storytelling in van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategy framework, it is conceivable that a narrative may comprise an amalgamation of the two. Reshef and Keim argue that these two storytelling outcomes are often embedded within each other (2014, p. 152), making any analysis of legitimation through these separate storytelling tropes problematic. To circumvent this issue, Vaara's (2014) application of mythopoesis, to analyse discourses (de)legitimising the Eurozone, adopts the concept of *imaginaries* to take into account the combined moral and cautionary aspects of storytelling (2014, p. 512). This notion of imaginaries, put forward by Fairclough and Thomas, considers "projections of possible alternative realities, visions of possible futures,…as well as misrepresentations of existing realities" (2004, p. 383), and so does not rely on the differentiation of moral and cautionary foundations in the storytelling. In the analysis of ideological stance in the Eurozone crises, Vaara (2014) found that imaginaries include 'nightmare scenarios' (2014, p. 512) and 'hyperbolic

dramatisation' (ibid., p. 513) in (de)legitimising discourses. These also feature as (de)legitimation strategies through mythopoesis in Ross and Rivers' (2017) study of internet memes on the U.S. presidential election campaigns of 2016, specifically to delegitimise Hillary Clinton and her campaign while legitimising Trump and his proposed policies.

The literature on narrative for (de)legitimation, therefore, seems to indicate a move away from van Leeuwen's (2007) moral and cautionary tales differentiation within mythopoesis. Instead, it indicates a move towards a more generic consideration of narrativised imagined/projected alternative realities or misrepresented current situations, particularly with a pessimistic and exaggerated outlook. These alternative realities through storytelling can be essential for the interpretation and legitimising of collective social norms by giving meaning through context (van Dijk 1976, p. 554; Seargeant 2020, p.6), while being flexible enough to incorporate changing frames and schemata through narratives according to new experiences (Tannen and Wallat 1993, p. 61).

An alternative approach to using mythopoesis in legitimation analysis has also been put forward by Bennett (2022). The author acknowledges the lack of detail in van Leeuwen's (2007) mythopoesis strategy for legitimation and suggests this has resulted in very few studies integrating this strategy in legitimation analyses. It also heavily criticises the moral versus cautionary tale dichotomy as being contrived and ineffective (2022, p. 371). Using the context of historical narratives on the European Union's foundation and how these have been used to legitimise its principal philosophies, Bennett (2022) proposes a new two-fold framework for the application of mythopoesis. The suggested framework relies on the understanding that storytelling is based on intertextuality and the relocating of stories taken from elsewhere being ideologically recontextualised (ibid., p. 375). The first stage of the framework, at the macro-level, involves analysing these recontextualisations to examine which topics have been included and which backgrounded. Then, a micro-level clausal and sentence analysis is carried out to ascertain how the topics are structured, how social actors are represented, and how rhetorical devices are employed (ibid., p. 376). Bennett's (2022) more comprehensive development of mythopoetic legitimation analysis, with its inclusion of topics from recontextualised narratives, use of the Labovian framework for their analysis, and consideration of social actors, closely mirrors the approach taken in this thesis through CEDA. However, where the former study focuses on historical myths, this research project examines the recontextualisation of narratives informed by personal experience or news reports.

The range of literature on the linguistic analysis of narratives is phenomenally wide. This review of narrative studies, therefore, will be limited to those which relate directly to the themes in this thesis or to outline the basis for the methodology and analysis in the proceeding chapters. Section 2.8.1 examines how legitimation through narrative discourses has been found in extremist online content, thus giving the rationale for research sub-question 3 and the role of narratives in the Alt-

Right and Manosphere blog posts. Then, Section 2.8.2 outlines the discourse analytical framework applied in the analyses of narratives in this thesis, namely the sociolinguistic approach put forward by Labov and Waletzky (1967, 1997). The review, while acknowledging the framework's critics, justifies its inclusion in this study and discusses comparable studies where it has been applied.

2.8.1   Narratives in extremism discourse

Research sub-question 3: *What role do narrative discourses play in the (de)legitimation and framing of sexual violence against women?* aims to establish the extent to which narratives are present in the posts collected from the Alt-Right and Manosphere blogs (see Section 2.8.2 for discussions on the identification of narrative content). In the absence of real world contact and face-to-face involvement, the Alt-Right and factions within the Manosphere must rely on their online environment to produce the type of material that will engage and educate devotees as well as entice new members. Research into the communication of extremist groups has found that narratives are one of the most prevalent types of discourse and are readily used to "the assimilation of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions' consistent with the group's ideology" (Braddock and Horgan 2016, p. 385). Braddock outlines three ways in which this can happen: by encouraging identification with the characters in the narrative; generating emotional reactions; and defining in- and out-group boundaries (2015, p. 50). An example of these strategies is given by Wodak when describing the ways in which fascist leaders use mythopoesis to supposedly legitimise their acts and beliefs as being for the benefit of the people (2015, p. 10).

The process of legitimation through the storytelling frames and narratives has been examined by researchers in fields of study relevant to this project. For example, Myketiak (2016) analysed how Rodger, who identified as incel (see Table 2.2), attempted to legitimise his mass shooting. Marcks and Pawelz (2020) found in their study of anti-immigration campaigns in Germany that emotional reactions and in-group and out-group boundaries were generated through narratives of imperilment, conspiracy and inequality. They found that these were then combined to establish the narrative of national threat and how violence was then framed as self-defence. This reframing process through the identification of rhetorical devices and how they combine to reframe violence will be applied to the analyses in this thesis.

Despite the scholarly interest in narratives produced by extremists, there has been a lack of research to date which has analysed the structural elements of these narratives. Previous research on discourses taken from sites run by extremist groups has focused instead on theme or sentiment analysis within the narratives (see, for example, Bennett Furlow and Goodall, 2011; Braddock, 2015; Marcks and Pawelz, 2020; Scrivens et al., 2020; and Singh, 2020). As this study is based on data already selected for its theme (content relating to R/SA), it offers a different perspective as to how the structures within the narratives are organised within that frame. An exception to the bias towards content rather than structure in the analysis of extremist discourses is the study by Dayter and Rüdiger (2016, 2022), in which they examined the 'field reports' of pick-up artists (see

Section2.4.3) in an online forum. The reports, which were examined through a Labovian analytical lens (see Section 2.8.2 below), detailed the men's self-reported successes and failures in 'game' (see Table 2.2). The data examined in that study, however, derive from forum posts which are shorter and more interactional than the data sources used in this thesis.

2.8.2   Narrative analysis

Research sub-question 4 asks: *To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the narrative structure affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?* To address this question, it is necessary to examine the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts from a micro-level perspective (Bennett 2022). Definitions as to what constitutes a 'narrative' in linguistic terms seem open to debate (Hoffmann 2010, p. 2; Gabriel 2015, p. 288) and to be continually developing (Holstein and Gubrium 2012, p. 4). In its most basic form (*minimal narrative*), it can be argued that a narrative includes "a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered" (Labov 2014, p. 204). Toolan's minimalist definition includes the necessity for events in those clauses to be causally linked through a perceived sequence (2001, p. 6). The presence of a causal link between events helps coherence and unifies segments to make the narrative more complete (Hoffmann 2010, p. 3). In narratives in discourses from extremist groups, for example, causality among temporal clauses have been identified as essential for *psychological transportation* (Braddock 2020, p. 78), that is, to immerse readers in the story world being created and effectively separating the story world from the real world (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008, p. 258). Extending the definitions above, Hoffmann suggests that, as well as a narrative sequence, there should be evidence of evaluative investment in the events which indicates the stance taken by the narrator (2010, p. 3). In the analysis in this thesis, *external* and *embedded* evaluation (i.e. expressed separately from the ongoing narrative or incorporated into the text through strategies such as direct speech) (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 99) will be considered. Hoffmann's (2010) definition provides the basis for the categorisation of narrative material from blogs in this study (see Sections 3.5.2 and 6.3.2), with the presence of the three elements: temporality, causality and evaluation, informing my initial categorisation of what online material can be tagged as a 'narrative post'.

Labov & Waletzky's sociolinguistic approach to narrative analysis

The narrative framework adopted in this thesis, used to analyse the narrative discourses identified within the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts, is Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) sociolinguistic approach to narratives. This framework, later refined by Labov (1972), was developed from oral personal accounts given by participants asked to describe a situation in which they were in danger of death (Labov and Waletzky 1997, p. 5). Based firmly within the structuralist school of narratology (Bruner 1997), the analysis focused on identifying the function of clauses within these Personal Experience Narratives (PENs) (Johnstone 2001, p. 637). Six components were identified as having distinct referential or evaluative functions within a narrative (ibid. pp. 27-

37), five of which Labov (1972, p. 370) later recommended as being framed as questions, as detailed below:

1. *abstract*: what is the story about?
2. *orientation*: who are the characters? Where and when does the story take place?
3. *complicating action*: what happened?
4. *evaluation*: why is the story relevant / what is the narrator's attitude to what happened?
5. *resolution*: what finally happened?
6. *coda*: explains how this narrative relates to the present situation (and signals that there are no more questions to answer)

This framework enables detailed structural analysis at the clause and sentence level of the narrative and so allows for comparisons to be drawn between narrative data (Patterson 2013, p. 33), an essential criterion for addressing the research questions in this comparative study of Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses. Essentially, it offers a way of analysing *how* a story is told and how components are organised for rhetorical purposes (Riessman 1993, p. 3). It also allows for an investigation into how social actor representations are placed within the narrative discourses in order to frame the sexual violence narratives (research sub-question 4). For example, it is expected that these representations will feature more prominently in the 'orientation' component (see Evans' (2019) study of 'care leaver' identity construction within the Labovian framework) and may differ in the 'evaluation' through the expression of attitudes towards the social actors (Georgakopoulou 2006, p .92), particularly in terms of in-group and out-group representations in this study.

Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) canonical schematic framework, while being highly influential in narrative studies (Johnston 2001, p. 639), has been heavily criticised for its inflexible nature and overly-simplistic categorisation of components that may require a delineation which is contrived (Edwards 2010, pp. 216-217). One extension of this is the ways in which the six narrative components can have both referential and evaluative functions (Patterson 2013, p. 36). For example reported speech elements can often function as both moving the story forward as complicating actions as well as functioning as an embedded evaluation of the events (de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2012, pp. 32-33). Therefore, coding the components can be challenging. The framework also fails to take into consideration the role of the receiver in meaning negotiation (Hoffmann 2010, p. 7) and the context in which the narrative originated (Patterson 2013, p. 13; de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2015, p. 10). The scheme's overt focus on structural elements, and its appeal of having such a clear paradigm for analysing stories, has been argued to have been at the detriment of more flexible, nuanced approaches to narrative analysis (see, for example, critique by Ryan, 2004; Bamberg, 2006; Martin and Rose, 2008; de Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). Departures from this structuralist paradigm of narrative analysis have led to alternative approaches to narrative analysis being developed, including, *inter alia*: work on collaborative, or 'multidimensional' aspects of narrative (Ochs and Capps 2001); social-interactional, or narrative practice approaches ('small story' narratives) (see, among others, Bamberg, 2006; Bamberg and

Georgakopoulou, 2008; Page, 2010; 2018); narrative analysis of social practice in organisational settings (Gabriel 2015) and narrative construction through interview interactions (Mishler 1991); and the analysis of narrative construction in sociocultural practices such as legal settings (Heffer, 2012; 2018).

For the analysis of how narratives on sexual violence against women are framed in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts, the structuralist Labovian approach to their analyses is apposite. By placing the narrative analysis within van Dijk's (2011) critical epistemic discourse analysis (CEDA) framework (see Figure 2.1), the narratives are contextualised. The narrative discourses from the blogs fall under the non-interactional, single-narrator (Hyvärinen 2015, p. 187), 'big story' (Bamberg 2006) paradigm which focus on "highly tellable topics,… are relatively decontextualized, have a clear moral stance and have a defined macro-level linear structure" which suits the application of the framework (Page 2018, p. 9). A comparable context to the one in this thesis is given in Elharraki's (2019) socio-cognitive analysis of discourses of women who had been subjected to sexual violence within their marriage (see previous discussion in Section 2.7.2). The author applies the Labovian framework to the women's narratives, as well as integrating this with van Leeuwen's (2007) framework of legitimation strategies. The findings indicate a correlation between the construction of their victimhood and their husbands' demonisation in their discourses through embedded and external evaluation (Labov 1972) and through moral evaluation (van Leeuwen 2007).

The narratives in the blog posts in this study involve personal anecdotes as well as the recontextualisation of others' experiences via intertextual references to news stories on sexual violence against women (see Section 6.3.2). These recontextualisations could be classed as including an organisational perspective to narratives, or *non-participant narratives,* whereby the narrator is neither participant or witness to the events but appeals instead to the collective schema of the group members (Renkema and Schubert 2018, p. 262). However, the focus of the analysis in this thesis is on the structure of the narrative and, as news reports have been found to include the Labovian components (Bell 1991; Bareiss 2014; van Krieken and Sanders 2017), how these are reorganized to reframe the accounts. The functions of *sensemaking* (conveying values and explanations for events) and *knowledge dissemination* (sharing reports on experience), which have been identified as often being present in non-participant narratives (Gabriel 2015), are included in the analysis of the blog posts through the integration of social actor analysis and its overall positioning within the CEDA framework.

Hypernarratives
Online narratives in blogs can draw upon multiple semiotic resources, either present on the page, or through the inclusion of hyperlinks: embedded electronic links to other webpages, blog posts or online files. These are usually indicated by a word highlighted in the text (Myers 2010, p. 30). The links give the reader a choice whether to access the incorporated material (or not) and experience

the narrative elements in multiple layers across different sources, while not affecting the overall narrativity of the text (Ryan 2004, p. 354). The resultant *hypernarrative,* a term derived from *hypertext*, which was coined by Ted Nelson (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 87), has been described as having four prominent features: multi-linearity (access to features that offer many temporal reading orders); fragmentation (employing text units – or 'nodes' – which connect to comprise a narrative but in a granular fashion); interactivity (allowing deliberate choices to be made about accessing content); and multimodality (the presence of different semiotic modes which, in the context of online content, includes modes relating to audio and visual channels) (ibid., pp. 87-92).

The key study regarding the application of the Labovian theoretical framework on the narrative blog posts in this thesis is Eisenlauer and Hoffmann's (2010) paper on weblog narration. Eisenlauer and Hoffmann successfully applied Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) sociolinguistic approach to the analysis of narrative structure on the blogs, albeit with the complicating actions and coda found to be often highly fragmented (2010, pp. 98-100). The use of Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) sociolinguistic approach to narrative analysis on blogs has been supported more recently by de Fina (2016) in the analysis of online narratives. The analysis shows that, in contrast to narratives found on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, narratives on personal blogs and fora which have social or political objectives often do follow this scheme (2016, p. 477).[12]

Despite the critical responses to Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) approach to narrative analysis and the range of alternative approaches available, these studies and the preceding considerations justify its application to the narrative discourses taken from the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts. In applying this structuralist approach and combining the social actor representation analysis (see Section 2.6 and Chapter 4), I will be able to ascertain how the narrative components function in order to frame discussions on sexual violence.

2.9   Summary

The above sections have provided a critical review of the literature relating to the theoretical foundation for this thesis - van Dijk's (2011a) CEDA approach to sociocognitive discourse analysis - to address the overarching research question: *How is rape and sexual assault framed in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses and what similarities and/or differences does this framing reveal about the ideologies of these two extreme right-wing communities?* In Part 1 of this chapter, the *social context* for this study was examined, namely the evolution and present manifestation of both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere. The sections indicated possible influences which will help determine ideological alignment and interpretation of the data analyses in the following chapters.

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[12] see also Dayter (2015) who found the scheme applied in longer Twitter threats, effectively considered microblogs (Zappavigna 2012)).

Part 2 detailed and justified the theoretical frameworks which will be employed in those analyses, all of which relate to discourse structures and strategies establishing *knowledge representations* (see Table 2.1).

The review of literature in this chapter highlighted a number of areas to which this thesis contributes. First, there is limited research on the MRA subcommunity of the Manosphere, particularly in relation to intracommunity discussions on sexual violence or on ascribed and inhabited identities in MRA discourses. Secondly, the extent to which this subcommunity overlaps in ideological stance with the Alt-Right is also under-researched. Although it has been established that both of these groups are 'misogynistic', how this actually manifests is unclear. Following work on the prevalence of narratives in extremist discourses, this thesis also aims to support or challenge the extent to which they are used in Alt-Right and Manosphere blogs. Finally, from a theoretical perspective, and considering the move away from mythopoesis as a legitimation strategy, the findings in this thesis will build on the body of literature which is starting to reestablish how narratives are used to legitimise actions and beliefs. The following chapter outlines the methodologies adopted in the collection and preparation of data for analyses (Chapter 3). This is followed by three analysis chapters to address the sub-questions outlined in Section 1.3. A discussion of the main findings is given in Chapter 7.

Chapter 3: Methods

3.1   Introduction

To address my research questions and focus on the ways identity and rape are (re)framed in discourses produced by the Alt-Right and the Manosphere, I needed to collect data derived from specific sites online. As outlined in Section1.2, the focus of this project is an examination of sites that potentially indicate ideological convergence or divergence between the Alt-Right and the Manosphere so specialised corpora that allow for a detailed investigation into the online discourses produced by these groups were necessary (Koester 2010, p. 67). Following Flowerdew's (2004) parameters in defining specialised corpora, those that are used in this study can be classed as highly specialised as they are built for a specific purpose; are particularly contextualised; are from the same general genre (websites); and are of the same text type (i.e. blog posts) (2004, p.21). This approach follows comparable studies on specialised corpora constructed to examine highly specific language from a set context (see, for example, Brindle's (2016) examination of masculinity indexed in the white nationalist *Stormfront* forum and Hardaker and McGlashan's (2016) corpus study of rape threats on Twitter).

The data collection process involved developing a sampling frame that had two distinct aims: 1) to identify the online sites that explicitly self-identify as Alt-Right or Manosphere and which share an online affinity[13] and, 2) to sample data on these sites which discuss sexual violence against women rather than a focus on nationalistic rhetoric, racist or ethnoreligious-based invective. Selecting data to address my research questions involved targeting the most relevant websites within the far-right network. Therefore, the first part of the data collection process was realised through the affordances of a network analysis and application of network visualisation software to identify which sites could provide the data for the study (Section 3.2). From these sites, subsampling criteria were used to collect published posts (Section 3.2.4).

Two points should be mentioned here in relation to the approaches taken in collecting the data for the corpus. Firstly, an *emic* approach was applied in this research where possible: "Emic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the native members of the culture whose beliefs and behaviours are being studied*."* (Lett 1990, p.130). This approach underpins the decision-making at various stages of the process in this project, particularly with regard to how the online sites were categorised, coded, and selected for data collection (see Section 3.2.2), and follows the approach in Taylor's (2014) corpus-assisted discourse study based on how

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[13] This is considered here as relating to a virtual, shared ideological association and the endorsement of ideological goals (Burris et al. 2000, p. 216)

newspapers interpret racism and xenophobia as opposed to the researcher's interpretation[14]. For this present study, sites are categorised (for example as 'Alt-Right') if they explicitly self-identify that way. This can be contrasted to the *etic* perspective which is based on the constructs of a "community of scientific observers" (Lett 1990, p. 131). An *etic* approach has been adopted in studies of far-right sites such as that carried out by Burris et al. (2000), which identified sites from an outsider's perspective and which, arguably, impose a false categorisation on the data. While it can be acknowledged that some sites may deliberately not categorise themselves in a particular way but may include semiotic indices that clearly imply a particular alignment (e.g. having swastikas on the site but not identifying as far right), it was important to ensure that the discourses were being analysed through the specific ideological lens of their producers and readers (Willis 2007, p. 100). Given the difficulties in demarcating specific ideological positions, especially within the complexities of the far right (see Section 2.2) and from an outsider's perspective, it was imperative that the data collection was based on the self-identification of sites (see Barber, 2021 for a more in-depth discussion the challenges of this approach).

The second point regarding the approach taken for data collection relates to the overall method. I decided to collect the data from the sites manually, as opposed to using a scraping programme to compile a web-based dataset (Guiliano and Ridge 2016). Two main considerations led me to adopt this method. Firstly, the data collection period was time-sensitive as there was a risk that the sites I was looking at would be taken offline by platform service providers[15], particularly after the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville in August 2017 (Farrell 2017). As I would have had to spend time developing and refining a scraping tool for each site, collecting the data manually mitigated the risk of missing out on access. Secondly, the process of checking and discarding any replicated data would have taken a significant amount of time. With both of these factors in mind, I decided to proceed with the data collection manually. A discussion on the merits of this method are discussed in Section 7.2.

This chapter starts an explanation of how the data sampling frame was devised (Section 3.2) and the approach I took in identifying relevant sources. Following the outline of this process, Section 3.4 gives an overview of the corpora in the study. Section 3.5 details how the corpus was marked up in preparation for the analysis. Finally, considerations as to the ethical and legal issues in collecting these data are given in Section 3.6, particularly as the protracted process of gaining ethical clearance has influenced this project in terms of the data sources used, the logistics of accessing them, and the management of the data.

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[14] see also Askanius (2019) for discussions on applying this approach to investigating neo-Nazi propaganda and Olive (2014) and Stauntson (2021) for examples of this approach examining discourses produced by and self-identifying gay, lesbian, bisexual and/or queer students.
[15] Examples include Blogger or Wordpress

3.2   Sampling framework: Site selection

Before being able to draft a sampling framework for data collection, it was necessary to become familiar with the online environment being analysed. A list of criteria and codes could then be established with which to analyse the section of that environment where Alt-Right and Manosphere sites are located.

3.2.1   Initial investigations into far-right sites

An initial investigation into the far-right sites which I could access online was carried out. This involved looking at a number of websites identified by Hawley (2017) and Wendling (2018) as being influential within the Alt-Right. These are listed below:

- *4chan*
- *8chan (now 8kun)*
- *AltRight.com*
- *American Conservative*
- *American Renaissance*
- *Breitbart*
- *Counter Currents*
- *The Daily Beast*
- *The Daily Shoah*

- *The Daily Stormer*
- *National Review*
- *The Occidental Observer*
- *The Occidental Quarterly*
- *Radix*
- *Reddit (/r/The_Donald)*
- *The Right Stuff*
- *Taki's Magazine*
- *VDare*

By scanning these sites and following the hyperlinks that were embedded in them, it was possible to gain a greater understanding of the different ways in which sites within this area of the network self-identify; clicking on the 'About' tab or reading the straplines and mission statements on the sites often revealed the affiliation of the site. For example, this opening sample from the mission statement of *The Occidental Observer* (Figure 3.1) gave a clear indication of its white nationalist leanings (underlined) and Figure 3.2 shows how Alex Fontana's blog demonstrates alignment with the Alt-Right (circled).

Figure 3.1: Screenshot from the Occidental Observer's Mission Statement (30th April 2019)

Figure 3.2. Strapline from www.alexfontana.wordpress.com (30/4/19)

The initial exploration revealed a total of nineteen different ways in which sites self-identified (for example, as Alt-Right, White Nationalist, Neoreactionary, belonging to the Manosphere, Conservative, or Christian Right). These categorisations are referred to in this chapter as 'factions'. As DiSalvo (2012) explains, the term 'factions' encompasses subunits of a general political ideology (in this case, right wing) that present as movements, cliques, alliances, blocs, and which have an ideological consistency outside the main political parties. Therefore, using this umbrella term allows for categorisation without having to ascertain whether each one is a movement or an alliance; a complex process which extends beyond the focus of this study. A complete list of the nineteen factions in the network analysis can be found in Appendix 1.

The investigation allowed me to gauge the type of content that was posted on the sites, which seemed to range from having a purely text-based information stream to incorporating podcasts, YouTube videos, gifs, photos, or other graphics such as graphs or animated scenes. It also informed my coding process (detailed in Section 3.2.2) and led me to the Alt-Right aggregator sites, *Alt-Right Portal*[16] and *Shitlord Hub*[17]. These two sites promote and collate all other online content which relates to the far right, effectively providing me with an epicentre of the far-right online environment from which I could begin constructing my network analysis. Finally, the investigation helped me to narrow my sampling frame and draft some parameters as to which sites would be included in the network analysis.

3.2.2   Network analysis for data source selection

Derived from network analyses that map connections among communities on social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, social network analysis (SNA) has also been used by researchers to analyse connections between far-right communities linked through websites and blogs (see, for example, Tateo, 2006 and Caiani and Wagemann, 2009). The first study to develop this methodology within this context was carried out by Burris et al., 2000) on the interorganisational structure of the white supremacist movement by "treating links between internet websites as ties of affinity, communication, or potential coordination" (p. 215). The researchers used the websites as the 'nodes' in the analysis and the connections between them as the 'edges' to determine whether there were splits within the movement or, instead, evidence of a growing cyber-community. The study focused on the relationships between the factions and lends support to the idea that 'soft-core' sites can act as pathways to the more extreme 'hard-core' sites within the white supremacist online environment (ibid., p. 232). These points and the context in which the study was based are particularly relevant to the aims of this project.

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[16] http://nxx14.blogspot.com/
[17] http://theshitlordhub.blogspot.com/

Alt-Right aggregator Sites

Four Alt-Right aggregator sites exist within the far-right online environment, however, *Alt Right Portal* and *Shitlord Hub* were the only two that were actively posting content during this period. Having checked the links contained on them, it was clear that they included a wide and representative selection of Alt-Right sites, many of which had been recorded during the initial investigation stage. A summary of these two aggregator sites can be seen in Table 3.1 and screenshots from the two sites follow in Figure 3.3 and Figure 3.4.

	Alt Right Portal	*Shitlord Hub*
URL Address	www.nxx14.blogspot.com	www.theshitlordhub.blogspot.com
Publishing software	*Blogger*	*Blogger*
Content	• RSS Feed of posts from linked sites • Alt-Right TV channels • Top 10 Alt-Right websites • List of blogs • 'Alt-Right Classics' (most read posts) • Daily readership figures for the top 25 sites • Links to the '16 Points'[18] in different languages • Ways to support the site	• Recommended sites (listed alphabetically) • Five recent post titles for each site • Alt-Right YouTube channels

Table 3.1. Summary of the aggregator sites used

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[18] A manifesto written by Vox Day for the Alt-Right outlining its core beliefs (found at: www.voxday.blogspot.com /2016/08/what-alt-right-is.html)
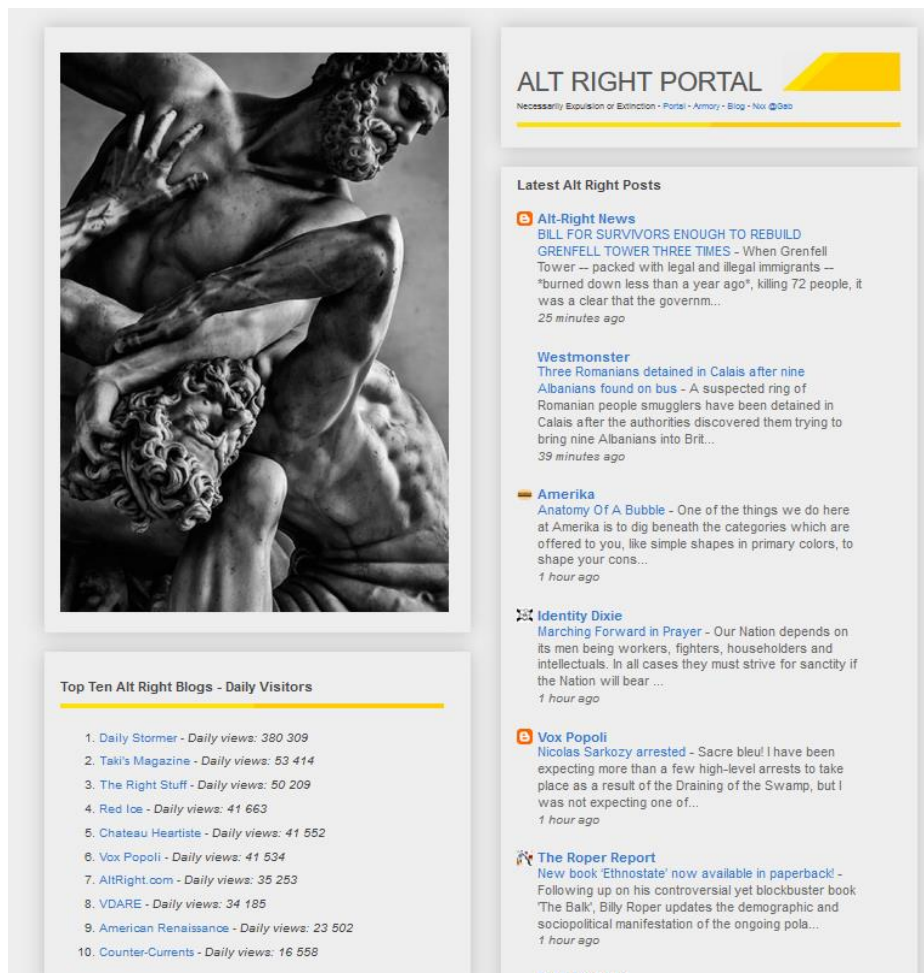
Figure 3.3: Screenshot of the Alt-Right Portal (19th March 2018)
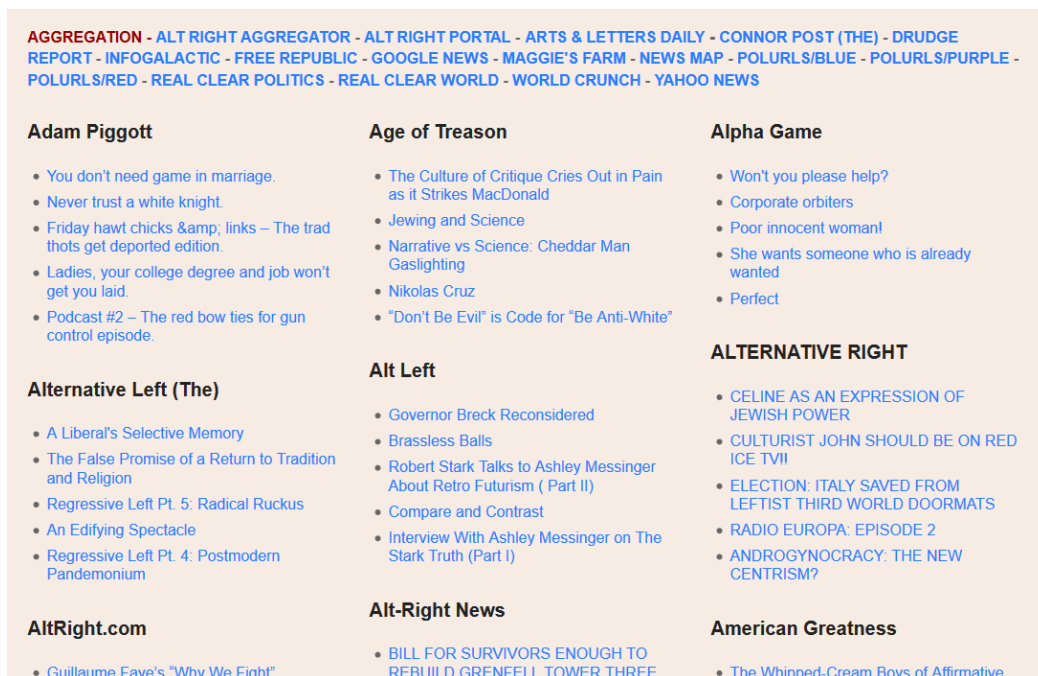
Figure 3.4: Screenshot of Shitlord Hub (19th March 2018)

Using *Alt Right Portal* and *Shitlord Hub* as my starting point, I recorded each site they provided links to in their recommendations (referred to here as 'primary sites'), and then which

recommended sites these subsequently linked to ('secondary sites'). The details of this process are given in the following section.

Recommended sites

It was important to ensure that my network analysis showed affinity and positive communication between the sites to avoid it becoming simply a representation of a generic network. As a key aspect of study is also examining the relationship between the Alt-Right and the Manosphere, I needed to establish which sites within these factions shared communication links and ties. Studies on blogging and online communities highlight the role of hyperlinks in enabling homogeneity between like-minded groups (Shumate and Lipp 2008; Myers 2010), and in building a structure of continuous ties and associations which form "a collective territory composed of interconnected social networks" (Park and Jankowski 2008). Fu and Shumate (2017) point out that the inclusion of a hyperlink is not random but part of a communicative strategy to associate with others (p. 54). A key part of this study is to examine whether linguistic features also index affinity between the two factions on which I am focusing.

This sub-section discusses two types of hyperlinks found on the primary and secondary sites in this study: 1) those that are permanent links and which direct readers to other sites (external), usually in the form of a 'blogroll' (Park and Jankowski 2008, p. 61), and 2) those that are embedded within the discourses and which make up its hypertextual structure (Jones and Hafner 2012, p. 37), either redirecting the reader to an alternative post within the site (internal) or to an external source. This latter category of hyperlinks will be discussed in Section 3.5.63.5.6 in relation to how the embedded links were annotated. In this section, only external hyperlinks to recommended sites are considered.

Following these points, the secondary sites had to be either conclusively or neutrally recommended or endorsed by the primary sites. This meant that any mention of sites being linked purely as an act of reciprocity or where the author had explicitly stated that he/she does not endorse the hyperlinked sites led to those links being ignored. Examples of this could be found on the site *Delenda est Carthago*, where the hyperlinks were organised under the heading "Folks Who Link To DeC". Although the author had included links, the impression given was that they were reciprocal and were perhaps being used as a way of bragging about the popularity of the site. On *Majority Rights*, the author expressly states "endorsement not implied" next to his list of hyperlinks. Similarly, on YouTube, the secondary sites were those collected from the "Subscriptions" of the primary sites, not those that tagged "Related Channels" as these are generated through an algorithm on the platform and not actively set up by the channel owner.

The sites included a range of affirmative expressions to indicate an affinity for the secondary sites to which they link. Many used variations on the phrase "Recommended Reading" or "Recommended Sites" and others were more imaginative or effusive, as can be seen in Table 3.2.

Where no information was given in relation to the hyperlinks, the sites they directed the reader to were included in the collection of secondary sites.

Site Name	Phrases used to recommend linked sites
Captain Capitalism	The Captain's Lieutenants
Cold Fury	Big Dogs
Eradica	Kings and Queens
Hail To You	Ten Most Valuable Websites
Radio Ayran	Associated Content
Rantburg	Better than the average link
Scar Tissue	Sites of interest
The Marcus Review	Great sites to visit
Weird and Pissed Off	Sites of great importance

Table 3.2. Examples of how affinity is indexed on blogrolls

As expected, there was significant overlap between the sites listed on the two aggregators. I deleted repeated site names and applied the following parameters for further exclusion to ensure the data was appropriate to address the research sub-questions.

Parameters for exclusion

The initial investigation into the far-right websites showed that many issues were being discussed on the sites from the perspective of a wide variety of factions. In order to manage the amount of data I collected and in line with my initial justifications, the following criteria were applied to exclude primary and secondary sites from the network analysis:

1. **Language**: Sites containing content in languages other than English
2. **Restricted access**: Sites which required a log-in or sign-up
3. **Inactivity**: Active sites posting content from outside the data collection period (from January 2016 to December 2017 – See Section 3.3.1) or which had fewer than five posts
4. **Topicality**: Content which did not focus on current affairs, general discussion, opinion or news
5. **Re-posted content**: Sites which were set up to collate or repost content from other sites

The first and second criteria were established for purely practical reasons although it should be acknowledged at this stage that they contribute to the limitations of the analysis (which will be discussed in Chapter 7). Very few sites had content in languages other than English but it was felt that translating those that were would be prohibitively time-consuming and, given the context-dependent uniqueness of the expressions used on these sites, translations may have been either unreliable or problematic. Regarding the second criterion, I wanted a network analysis that showed sites that were accessible to all readers and, from my own perspective, did not involve the risk of having to give any personal information to gain admission. Criterion 3 relates to the relevance of the data in the network analysis. Some of the sites I accessed had little content and had clearly been abandoned but not shut down. It seemed likely that sites with fewer than five posts would not be regularly viewed by readers. Criterion 4 eliminated content which was seen as tangential to my study and unrelated to my research sub-questions. Some sites, for example, focused on financial

services or on detailed information about weaponry which were not in the purview of the study. The same criteria were used for video and podcast sites.

Coding the nodes and edges

After applying the parameters outlined above for selecting the sites to include in the network analysis, 170 primary sites were identified. The hyperlinks embedded on these primary sites were then followed and, after the criteria were applied again, this led to a further 537 secondary sites. Figure 3.5 below outlines this process.
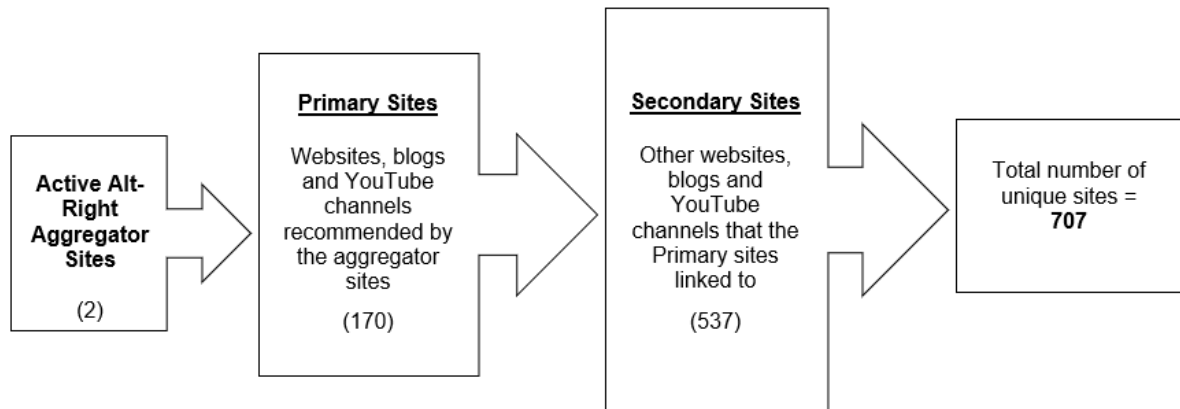
Figure 3.5: Node selection process

Preparing the website data for the network analysis involved two stages. For the first stage, the 707 websites (the *nodes*) needed to be coded depending on their faction. This involved checking all the websites once to determine 1) how many there were, and 2) the faction to which they belonged. Each node was numbered (this number was the source ID) and categorised according to faction. Stage 2 involved checking all the websites again to record the links between the 707 sites (the *edges*). If a site had an active hyperlink to another of the 707 sites, that link was recorded on an Excel spreadsheet.

As mentioned in Section 3.2.1, nineteen different factions were identified from the websites and are listed in Appendix 1. As I was taking an emic approach and did not want to use my own interpretation of the content to determine the sites' identities, any site that did not explicitly state how it identified was not categorised in any way (the site was included in the analysis but the faction field was left blank). Of the 707 sites in the analysis, 368 (52.05%) were unable to be classified as self-identifying as any particular faction (see Appendix 1for the percentage breakdown). A total of 707 sites (nodes) and 4492 links (edges) were recorded and used in the analysis. The whole process was completed within approximately 150 hours, from 8th January to 9th February 2018.

3.2.3 The visualisation of the network and target population

The software used for the final stage of the network analysis was *Gephi*[19]. This software is employed in a range of disciplines to produce network visualisation and transform the data into a map (Bruns 2012). The algorithm I selected was ForceAtlas2, a force-directed layout used for network spatialization (Jacomy et al. 2014, p. 4). Effectively, this algorithm causes the nodes to repel and the edges to attract. The natural inclination of the nodes, therefore, is to move as far away from each other as possible but those that are connected by edges are drawn towards each other. This results in turning "structural proximities into visual proximities" (ibid., p. 2) with nodes sharing denser connections being grouped together. Conversely, nodes with no shared connections are displayed furthest apart.

Having run the data through the algorithm; colour-coded the different factions (see Appendix 1); and applied an extra 'Label Adjust' setting to spread the nodes slightly to ensure the site names were easy to see, a visualisation of the network (shown in Figure 3.6) was generated. As the producers of the algorithm point out, the location of the nodes in themselves are not symbolic (i.e. whether they are in the top right or top left-hand corner of the map) but their position in relation to the others *is* (Jacomy et al. 2014). This relative positioning is precisely what I was aiming to achieve in order to select the most appropriate sites to investigate my research questions as it highlights where the Alt-Right and the Manosphere intersect in terms of online affinity. The full network analysis visualization can be seen in Appendix 2. In Figure 3.6, a basic infographic shows the four key coloured sections of the network analysis and a summary of the main factions present in those areas of the network. Figure 3.7 then shows both a zoomed-out, impressionistic view of the whole network and a detail of the key intersection. Details of the coloured factions then follow.
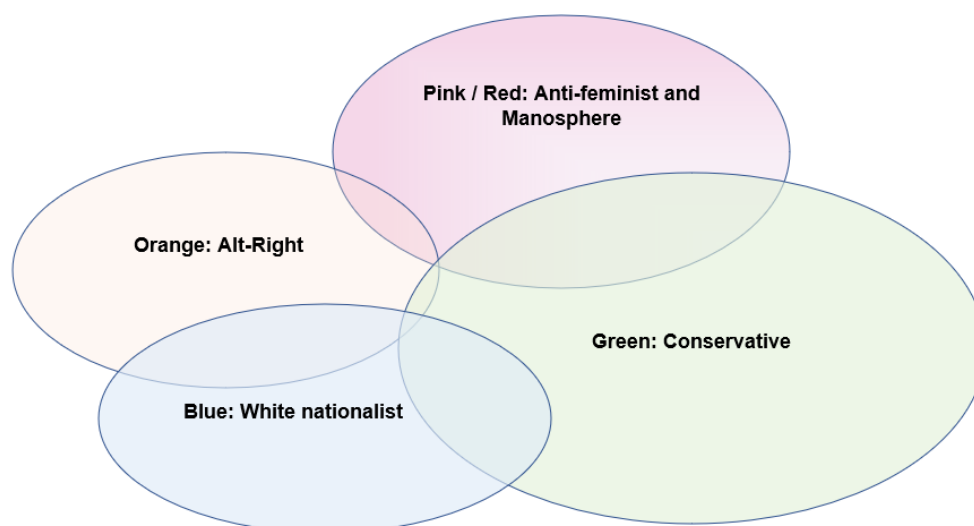
Figure 3.6: Overview infographic of key sections of the network analysis

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[19] https://gephi.org
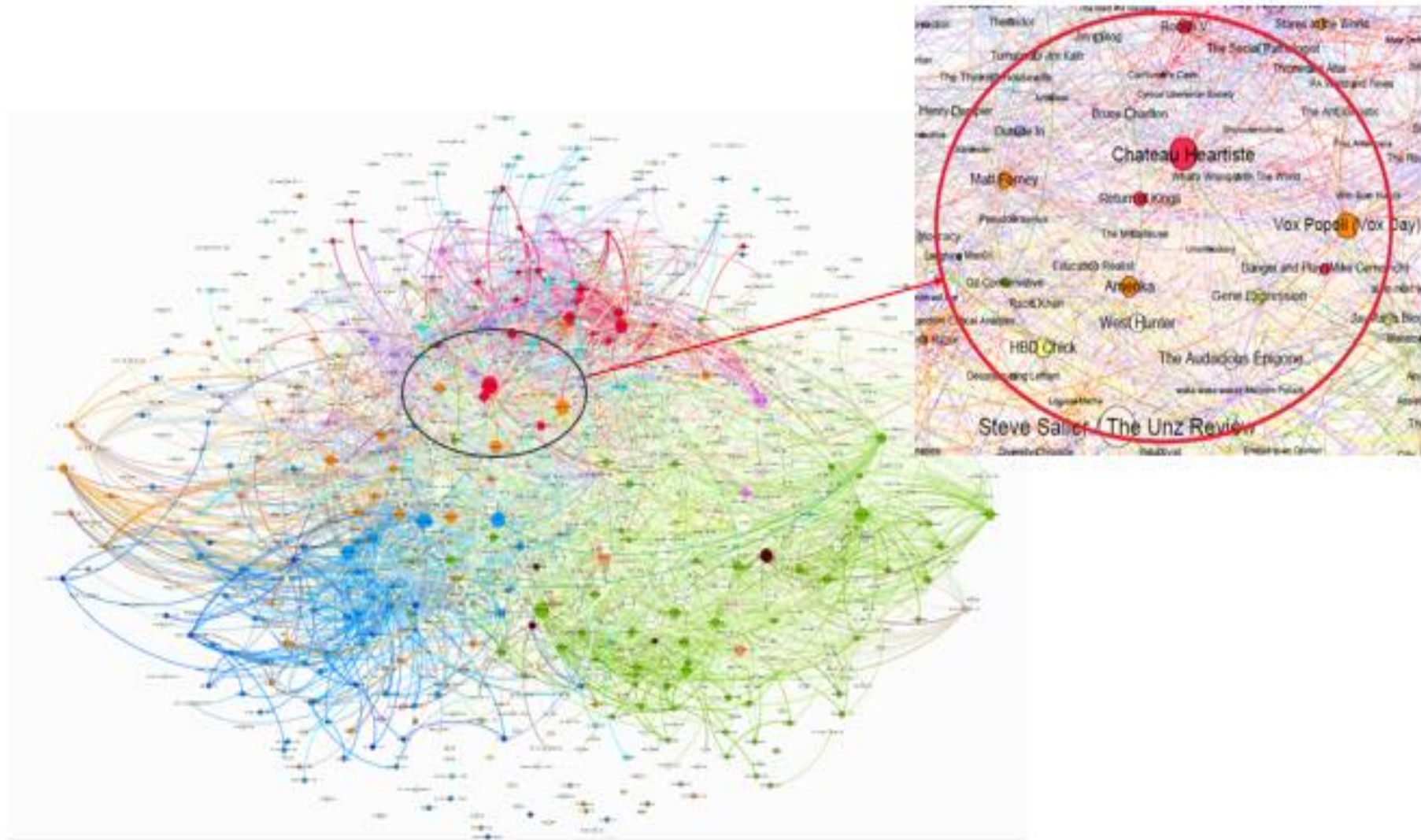
Figure 3.7: Network analysis: area of proximity between Alt-Right and Manosphere sites marked

The visualised network in Figure 3.7 shows key areas of affinity between the sites. The green area to the right is largely conservative, the blue area to the bottom left is largely white nationalist and anti-Semitic sites. The orange area to the far left is the Alt-Right while the red/pink area at the top represents the Manosphere and anti-feminist factions. The sites that are in overlapping areas share closest affinity with each other, with *Steve Sailor* in the middle representing allegiances with all of them. In fact, his site, while not identifying as belong to any faction, had the most sites linking to it (67 of the 707 or 9.48%). Regarding the Alt-Right, those sites furthest left in the orange area are more aligned with white nationalism (for example, *The Right Stuff / Fash the Nation*). In the Manosphere, the red sites shown at the top of Figure 3.8 share closer affinity with the Christian Right (in pale blue), Neoreactionary sites and anti-feminist groups (associations which are supported by the literature, see for example, Hawley, 2017; Nagle, 2017; Neiwert, 2017). I wanted to target Alt-Right sites that share an affinity with the Manosphere so have highlighted this area as sites that could make up my target population.
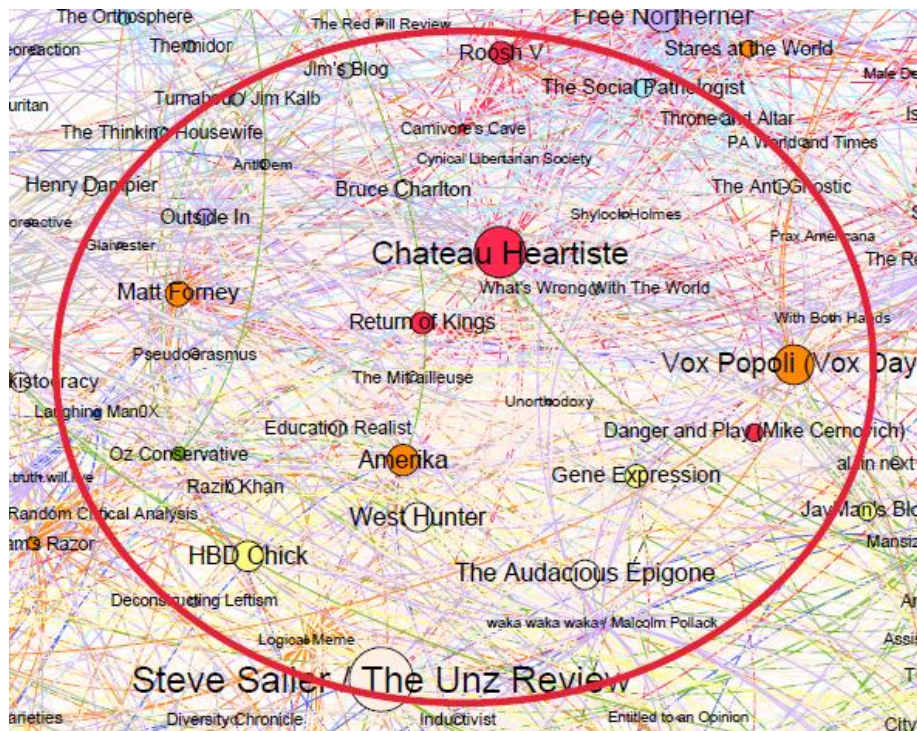
Figure 3.8: Area of proximity between Alt-Right and Manosphere sites (detail)

From the detail shown in Figure 3.8 above, which highlights where the Alt-Right and the Manosphere share closest online proximity, eight sites can be seen that are coded as either the former or the latter. These are listed in Table 3.3 with their domain and the number of sites that link to them.

Site	Domain name	No. of sites linking to this site (% of total sites)
Alt-Right (orange nodes)		
Vox Popoli	www.voxday.blogspot.com	**39** (5.51)
Amerika	www.amerika.org	**30** (4.24)
Matt Forney	www.mattforney.com	**23** (3.25)
Manosphere (red sites)		
Chateau Heartiste	www.heartiste.wordpress.com	**51** (7.21)
Return of Kings	www.returnofkings.com	**21** (2.97)
Roosh V	www.rooshv.com	**21** (2.97)
Danger and Play (Mike Cernovich)	www.cernovich.com	**15** (2.12)
Carnivore's Cave	www.carnivorescave.blogspot.com	**4** (0.57)

Table 3.3: Sites in target population

The table above shows the most 'linked to' site self-identifying as Alt-Right is *Vox Popoli* (39 sites) and, for the Manosphere, *Chateau Heartiste* (51 sites). All eight of the above sites were investigated further to ascertain if they were suitable as target populations for data collection.

3.2.4   Downsampling

Having examined the eight sites in the target population, two main issues were considered and used to downsample the target population: how popular[20] the sites were (based on the number of sites that link to it) and the ability to search for posts within the sites. Regarding popularity, as can be seen in Table 3.3, Carnivore's Cave only had four sites linking to it, indicating that it had less impact or significance within the network. This site was eliminated from the target population to ensure the data collection could be focused on the more popular sites. Turning to accessibility, it was vital that the site allowed users to be able to navigate the blog and find particular posts. Using the sites' search functions (as seen in Figure 3.9 below), it was possible to employ the subsampling criteria for the data collection (see Section 3.2.4).

Figure 3.9: Search function on Return of Kings

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[20] This refers to the sites' popularity in the network, not in relation to website traffic (discussed in Section 3.3.6)

However, two of the sites identified and listed in Table 3.3 above were problematic as they lacked this type of site search feature: *Roosh V* and *Mike Cernovich's Danger and Play*. Given the time concerns involved in developing computational methods to collect data from these sites, they were also eliminated from the target population.

3.2.5   Site selection

Having considered the above, my final selection of data sources comprised three from the Alt-Right (Matt Forney, Amerika, and Vox Popoli) and two from the Manosphere (Chateau Heartiste and Return of Kings). A brief description of these sites; average monthly website traffic statistics (recorded by SimilarWeb from October to December 2018); and their main contributors are listed below in Table 3.4. All five sites are described as 'blogs' by the authors on the site and also fit the definition of blog given by Zappavigna as a type of website that "displays entries in reverse chronological order" (2012, p. 2).

Site Name	Date Founded	Average Monthly Visits	Main Contributor(s)
Alt-Right			
Matt Forney	2012	88,922	Matt Forney
Amerika	1988	130,772	Brett Stevens / Jonathan Peter Wilkinson
Vox Popoli	2003	441,464	Theodore Beale (known as: Vox Day)
Manosphere			
Chateau Heartiste	2007	1,260,000	James C. Weidmann (known as: Roissy in D.C.)
Return of Kings	2012	1,390,000	David G. Brown

Table 3.4. Site details for the data sources in the target population

3.3   Data collection

The previous sections have outlined how the sites were targeted for data collection. From these target sites, two further criteria were applied within which to collect content which had been posted on the sites: complete posts which fall within the fixed time period and which reference rape and/or sexual assault (R/SA). These criteria are expanded on below.

3.3.1   Post time frame

Section 3.3.2 above, which outlines the parameters for sampling frame, includes details on the time period used for this project: 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2017. This two-year period was used for the site selection in the network analysis and also informs the subsampling criteria in that all the posts collected from the target sites fall within this time frame. It was chosen as the period included significant events such as the election of President Trump, who has been argued to have emboldened the far-right (Burley 2017; Nagle 2017; Wendling 2018); the *Unite The Right* rally in Charlottesville; and the #MeToo movement, which focused on the experiences of women in relation to R/SA. During my initial investigation into this online environment, I noticed that these

events provoked considerable reaction within the communities, justifying this time frame. This observation is also supported by literature on the expansion of the Alt-Right (Hawley 2017; Neiwert 2017; Wendling 2018) which is generally considered to have started early 2016.

3.3.2 Search terms

In order to analyse how R/SA are framed and discussed in my data sources, the collected texts needed to refer to these aspects of sexual violence. The search terms used to identify texts on the five target sites (using the site search features available) were: *rape* AND/OR *raping* and *sexual assault* AND/OR *sexually assaulting.* The use of these search terms is based on the fact that the initial investigation into the sites showed that these terms are used by members of the factions. The literature also indicated that rape, false rape allegations, rape culture, rape advocacy, and rape threats are key themes in ideological discussions in both white supremacists and misogynistic groups (see, for example, Romano, 2016; Lyons, 2017; Anti-Defamation League, 2018). However, it is acknowledged here, and discussed later in Section 7.2.1, that the use of these terms to identify data sources resulted in only those blog posts which *explicitly* discuss R/SA being collected. Those which may have *implicitly* referred to sexual violence or which used alternative terms for R/SA were not able to be found. Although this may have impacted the data and its analysis, without knowing which other neologisms, slang terms, or in-group references to acts which could be deemed by an out-group observer to reference R/SA, it was not possible to use more informal search terms.

Three synonyms for *rape* and *sexual assault* were also used as search terms (for posts within the set time period) and resulted in 144 posts being examined via a qualitative reading of the context (Brindle 2016, p. 39). These were: *molestation/molest* (23 posts); *violation/violate* (97); and *sexual/sexually abuse* (24) and were found by doing an online search for synonyms for *rape.* However, the use of these terms and their collocates produced discourses which were outside the aims of this study. Of the 22 posts referencing *molestation*, 21 (95.45%) related to child molestation, as exemplified in line [3-1] from the blog *Amerika:*

> [3-1] All of this makes it not entirely implausible that, as Andrew Breitbart alleged, there is a **child molestation** and child pornography ring operating out of Washington, D.C. under the cover of helping save children from exploitation abroad. (AM12)

One post using *molestation* as a search term did refer to violence against women but had already been collected via its use of the key search term *rape.* Of the 97 posts resulting from a search of *violation* AND/OR *violate*, 95 (97.94%) of them used the terms in relation to the breaking of rules, policies, terms, free speech, and general rights. An example of this can be seen in line [3-2] about identity politics in NFL football:

> [3-2] The game of football had become secondary to the politics of the day, and that's a direct **violation** of the contract between sports viewer and sports provider. (ROK39)

Using the term *violation*, two posts in the search results did relate to the sexual violation of women but again had already been identified using the term *rape*. Lastly, 18 of the 24 (75%) posts that referenced sexual abuse used the term in relation to children, with the other six posts also relating to subjects unconnected to my research questions. One example of this, seen in line [3-3], lists sexual abuse as a mind-control technique by cults.

> [3-3] Induced dissociation and other altered states by putting person in mild form of trance (through speaking in tongues … long hours of lectures or study, public trials or group humiliation, about seat criticisms focusing on one individual, **sexual abuse**, torture, etc.) (AM13)

Appendix 3 gives a detailed list of the collocates of the three search terms, the number of posts containing these terms and the sites from which they were collected. Although other ways of referencing sexual violence against women may have been used by the bloggers (for example, by using neologisms, metaphors, euphemistic or offensive terms), it was not possible at this point to know what these terms were (see Brindle 2016, p. 39, who encountered the same problem when examining Stormfront posts referencing homosexuality). Critical reflection on this point is given in Section 7.2.

One of the main challenges in this process was not being able to search for 'sexual assault' as one term. My search results often brought up posts that mentioned 'sexual' and 'assault' but within different contexts. One example of this is from a post on the shooting at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando in June 2016. The post, 'Islamic Terrorist Kills 20 People At Homosexual Nightclub In Florida (Update: 50 Killed)', on the *Return of Kings* site was picked up in my search due to references to 'homo<u>sexual</u>' and the use of an '<u>assault</u> rifle'. As this post did not discuss the sexual assault of women, it was not included in my data collection. It did, however, highlight the potential problems with the search process and so each post I collected was checked for relevancy qualitatively.

Finally, Figure 3.10 below summarises the sampling and subsampling process described in the above sections. Using this framework, the corpora could be constructed and annotated.
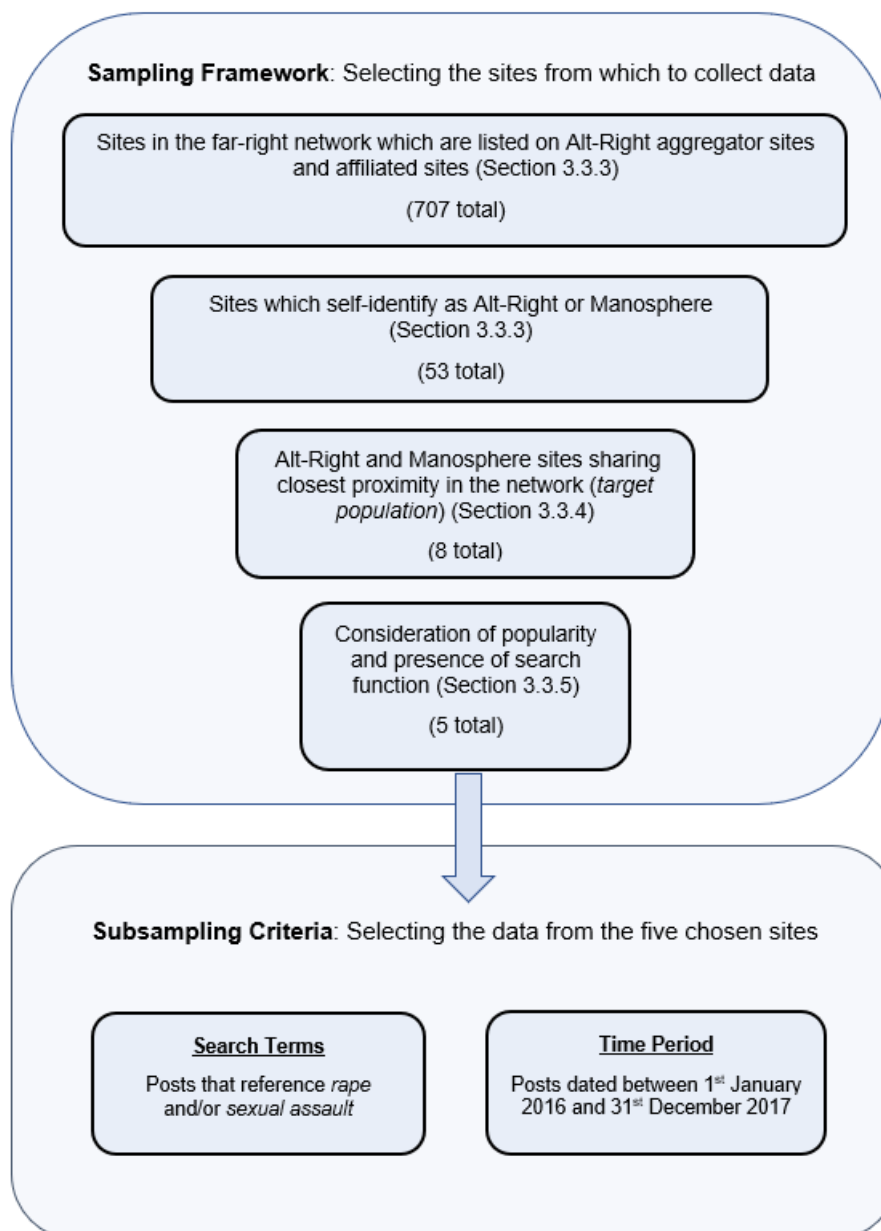
Figure 3.10: Summary of the two-stage sampling process

3.4 Description of the corpora

Table 3.5 below gives a description of the two corpora used in this study and includes the number of posts collected from each search term and the token count. McEnery and Hardie's definition of *token* is used here, namely "Any single, particular instance of an individual word in a text or corpus." (2012, p. 254). From the 99 posts taken from the sites, 41 were from the Alt-Right and 58 were from the Manosphere. Although these two corpora are relatively balanced in terms of the number of posts (41.41% & 58.59% respectively), the number of tokens is less so. The 99 posts contributed a total of 82,264 tokens with the Alt-Right corpus comprising 28,065 (34.12%) and the Manosphere corpus 54,199 (65.88%). The sampling unit for the corpora in this study is a whole text (including the headline but not the dateline) in order to preserve the narrative discourse

structure within the posts (Burnard 2000; Weisser 2016). As can be seen from the table below, the particularly long posts on *Return of Kings* (with an average token length of 1078.8) and highest total number of posts (37%) have contributed towards an imbalance of tokens. However, following Sinclair (2004) and Weisser (2016), this is not problematic if the parameters of the sampling criteria have been met. Further details regarding the post title, date and author are listed in Appendix 6: Appendix 7.

Site/data source	Search term used				Overview		
	rape		*sexual assault*		Total no. of posts (%)	Total no. of tokens (%)	Average tokens per post
	2016	**2017**	**2016**	**2017**			
Amerika	5	5	0	0	10 (24.39)	7442 (26.52)	**744.20**
Matt Forney	4	1	0	2	7 (17.07)	6386 (22.75)	**912.29**
Vox Popoli	9	4	8	3	24 (58.54)	14,237 (50.73)	**593.21**
Total Alt-Right corpus (%)	**18 (43.90)**	**10 (24.39)**	**8 (19.51)**	**5 (12.20)**	**41**	**28,065 (34.12)**	**684.51**
Chateau Heartiste	4	5	7	5	**21** (36.2)	**14283** (26.4)	**680.1**
Return of Kings	16	8	1	12	**37** (63.8)	**39916** (73.6)	**1078.8**
Total Manosphere corpus (%)	**20 (34.5)**	**13 (22.4)**	**8 (13.8)**	**17 (29.3)**	**58**	**54,199 (65.88)**	**879**
TOTALS (combined)	**38**	**23**	**16**	**22**	**99**	**82,264**	

Table 3.5. Overview of corpora

The posts were captured and saved according to the following procedure, informed by Weisser (2016, pp. 56-59):

1.   the posts were read and checked for relevancy to make sure they discussed R/SA

2.   the posts were then exported to Word so unnecessary features such as photos, embedded videos, comments, and metadata could be easily identified and deleted.

3.   a second check for duplicate posts (usually those that contained both search terms) could be carried out and deleted. I used the post title to name the Word file and, as these were displayed alphabetically, I could find duplicate file names easily.

Once the duplication and relevancy checks had been completed, the posts were transferred into Notepad++ to be marked up. The following section outlines this process and includes and overview of the type of mark up carried out (Section 3.6). The processes marking up the narrative components (Section 3.6.2 and 3.6.3), social actor representations (Section 3.6.4), references to R/SA (Section 3.6.5); and hyperlinks (Section 3.6.6) are then discussed.

3.5   Corpora mark up

The Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora are small, specialised, 'opportunistic corpora' (McEnery and Hardie 2012, p. 11) which can be annotated manually. This process allows for the addition of linguistic information to a corpus (Hardie 2014; Weisser 2016; Potts and Formato 2021), usually with the use of 'tags'. Extensible Markup Language (XML) was used, in this case, to tag the linguistic features identified in the research questions. This process involved using XML to identify and store extra, specific linguistic information in the corpus in highly adaptable tags, which then facilitate multi-level search capability when used with corpus analytic software like Sketch Engine (Potts and Formato 2021). I used *Notepad++* (version 7.5.8)[21] text editor to annotate the data and details of the specific tags used are given in the next paragraphs.

Three types of annotation were required for this study to address the research questions outlined in Section 1.3. These were:

(1) *semantic annotation* for the categorisation of words and phrases used in the texts which relate to naming and referential strategies, many of which are culturally-specific and could easily be missed in a non-annotated corpus. Examples of semantic annotation include the use of neologisms (*betasoys, manlets*), metonymy (*plain janes*), synecdoche (*gloryhole faces*), and metaphor (*an anti-Trump pussyhatter*). Where necessary, neologisms were checked using online dictionaries which list terms commonly used in discourses produced by extreme groups. These included *Urban Dictionary*[22] and *PUA Lingo*[23] (for a critical discussion on the use of these types of sites for linguistic research in this field, see Ging et al*,* 2020; Wright, 2020; Barber, 2021). Semantic

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[21] available at: https://notepad-plus-plus.org/
[22] www.urbandictionary.com
[23] www.pualingo.com (this is now offline but www.gameglobal.net/glossary would be an alternative)

annotation also enabled alternative references to rapists to be tagged, perhaps expressed in metaphorical or euphemistic language, like this use of synecdoche:

> [3-4] If women stopped getting blind drunk and having sex, most "rapes" would vanish. But as long as they engage carelessly in casual sex, **a few of the wrong penises are going to sneak into the great stack of dongs they will have given entry** by the time they hit "the wall" in their late 30s. (AM11)

(2) *discourse annotation* to add information about anaphoric references, particularly the use of pronominal identity markers[24].

(3) *stylistic annotation* for clause-level analysis of the use of components in narrative texts (Labov and Waletzky 1997; Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010; Labov 2014)

To summarise, these three types of annotation mapped onto each of my sub-research questions as shown in Table 3.6.

Sub-research Question	Corpus Annotation Required
1. How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of social actors in discourses about sexual violence?	• Representation of social actors, indexed through referential strategies, nomination, use of pronouns, metonymy, and gender
2.How are ideological standpoints on sexual violence against women legitimised in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses?	• References to rape, sexual assault, and sexual violence against women through nominal and verbal features, metonymy, and neologisms
3. What role do narrative discourses play in the (de)legitimation and framing of sexual violence against women?	• Texts tagged according to whether it contains narrative discourse and the type of narrative it is (news-based or personal) • Hyperlinks (signifying intertextuality)
4. To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the narrative structure affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?	• Narrative components • Representation of social actors (see above for research sub-question 1)

Table 3.6. Corpus annotation required to address each research question

3.5.1 The mark up process

Figure 6.11 shows the six-stage process of preparing each corpus for annotation, from capturing the data for offline use, to creating the annotated corpora ready to be used with Sketch Engine. Further details for each stage are given below.

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[24] Pronouns were marked up but the change in research focus meant that they were not included in the final analysis.

```
Stage 1        ┌─────────────────────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────┐
               │ Article/blog post copied to │───────▶│ Hyperlinks noted,    │
               │ Word from online source     │        │ multimodal features  │
               └─────────────────────────────┘        │ removed, and number  │
                                                       │ of tokens recorded   │
                                                       └──────────────────────┘
                              │
                              ▼
Stage 2        ┌─────────────────────────────┐
               │ Text transferred to         │
               │ Notepad++ for XML annotation│
               └─────────────────────────────┘
                        ╱              ╲
                       ▼                ▼
Stage 3  ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
         │ Texts classified as      │   │ Texts classified as      │
         │ 'narrative'              │   │ 'non-narrative'          │
         │ (Hoffman, 2010)          │   │                          │
         └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                    │                               │
                    ▼                               │
Stage 4  ┌──────────────────────────┐               │
         │ Type of narrative        │               │
         │ identified and labelled  │               │
         │ (news narrative or       │               │
         │ personal narrative)      │               │
         └──────────────────────────┘               │
                    │                               │
                    ▼                               │
Stage 5  ┌──────────────────────────┐               │
         │ Narrative components     │               │
         │ identified and marked up │               │
         │ (where present: abstract,│               │
         │ orientation, complicating│               │
         │ action, evaluation,      │               │
         │ resolution, and coda)    │               │
         │ (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) │               │
         └──────────────────────────┘               │
                    │                               │
                    ▼                               ▼
Stage 6  ┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
         │ Lexical and intertextual features marked up:     │
         │  • Social actor representations: naming and      │
         │    referential strategies (van Leeuwen 2008)     │
         │  • References to sexual violence                 │
         │  • Hyperlinks: text and linked target            │
         └──────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Figure 3.11. Marking up the corpora

Stage 1

Using the sampling frame, the blog posts collected from the subsampling stage were copied and pasted into a Word document, making it much easier to recognise and remove HTML metadata in the Word document than in the plain text format of Notepad++. For example, the date and time of upload, the author's name, and the tags that the author allocates to the post for search purposes often preceded or followed the text, along with adverts, and links to services. In plain text, these features look the same as the text and, if not removed, could have been accidently included in the analysis.

Stage 2

The texts were copied into Notepad++ and the XML tagging functions were installed. This allowed for highlighted syntax and for elements to be collapsed if necessary.

Stage 3

Posts were identified and classified as either containing narrative content, non-narrative content, or a combination of both, leading to three categorisations. As specified in Section 2.8.2, which

discusses the identification of narrative elements in detail, a text was considered a 'narrative' if three factors were present: (1) "a sequence of two clauses which are temporally ordered" (Labov 2014, p. 204); (2) there is a causal link between the two clauses (Toolan 2001, p. 6); and (3) there is evidence of external evaluation (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 99). Applying these criteria, the following content was classified:

Site/data source	Overview Total no. of posts	Content breakdown of posts		
		Narrative (% from source)	Mixed-narrative (% from source)	Non-narrative (% from source)
Alt-Right				
Amerika	10	1 (10.00)	2 (20.00)	7 (70.00)
Matt Forney	7	4 (57.14)	0 (0.00%)	3 (42.86)
Vox Popoli	24	12 (50.00)	2 (8.33)	10 (41.67)
Total (%)	**41 (41.41)**	**17 (41.46)**	**4 (9.76)**	**20 (48.78)**
Manosphere				
Chateau Heartiste	21	3 (14.29)	2 (9.52)	16 (76.19)
Return of Kings	37	4 (10.81)	8 (21.62)	25 (67.57)
Total (%)	**58 (58.59)**	**7 (12.07)**	**10 (17.24)**	**41 (70.69)**
TOTALS (combined)	**99**	**24**	**14**	**61**

Table 3.7. Content breakdown per corpus

The posts classified as 'mixed narrative' were those which contained a full narrative but were then followed by a tangential opinion piece which did not connect directly to the original story. For example, in the blog post *Legalise Rape III* (Amerika), the blogger narrativises what happened to him after he promoted, in a previous post, the idea that rape should be legal. In the second half of the same blog post, he switches to an opinion-based discourse about rape, sex workers, women having casual sex, and feminism. For the analyses, the first half of this blog post was included in the narrative analyses and the second part in the non-narrative analyses.

Stage 4

Following the general classification of narrative, mixed and non-narrative content, more specific codification of the data was applied to further classify the data. It was clear from the close reading of the narrative posts that two types of narrative could be identified: 1) those based on a news story which was being (re)interpreted by the bloggers and 2) a personal narrative which had no link to a news story. The two categories of narrative are summarised and exemplified in Table 3.8. The sections highlighted in bold indicate specific features which show how the examples fit the criteria (ibid.).

Type of narrative (XML tag)	Description and criterion	Example from the data
News narrative (nn)	Description: A narrative which uses a news story as its basis Criterion: The main complicating actions of the narrative happen to someone within the context of a news story	**News clippings** about shitlib/antifa White women suffering the all-too-predictable consequences of taking their anti-White ideology seriously are an almost weekly occurrence. The latest is a howler, if you're into schadenfreude so delicious the aftertaste lingers for weeks. **Antifa Chick Goes to Turkey With Muslim Loverboy, Gets Raped and Beaten (headline)** **Lacy MacAuley is a well-known radical left-wing Antifa organizer in Washington D.C. She was featured in Project Veritas' undercover videos which exposed the #DisruptJ20 plot to violently disrupt President Trump's inauguration.** Just like every other lunatic leftist, **Lacy fell in love with Islam and became obsessed with helping Syrian 'refugees'**, wholeheartedly believing that Islam is the religion of peace. **MacAuley details her experience dating a Turkish Muslim man, describing the hell and fear she lived in because he controlled every move she made, beat and raped her**…(CH19)
Personal narrative (np)	Description: A narrative based on personal experience. Criterion: The main complicating actions of the narrative involve the narrator.	**I was Patient Zero** to the false rape epidemic. "Date rape" was common, the media said, and thus there was pressure to prosecute rape cases where there was no evidence of rape. **My case was bogus**. I slept with the girl on the living room floor while her best friend was in the room. (Anyone who wants to fact-check me, ask me for a copy of the case file. It's somewhere in my Gmail, I'm sure.) The prosecutors were highly sensitive of the media, as was the judge, who once said to my lawyer, "Think about what the media would say if I dismissed this case!" **I was full of rage, anger, depression, and every other toxic emotion. I had followed all of the rules, and my life was "ruined" by a feminist media and legal system.**(VP23)

Table 3.8. Examples of narrative content

There were very few issues regarding the classification of narratives as the posts fell easily into the two broad categories listed above. There were also very few personal narratives in the corpus, with only the Alt-Right bloggers using them in their posts (n=7, 19.44% - see italics). This is discussed in more depth in Section 6.3.2.

	Alt-Right corpus	Manosphere corpus	TOTALS
	Occurrence (%)	Occurrence (%)	Occurrence (%)
News narratives	14 (38.89)	15 41.67	29 (80.56)
Personal narratives	*7 (19.44)*	0 0	7 (19.44)
Total narrative posts	**21 (58.33)**	**15 (41.67)**	**36 (100)**

Table 3.9: Ratio of news narratives to personal narratives in the corpora

Once the narrative content had been identified and classified, Stage 5 in the annotation process (Figure 3.10) could take place. This involved tagging the narrative components, which is outlined in the following section.

3.5.2   Narrative components

For Stage 5, each of the narrative texts were deconstructed to identify six possible components, following Eisenlauer and Hoffmann's (2010) update on (Labov and Waletzky's (1967) code scheme in relation to narratives on blogs.

a)   the *abstract:* a general summary of what happened

b)   the *orientation:* the elements that identify the characters, place, and time of the events

c)   the *complicating action:* what happened (the events)

d)   the *evaluation*: why the narrative is relevant / attitude to what happened

e)   the *resolution:* what finally happened

f)   the *coda:* how this narrative relates to the present situation

Each component, where present, was tagged during this clause-level annotation process. As can be seen in the examples given in Table 3.12, and in line with the review of literature in Section 2.8.2 (particularly relating to work by Eisenlauer and Hoffmann (2010)), these components were often mixed in the order in which they appear throughout the narrative.

Following standard XML mark-up language procedures, each tag consists of elements, attributes and values (Rühlemann et al. 2015, p. 48), which represents three levels of information increasing in nuance (Hardie 2014; Potts and Formato 2021). For example, when tagging the narrative elements in the corpora, I can include the following information for computational reading of the stylistic annotation for an abstract:

Information/Item to Tag	XML Tag	Reference Code Used
narrative clause	element	**structure**
narrative component	attribute	**comp** (= component)
classification of component	value	**ab** (= abstract)

Table 3.10. Example of an XML tag used for stylistic annotation

An example of how these tags are used together to mark up a piece of narrative identified as an abstract would be:

<structure comp="ab">News clippings about shitlib/antifa White women suffering the all-too-predictable consequences of taking their anti-White ideology seriously are an almost weekly occurrence. The latest is a howler, if you're into schadenfreude so delicious the aftertaste lingers for weeks.**</structure>** (example text taken from CH19)

Once the type of narrative content had been categorised, the components of that narrative were tagged. This happened at the clausal level, with the tagged unit being a complete sentence or paragraph. Table 3.11 shows the tag codes used for each of the six components.

Element	Attribute	Value	Tag used
structure	comp	abstract	abs
		orientation	ori
		complicating action	cac
		(external) evaluation	eva
		resolution	res
		coda	cod

Table 3.11. Mark up scheme for narrative component

Table 3.12 below shows an example of a post (CH20) with its narrative components identified. This particular narrative does not contain an abstract or resolution and shows how components can be repeated. The hyperlinks are underlined and tagged separately (see Section 3.5.6).

Narrative Component	Tag Used	Example from the Text
Orientation	\<structure comp="ori"\>	*A hot if somewhat mannish-looking female teacher is in court on charges of "raping" one of her students during their months-long sexual adventure. A teacher is accused of sodomizing a middle school student and raping him during their alleged months-long sexual relationship.*
Complicating action*	\<structure comp="qcac"\>	*Lindsey Jarvis, 27, pleaded not guilty to two counts of rape at the Fayette County Courthouse in Kentucky, where she held hands with her husband of three years. She was also charged with rape, sodomy and unlawful transaction with a minor in neighboring Woodford County, where she was accused of sexually assaulting the boy in May 2016.*
Evaluation*	\<structure comp="eva"\>	*If you've heard this story before too many times to count, you're not going crazy; sexual predation by female teachers, many of them hot and married, of their young (and usually willing) charges is rampant in America, FOR SOME ODD REASON. (Hint: it's the leftoid glorification of unconstrained female sexuality and the concomitant demonization of normal male sexuality and patriarchal prerogative, plus various r-selected biofeedback loops that accompany declining cultures in the throes of late stage decadence.)*
Coda*	\<structure comp="cod"\>	*Never rely on legal documents to secure a woman's love. You can only win her heart in the supreme court of her raging id.*
Evaluation	\<structure comp="eva"\>	*First mistake: a wife or gf should never be a man's "best friend". His lover, his confidant, his alibi, his accomplice, his lolita, his sex toy, sure. But not his best friend. That cloying admission reeks of neediness and uxuriousness, and sucks all the romantic lifeblood out of what should be a sexually dichotomous relationship. Women don't want a best friend for a husband; they want a lover and a king. Second mistake: penning this treacle at all. He could have done so much more for his cause, meaning his sex life and future paternity certainty, had he sent her this instead on her birthday.*
Coda	\<structure comp="cod"\>	*I'd like to end on a hopeful note. How do we solve the crisis of supportive beta husbands and boyfriends enabling the worst sort of female animal behavior?* *My suggestion, one I've been proselytizing for a while, to no avail apparently as we can see the population of supplicating betas grows year over year, is….hold your breath….Game. If beta males gained the skills of the crimson arts and had more choice in women, or at least perceived that they had more choice in women, the confidence instilled in them would stream outward and fill the hearts and Bartholin's corpuscles of the women in their lives, and a big beautiful mutually reinforcing limbic synchronization that aligned with the ancient biomechanic laws of sexual polarity would draw man and woman closer together, and those wild cockscillations that undulate darkly in the vajfold crevices of every woman threatening to crumble heartbridges would be calmed.* *Or, having options in women, beta males would at least be more emotionally continent about their choice of long-term mate and be more willing to jettison those women who don't make the grade.*

Table 3.12. Example of a complete set of narrative components tagged (* section of text is unfinished due to space restrictions) with hyperlinks underlined

3.5.3   Ambiguous narrative components

Following the literature on the linguistic features and functions of narrative components (see Eisenlauer and Hoffmann (2010) and discussion in Section 2.8.2), it was relatively straightforward to classify the components. However, there were instances where it was not immediately clear whether a component could be classed as one particular type or whether it fulfilled the role of two or three components. For example, this line seemed to act as a complicating action and a resolution to the story.

> [3-5] Following the decision, social media erupted with rabid feminist insistences that Ghomeshi was "guilty." (ROK33)

Eisenlauer and Hoffmann (2010) point out, in their review of Labov and Waletzky's (1967) code scheme and its application to blog posts, that the components often do not follow a linear order and are fragmented and dispersed over the narrative (2010, p. 96). They highlight that both linguistic markers and relative positioning can determine how clauses are being employed in the narrative when this 'disrupted adjacency' is apparent (ibid., p. 97). Following this, I looked at linguistic markers for line [3-5] and how the clause is positioned in the original text (as the layout was not detectable when the text was in Notepad++) to help with any ambiguous coding of the components. I added the caveat that, if the clause remained ambiguous, it could be categorised as a mixed component (using a 'cacres' code, for example, to show a complicating action that also appears to be a resolution). In terms of line [3-5], after looking at the original post again, it could be seen that the sentence shows a delayed complicating action because of the use of the linguistic marker 'Following the decision', indicating a temporal juncture which links back to the title of the post. Further examples of coding ambiguous components with linguistic markers and relative positioning can be seen below.

Linguistic markers

The examples in Table 3.13 show clauses which were challenging to classify as they come from a particularly fragmented text with a high degree of disrupted adjacency. They could not be determined from their relative positioning (all examples are from ROK32). Lexical markers and anaphoric referencing markers were used to code these examples, with the resulting classifications shown below.

Component	Type of Linguistic Marker	Example
Complicating action	Temporal junctures (*following, then, during*); Anaphoric references that take the reader back to the main story (referring to roles initially laid out in the orientation)	*Throughout this harrowing time, feminists led a vigilante-style campaign to strip Evans of any ability to earn a good income…* *Of course, feminists have accused Evans' fiancée, Natasha Massey, of "bribing" potential witnesses by offering £50,000 for information to clear his name. Both ex-lovers of the accuser, however, swore under oath that they were not motivated by money in coming forward.*
Resolution	Final causes; markers of consequence; indicators of the narrative climax (concluding verbs)	*Some positives emerged, though. Sheffield United's co-chairman Jim Phipps was unequivocal about the extreme pressure placed on the club to ditch Evans.*
Evaluation	Markers indicating emotive load, evaluative markers	*Feminist anger is as hypocritical as it gets*

Table 3.13. Examples of coding challenging components using lexical markers Relative Positioning

An alternative to using lexical markers was to look at the original text and its layout. Two examples that show how checking the original text helped determine how to code the components can be seen here:

[3-6]   Thank god Ghomeshi kept his emails. (ROK33)

The first example in [3-6] looked like a resolution or an evaluation but in the original text it appears as a subheading. According to Eisenlauer and Hoffmann (2010), headings and subheadings are most often classed as abstracts as they arouse interest in the reader, generate anticipation and help organise the plot of the narrative or sub-narrative (p. 94). As this sub-heading indicated a sub-narrative in the following paragraph, line [3-6] was coded as an abstract.

For the final stage (Stage 6 of the annotation process, see Figure 3.10), for both narrative and non-narrative blog posts, representations of social actors and references to sexual violence were tagged. As a secondary focus, and in line with the perspective that the texts are hypertexts (Myers 2010; Jones and Hafner 2012), the hyperlinks were also tagged. Details of this process are given in the following sections.

3.5.4   Social actor representations

To address research sub-question (1) and the relationship between ideological stance and social actor representation (see Section 1.3), I tagged the ways in which identities were indexed in the discourses. Three categories of identity features were used to create tags for the mark up: 1) gender, 2) the 'role' the social actor has in the discourse about sexual violence (e.g. the accused or the perpetrator), 3) whether there is a nominal reference such as name or pronoun used. Table 3.14 shows how this worked in the annotation of identities and the following sections give examples of the value codes used.

Value meaning	XML Tagging Example of Value
Kevin Spacy – accused of sexual assault	<identity ref="**macdnom**">Kevin Spacey</identity>
	= male + accused + named
A woman who was raped	<identity ref="**fvicprp**">her</identity> own words
	= female + victim + possessive pronoun (*her* own words)

Table 3.14. Mark up scheme overview for identity features

Gender/Sex

As both the Alt-Right and Manosphere promote a binary perspective on gender (Neiwert 2017; Wendling 2018; Hermansson et al. 2020), just two gender tags were used in the tagging: female and male – denoted by *f* and *m* respectively. In this study, *gender* is used to indicate the social construct of gender ascribed to the social actors by the bloggers. There were identity references which did not specify whether the person being referred to was female or male and these were not given a gender tag. Line [3-7], for example, shows an example of a social actor (*someone*) who would be tagged as victim but not tagged for gender. In the blog post describing the difference between men being raped in prison and women being raped by men outside of a prison context, the blogger specifically marks the reference relating to either male or female (underlined).

[3-7] To be taken seriously, Laurie Penny and others like her must genuinely and unequivocally condemn all forms of rape, regardless of **someone**'s genitalia or history (ROK12)

Role

Not all social actors mentioned in the discourses were tagged; only those that were connected to or involved in an aspect of sexual violence. For example, in discussions about the so-called migrant attacks on women in Cologne (see, for example, blog posts CH5 and VP18) the women who were allegedly attacked were tagged as victims but the other women in the street for the New Year's Eve celebrations, who were also mentioned, were not tagged). This was to ensure my analysis focused on addressing my research questions and did not include tagging identities that would not be analysed. In [3-8], for example, the first occurrence of *women* (underlined) was not tagged as the term refers to all women in Cologne. The second occurrence of *women* (in bold) was tagged as it indexes alleged victims of sexual violence (in italics).

[3-8] Because the perpetrators are men of Arab and North African descent, the female Mayor of Cologne, Henriette Reker, is now issuing guidelines for women so they can avoid being raped. Let's stop here for a moment. She would never issue these guidelines to prevent incidents involving indigenous male *Germans allegedly sexually assaulting or raping* **women**. (ROK7)

This level of close reading and targeted tagging of social actors allowed for a far more accurate analysis at the corpus analytical stage.

In addition, references to the author and reader were tagged. The aim of this was to analyse these social actors in relation to the theoretical frameworks of sociocognitive discourse (van Dijk 2006, 2018) and collective identity theory (Koller 2005), particularly in terms of their roles of narrator and audience. Table 3.15 gives the values and tag codes used to mark the social roles in the discourses.

Element	Attribute	Value	Tag used
identity	ref	victim	vic
		accuser	acr
		accused	acd
		perpetrator	per
		enabler	ena
		other	oth
		author	auth
		reader	read

Table 3.15. Mark up scheme for identity role

One particular problem concerned the use of the second person pronoun *you* with reference to the reader. A close inspection of the text was sometimes needed to ascertain whether *you* was being used generically or whether the author was directly addressing the reader. To justify the final tagging, the direct verb was used to determine who was being addressed: if the verb related to something the reader could do, the pronoun was tagged as 'reader' but, if it was impossible for the reader to carry out the action, the pronoun was not tagged. Line [3-9] shows an example of this:

 [3-9]   I make your career, and well, <u>you</u> do me a *favor*, if **you** catch my meaning…(AM9)

In the above example where the pronoun is underlined, the blogger is referring to a generic *you* as he cannot, in reality, help the readers' careers. In the second occurrence of *you* (in bold), the pronoun was tagged as referring to the reader. In this case, it was possible for the reader to "catch" the meaning of what the blogger was saying, indicating he was speaking directly to his audience.

Nominal reference

The use of pronouns, named actors, and use of metonymy were tagged to determine the grammatical markers of identity, as shown in Table 3.16. This allowed me to disambiguate the object and possessive pronoun *her* as well as identify potentially problematic use of metaphor and synecdoche.

Element	Attribute	Value	Tag used
identity	ref	subject pronoun	prs
		object pronoun	pro
		possessive pronoun	prp
		reflexive pronoun	prr
		relative pronoun	prw
		metonymy	met
		nomination	nom

Table 3.16. Mark up scheme for nominal reference

Figure 3.12 shows a screenshot of a page from Notepad++ where a post (CH20) has been annotated using the above-mentioned identity tagging codes.

```
11    <identity ref="facdnom">Lindsey Jarvis</identity>, 27, pleaded not
      guilty to two counts of rape at the Fayette County Courthouse in
      Kentucky, where <identity ref="facdprs">she</identity> held hands with
      <identity ref="facdprp">her</identity> husband of three years
12    There's a time to hold <identity ref="menaprp">your</identity>
      <identity ref="facd">wife</identity>'s hand, and that time is NOT when
      <identity ref="facdprs">she</identity>'s in court for fucking and
      tickling the anus of one of <identity ref="facdprp">her</identity>
      underage <identity ref="mvic">students</identity> for months on end.
```

Figure 3.12. Example of an annotated post on Notepad++ (source: CH20)

3.5.5 Mark up of references to sexual violence

In line with research sub-question (2), it was necessary to identify the ways R/SA were referenced in the blog posts. By identifying these references, however they were expressed in the blog posts, a concordance analysis could then be carried out to ascertain the context and framing of the refence to sexual violence, and whether legitimation strategies were employed in any way. Taking into account Rheindorf's views on the necessity of defining what co-text is being considered for qualitative analysis (2019, p. 33), concordance lines in this thesis are analysed at the complete sentence level, most commonly as extended concordances.

References to sexual violence included the terms *rape/raping* and *sexual assault/sexually assaulting*. They also included more obscure, slang, and metaphorical terms and neologisms. A full list of all the terms identified is given in Appendix 5.

Element	Attribute	Value	Tag used
offence	type	rape	rape
		sexual assault	sa
		rape and/or sexual assault (not specified)	ras

Table 3.17: Mark up scheme for references to sexual violence

In total, 717 terms for sexual violence were tagged in the corpus. Of these 362 (50.49%) was *rape* and 98 (13.67%) was *sexual assault*. Some close reading was necessary to ascertain how alternative terms were being used. For example, in line [3-10], the use of *crime* in scare quotes (in bold) referred back to an earlier reference to rape so was tagged <offence type="rape">

> [3-10] Rubin Erdely's piece conveyed that Eramo was indifferent and even callous towards the accuser, Jackie Coakley, in addition to discouraging her from reporting the **"crime."** (ROK9)

As shown in Table 3.17 above, where sexual violence in the blog posts was referenced but it was not specified as either rape or sexual assault, the tag 'ras' was used.

> [3-11] Realistic approaches to **sex crimes**. (AM2)

An example of this is seen in [3-11] whereby sex crimes was tagged <offence type="ras">. Wider reading of the content made it clear that the blogger was referencing R/SA throughout.

3.5.6 Mark up of hyperlinks

To examine the intertextual relationship (Myers 2010) and the 'hypertextual structure' (Jones and Hafner 2012, p. 37) of the narrative components, for example to analyse whether much of the complicating action in the narrative is given via a link to an external source, the hyperlinks were tagged as per Table 3.18. A further level of coding was added for newspaper sources, with the initials of the newspaper being added to the 'news' tag. For example, if a hyperlink was for the *Daily Mail*, the initials 'dm' were added (<hyper type="**newsdm**">this story</hyper>). This relatively quick addition to the tagging was done to 1) enable the intertextual elements of the discourses to be categorised and analysed in relation to the types of target sources used by the authors; 2) to show the extent of affiliation to other sites in the network; and 3) to highlight the extent to which recontextualisation from mainstream media reports on rape is taking place within the far-right network.

Element	Attribute	Value	Tag used
hyper	type	Twitter	twit
		stats-based report	stats
		academic article	ac
		newspaper report	news
		same/own blog	own
		website in the network	webn
		other website	webo
		video	vid
		podcast	pod
		journal	jou
		magazine	mag
		4chan/8chan	chan

Table 3.18. Mark up scheme for hyperlinks

Finally, the headlines were tagged as separate values. This was to determine whether the ascribed and inhabited identities within them differed vastly from those in the associated text although, as the project developed, a later decision was made to include the heading in the general text analysis. The simple tag: <headline type="orig"> was used to signify the beginning and ending of the headline.

3.6   Considerations

Before starting the data collection process for this project, there were two key concerns regarding the way in which the process had to be carried out. Firstly, I had to establish whether I was following all relevant legal guidelines so as not to violate any intellectual property rights and, secondly, I needed to consider the ethical implications in order to get the necessary institutional clearance and ensure anyone in contact with the research would be protected.

3.6.1   Legal considerations

As the data for this project is derived from online sites, certain legal issues needed to be considered before I could collect them for use in my research. The two main considerations were: 1) whether the texts collected are available to use or are protected by copyright and 2) whether

consent is required from the authors of those texts. These two issues are inextricably linked in relation to my data sources and so will be discussed here together.

With regard to the issue of copyright, each of the five sites I am using for data collection display the copyright notice on their home page. With the exception of *Vox Popoli*, this notice is limited to 'Copyright © [year / years active] [name] All Rights Reserved'. *Vox Popoli* follows the same notice but adds that "Reproduction without written permission is expressly prohibited". As all the sites are clearly protected by these intellectual property rights, any reference to data taken from them has to be clearly attributed. In this thesis, attribution is in the form of either the URL, the name of the blog, or an individual author.

To address the extended prohibition on *Vox Popoli*, further considerations had to be made. McEnery and Hardie (2012) outline three approaches to dealing with material published online, either 1) ask for permission from the owner of the material if it is copyrighted; 2), use sources which are not protected by copyright and which explicitly state the content is in the public domain; and 3) collect protected material without permission and not redistribute it (p. 59). Regarding the first of these approaches, given the extremist nature of the site, it would have been inadvisable to seek out permission from the owner of *Vox Popoli* to use the copyrighted material. The second approach was not possible as all the content was protected by copyright, leaving only the third, i.e. collecting data material without permission but limiting its redistribution. Support for this approach is found in Rüdiger and Dayter's (2017) research on the language of members in a Manosphere forum. The authors put forward the concept of 'limited informed consent', whereby non-vulnerable contributors who exhibit hostile behaviour patterns do not need to be contacted directly to gain informed consent (p.259). Rüdiger and Dayter (2017) make an assumption about the non-vulnerability of the men in their study based on the white, male, aggressive identity they project online - an identity which is mirrored in the authors of the texts in this study. Spilioti and Tagg (2017) point out that, regardless of the researcher's personal view of the language producer, it is problematic to try to distinguish between communities which deserve data protection and those that do not (p. 166). It could also be argued that the men creating the texts being collected for this study are potentially vulnerable, for example in a legal sense (Barber 2021, p. 137).

Further justification for using data taken from *Vox Popoli* without having to contact the text producer was necessary. The concept of 'fair use', which allows for "relatively insubstantial parts of copyrighted materials to be used for purposes such as research, education, review, etc" (Weisser 2016, p. 33) applies here and, if conducted responsibly, avoids infringing copyright protection. The data I am analysing and presenting is decontextualized through the corpus analytical process and so will not be 'reproduced' in contravention of the *Vox Popoli*'s legal protection. To ensure that I do not risk contravening the owner's rights expressly covered by the extended prohibition written on this particular site, longer quotes and examples from *Vox Popoli* will be limited in this thesis.

3.6.2   Ethical considerations

Collecting, analysing, and storing the data for this project involved a number of ethical concerns to be taken into account. The initial investigation into the target groups (see Section 3.2.1) revealed that a number of sites were blocked on the University computer network and confirmed the extreme content of the type of sites I would be including in my network analysis. This prompted a series of meetings with Research and Innovation Services; Strategic Planning and Governance; University IT; the Head of School; and the ENCAP Ethics Officer. Following Cardiff University's *Security Sensitive Research Procedure*, a Risk Assessment was carried out and authorised. This document can be seen in Appendix 4 and the three main issues covered in it are detailed below. It should be noted here that the risk assessment was carried out in relation to ethical issues present at the beginning of the project and which were anticipated. As the project progressed, it was important to review these and make decisions based on ethics at each stage embarked upon (Markham and Buchanan, 2012; franzke et al., 2020).

The following sections summarise key discussions which took place before submitting a risk assessment as part of the ethical clearance process and before the data collection could begin. The discussions align with university-wide policies and the discipline-specific *Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics* (BAAL, 2016; 2021).

The researcher

A key consideration of conducting the site search for the network analysis was the risk to myself as the researcher. The sites in the network analysis contained descriptions and images of sexual assaults against women; images and videos of violence against minority groups; Nazi symbolism; graphic photos of people who had died by suicide; and pornography. The final data sources selected through the sampling frame and which are analysed in more depth are significantly less explicit and extreme but contain language derogating women; jokes about sexual assault; and discussions on the extermination of members of minority groups. The risk assessment details the discussions we had on how to seek counselling if needed and the measures that were put into place to mitigate the risk of radicalisation (as outlined in the Prevent Duty Guidelines (Home Office, 2015, updated 2021)). I was also advised not to use my home computer to search for sites and it was recommended that I install a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to avoid my personal network being compromised. Since the risk assessment was written, the Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics (4th edition) have been updated (BAAL 2021), which make these considerations more explicit.

The research environment

As my data collection process was restricted to the university computer system and the environment in which I work is particularly diverse, it was necessary to set up a designated workstation which prevented colleagues from inadvertently viewing the extremist content. To fulfil this ethical consideration to others and in accordance with guidelines set out in BAAL (2016; 2021),

a computer was set up that allowed access to blocked sites but which was positioned to stop others from seeing the screen. Printing from this computer to the main office printer was also restricted. Regarding the storage of material collected from the websites, classified as C1 – Highly Confidential under the Cardiff University Information Handling Procedure, I had to ensure that any saved data was password protected and my computer (and personal laptop) was locked at all times.

Research dissemination

The risk assessment which was carried out also covered how the research and data are to be handled in the public domain. This included taking into account the information I include in presentations, both in terms of giving content warnings and ensuring the presentation does not offend participants. The way in which I convey my findings also has to be considered. This includes declaring any biases I hold (Rüdiger and Dayter 2017) and presenting findings in an objective manner whenever possible to avoid potential conflict. Related to this issue of displayed content is that of the rights of people mentioned in my data. As McEnery and Hardie (2012) highlight, anyone referred to within collected data should have their privacy protected (p. 62). The texts used in this research give details and extreme opinions on women who have been raped or who are alleged to have been raped; women being blamed for advancing rape culture; men accused of rape (yet to be found guilty); and politicians who are being targeted for their viewpoints. As a researcher, I have an ethical responsibility not to further disseminate the identities of people who are being victimised on these sites. These names can be anonymised if discussed in the public domain.

3.7   Summary

The sections above outline the steps taken to construct the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora for this research project. As well as having the final corpora to analyse, taking these steps gave me invaluable insight into the online environment in which these two factions are situated. Completing the network analysis, for example, revealed the complexities and nuances of ideological identities within the far right and the types of sites, content, and affiliation found within that particular network.

The corpora were uploaded into Sketch Engine to enable corpus analysis to be undertaken. This particular corpus software allows for corpus query language searches (CQL) so the XML tags could be used as search terms. The next chapter outlines the first stage of the analyses and the investigation into the sub-research question on the presence of social actors in the corpora.

Chapter 4: Social Actor Representations

4.1   Introduction

This first analysis chapter examines social actor representations in the blog posts on R/SA to address research sub-question (1) namely: *How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of social actors in discourses about sexual violence?* (see Section 1.2). Focusing on the social actors present in discussions of sexual violence against women relates directly to the strategy of 'actor representation' within van Dijk's (2011) *knowledge representation* component of his critical epistemic discourse analysis framework (detailed in Section 2.1.2). By determining how the ascribed identities (Blommaert 2005) of those portrayed in discussions of R/SA are represented, it is possible to ascertain the collective frames of perception of sexual violence against women and *common ground* (van Dijk 2018, p. 34) that might be shared by the Alt-Right and Manosphere.

The role of social actor representation in expressing ideological stance in discourses linked to extremism has been widely acknowledged (see, for example, van Dijk, 1998; Brindle, 2016; Koller and Heritage, 2020; Krendel, 2020; Lorenzo-Dus and Nouri, 2020), particularly in relation to in-group and out-group ideological polarisations (van Dijk 2011, p. 37). Berger reiterates how critical identity construction is in material shared within ideologically extreme groups: "Identities are created, not found, and so the process by which they are assembled is important" (2018, p. 70). For the analyses in this chapter, the way social actors are identified, through the choices made by the bloggers in indexing those discussed in relation to sexual violence, is key to in-group and out-group construction. These choices, described as "rhetorical realisations" by van Leeuwen (2008, p. 25), demonstrate the fundamental values, or axiomatic basis, of the group's self-schema and ideological stance (Tabbert 2015, p. 152) internally at the group level (van Dijk 1998, pp. 120-121).

The rhetorical realisations through social actor representations also indicate how the groups position themselves beyond their internal, collective identity (van Dijk 1998, p. 129). Their position within society and their stance towards institutional authorities, such as the legal system and legislature, is of particular importance with regard to the specific focus in this research project of R/SA. Research into the lexical choices to represent those involved in sexual assault cases in media reporting, for example, has highlighted attitudes towards victims and perpetrators of sexual violence in line with the supposed ideologies of the readership and socially-held rape myths (see Clark, 1992; Luchjenbroers and Aldridge, 2007; Tranchese, 2019; Viehbeck, 2020). In examining the representations of relevant parties in discussions of rape in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts, the groups' internal self-schema and collective identity can be ascertained in terms of their positioning towards the legal processes tasked with criminalising sexual violence and those that give victims protection and redress. For example, how the blog posts represent an 'ideal victim' of rape can indicate a shared belief system on the personal characteristics, behaviours, and social

positioning of women whose victim status is legitimised and those who do not deserve that status (Clark 1992; Tabbert 2015).

This chapter first outlines the categorisation process of the data collected from the Alt-Right and Manosphere blogs (Section 4.2), before examining the representations of the women and men social actors most prominent in those data. Throughout the analyses, social actors will be referred to in terms of *woman* or *man* (not *female* or *male*) to reflect the focus on gender, and not biological sex, within this social science-situated thesis. The women social actors are categorised as women victims and women accusers (Section 4.3) and the men social actors as men perpetrators and men accused (Section 4.4). Separate discussions on these gendered social actor analyses follow each section (Sections 4.3.5 and 4.4.5 respectively). Concluding thoughts and reflections in line with the research question bring this chapter to a close in Section 4.5.

4.2   Corpora mark up and categorisation process

As detailed in the previous chapter, references to social actors discussed in relation to sexual violence in the corpora were marked up using XML. These references included three types of naming conventions and broadly follow the classification process outlined in Potts and Weare (2018): 1) pronominal references, 2) nomination, and 3) categorisation. The following sections give details on the corpora being examined, how the social actors were classified, and the frameworks applied to the analysis.

4.2.1   Corpora: social actor representations

Table 4.10 gives an overview of the number of blog posts, tokens and marked up naming conventions in each corpus. In total, 3,627 XML tags (in bold) were created to signify the naming conventions in the corpora. Of these, 34.79% originated in the Alt-Right corpus and 65.21% were from the Manosphere corpus.

	Alt-Right Corpus (% of total)	Manosphere Corpus (% of total)	Total (both corpora)
Blog posts	41 (41.41)	58 (58.59)	99
No. of tokens	28,065 (34.12)	54,199 (65.88)	82,264
Marked-up naming conventions (XML tags)	1,262 (34.79)	2,365 (65.21)	**3,627**
Ratio of tokens:tags	22.24	22.92	

Table 4.1: Overview of Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora showing total blog posts, tokens and number of naming convention marked up

The ratio of the number of tokens to XML tags for naming conventions was similar between the two corpora, with the Alt-Right showing one tag per 22.24 tokens and the Manosphere showing one tag per 22.92 tokens on average.

4.2.2 Indexing of social actors

Using Sketch Engine's Corpus Query Language (CQL) function, which allows searches based on XML tags, the quantitative analysis of the ways in which social actors are represented in discussions of sexual violence showed that the majority of references rely on pronouns (56.89% in the Alt-Right corpus and 45.50% in the Manosphere corpus). Nomination is the least frequent naming strategy in the corpora, as shown in Table 4.2. This may be a result of anonymity laws for media reporting of victims of sexual violence (McGlynn 2011) and calls within men's rights groups to apply the same restrictions to men who are accused[25] (see Section 4.4.3).

	Alt-Right Corpus Tag Frequency (%)	Manosphere Corpus Tag Frequency (%)
Pronominalisation	718 (56.80)	1,076 (45.50)
Nomination	161 (12.74)	436 (18.44)
Categorisation	**385 (30.46)**	**853 (36.07)**
TOTAL	1,264 (100.00)	2,365 (100.00)

Table 4.2: Naming strategy XML tags in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora per type (data for study in bold)

The third type of naming convention, categorisation, which forms the focus for this chapter, is used in 30.46% of the Alt-Right naming strategies and 36.07% of those in the Manosphere corpus (shown in bold in Table 4.2 above). The social actors present in this categorisation are examined below.

4.2.3 Categorisation process

The identified social actors in blog posts about sexual violence comprised 19 different classes of XML tags according to the role the social actor has in discussions of sexual violence, as outlined in Section 3.5.4. These classes included victims, perpetrators, accusers, those accused of sexual violence, enablers of rape (e.g., people seen as encouraging men to rape or to falsely accuse men of rape), legal parties and references to the author and reader as participants in the reframing of sexual violence. These broad classes were further delineated by gender or by denoting a generic, non-gendered social actor, an example of which is given in concordance line [4-1]. In this example, the node *victims* (shown in bold) was tagged as victim (generic) as the blogger explicitly refers to the fact that the "genitalia", therefore the biological sex, of the victim does not need to be considered (underlined).

[4-1]   Though she should be advocating against rape <u>irrespective of</u> **victims**' <u>genitalia</u>, these kinds of arguments are perhaps the only way to reach Laurie Penny. (ROK12)

---

[25] See *Return of Kings* blog post 'British Government Bans Female Rape Accusers From Being Cross-Examined in Court' (24/3/17) for one men's rights activist's perspective on this issue.

Table 4.3 below shows the list of 19 classes marked up in XML; the frequencies in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora; the total number of tags under the identified categories; and an example concordance line to exemplify the class of the social actor, which is shown in bold.

Social actor class	Alt-Right corpus	Manosphere corpus	Total	Frequency % (across both corpora)	Example concordance line (with categorised naming strategy in bold)
Men accused	89	<u>287</u>	376	**30.37%**	To boot, because there is almost always no evidence against **men**, most <u>accusations</u> are played out in public. (ROK1)
Women accuser	19	203	222	**17.93%**	Nevertheless, a **girl** is almost always anonymous and the man <u>she is accusing</u> is almost always named. (ROK4)
Men perpetrator	<u>92</u>	109	201	**16.24%**	So two high school **freshmen** (both 18 years old and of some dubious Hispanic origin) <u>grabbed a fourteen-year-old classmate</u> (AM5)
Women victim	63	66	129	**10.42%**	I know a **woman** <u>who was raped</u> by a black football player at the University of Minnesota (19VPNN)
Victim (generic)	28	8	36	2.91%	In Sweden the authorities make great efforts to encourage **victims** of sexual offences to report these crimes. (VP2)
Men victim	7	29	36	2.91%	If the raw number of <u>male prison</u> **victims** is so high, the per capita rates would be astronomical. (ROK12)
Author	26	6	32	2.58%	I hear others implying that <u>I am a</u> **rapist** and don't even know it (34MFPN)
Reader	4	22	26	2.10%	<u>Fellow Chateau</u> **guests**, another CH ugly truth is externally validated by scientific inquiry. (CH6)
Enabler (generic)	5	20	25	2.02%	The **German governments**, along with SJWs, deserve criminal sanctions <u>for allowing these sexual assaults to happen</u> (ROK7)
Men enabler	3	22	25	2.02%	**WKs** have always been <u>enablers of</u> the worst sort of man-hating, skank-glorifying feminism. (CH1)
Women enabler	5	17	22	1.78%	To make matters worse, **feminists** <u>have been trying to train men to rape girls for years</u>. (MF2)
Perpetrator (generic)	17	4	21	1.70%	This kind of rationalization is the exact sort we hear from **child abusers** who can actually be charged. (7ROKNN)
Legal parties (generic)	1	18	19	1.53%	It turns out that, as usual, "new" is a scam, and time-proven means you avoid elevating <u>molestation</u> **experts** to positions of power (16AMNN)
Women accused	0	18	18	1.45%	A hot if somewhat mannish-looking <u>female</u> **teacher** <u>is in court</u> <u>on charges of "raping"</u> one of her students (3CHNN)
Men accuser	9	6	15	1.21%	A **man** <u>who levels false accusations against men</u> has no right to call himself a men's rights' activist. (36MFPN)
Accused (generic)	6	5	11	0.89%	Those in the West finding themselves prosecuted over bogus claims of "rape" or "sexual assault" may not face a firing squad today, but the hunt for new **"criminals"** continues unabated. (ROK2)
Women legal parties	5	4	9	0.73%	Esmay started repeating Rachel Haywire's false claim that I raped <u>my</u> **friend**<u>, colleague and podcast sidekick Ann Sterzinger</u> (36MFPN)
Men legal parties	5	3	8	0.65%	Here we have a seemingly well-adjusted and intelligent young **man**, <u>Ryan Duffin, who was led to trust her</u> (11ROKNN)
Accuser (generic)	1	6	7	0.57%	His **accusers**, as far as we know, were essentially <u>unidentified</u>. (ROK2)
TOTAL	**385**	**853**	**1,238**	100%	

Table 4.3: Frequency of social actor XML tags in the categorisation naming strategies for the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora, with concordance line examples (frequencies ≥ 10% shown in bold, node words in the concordance lines in bold and categorisation features, where relevant, underlined)

The table above shows that the highest frequency of XML tags identifying naming strategies in the Alt-Right blog posts related to men perpetrators (92 occurrences, 24.02% of Alt-Right tags, underlined). In the Manosphere corpus, men accused tags were the majority (287 occurrences, 33.65% of Manosphere tags - underlined). This discrepancy indicates a slightly different focus for the bloggers, and readership, in the two factions in their discussions on sexual violence. Together, however, the four most frequent social actors discussed in both corpora are the same, with men accused being the most prominent (376 occurrences, 30.37% of all social actor tags). The classes showing a total frequency of 10% or higher were chosen for further investigation. These are shown in bold in the frequency column and include men accused (30.37%), women accuser (17.93%), men perpetrator (16.24%) and women victim (10.42%).

The social actors represented in the four highlighted classes were categorised using van Leeuwen's (2008) social actor framework analysis. This "sociosemantic inventory" (2008, p. 23) of categories is discussed with reference to research in which it has been similarly applied in Section 2.7. However, a brief overview of the social actor categorisations from the inventory which are applied in the analyses and examples from the data are given in Table 4.4 below. This shows only the classifications relevant to the data in this chapter and does not include the whole framework. The descriptions of the classifications include direct quotes and paraphrases from van Leeuwen's (2008) guidelines and example node words taken from the data and which were coded accordingly.

Personal / Impersonal	Classification	Sub-Classification (1)	Sub-Classification(s) (2)	Definition (page numbers refer to van Leeuwen, 2008)	Examples (from corpora)
PERSONALISATION				Social actors are referred to…:	
DETERMINATION	CATEGORISATION	APPRAISEMENT		"in terms which evaluate them as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied" (p. 45)	*bimbo, pariah*
		FUNCTIONALISATION		by way of actions and activities, occupations and roles (p. 42)	*cleaner, rapist*
		IDENTIFICATION	CLASSIFICATION	according to "the major categories by means of which a given society or institution differentiates between classes of people. In the West, these now include age, gender, provenance, class, wealth, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation" (p. 42)	*man, child*
			RELATIONAL	in terms of their personal relationships, work relations and connection to others (p. 43)	*spouse, teammate*
			PHYSICAL	in terms of physical characteristics (p. 44)	*Brad Pitt lookalikes*
	OVERDETERMINATION			"as participating, at the same time, in more than one social practice" (p. 47)	*Asian gang, rapefugee*
	DIFFERENTIATION			in contrast and juxtaposed against an individual or group "creating the difference between the self, and the other, or between us and them" (p. 40)	*those, the latter*
INDETERMINATION	GENERICISATION			as a generic class of people (p. 35)	*minorities, muslims*
	SPECIFICATION			as non-specific but identifiable individuals (p.35)	*staff, another*
IMPERSONALISATION					
	SPECIFICATION			as having no human characteristics and identifiable (p. 35)	*one, ten*
	ABSTRACTION			"by means of a quality assigned to them by and in the representation" (p. 46)	*pets, vermin*
	OBJECTIVATION	SPATIALISATION		by means of metaphorical reference to places or something associated with that place (p. 46)	*Islam*
		INSTRUMENTALISATION		in terms of something which is used (p. 46)	*walking fuckdoll*
		SOMATISATION		in terms of a part of the body (p. 46)	*breasts, scalp*

Table 4.4: Definitions and examples of social actor classification categories (van Leeuwen 2008)

As shown in Table 4.4, the categories are divided into the overarching classifications of PERSONALISATION and IMPERSONALISATION; the former referring to social actors being represented as human beings and the latter referring to abstract or concrete nouns "whose meanings do not include the semantic feature 'human'" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 46) and often involve metaphorical references (ibid., p. 53). A further sub-categorisation of DETERMINATION and INDETERMINATION allows for the classification of social actors depending on whether they are specified as individuals or are unspecified or anonymous (ibid., p. 39). Within these overarching classifications, van Leeuwen's (2008) inventory of social actors allows for a more granular analysis of indexing identities based on the definitions given in the table and discussed more thoroughly throughout this chapter and in Section 2.7.

4.2.4 Ambiguous naming strategies for categorisation

In his explanation of the social actor network categorisation, van Leeuwen acknowledges potential difficulties in classifying social actor representations which might span two or more categories in the framework (2008, p. 53). In terms of the present study, a number of social actor representations did, in fact, pose challenges in classification due to multiple semantic components. For example, the naming strategy *bimbo* includes semantic properties related to a low level of intelligence (APPRAISEMENT) while also including aspects of appearance such as being blonde and hyperfeminine (Bale 2021) (CATEGORISATION: PHYSICAL IDENTIFICATION). The eventual categorisation was APPRAISEMENT as the dictionary definition[26] and online articles discussing the term, showed the semantic component relating to low IQ was used more consistently. Table 4.5 below shows examples of similarly challenging naming strategies from the data which include more than one possible semantic component and how they were finally categorised.

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[26] The Oxford English Dictionary (www.www.oed.com) was used as the primary reference point for all definitions.

Naming strategy	Issue	Possible classification	Resolution	Final categorisation
feminist	Part of the dictionary definition focuses on the advocation and support of the rights and equality of women, implying the actions undertaken define being a *feminist*. In van Leeuwen's (2008) framework discussion, he also identifies nouns including a suffix 'ist' to indicate functional roles (p. 42).	FUNCTIONALISATION	The CLASSIFICATION subcategory of IDENTIFICATION includes roles defined by belief systems (for example, religion) and notes on how belonging to a group or organisation indicates a class role (p. 42). In tandem with roles such as *atheist* and *racist,* whereby action is not necessary to define the belief systems, *feminist* is considered here to be predominantly a category used by society to "differentiate between a class of people." (ibid.).	IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION
jail bait	This term describes a person who is under the legal age of consent for sexual activity but who is considered older. The use of the term also indicates it applies to someone who is sexually-attractive, provocative and a risk or danger to men who can be jailed for having sex with them.	APPRAISEMENT	The focus on age is the predominant semantic meaning here as it is the most essential factor in the definition of this term.	IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION
liar	The two semantic meanings can relate to 1) a dishonest person and 2) someone who tells lies.	APPRAISEMENT	The action of telling lies differentiates this term from others indicating dishonestly (e.g., a fraud).	FUNCTIONALISATION
poster girl	This term refers to someone who is deemed to represent or epitomise a group, idea, or movement, usually based on physical aesthetics.	PHYSICAL IDENTIFICATION	The action of being a representative seems predominant here as physical attributes are not always necessary (e.g., someone can be a poster girl for qualities related to attitude or experience).	FUNCTIONALISATION
sex slave	The semantic meanings here relate to the action of providing sex for someone on demand as well as relating to a given relationship.	FUNCTIONALISATION	The meaning relating to the relational aspect of this word can be considered more dominant by focusing on the head noun 'slave', relating to someone being the property of another.	RELATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

Table 4.5: Examples of challenging naming strategy classification and explanation for final categorisation

Having finalised the categories of social actor representations according to the processes outlined above, the analyses of the four most frequent classes of social actor in discussions of sexual violence was carried out. Section 4.3 examines women social actor representations and Section 4.4 examines those classified as men social actors.

4.3 Women social actor representation

The following four sections examine representations of women in the corpora. Sections 4.3.1 (Alt-Right corpus) and 4.3.2 (Manosphere corpus) analyse how women victims of sexual assault are indexed. The women represented in this class (shown in Table 4.6 were discussed in the blog posts as having genuinely experienced sexual violence. Sections 4.3.3 (Alt-Right corpus) and 4.3.4 (Manosphere corpus) look at representations of women regarded as 'accusers'. These are women who are not believed to be victims of rape or sexual assault and are, instead, considered to be making unfounded allegations. These representations are shown in Table 4.6. A consideration of all representations of women social actors in the corpora, summarising these four sections, is then given in Section 4.3.5.

4.3.1 Women victims: Alt-Right corpus

Table 4.6 below shows there are 63 representations of women victims in the Alt-Right corpus, representing 16.36% of the 385 categorisation naming strategies in the Alt-Right blog posts.

			Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus	
			Number of Nodes (%)	**Nodes (no. of occurrences)**	**Number of Nodes (%)**	**Nodes (no. of occurrences)**
PERSONALISATION						
CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION			11 (2.87)	*victims* (4), *victim* (2), *jail bait* (1), *"liars"* (1), *sophomore* (1), *survivors* (1), *whore* (1)	18 (2.11)	*victims* (6), *victim* (5), *Assistant* (3), *reporter* (2), *organizer* (1), *"rape survivor"* (1)
CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION:	CLASSIFICATION		46 (12.01)	*women* (17), *woman* (12), *girls* (8), *girl* (5), *females* (1), *female* (1), *kid* (1), *White Girl* (1)	43 (5.04)	*women* (21), *girl* (10), *woman* (7), *child* (2), *chick* (1), *girls* (1), *minors* (1)
	RELATIONAL		3 (0.78)	*classmate* (1), *sex slaves* (1), *spouse* (1)	1 (0.12)	*classmate* (1)
	PHYSICAL		0 (0.00)		0 (0.00)	
INDETERMINATION			0 (0.00)		1 (0.12)	*ones* (1)
IMPERSONALISATION						
OBJECTIVATION			3 (0.78)	*rape-meat* (1), *schmokin' hunk of poon* (1), *walking fuckdolls* (1)	3 (0.35)	*breasts* (2), *skeletons* (1)
TOTAL			**63 (16.45)**		**66 (7.74)**	

Table 4.6: Social actor representation: 'women victim' in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora

The most frequent classification of women victims is shown to be that of PERSONALISATION: IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION (n= 46, 12.01%) whereby victims of sexual violence are defined in terms of social and institutional categories used to classify people, for example gender or age (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 42). The classification of *women* (17) or *woman* (12) is the most frequent naming strategy, indicating the victims' gender and adult status (i.e., not *girl*) are the most salient features for indexing victims of sexual violence in this corpus. This can be juxtaposed against the FUNCTIONALISATION representation of *victim(s)*, which occurred six times in this subcorpus. This suggests that the bloggers' collective, shared self-schema of women victims of sexual violence is one related more to the permanent characteristic of gender rather than the legalistic term 'victim', which demarcates the women in terms of their status in a rape or sexual assault case (see Section 4.3.5 for further discussion on this point).

The preference to refer to women victims in the plural demonstrates a trend to generalise and associate women sexual assault victims as an homogenous class as opposed to individuals. This trend is paralleled in the preferred pluralisation of *girls* (8) compared to *girl* (5) or *White Girl* (1) in the singular form. A closer examination of the concordance lines shows that the bloggers use the pluralised forms of *women* to imply a threat to <u>all</u> women in 12 of the 17 occurrences. Those referenced as posing the threats are in the Alt-Right's traditionally ideologically-positioned out-groups (Hermansson et al. 2020): *immigrants/refugees/'diverse'* men (4), *Muslim/Arab men* (3), *Jewish men* (2), *feminists* (2), *black men* (1). Concordance lines [4-2] and [4-3] show examples of how this threat is framed, with women seen as being in danger from men considered outsiders and who possess inherently sexually-deviant characteristics (see Daniels, 1997). The categorised nodes for these concordance lines are shown in bold, with the lexical features describing the outsider status of the men underlined. The assumption as to inherent sexual deviancy is in italics in [4-3].

[4-2] Or if you do actually believe that **women** are singled out far too often for sexual assaults, than you can't continue to give <u>diverse rapists</u> a pass on their criminality because they are diverse. (AM3)

[4-3] Germany's FBI, the Federal Criminal Office, said it had information that the surrounding and sexual molestation of **women** was a *'familiar phenomenon* in some <u>Arab countries.'</u> (VP18)

With the generic use of *girls* (8), the bloggers similarly suggest a vague and ongoing threat from perpetrators aligned with an ideological out-group, with 7 out of the 8 occurrences focusing not on the women victim but on those deemed responsible for the rape. Unlike the threats referenced in relation to *women* by out-group men, however, most of the threats in concordance lines referencing *girls* are seen as emanating from feminists (4 out of the 7 occurrences). There is an assumption by the bloggers, therefore, that *girls* are in a separate class to "feminists" and implies, due to their young age and supposed innocence, they are yet to be 'corrupted' by feminism.

Concordance line [4-4] shows an example of this where feminists are seen as the reason why men rape girls.

[4-4]　To make matters worse, <u>feminists have been trying to train men to rape</u> **girls** for years. (MF2)

The naming strategy *girls* implies being impressionable, underage, possibly naïve and vulnerable. In an analysis of British English online texts, Baker found that the three most frequent representation of *girl* through collocates were representations of adult women referred to as girls, the romanticized, ideational representation of girls as romantic partners and the vulnerability of girls to violent crime (2014, p. 149). While these analyses were based on texts present on UK-based websites, the findings are supported in analyses of American corpora (see, for example, Norberg, 2016; Krendel, 2020). Norberg's (2016) corpus analysis of *girl* found the verbs collocating exclusively with the node as object were associated with crime far more than those collocating with *boy*. These verbs include *rape*, *traffic*, *abduct*, *assault*, and *attack* (ibid., p. 303). The analysis also showed violent behaviours towards girls, such as *force*, *murder*, *hit,* and *hurt* (ibid., p. 302). In line [4-4] above, the blogger positions *men* here as equally as vulnerable as *girls*, with both written as the object of the action of the feminists. This effectively associates the rapist with the same characteristics associated with *girls*, with both parties being seen as being manipulated by feminists. This simultaneously exonerates the men from the sexual violence through passivity while also implying victimhood through easy manipulation and vulnerability.

An exception to the pluralised naming strategies for victims of sexual violence to assimilate them as one class is the use of *White Girl* (1). The blogger has used the format of a title, with the capitalisation, to epitomise a 'ideal' victim (Clark 1992) due to her race and age. Concordance line [4-5] shows that the meaning being communicated is actually one of pluralisation and homogenisation, however the use of the singular form here appears to appropriate an African American English (AAE) linguistic practice of non-pluralisation of the count noun (Ezgeta 2012).

[4-5]　What happens when the rapists are diverse? **White Girl** ends up bleeding a lot. (AM3)

This linguistic minstrelsy, or 'figurative blackface' (Eberhardt and Freeman 2015), a term used when white users of AAE adopt a blunt, reduced form of this language to racialise and stereotype AAE speakers (ibid., p. 304), reinforces the racist rhetoric while also effectively extending the homogenisation of 'ideal victims' (for the discussion on this see Section 4.5).

In the FUNCTIONALISATION category, the pluralisation of *victims* (4 instances compared to 2 for *victim*) is used consistently with that of *women* and *girls* by classing victims in opposition to an out-group threat. Three of those four occurrences of *victims* related to the Cologne attacks, on New Year's Eve 2015/16, which were erroneously blamed on immigrants to the city (Kroon 2019). The one use of *victims* which does not relate to the Cologne attacks shows FUNCTIONALISATION being used to emphasise the actions of women victims of sexual violence framed in a way to again

exonerate white attackers. The extended concordance line [4-6] below shows the node referring to left-leaning women victims (italicised). In contrast to showing an outsider threat to women, these victims are portrayed as culpable for their own rapes. The argumentation strategy of topos of numbers (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Brindle 2016b), or using the logic of statistics (underlined), is used to portray left-leaning women victims of rape (italics) as both desiring rape and physically evolved to tolerate it.

[4-6]   It's well-known that a great many girls have rape fantasies, and a significant number of rape **victims** claim to have orgasmed during their assaults. Both these points serve as evidence that a portion of the female population—the r-selected, *leftist portion*—not only wants to be raped, but is physiologically adapted for it. (MF2)

This framing again portrays an 'ideal victim' of rape, that is, one that does not identify as *leftist*, and seems to offer men license to commit sexual violence against those seen as against their ideological positioning. A similar stance can be seen in further representations of women victims in the FUNCTIONALISATION category of social actors, for example *jail bait* (1) and *whore* (1). These women are represented as not deserving of any sympathy and as the rape being acceptable or excused, as line [4-7] shows.

[4-7]   No one cares when a **whore** is raped like no one cares when a thief is robbed. (AM11)

Finally, the OBJECTIVATION (3) categorisation of women victims of sexual violence shows how SOMATISATION, whereby "social actors are represented by means of reference to a part of their body" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 47), is used to reduce the victims to their sexualised body parts. This is used in line [4-8] when the violence is framed in terms of the group of men who are seen to be entitled to rape women:

[4-8]   It's hell to get on the wrong end of a false rape allegation. It's awesome to be in the protected class of men who can do any damn thing to a **schmokin' hunk of poon** that crosses their sick and depraved imagination. (AM7)

This dehumanising objectification of the victim by not only reducing her to a body part but one which is specifically violated during the rape, diminishes her experience and, consequently, admonishes any past or future culpability of the men for the crime. Using this synecdoche to represent women indicates a collective ideological stance which considers women in terms of their ability to satisfy sexual desires and to be at the service of men. The reference to *schmokin'* within this multi-word unit also indicates an attitude among the readership that it is acceptable, if you are within that 'protected class of men' to rape women seen as sexually attractive and to consider them as simply sex organs.

4.3.2   Women victims: Manosphere corpus

As seen in Table 4.6, women victims of sexual violence are represented in the Manosphere corpus at just under half the frequency of that of the Alt-Right (66 occurrences or 7.74% in the former compared to 63 occurrences or 16.45% in the latter). This implies a relative lack of focus or interest in the Manosphere bloggers in the representation of women victims compared to those in the Alt-

Right. The most frequent naming strategy, mirroring that in the Alt-Right corpus, is the IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION gendered categorising of victims as *women* (21) and *woman* (7), which represents 31.82% and 10.60% respectively of the 66 social actor occurrences in this subcorpus. This again shows a preference for categorising women victims according to their gender as opposed to their status with reference to a legal process or in terms of having suffered violence (e.g. as *victims*). As in the representations discussed in the above section on the Alt-Right (Section 4.3.1)), the generalising of a class, using *women*, can be seen in relation to threats from out-group men, here, for example, on German women (italics) as a group:

[4-9]   It has been three weeks since the Cologne mass sexual assaults on *German* **women** at the hands (and groins) of Middle Eastern men. (CH13)

Mirroring the Alt-Right out-groups noted in concordance lines [4-2] to [4-9] above, the 21 occurrences of *women* in the Manosphere subcorpus are assimilated in relation to threats from *migrants* (8), *left-leaning men* (2), *Jewish men* (1) and *a Black man* (1). Further crossover in ideological stance can be seen in the grouping of feminist or left-leaning women as victims of sexual violence, with seven occurrences implying the victim deserved the crime committed against her, or the assault was the responsibility of feminists, as shown in concordance line [4-10]:

[4-10] If anything, "Free the Nipple" and related social retardisms represent a desire by <u>feminists</u> to <u>deliberately inflict sexual harm and assault</u> on other **women**. (ROK17)

One concession where the naming strategy *women* was used without an explicit out-group threat present in the concordance line or an implication of violence being deserved is shown in concordance line [4-11]. Here, 'elderly' *women* are portrayed as deserving of sympathy, through the underlined references to the attackers being *depraved* and *criminal* and reference to regret signaled through *unfortunately*. Despite this acknowledgement, there is a concession that these instances are 'occasional', effectively underplaying the risk of sexual violence.

[4-11] <u>Unfortunately</u>, there are some <u>very depraved individuals</u> out there. Occasional stories of <u>seasoned criminals</u> raping *elderly* **women** surface, for example. (ROK34)

In line with literature on media representations of rape victims (Clark 1992; Tabbert 2015), these women are represented as 'ideal victims' due to their juxtaposition to the 'ideal offenders'*.* In this instance, these offenders are described as *depraved individuals* and *seasoned criminals* and so outside the norms of society and represented as canonical opposites (Tabbert 2015, p. 115) to the presumed vulnerable women; women who are seen as older, less sexualised than younger women and therefore as genuine victims. This again distances the readership from acts of sexual violence, committed by men like themselves who they view as within the norms of society (*ibid.*), against women as a class.

One aspect of divergence from the Alt-Right subcorpus in the representation of women victims is the use of *girl* as a naming strategy in the IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION category of social actors. The trend differs from the Alt-Right subcorpus with singular *girl* (10) more frequent than the plural

girls (1). Of the ten occurrences of *girl,* six reference the girl's age, for example in [4-12], where the rapist is described as Jewish in the extended context, and [4-13], where the rapists are described as Hispanic within the blog post and indexed here through *brown border jumpers*:

> [4-12] This filmmaker, rightfully seen as a pariah by the general public for anally raping a <u>13-year-old</u> **girl** forty years ago, is nevertheless perhaps the most revered–and defended–living director within high-flying acting circles. (ROK20)

> [4-13] The shitlibs controlling our information gateways will spend months loudly and insistently reporting on, and over-analyzing, a *fake news story* about White frat bros raping a girl at UVA while utterly burying or suppressing the details of a *real news story* about two brown border jumpers who in fact raped a <u>14 year old</u> **girl** in a high school bathroom. (italics show original emphasis) (CH18)

This focus on age to exemplify the social actor representation *girl* marks a difference between the Alt-Right bloggers' use of the naming strategy and that in the Manosphere blogs. Where the former use the strategy in opposition to feminists to present a victim ideologically aligned with them, the general trend in the latter is to highlight the victims' vulnerability and present her as the 'ideal victim' in opposition to out-group men (see (Baker, 2014; Norberg, 2016; Krendel, 2020 and discussion above in Section 4.3.1). The representation of vulnerability is present in all occurrences of *girl* except for those in one blog post which claims that the #MeToo movement equates not texting back a girl with assaulting her. However, in this occurrence, shown in [4-14], male feminists (underlined) are blamed for this view:

> [4-14] <u>A male feminist spinoff</u> of this putrid witch-hunt, #IHave, is now comparing not responding to a **girl**'s text messages to abusing her sexually… Not texting a reply to her leads to rape, remember! (ROK25)

Criticising 'male feminists' for making a connection between not texting a girl and assaulting her allows the bloggers to preserve the representation of girls as ideal partners. In a corpus analysis of representations of *girls* on Reddit forums associated with the Manosphere, Krendel found that, when indexed positively, the term *girl(s)* was used to represent an ideal partner due to characteristics based on fun and good company (2020, p. 623). Men aligned with feminism, seen in line [4-14], indicate another out-group seen as threatening this perspective and representing possible loss to established relationship norms.

Table 4.6 shows occurrences of social actor representations within the categorisation OBJECTIVATION for both the Alt-Right and Manosphere (n=3 for both corpora, 0.78% for the former and 0.35 % frequency for the latter). While the Alt-Right bloggers index victims of sexual violence in this categorisation through particularly vilifying terms which focus on the violation of women's bodies (*rape-meat* (1), *schmokin' hunk of poon* (1), *walking fuckdolls* (1)), the Manosphere bloggers' use of SOMATISATION, while dehumanising, is less vitriolic. The use of *breasts* (2) to represent the victims is less frequent although concordance line [4-15] shows this is being used to show support for legislation against sexual assault.

[4-15] As for me, I am happy with the status quo…laws should exist and be enforced to prevent these **breasts** being groped without permission. (ROK17)

However, metaphorical representations of women victims of sexual violence around the node word show that the denigration of women is achieved in alternative ways. In concordance line [4-16], for instance, the woman being described was raped by a Muslim man.

[4-16] Manjaw. Manlips. Thousand cock stare. A bad combo for the continuation of Western Civ. This **woman** is a walking biohazard sign warning that you'll have to check your sanity and illusion of paternity certainty at the door if you get involved with her. (2CHNN)

The implication that she has had sex with many men ('thousand cock stare' and suggestions that paternity is in question); is toxic ('a walking biohazard sign'); and looks masculine ('manjaw', 'manlips'), assumed here by the readership to be a negative trait, shows that women seen as not deserving sympathy are as vilified as in the Alt-Right corpus.

4.3.3   Women accusers: Alt-Right corpus

Table 4.7 below lists the social actor representations for women accusers in the two corpora. In the Alt-Right subcorpus, 19 social actor representations were identified for women accusers, accounting for 4.94% of the categorised naming strategies marked up in the blog posts. The social actor representations are predominantly divided between CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION (8) and CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION (9), with *woman* (5) and *women* (3) being the most frequent naming strategy used. While this focus on gender is used to index women victims, discussed in the previous sections, there is a shift here from a preference for the plural form to the singular form. This indicates the bloggers discuss individual women within this category of social actors rather than generalising women as a class. However, the extended concordance lines show examples of how the focus on one woman is then generalised, extrapolating the actions of one woman to all women. Concordance line [4-17] shows this by proceeding to project the actions of one woman onto all women (underlined, original capitalisation remains) and line [4-18] uses 'some' to create an indeterminate character, with 'keep' and 'every day' implying it is more than one woman.

[4-17] I cannot believe this. I am LITERALLY shaking with rage right now. This **woman** was RAPED and yet neither her husband nor the police believe her. WOMEN NEVER LIE ABOUT RAPE! (17VPNN)

[4-18] I keep hearing stories every day about how some **woman** destroyed a man's life on a whim, just because she refused to accept the consequences of her actions. (34MFPN)

Finally, regarding the use of FUNCTIONALISATION as a naming strategy for women who accuse men of sexual violence, five contributions reference roles within a company (*research assistant* (2), *staffers* (2), *employees* (1)). These representations index women accusing their managers of sexual assault. The only naming strategy here which indicates a single social actor (*research assistant*) is framed within a context showing she is assumed to be attention-seeking (underlined)

and lying, with the crime expressed with scare quotes to denote disbelief in the claim (Predelli 2003, p. 3) (italics), as exemplified in line [4-19]:

[4-19] Loudly, and <u>apparently without caring who heard her</u>, a **research assistant** at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City charged that her boss—noted paleoanthropologist Brian Richmond, the museum's curator of human origins—had *"sexually assaulted"* her in his hotel room after a meeting the previous September in Florence, Italy. (27VPNN)

In line with previous trends highlighted for women social actors above, the use of pluralised FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategies, namely *staffers* (2) and *employees* (1), shows that the women are deemed more credible and are in danger, as a group, from a threat posed by an out-group man, in this case, the Jewish left-leaning publisher David Corn.

[4-20] Mother Jones' David Corn is sixth member of elite media accused of misconduct towards female **staffers**. (VP9)

In line [4-20], there are no features to indicate the claim is uncredible. In contrast to the singular *research assistant*, whose criticised actions are the focus of concordance line [4-19], the pluralised FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategy in line [4-20] allows the focus to be on the alleged perpetrator, creating an assumption of guilt in the shared collective schema of the readership. The pluralisation indicates a threat to women more generally and hints at a more systemic sexual violence problem in an organisation in opposition to the readership's ideology.

		Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus	
		Number of Nodes (%)	**Nodes (no. of occurrences)**	**Number of Nodes Frequency (%)**	**Nodes (no. of occurrences)**
PERSONALISATION					
CATEGORISATION: APPRAISEMENT		1 (0.26)	*bimbos* (1)	2 (0.23)	*cretins* (1), *villains* (1)
CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION		8 (2.09)	*research assistant* (2), *staffers* (2), *accuser* (1), *accusers* (1), *employees* (1), "*liars*" (1)	96 (11.25)	*accusers* (31), *accuser* (24), *actress* (5), *fabulist* (4), *complainants* (3), *actresses* (2), *stripper* (2), "*victims*" (2), "*actors*" (1), *architect* (1), *attention-seeker* (1), *cleaner* (1), *cleaners* (1), *complainant* (1), *ex-supermodel* (1), *housekeeper* (1), *housekeepers* (1), *liar* (1), *patient* (1), *poster girl* (1), "*rape culture*" *extremist* (1), *rape hoaxer* (1), "*rape survivor*" (1), *singer* (1), *sociology major* (1), *starlets* (1), *supermodel* (1), *thespian* (1), *thieves* (1), "*victim*" (1), *victims* (1)
CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION:	CLASSIFICATION	9 (2.35)	*woman* (5), *women* (3), *ladies* (1)	86 (10.08)	*women* (38), *woman* (29), *girl* (11), *66-year-old* (1), *child* (1), *female* (1), *feminists* (1), *girls* (1), *hag* (1), *sociopath* (1), *wymyn* (1)
	RELATIONAL	1 (0.26)	*partner* (1)	10 (1.17)	*daughter (10)*
INDETERMINATION		0 (0.00)		7 (0.82)	*another (1), every woman and her dog (1), individuals (1), others (1), people (1), person (1), someone (1)*
SPECIFICATION		0 (0.00)		1 (0.12)	*staff (1)*
IMPERSONALISATION					
ABSTRACTION		0 (0.00)		1 (0.12)	*subject of constant desire (1)*
TOTAL		**19 (4.96)**		**203 (23.80)**	

Table 4.7: Social actor representation: 'women accuser' in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora

4.3.4   Women accusers: Manosphere corpus

Table 4.7 above shows the frequency of representations of women accusing men of sexual assault in the Manosphere corpus (23.80%) is nearly five times that seen in the Alt-Right (at 4.96%), suggesting a much higher preoccupation with this class of social actors than in the far-right blogs. The most frequent representations are classified as CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION (11.25%), framing the women in terms of their actions, roles, jobs, and, effectively, status in society. This marks a noticeable difference to the Manosphere women victims subcorpora in which IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION was seen as the preferred way to index victims of sexual assault (see Table 4.6). The most frequent naming strategy in this categorisation is *accusers* (31) or *accuser* (24), representing those accusing men of sexual assault in terms of their legal status as having initiated criminal proceedings against the men. A closer examination of the concordance lines in which these representations occur, and particularly the subcontexts within which *accuser(s)* appears, shows a more granular picture of the specific actions these women are associated with according to the Manosphere blog posts. For example, concordance line [4-21] indicates the negative assessment of accusers being able to remain anonymous within the legal system (underlined), while the example in [4-22] relates to the accuser giving inadequate testimony through the underlined reference to flawed or missing evidence. Both these subcontexts relate to the perceived inadequacies of and bias in the legal system.

> [4-21] Ched Evans' suffering provides another illustration of why letting **accusers** stay anonymous is a terrible idea. (ROK32)
>
> [4-22] If the evidence from the **accuser** is already so bad and non-existent, how bad and non-existent will the evidence of former girlfriends be? (ROK4)

Table 4.8 below outlines the subcontexts of *accusers* (31) and *accuser* (24) as ascertained from the extended concordance lines. These are listed under four general themes: 1) personal characteristics of the accuser, 2) the legal system and legal process, 3) the personal gain of the accuser, and 4) political contexts.

General context	Subcontext (function)	*accuser* Number of Nodes (% frequency)	*accusers* Number of Nodes (% frequency)
Personal characteristics	Being vindictive	2 (8.33)	0 (0.00)
	Showing mental incapacity	1 (4.17)	0 (0.00)
	Showing stupidity / incompetence	1 (4.17)	0 (0.00)
	Being promiscuous	1 (4.17)	0 (0.00)
	Playing the victim	0 (0.00)	1 (3.23)
	Total	**5 (20.83)**	**1 (3.23)**
Legal system and process	Giving false, inconsistent or incomplete evidence	5 (20.83)	7 (22.58)
	Benefitting from bias in the legal system	2 (8.33)	6 (19.35)
	Capitalising on anonymity	4 (16.67)	3 (9.68)
	Not having to be cross-examined	0 (0.00)	6 (19.35)
	Having to give evidence of sexual history	4 (16.67)	1 (3.23)
	Giving robust and honest evidence	2 (8.33)	3 (9.68)
	Deserving of legal punishment	1 (4.17)	1 (3.23)
	Total	**18 (75.00)**	**27 (87.10)**
Personal gain	Seeking monetary advantage	1 (4.17)	2 (6.45)
	Total	**1 (4.17)**	**2 (6.45)**
Politics	Being used by others as a political weapon	0 (0.00)	1 (3.23)
	Total	**1 (4.17)**	**1 (3.23)**
TOTAL		**24 (100.00)**	**31 (100.00)**

Table 4.8: Contexts within which 'accuser(s)' function in the Manosphere subcorpus for 'women accuser'

Contrary to previous research on the portrayal of women accusing men of R/SA in Manosphere forums (Lumsden 2019, p. 104), which posited that women were seen as self-promoting and motivated by the desire for compensation (see Section 2.4.2 for a full discussion on this), the women represented in the Manosphere subcorpus as *accusers* are predominantly discussed with reference to an unfair and corrupt legal system. Of the 24 occurrences of *accuser* and 31 of *accusers*, 18 (75.00%) and 27 (87.10%) respectively portray women being actively complicit in victimising men through the courts. The subcontexts of being allowed to give false testimony (5 and 7 instances) and taking advantage of the anonymity afforded to accusers but not the accused (4 and 3 instances) are the most frequent (shown in Table 4.8). For example, in line [4-23] the blogger implies there are few barriers to giving false testimony as the basic tools implied as being

'tears' and 'lies' allow a woman to give evidence (underlined), together with the support of those seen as anti-men (italics):

> [4-23] By contrast, <u>all</u> your ex-wife, the mother of your child, or <u>some crazy false **accuser** needs is some tears</u>, *a set of feminist backers*, and <u>words from her mouth</u>. (ROK1)

Likewise, accusers being proactive in taking advantage of the system is shown in [4-24] through the assumption that these women will fabricate trauma to avoid giving any evidence (underlined):

> [4-24] If courtroom cross-examinations are supposedly too traumatic, <u>what's to stop</u> **accusers** and feminists <u>from saying</u> prerecorded [sic] cross-examinations are as well? (ROK5)

Together, the naming strategy of *accuser(s)* is used by the bloggers here to epitomise not just victimisation against men by women accusing them of sexual violence, but also of a broken legal system supposedly rigged against them. This aspersion on the legal system is also seen in the naming strategy *complainants* (3), within the category of FUNCTIONALISATION and which relates to the legal status of the social actor, and is exemplified in line [4-25]

> [4-25] Consequently, the move to ban courtroom cross-examinations of rape **complainants** reeks of <u>unwarranted exceptionalism</u>. (ROK5)

Other naming strategies in the FUNCTIONALISATION classification shown in Table 4.7 indicate women being represented in terms of jobs which involve pretense (*actress(es)* (7), *"actors"* (1), *thespian* (1)); unskilled labour (*stripper* (2), *cleaner(s)* (2), *housekeeper(s)* (2)); as acting dishonestly (*liar* (1), *rape hoaxer (1), thieves (1)*); or in functional roles which are expressed using scare quotes to show they are not credible (Predelli 2003, p. 3) (*"victim(s)"* (3), *"rape survivor"* (1)). In sum, the women accusing men of sexual violence here are being made to sound less credible by representing their roles contemptuously and delegitimising their social position (van Dijk 1998,p. 259).

Mirroring previous discussions on the use of gender categorisation, under CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION, a similar tactic is used to emphasise threat by using the plural form *women* (38) more frequently than *woman* (29). In [4-26] for example, women's collective supposed dishonesty is generalised through the comparative adverbial *more likely* and then hyperbolised (with *BIGGER* in capital letters) by claiming their lies are more exaggerated and, by implication, more catastrophic (both underlined). In [4-27] the blogger undermines accusers by portraying them as emotionally volatile women, through adjectives related to instability (italics), and by implying they are encouraged to lie by a large number of feminists acting underhandedly (underlined):

> [4-26] This is also a good time to remind everyone that in surveys of sexual behavior, **<u>women</u>** are <u>more likely to lie than are men</u>, AND <u>when women lie they lie BIGGER</u>. (CH1)

> [4-27] The rise in "regret rape" — my term for the post-cock, morning-after rationalization of a pump and dump night of consensual sex as an incidence of "rape" by *bitter, sad, emotionally unstable* **women** of middling SMV — is tied up with the explosion of gynocratic psychotherapy and <u>the planting of false memories by malicious feminist therapists educated by the thousands</u> in man-hating women's studies programs. (CH2)

The generalisation and catastrophising is further exemplified by the inflated *every woman and her dog* representation in the INDETERMINATION category. The strategies used in the categorisation of this class of social actors show a predominance to damage the credibility of the women accusers and characterise them generically as a threatening class.

4.3.5 Summary and discussion: Women social actor representation

Three main themes emerge from the analyses of women social actors in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts: 1) categorisation in line with legal status, 2) the homogenisation of women as a class, and 3) a lack of representation based on physical appearance. These are summarised below.

Legal v non-legal status

Women deemed to be genuine victims of sexual violence are not represented in terms of being a party within a legal process, being able to bring a successful action, or benefitting in any way from the court system. In both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere, victims of sexual violence are represented in terms of their gender with reference to a threat, thereby laying the focus of their victim representation on out-groups to reinforce ideological stances based on anti-immigration and anti-feminism. However, women accusing men of sexual violence in the Manosphere blog posts were represented as *accusers* and *complainants*, indicating an acknowledgement of legal process and an inward perspective as opposed to looking at outsider threats. The role or function of the women in that process is seen as being complicit in a system designed to victimise men. This supports previous research on the representation of the legal system by members of the Manosphere as being discriminatory and run by feminists (Burley 2017; Lumsden 2019). However, the analyses highlight a more nuanced view of how women seemingly affected by sexual violence are seen as proactively taking advantage of this system.

Homogenisation of women actors

The pluralisation of social actors to generalise women within discussions of sexual violence is particularly marked. The blog posts in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora rely heavily on the homogenisation of women to further a shared ideological stance on the established white nationalist racist trope of the sexually-deviant 'invader' (Daniels 1997). This threat from an out-group against a class of people traditionally seen as needing to be protected (Brigley Thompson 2020, p. 112), thereby portrays the men as being victimised (Daniels 1997, p. 37) and as a possible 'call to arms' to act against this threat. When women are indexed as individuals, they are largely vilified, criticised for ruining reputations and represented as unstable, with the exception of *girl* portrayed as the ideal victim (see Section 4.4.5).

Physical identification

There was an unexpected absence of references to physical features in the women social actors represented in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora. Contrary to literature on the portrayal of women by sections of the Manosphere, for example in Red Pill, incel and PUA forums (Koller

and Heritage, 2020; Krendel, 2020; Kelly et al., 2021), which details extensive focus on women's physical appearance and "positive aesthetics" (Krendel 2020, p. 621), this is absent in social actor representations analysed in this chapter. While physical appearance is hinted at in terms like SMV ('sexual market value') in concordance line [4-27] through naming strategies like *bimbo* (see Section 4.2.4) and in descriptions of denigrated rape victims (see concordance line [4-16]), it is not explicitly indexed through social actor representations. The lack of categorisation for PHYSICAL IDENTIFICATION, under van Leeuwen's (2008) framework suggests the collective group schema and ideological stance for women victims and accusers of sexual violence avoids homogenising women in terms of (un)attractiveness, femininity, or physical features. Instead, the collective schema and stance rely more heavily on the bloggers indexing these women in terms of either their gender (IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION), which creates a much wider class of social actors as seen as in direct opposition to them as men, or via the actions undertaken by the women (FUNCTIONALISATION). These actions are considered to either render the women uncredible or are seen to victimise men directly or indirectly through the court system. Where physical features are used to index women, it is through the dehumanising and particularly degrading use of OBJECTIVATION to reduce women to their sexualised body parts. The totality of these techniques has the effect of distancing the (assumed) male readership from any emotional, familial, or physical connection with women who have been raped or sexually-assaulted.

4.4 Men social actor representation

The two categories which refer to men social actors in discussions of sexual violence and which show a total frequency of at least 10% of all naming convention tags are: 1) men perpetrator (16.24%) and 2) men accused (30.37%), as shown in Table 4.3 and summarised below in Table 4.9 (men social actors classes indicated in bold). The first of these categories refers to men who are deemed by the blogger to have committed a sexually violent act while the latter refers to men who have not been proved guilty and are being accused of such acts (details of the coding process are given in Section 3.5.4).

Social Actor Class	Alt-Right Corpus	Manosphere Corpus	Total	Frequency % (across both corpora)	Example concordance line (with categorised naming strategy in bold)
Men accused	**89**	**287**	**376**	**30.37%**	To boot, because there is almost always no evidence against **men**, most accusations are played out in public. (ROK1)
Women accuser	19	203	222	17.93%	Nevertheless, a **girl** is almost always anonymous and the man she is accusing is almost always named. (ROK4)
Men perpetrator	**92**	**109**	**201**	**16.24%**	So two high school **freshmen** (both 18 years old and of some dubious Hispanic origin) grabbed a fourteen-year-old classmate (AM5)
Women victim	63	66	129	10.42%	I know a **woman** who was raped by a black football player at the University of Minnesota (19VPNN)

Table 4.9: Summary table of the four most frequent social actor class XML tags in the categorisation naming strategies for the Alt-Right and the Manosphere corpora

The following four sections examine these two groups by first looking at the representations of `men perpetrators` in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora (Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2) and then the representations of accused men (Sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4), followed by a general summary (Section 4.4.5).

4.4.1   Men perpetrators: Alt-Right corpus

Table 4.10 gives the categorised social actor representations of `men perpetrators`. As shown, there are 92 node words in the Alt-Right blog posts, accounting for 23.90% of the naming strategy nodes in the Alt-Right subcorpus.

		Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus	
		Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)	Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)
Personalisation					
CATEGORISATION: APPRAISEMENT		0 (0.0)		3 (0.35)	*bastards* (1)*, dirtbags* (1)*, pariah* (1)
CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION		43 (11.23)	*rapists* (10)*, rapist* (6)*, pedophile* (4)*, teacher* (4)*, invaders* (2)*, abusers* (1)*, attacker* (1)*, congressman* (1)*, driver* (1)*, football player* (1)*, former Conservative Prime Minister* (1)*, masked intruder* (1)*, parliamentarians* (1)*, perpetrator* (1)*, perpetrators* (1)*, prime minister* (1)*, "rapists"* (1)*, sex criminals* (1)*, student* (1)*, students* (1)*, suspects* (1)*, Tory leader* (1)	40 (4.69)	*rapist* (17)*, rapists* (7)*, perpetrators* (3)*, criminals* (2)*, border jumpers* (1)*, director* (1)*, entertainer* (1)*, filmmaker* (1)*, invaders* (1)*, offenders* (1) pedophile* (1)*, pedophiles* (1)*, prisoners* (1)*, "sexual abuser"* (1)*, writer* (1)
CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION:	CLASSIFICATION	15 (3.92)	*men* (8)*, "British"* (1)*, male* (1)*, males* (1)*, freshman* (1)*, male feminists* (1)*, man* (1)*, Syrian* (1)	25 (2.93)	*man* (10)*, men* (8)*, Arab* (1)*, black guy* (1)*, freshman* (1)*, guys* (1)*, kid* (1)*, male feminist* (1)*, North African* (1)
	RELATIONAL	3 (0.78)	*classmate* (1)*, client* (1)*, spouse* (1)	6 (0.70)	*son* (3)*, Loverboy* (1)*, sexual partner* (1)*, stranger* (1)
INDETERMINATION		3 (0.78)	*people* (3)	6 (0.70)	*individuals* (2)*, Man B* (2)*, others* (1)*, someone* (1)*,
OVERDETERMINATION		2 (0.52)	*Asian gang* (1)*, "rapefugees"* (1)	4 (0.47)	*rapefugee* (2)*, rapefugees* (1)*, sandwog* (1)
GENERICISATION		16 (4.18)	*refugees* (5)*, Muslim* (4)*, Muslims* (3)*, "refugees"* (2)*, refugee* (2)	19 (2.23)	*migrants* (10)*, migrant* (3)*, asylum seekers* (1)*, ethnic minority* (1)*, foreigners* (1)*, minorities* (1)*, "refugees"* (1)*, refugees* (1)
IMPERSONALISATION					
SPECIFICATION		4 (1.04)	*one* (3)*, another (1)*	1 (0.12)	*one* (1)
ABSTRACTION		5 (1.31)	*predators* (2)*, a pain in the butt* (1)*, animal* (1)*, examples of necessary diversity* (1)	4 (0.47)	*"gifts of love"* (1)*, pets* (1)*, protected species* (1)*, vermin* (1)
OBJECTIVATION		1 (0.26)	*a few of the wrong penises* (1)	1 (0.12)	*Islam* (1)
TOTAL		**92 (24.02)**		**109 (12.78)**	

Table 4.10: Social actor representation: 'men perpetrator' in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora

The most frequent category of naming strategies in the Alt-Right men perpetrator subcorpus is FUNCTIONALISATION, at 43 occurrences (11.43%). Within this, *rapists* (10) and *rapist* (6) are the most common ways to refer to men deemed to have committed sexual violence[27], although there are six other naming strategies which also use reference to legal status or criminality to refer to these men (*pedophile* (4), *perpetrator*(s) (2), *abusers* (1), *"rapists"* (1), *sex criminals* (1) and *suspects* (1)). This preference to use the functional naming strategies which explicitly identify the men as having committed sexual violence or as them having entered the criminal law system - a total of 26 of the 43 occurrences in this categorisation - suggests it is their criminal actions which define them, rather than identities based on inherent characteristics or classifications. However, the modifiers of these naming strategies show that, apart from *"rapists"*, the scare quotes around which indicate it is being used sarcastically (Predelli 2003), the strategies seen in the above sections on women social actors which distance in-group men from the crime are also present here. Of the 10 occurrences of *rapists*, seven are modified by reference to out-group men: *diverse* (3), *Muslim* (3), and *multicultural* (1), as exemplified in line [4-28]:

> [4-28] But since the **rapists** are <u>multicultural</u>, since they are diverse, since they *are*
>   refugees, we have to be humane about it. (AM3)

This type of modification to indicate that sexual violence is committed by homogenised, racialised men is seen in other naming strategies in the FUNCTIONALISATION category: in the singular form of *rapist*, where 'diverse' is used in one concordance line; with *abusers* (1) modified by 'Muslim'; *perpetrators* (1) by 'Cologne' (referencing the so-called migrant attacks); *invaders* (1) by 'third world'; *attacker* (1) by 'Pakistan'; and *student(s)* (2) by 'Hispanic'. As well as distancing the assumed readership from the commission of sexual violence, this rhetoric further plays into the shared collective identity schema of the dangerous, sexually-deviant out-group men (identified in Daniels, 1997). The naming strategy *rapists* is also used by way of a metaphor to emphasise exploitation of 'leftists', as seen in line [4-29]:

> [4-29] <u>Much in the same way leftists feel entitled to take other peoples' money away through
>   taxation and welfare</u>, **rapists** feel entitled to stick their penises in girls' vaginas. (MF2).

This conflation of rape with Democratic policy not only undermines the crime and vilifies the 'left' but further distances the far-right readership from being associated with it.

Reflecting the ideological stance seen in the Manosphere subcorpora for women victims and accusers of sexual violence, another use of *rapists* appears to be to discredit and criticise the criminal law system. Line [4-30] shows how a generic use of *rapists* is employed to highlight failings in the justice system and sentencing procedures.

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[27] Given the search term *rape* was included in the data collection, this might account for this frequency

[4-30] Witness this <u>tragicomedy of justice</u> from the UK where **rapists** <u>get cautions instead of</u> <u>sentences</u> (AM4)

With no explicit references to white men committing sexual violence, the nuanced assumption here is that, not only is the legal system broken, but it is non-white men who are being allowed to commit R/SA without punishment, furthering the Alt-Right agenda to vilify immigrants (see Section 2.3).

In a further overlap with the Manosphere, and mirroring the findings in the analysis for women victims and accusers in the Alt-Right subcorpora, feminism is also blamed for creating a fiction of rape (see italicised *mythical* in line [4-31]) to vindicate women from perceived immoral behaviour (underlined):

[4-31] <u>Feminism</u> has made itself powerful by portraying women as victims, rather than accepting that the <u>poor choices of women</u> — <u>casual sex, delayed or denied family, excessive drink,</u> <u>entering the working world</u> — have created a world of misery for women. No wonder they are looking for someone else to blame, and have settled on the *mythical* **Rapist** as their target. (AM11)

This rhetoric links directly to traditional Alt-Right ideology on the desire of purity in women, women as monogamous homemakers, and claims of rape by women only when they regret having sex (Brigley Thompson 2020, p. 112). By blaming a fictitious rape culture on feminism, the bloggers can simultaneously denigrate women while also exonerating men from any liability.

Finally, with regard to the FUNCTIONALISATION category of social actors for men perpetrator naming strategies in the Alt-Right subcorpus, the use of jobs and positions of authority should be noted. The 11 occurrences include: political jobs or positions relating to a politician (regarding *driver*, it was used in the blog post to refer to the prime minister driving away from reporters) (6), *teacher* (4); and *football player* (1). The inclusion of social actors defined in terms of their political position, all of whom are accused of being rapists and/or pedophiles, relates directly to the Alt-Right's historical origins connected to libertarianism and their current ideological stance on freedom from state control (Hawley 2017; Neiwert 2017; Cooper 2021). By portraying politicians as guilty of sexual violence, the bloggers are reinforcing their ideological stance against government intervention and the vilification of politicians (see Section 2.3). This political ideology against the state is also reflected in the use of the naming strategy *teacher* (4). As fierce proponents of homeschooling (Cooper 2021, p. 11), the choice to refer to the perpetrator as a *teacher* allows the blogger to emphasise the dangers of sending children to school and the risks posed by teachers, underlined in line [4-32].

[4-32] Her chemistry **teacher**, Marcus Revilla, <u>who impregnated her</u>, pleaded guilty to sex crimes in state and federal courts, including <u>sexual assault of a child and</u> <u>production of child pornography</u>. (VP16)

This concordance line capitalises on the teacher's crimes but pluralising them; emphasising the extent the legal system was involved ("state and federal courts"); and indicating there is an on-

going threat by referring to the "production of child pornography". Here, the men perpetrator is being used to substantiate the non-interventionist stance held by the assumed readership.

The final naming strategy referencing a job, *football player*, is modified by 'black', as can be seen here:

> [4-33] I know a woman who was raped by a <u>black</u> **football player** at the University of Minnesota. (19VPNN)

This marking of the player in terms of his race again reflects the 'othering' prevalent in this Alt-Right subcorpus. It also ensures that a person involved in a sport regarded by the hard right as traditionally patriotic and "asserting U.S. sporting masculinity, strength, and prowess" (Falcous et al. 2019, p. 595) is differentiated from the identities of those reading the blogs.

Compared to the focus on gendering social actors in the women categories above, the frequency of indexing perpetrators of sexual violence with gender (IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION) is relatively low at 13 occurrences (*men* (8), *male* (1), *males* (1), *freshman* (1), *male feminists* (1), *man* (1)). In line with the distancing from sexual violence seen in representations of women victims, particularly by portraying an outsider threat or by depicting left-leaning women as desiring sexual violence, this strategy of avoiding gendered social actors allows the bloggers to disassociate from the crime as a class. Where *men* (8) is used in the blogs, three of the instances make reference to immigrant men, for example in line [4-34] which hints at the perpetrators being in a protected class because of their nationality (underlined, original capitalisation included).

> [4-34] But you don't want to question the behavior or <u>origins</u> of these **men** committing all of these sexual assaults, <u>you will be guilty of *HATE SPEECH!*</u> (AM3)

This simultaneously further distances in-group men as a class from sexual violence while also portraying them as victims of censorship on free speech, an ideological concern preoccupying the far right (Harmer and Lumsden 2019, p. 9; Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 141).

Finally, and to reiterate the 'othering' present in this subcorpus, is the second most frequent categorisation of men perpetrators, GENERICISATION. This includes 16 social actor occurrences, representing 4.18% of the subcorpora, and which includes *refugees* (5), *Muslim* (4), *Muslims* (3), *"refugees"* (2), and *refugee* (2). This homogenisation is also seen in the use of INDETERMINATION (*people* 'of foreign descent') and the OVERDETERMINATION category, namely *rapefugee*, which is discussed in relation to the Manosphere subcorpus (Section 4.4.2). It is clear from the analysis in this subsection that discussions of R/SA offer the Alt-Right bloggers a chance to exploit traditional racist and political ideologies while exonerating white men from any association of sexual violence.

4.4.2 Male perpetrators: Manosphere corpus

There are 109 occurrences (12.78%) of social actor representations in the Manosphere subcorpus for men perpetrator, as seen in Table 4.10 above. The dispersion of naming strategies across the subcorpora mirrors that seen in the Alt-Right, with frequencies per categorisation broadly similar.

The most frequent category of naming strategies, as in the Alt-Right, is FUNCTIONALISATION. Within this category, the criminal representation *rapist* is most commonly used - *rapist* (17) / *rapists* (7). A breakdown of the references to *rapist(s)* shows that a range of out-groups are indexed in the concordance lines as being deemed responsible for the criminal behaviour. However, unlike the analysis of *rapist(s)* in the Alt-Right men perpetrator subcorpus, which lay blame for sexual violence on racialised out-groups, these references predominantly focus on out-group women. Of the 24 total references to *rapist(s),* nine transfer responsibility for the rape from the rapist to single mothers (all originating from the same blog post); five place responsibility for the rape being committed onto feminists influenced by the #MeToo movement; three reference ex-prisoners (male); two are discussed in relation to accusations by the singer Kesha; and there are single references indicating Hillary Clinton, Bill Cosby and migrant men being responsible for the rapes which have been committed. Compared to the Alt-Right subcorpus, which saw the pluralised form *rapists* used more frequently (ten instances compared to six in the singular), the Manosphere subcorpus shows a preference for the singular (17 singular forms of *rapist* compared to seven plural). This marked shift may be accounted for by this focus on blaming women: there is less reliance on a basic homogenising of racialised rapists and more on providing a back story as to the responsibility of women for men's actions. This is exemplified in line [4-35]. Here, the blogger blames the rape on the upbringing of the rapist, putting the majority of the blame on the mother (underlined) before going on to argue that all women relatives are collectively responsible for the man's crime (italics):

[4-35]   Every time a feminist accuses you of some mystical responsibility for a stranger's rape via "rape culture," your instinctive response should be that his parents, <u>his mother most of all</u>, should have raised the **rapist** better. And after that, individuals such as his *sisters, female cousins, girlfriend* (provided she was not the victim), and *female friends* are the next people who should have their *collective responsibility* assessed. (ROK14)

The vilification of single mothers in the blog post reflects the ideological position of the fathers' rights movement, a key precursor to the Manosphere (see Section 2.4). Studies on the anti-feminist rhetoric used in fathers' rights groups (see, for example, Boyd 2004 and Rosen et al. 2009), show how feminism is blamed for what was perceived as a loss of familial control and the disintegration of the patriarchal nuclear family (Rosen et al. 2009, pp. 516 -519). Motivated by the explicit incentive to reverse the changes put in place by feminism and capitalising on the far right's anti-interventionalist ideology (see Section 2.4), "fathers' rights advocates claim that feminists are desperate to divorce so that they can lead luxurious man-free lives, financed by child support" (ibid., p. 518). This rhetoric continues in Manosphere spaces (Weaver and Morris 2021). For example, Chateau Heartiste (examined in this thesis) has blog posts titled *Why It's Good To Shame Single Moms* (28th November 2011) and *The Blight Side Of History: Single Mommery Edition* (1st February 2018). In a particularly scathing *Return of Kings* blog post, single mothers are referenced as a disease: "It is known that single mothers are a virus which cause many of the

societal ills plaguing Western culture." (Return of Kings, 2013[28]). The inclusion of single mothers as an out-group in this analysis, particularly with reference to the actions of men (as FUNCTIONALISATION) rather than their fixed gender classification, reinforces this shift in culpability onto a demographic already vilified by the assumed male readership.

While the FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategies *rapist(s)* distance in-group men from culpable actions of sexual violence by blaming women, further distancing is achieved through naming strategies relying on racialisation. Mirroring the strategies used by the Alt-Right in this subcorpus, the Manosphere bloggers utilise homogenising and deindividualizing naming strategies such as OVERDETERMINATION, GENERICISATION and ABSTRACTION to index men perpetrators in the blogs. This extract from Table 4.10 shows the naming strategies used within these three categories:

Social Actor Categorisation	Number of Nodes (% frequency)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)
PERSONALISATION		
OVERDETERMINATION	4 (0.47)	*rapefugee* (2), *rapefugees* (1)*, sandwog* (1)
GENERICISATION	19 (2.23)	*migrants* (10), *migrant* (3), *asylum seekers* (1)*, ethnic minority* (1)*, foreigners* (1)*, minorities* (1)*, "refugees"* (1)*, refugees* (1)
IMPERSONALISATION		
ABSTRACTION	4 (0.47)	*"gifts of love"* (1)*, pets* (1)*, protected species* (1)*, vermin* (1)

Table 4.11: OVERDETERMINATION, GENERICISATION and ABSTRACTION naming strategies in the Manosphere subcorpus 'men perpetrators' (extract from Table 4.10)

As discussed above, GENERICISATION is used here to deindividualise the out-group men, having the effect of implicitly inferring a greater number of people and so a greater threat. The argumentation strategy of *topos* of numbers (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Brindle 2016b), as discussed in Section 4.3.1, compounds this amplification of threat, as seen here (underlined):

[4-36]   One of my colleagues recently wrote about Sweden's similarly lopsided rape culture; a monumental 82% of rapes there are committed by **migrants**. (ROK16)

By using the generic naming strategy and unsubstantiated statistical 'evidence', the blogger can reinforce the collective frame of perception of the sexually-deviant migrant (see Daniels, 1997 for a discussion of this trope) Likewise, the use of OVERDETERMINATION achieves the same effect. This categorisation is defined by van Leeuwen as occurring "when social actors are represented as participating, at the same time, in more than one social practice." (2008, p. 47). The Manosphere bloggers are using the generic 'refugee' with the functional 'rapist' in their naming strategy portmanteau *rapefugee(s)* (3) to associate the racialised identity with sexual aggression, as discussed in Section 2.5. This neologism started on conservative and Alt-Right websites and became widespread as a Twitter hashtag after the New Year's Eve assaults in Cologne in 2015/2016 (Wendling 2018, pp. 98-99). It evolved from what Wendling (2018) describes as two

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[28] Post: *Fat Single Mothers Are Child Abusers* (12/10/13) at: https://www.returnofkings.com/19286/fat-single-mothers-are-child-abusers

basic triggers of the Alt-Right; 1) "rape by a strange brown foreigner" (ibid., p. 98) and 2) the threat of cuckoldry (a white husband being aware of his wife having sex with an African-American man (Wendling 2018, p. 80)). Its use in the Manosphere blog posts shows a clear overlap in ideological stance and collective identity schema with the Alt-Right. Here, for example, in line [4-37], the term is used cataphorically to assimilate the threat to white women (italics), and consequently white men, by connecting two unrelated events: a stabbing by a refugee and the New Year's Eve attacks (both events underlined):

[4-37]   Today, a Swedish woman <u>was stabbed to death by a</u> <u>Muslim refugee</u>. Add her body to the running count of *White female victims* of **rapefugee** runaway entitlement. <u>It has been three weeks since the Cologne mass sexual assaults on German women</u> <u>at the hands (and groins) of Middle Eastern men</u>. (CH13)

Further rhetoric more commonly associated with the Alt-Right can be seen in the naming strategies categorised as ABSTRACTION (Table 4.11). The dehumanising naming strategies of *vermin* (1) and *pets* (1), the latter being modified by 'gutter filth', echo metaphorical signalling used by Nazis to refer to Jews and immigrants in terms of pestilence and disease (Musolff 2007), and used to justify the horrific actions against them. More recently, these terms have been used in right wing German newspapers and found in studies on German hate speech to refer to immigrants (Musolff 2015). In concordance line [4-38] below, the Manosphere blogger is employing the same rhetoric to demonise immigrants, imply threat through the strategy of topos of numbers (*many*), and associate them with sexual violence (underlined):

[4-38]   <u>The Latin American countries are not sending their best</u>. <u>Many are rapists</u>. Like the two Guatemalan **vermin** who invaded the US via Mexico and, somehow, wound up in Rockville, Md as 18 year old freshmen in a local high school, where they escorted a classmate, a 14 year old girl, into a bathroom stall and proceeded *to facially, anally, and vaginally rape her*. (1CHNN)

The extreme abstracting of the perpetrators (*vermin*) seems to give license to the blogger to be particularly explicit in his descriptions of the sexual assault (italics), arguably to incense the readership further. Similarly, the use of the ABSTRACTION naming strategy *protected species* (1) in line [4-39] below, empowers the blogger to incite his readers to take action. Here, there is evidence of 'doxxing', a form of cyberbullying involving the release/posting of personal contact information for others to use to intentionally harass a target, usually with the posting of offensive and threatening messages intended to cause emotional harm (i.e., 'flaming')[29].

[4-39]   If you object to Reker's blaming of the 90 violated women in Cologne, *feel free to contact her* with some <u>well thought-out</u> <u>correspondence</u> or <u>via Twitter</u>. Reker is getting a pass for her incendiary comments purely because she is a female and a leftist, not to mention that the perpetrators are exclusively minorities and therefore a **protected species**. (ROK7)

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[29] see Chen et al., 2018 and Zhang, 2020 for a discussion on this relationship between doxxing and flaming.

In this example, the underlined sections show where hyperlinks in the original post took readers to the contact address and social media account of Henriette Reker, the pro-immigration Mayor of Cologne. The invitation to contact Reker (in italics) is a clear signal to the readers to send harassing messages to her, with encouragement also coming from the comment 'getting a pass' which implies she is escaping unpunished. The naming strategy *protected species* to describe the minorities being blamed for the rapes creates a sense that the government are protecting the perpetrators and are, therefore, the enemy. The blogger also clearly indicates that Reker deserves to be 'contacted' because she is a left-leaning woman ("she is a female and a leftist"), tapping into the assumed anti-feminist stance of the readers. This co-opting of far-right rhetoric in the Manosphere blogs to incite readers, coupled with the anti-feminism signalling, indicates how discussions of sexual violence against women are weaponised by the bloggers and can be used as a call to action.

4.4.3 Men accused: Alt-Right corpus

Representations of men accused of sexual violence comprise the largest category coded within van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. This class of social actors sees 89 (23.12%) representations from Alt-Right blogs and 287 (33.65%) from the Manosphere blogs. This quantitative overview of the data indicates that the predominate focus of blog posts referencing sexual violence against women focus on the men being accused of the crimes.Table 4.12, which goes over two pages, shows the classifications of these social actors.

		Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus	
		Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)	Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)
Personalisation					
CATEGORISATION: APPRAISEMENT		4 (1.04)	*"good guys"* (1)*, nerd* (1)*, social pariah* (1)*, an enemy with a dick* (1)	3 (0.35)	*hero* (1)*, innocents* (1)*, pariah* (1)
CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION		44 (11.43)	*players* (8)*, rapists* (4)*, chief* (2)*, congressman* (2)*, football players* (2)*, rapist* (2)*, Senator* (2)*, boss* (1)*, cop* (1)*, curator* (1)*, directors* (1)*, Duke Lacrosse Players* (1)*, editor* (1)*, executives* (1)*, ex-President* (1)*, football coach* (1)*, liar* (1)*, NYPD detectives* (1)*, police officer* (1)*, politicians* (1)*, president* (1)*, producers* (1)*, school police officer* (1)*, "rapist"* (1)*, sexual assailant* (1)*, sexual predator* (1)*, suspects* (1)*, university students* (1)*, winner* (1)	82 (9.61)	*accused* (11)*, students* (5)*, director* (3)*, boxers* (2)*, Olympians* (2)*, pedophile* (2)*, producer* (2)*, "rapist"* (2)*, rapist* (2)*, serial rapist* (2)*, student* (2)*, suspect* (2)*, suspects* (2)*, victims* (2)*, "abusers"* (1)*, abuser/rapist* (1)*, abusers* (1)*, actor* (1)*, "attacker"* (1)*, artist* (1)*, athletes* (1)*, backroom heavyweight* (1)*, boxer* (1)*, cab driver* (1)*, celebrities* (1)*, co-founder* (1)*, college students* (1)*, conservative adversaries* (1)*, conservative politician* (1)*, defendant* (1)*, defendants* (1)*, directors* (1)*, flag bearers* (1)*, football star* (1)*, hater of Donald Trump* (1)*, Hillary Clinton supporter* (1)*, hypocrite* (1)*, lacrosse players* (1)*, leader* (1)*, leaders* (1)*, liar* (1)*, music producer* (1)*, Olympic competitors* (1)*, "perpetrators"* (1)*, policeman* (1)*, producers* (1)*, pugilist* (1)*, "rapists"* (1)*, Republican opponent* (1)*, rapists* (1)*, sexual abuser* (1)*, silver medallist* (1)*, soccer player* (1)*, stars* (1)*, window-washer* (1)
CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION:	CLASSIFICATION	14 (3.64)	*men* (6)*, man* (3)*, guys* (2)*, guy* (1)*, narcissist* (1)*, nonagenarian* (1)	146 (17.12)	*men* (72)*, man* (46)*, gay man* (5)*, neo-Nazi* (3)*, Democrat* (2)*, guys* (2)*, male* (2)*, males,* (2)*, Republican* (2)*, Welshman* (2)*, Average Joe* (1)*, conservative* (1)*, frat boys* (1)*, Germans* (1)*, guy* (1)*, male feminists* (1)*, member of the American Nazi Party* (1)*, Moroccan* (1)

		Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus	
		Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)	Number of Nodes (%)	Nodes (no. of occurrences)
	RELATIONAL	2 (0.52)	*son* (1), *teammates* (1)	23 (2.70)	*father* (5), *fraternity members* (4), *dad* (2), *best friends* (1), *boyfriend* (1), *buddy* (1), *client* (1), *frat boys* (1), *frat bros* (1), *fraternity brothers* (1), *kin* (1), *loved ones* (1), *lover* (1), *stranger* (1), *strangers* (1)
	PHYSICAL	0 (0.00)		1 (0.12)	*Brad Pitt lookalikes* (1)
INDETERMINATION		5 (1.30)	*everyone* (1), *individuals (1), little people* (1), *others* (1), *subsets of the population* (1)	13 (1.52)	*others* (3), *people* (3), *figures* (2), *Man A* (2), *individuals* (1), *ones* (1), *someone* (1)
OVERDETERMINATION		3 (0.78)	*Patient Zero (1), Rapadores* (1), *#Rapefugees* (1)	0 (0.00)	
GENERICISATION		8 (2.08)	*migrants* (3), *asylum-seekers* (2), *Hispanics* (1), *immigrants* (1), *minorities* (1)	0 (0.00)	
SPECIFICATION		4 (1.04)	*employees* (1), *elites* (1), *member of the media elite* (1), *politically protected classes* (1)	5 (0.59)	*fraternity* (2), *person* (2), *employees* (1)
DETERMINATION: DIFFERENTIATION		0 (0.00)		7 (0.82)	*those (6), the latter* (1)
IMPERSONALISATION					
SPECIFICATION		2 (0.52)	*one* (1), *ten* (1)	0 (0.00)	
ABSTRACTION		3 (0.78)	*orcs* (2), *predators* (1)	5 (0.59)	*bogeymen* (1), *easy target* (1), *predator* (1), *scapegoats* (1), *whipped donkeys* (1)
OBJECTIVATION		0 (0.00)		2 (0.23)	*scalp* (1), *scalps* (1)
TOTAL		**89 (23.12)**		**287 (33.65)**	

Table 4.12: Social actor representation: 'men accused' in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora

In the Alt-Right subcorpus, the most frequent naming strategies for men accused of sexual violence corresponds to the CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION classification (11.43%) in van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of social actors. The predominant indexing of men accused of sexual violence in the Alt-Right blogs is through naming strategies relating to jobs and sports (33 of the 44 FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategies, or 75.00%, with 20 strategies referring to jobs and 13 to sport). Instead of focusing on criminalised actions, these highlight the men's social status and value, both of which are then seen to be attacked by the accusations of R/SA. In line [4-40], the description of the man accused of sexual assault shows how highly he is regarded with reference to his status as boss (italics) and the adjectival modifier 'noted' along with his full occupational title and formalised nomination (underlined):

> [4-40] [A] research assistant at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City charged that her *boss*—<u>noted paleoanthropologist Brian Richmond</u>, the museum's **curator** of human origins—had "sexually assaulted" her in his hotel room after a meeting the previous September in Florence, Italy. (VP22)

The implication here is that a man worthy of respect is being unfairly targeted by an accusation unlikely to be true, damaging both his reputation, position, and value he has made to society. This is also seen in the descriptions of sports players being accused of sexual violence. As noted in Section 4.4.1, sport plays a key role in the construction of masculine identities in the far right (Brindle 2016b, p. 141), as "sporting prowess serves as symbolic proof of men's superiority and right to rule" (ibid.). In line [4-41], football players accused of rape are supported because of their financial value to the university (underlined), with the issue of culpability left unmentioned. Instead, the institution's justice system is criticised as biased and unofficial (italics) and threatening that "right to rule":

> [4-41] It would certainly make for an intriguing dilemma if the universities were forced to choose between their *SJW-converged internal justice system-substitutes* and the <u>football-generated revenue produced by the **players**.</u> (VP14)

This line is a clear example of how FUNCTIONALISATION is employed to highlight not only the perceived injustice caused to men accused of sexual violence, but also the detrimental impact the accusation has on the wider society (here, the university) due to the attack on their social status.

Status conferred via FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategies is seen in the Alt-Right subcorpus as being mitigated when the men accused of sexual violence belong to an out-group. For example, there is little support for men accused of sexual assault who are Jewish. Concordance line [4-42] shows how the functional roles of *producer*, *director*, and *executive* are associated with Jewish men, signalled by the use of three parenthesis around their names. Neiwert (2017) points out that this 'echo' evolved from an anti-Semitic slur on a far-right podcast, which then spread on social media and 4chan in its written form (p. 251).

[4-42] <u>Read this before you condemn the women in Hollywood</u> who were pressured by **producers**, **directors**, and **executives** like (((Louis B. Mayer))), (((Jack Warner))), Daryl Zanuck, (((Harry Cohn))), (((Arthur Freed))), Buddy Adler, (((Harvey Weinstein))), (((James Toback))) and (((David O'Russell))) to sexually submit to them for their supposed silence. (VP21)

This concordance line is particularly difficult to read with the excessive use of parenthesis, arguably deliberately so to cause discomfort and a visceral reaction in the readers. The use of the echo here is an example of "nebulous othering" (Tuters & Hagen 2019, p. 11), which relies on the readership to understand the memetic abstraction and interpret the characteristics of the men based on the shared belief systems of the far right group (ibid., p. 12). The implicit message through this echoing in the concordance line is that, despite the men not being explicitly deemed guilty, their credibility, status and social value are diminished with the anti-Semitic signalling and the women, therefore, may have a valid claim against them (underlined). This type of othering also unites and consolidates the collective identity and membership of the readers and reinforces the stereotypical characteristics associated with the out-group.

Within the CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION classification in the Alt-Right subcorpus, only ten of the 44 naming strategies (22.73%) index the action of rape or the legal status of the man/men accused of rape. These strategies are *rapists* (4), *rapist* (2), *"rapist"* (1), *sexual assailant* (1), *sexual predator* (1) and *suspects* (1). The most frequent of these, *rapists (4)* are all used by the blogger to refer to an accusation against him and Roosh V (founder of Return of Kings), which they both deny, for example:

[4-43]   In response to this post, Dean Esmay has begun falsely accusing *Roosh and me* of being **rapists**. (MF7)

This naming strategy indexing criminality is used here in order to be outraged by the accusation, with the wider context of the blog posts in which *rapists* is found reiterating the absurdity of the claim. In line with this, *rapist* is used to show a similar illogical indexing by others. Concordance line [4-44] uses *rapist* in contrast to what is considered to be the stereotypical stranger and 'real' rapist (italics). The blogger attempts to enforce the absurdity of using the term *rapist* by modifying it with 'alleged' and describing him as being in a sexual relationship with the women (underlined):

[4-44]   This means that barring *a masked intruder in the bushes who leaps out with blackjack in hand*, "rape" means mostly confused consent, especially when the young ladies are already having casual sex with abandon <u>and/or having sex with the alleged</u> **rapist** <u>on a regular basis</u>, as was the case with Emma Sulkowicz and seems a common denominator to many of these cases. (AM2)

The effect of using *rapist* in this way distances men from the crime by creating a distinction between a fiendish, dangerous attacker who exists "outside of human kind and society" (Clark 1992, p.224) and the assumed readership; allows the blogger to redefine the sexual crime as being

incommensurate with the male behaviour he wants to endorse; and taps into the group's schema of the dangers of 'regret rape'[30] accusations.

4.4.4   Men accused: Manosphere corpus

Table 4.12 shows the Manosphere bloggers included 287 naming strategies relating to social actors indexing men accused of sexual violence. At 33.65% of all naming strategies in the Manosphere corpus, this represents the largest proportion of social actors across the whole dataset. Of the different categorisations in van Leeuwen's (2008) framework, the Manosphere bloggers used IDENTIFICATION: CLASSIFICATION naming strategies the most (146 instances, representing 17.12% of the total). This is in contrast to the data from the Alt-Right subcorpus for men accused, which contained only 14 instances (3.66%) of nodes pertaining to IDENTIFICATION:CLASSIFICATION. This suggests a clear difference in the shared representations and collective identities in the two groups regarding men accused of sexual violence against women: in the Alt-Right, the actions and value through social status is foregrounded with FUNCTIONALISATION taking precedence, while in the Manosphere, the relatively fixed, homogenised categories used by society to differentiate the men (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 42) are used with CLASSIFICATION.

Within the social actor categorisation of CLASSIFICATION, *men* (72) and *man* (46) are the most frequent naming strategies to reference those accused of sexual violence (80.82% of the nodes in this categorisation). The results mirror Marwick and Caplan's findings on how identity is constructed within the Manosphere with a significant focus on a binary gender system (2018, p. 548). However, a closer analysis of the contexts in which these social actors are indexed showed there were three broad contexts within which *men/man* were used to discuss the accusations, the majority of which fall into discussions about the legal system. These contexts and further subcontexts were derived from analysing the extended concordance lines of these instances (examples of which follow) and are listed in Table 4.13.

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[30] This refers to the idea that a woman makes a rape accusation after having consensual sex because they feel shame, regret, or guilt for consenting to sex taking place

		men	*man*
General context	**Subcontext (function)**	**Number of occurrences (% frequency)**	**Number of occurrences (% frequency)**
Legal system	Convicted on inadequate or false evidence / conviction due to quotas only	23 (31.94)	17 (36.96)
	Falsely accused / victim of 'rape hysteria'	23 (31.94)	6 (13.04)
	Held responsible for other men's sexual crimes	5 (6.94)	2 (4.35)
	Accused of sexual assault for non-sexual behaviour	3 (4.17)	3 (6.52)
	Doubting the credibility of the accused	2 (2.78)	1 (2.17)
	Having sexual history reframed into rape	0 (0.00)	1 (2.17)
	Accused of 'regret rape'	0 (0.00)	1 (2.17)
	Total	**56 (77.78)**	**31 (67.39)**
Effect on life	Slandered / reputations ruined	7 (9.72)	7 (15.22)
	Branded guilty for life	5 (6.94)	4 (8.70)
	Harassed and expelled from college	1 (1.39)	0 (0.00)
	Now suing for false rape allegation	1 (1.39)	0 (0.00)
	Experienced suffering	0 (0.00)	1 (2.17)
	Supported by partner	0 (0.00)	1 (2.17)
	Total	**14 (19.44)**	**13 (28.26)**
Motivation for accusation	Accused for money / extorted	2 (2.78)	0 (0.00)
	Accused for revenge	0 (0.00)	2 (4.35)
	Total	**2 (7.78)**	**2 (4.35)**
TOTAL		72 (100.00)	46 (100.00)

Table 4.13: Context categories of men/man in the Manosphere subcorpus for 'men accused'

The most frequently occurring context involved discussions of convictions based on inadequate evidence (*men*: 31.94%, *man*: 36.96%). Concordance line [4-45] gives an example of this, with the focus on the lack of adequate evidence underlined:

[4-45] The double-edged sword of modern "justice" is that courts are too happy to convict **men** using an absolute paucity of evidence (ROK32)

Examples of other features signalling a lack of adequate evidence to convict the *men*/*man* in this category include men being "poorly convicted" (ROK2), being victims of questionable quality evidence (ROK4), men being subject to "conviction quotas" (ROK2, ROK4, ROK5 and ROK6) rather than being convicted on the strength of the evidence, "innocent men thrown into jail" (CH2),

"men going to prison for decades after poorly-argued rape allegations" (ROK22), men losing the "right to a fair trial" (ROK3), and "men being imprisoned based on a woman's words" (ROK3). This delegitimisation of legal process around the node words *men* and *man* implies an existential threat to all men from a system which cannot be trusted to represent them fairly and within which they are being indiscriminately targeted.

The context in the concordance lines around *men/man* of false accusations based on a widespread, perceived 'rape hysteria' perpetuated by feminists was the second most frequent context category (*men*: 31.94%, *man*: 13.04%). Line [4-46] shows how this is articulated, with the use of scare quotes to show suspicion in the accusations (Predelli 2003) (underlined) and *men* being described as being unfairly victimised (italics):

[4-46]   Perhaps, though, the "rape" and "sexual abuse" hysteria will SNOWBALL like never before, SUCKING IN more and more *unfairly attacked* **men**. (ROK2)

The notion of 'rape hysteria' being generated by women is a standard feature on men's rights activist websites (Neiwert 2017, p. 233), with the target being seen as both men and masculinity (ibid.). The reference to this notion of snowballing in [4-46] and "sucking in" men in (small caps), however, also implies increasing endangerment to men as a class and indicates an extension of the victimhood metanarrative as including more nihilism (see Section 2.3 for a discussion on nihilistic representations in Manosphere discourses).

Finally, as mentioned above in relation to the lack of nominalisations in the data (Section 4.4.2), the issue of naming accused men is seen in the context categories (*man*: 9.72%, *man*: 15.22%). Line [4-47] exemplifies the perceived injustice in this process, with the law stated (underlined) and the impact on men given (italics).

[4-47]   One of the now discredited accusers, Lucy DeCoutere, waived a publication ban, a right denied to **men** accused of sexual assault, *who have much more to lose from the court process, namely their freedom.* (ROK33)

This category includes features blaming the legal system directly and how the system is used by women to deliberately ruin the reputations of men, as shown in line [4-48]. Here, the blogger implies that women take a calculated risk (underlined) to slander men who are portrayed as victims of society (italics):

[4-48]   Hedging one's bets slightly for legal reasons so you can still slander a **man** *society has already hit to the ground* remains inexcusable. (ROK26)

Table 4.12 shows, much like in Section 4.3.4 above (the Manosphere subcorpus of women accusers), a perceived bias and discrimination in the legal system. The contexts in which *men* and *man* are used are broadly similar, with no discernable difference in the use of the singular and plural in this regard. By using the generic, gendered naming strategy, the bloggers are portraying a threat to all men, simply because of their gender, even if an original reference related to one individual. Line [4-49] below shows how this comprehensive threat is articulated, with the specific

example of Liam Allan's case being used to epitomise, and catastrophise, the danger to all men. The blogger describes the British legal system as persecuting men (underlined) and how there is an explicit motivation to convict a fixed number of men without due process (italics).

[4-49] The self-described "torture" Liam Allan faced is yet another reminder of <u>how persecuted **men** are in the British legal system</u>. With *conviction quotas* being an established and systemic feature of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and its modus operandi, under-pressure *police appear to have also joined the anti-due process party*. (ROK6)

The discrediting of the legal system has roots in the rhetoric of fathers' rights groups, as mentioned above. Kimmel describes this perspective as stemming from the stories men tell each other of ex-wives playing dirty and their lawyers manipulating "a legal system into eviscerating men and rewarding women" (2013, p. 138). The extrapolation of this evisceration from the divorce courts to the criminal courts is then made. The link to victimisation is also seen in the second most frequent naming strategy categorisation in the Manosphere subcorpus: FUNCTIONALISATION. Whereas the Alt-Right subcorpus included only eleven of the 44 instances (25%) indexing criminal behaviour or legal status (e.g. *rapist*), with the majority referencing jobs or sports roles (as discussed in Section 4.4.3), a much higher frequency of references to men in the legal system is present in the Manosphere blog posts (35 of 82, or 42.68%) in the FUNCTIONALISATION category (e.g. *accused* (11)). This reiterates the portrayal of victimhood in relation to the justice system.

The third most frequent categorisation of naming strategies in the Manosphere subcorpus (Table 4.12) is IDENTIFICATION: RELATIONAL, with 23 instances (2.70%). This is a marked difference to the social actors in the Alt-Right subcorpus categorised as RELATIONAL, with only two instances (*son* (1) and *teammates* (1)). In the Manosphere blog posts, there is an emphasis on fraternity which is heavily associated with the "band of brothers" trope, situated in opposition to feminism and which defends men-only spaces (Kimmel 2013, p. 223). This can be seen with the naming strategies *fraternity members* (4), *frat boys* (1) *frat bros* (1), and *fraternity brothers* (1), all of which refer to the students at the University of Virginia (UVA) who belonged to the Phi Kappa Psi fraternity and who were accused of rape. The men are referred to as *students* in three instances in the subcorpus, showing that 'fraternity' is the preferred naming strategy by the bloggers and one which emphasises the attack on the men-only group space. Line [4-50] shows how the blogger describes the fraternity members as being falsely accused (italics) and how this allegation is then seen as a threat to all men on the campus (underlined) (capitalisation shows original emphasis):

[4-50] This only increased the suffering of the *falsely maligned* **fraternity members**, plus gave ammunition to the "rape culture" activists who ridiculously represent <u>EVERY young male on campus as a potential sexual abuser of women</u>. (ROK9)

The sense that if the fraternity is attacked then no man is safe from the threat is compounded by the use of 'ammunition', a metaphorical nod to indiscriminate school shootings and the lethal effect of being targeted. The use of a more informal, relatable form, *frat bros*, is also used to show familiarity and suggest sympathy and support for the accused students. In line [4-51], this is

employed to emphasise the contrast between them and the racialised other regarded as 'real rapists' (underlined), compounded by the modifier of the naming strategy, 'white' (capitalisation shows original emphasis):

[4-51]   The *shitlibs controlling our information gateways* will spend months loudly and insistently *reporting on*, and over-analyzing, a *FAKE NEWS STORY* about White **frat bros** raping a girl at UVA while utterly burying or suppressing the details of a REAL NEWS STORY about <u>two brown border jumpers who in fact raped a 14 year old girl in a high school bathroom</u>. (1CHNN)

The concordance line shows how the support for the accused men is also used to criticise what is seen as the left-leaning media (italics). The rhetoric here portrays the men as scapegoats being attacked (and simultaneously the men-only space) while out-group men are protected ("suppressing the details of a REAL NEWS STORY").

The following section brings together the main themes which have emerged from the above analyses of men social actors. Convergence and divergence of ideological perspective seen in the Alt-Right blog posts and those of the Manosphere are emphasised.

4.4.5   Summary and discussion: Men social actor representation

Overall, the Alt-Right subcorpus shows a stronger focus on men perpetrators than that of the Manosphere (24.02% compared to 12.78% of naming strategies). Conversely, the Manosphere subcorpus includes a higher frequency of naming strategies for men accused, but not considered guilty, of rape (33.65%) compared to the Alt-Right bloggers (22.72%). This basic, quantitative summary shows that the bloggers in the two groups are using discussions of R/SA to achieve different objectives based on differing perspectives on the pervasiveness of sexual violence against women. While both groups maintain victim-status through these discussions, the source and effect of this victimhood diverges to a certain extent. In the rhetoric espoused in the Alt-Right blogs, which focuses on sexual violence having happened, victimhood is portrayed as stemming from racialised perpetrators invading in-group spaces, a threat to social status, and from government intervention and corrupt politicians. In the Manosphere blogs, men are portrayed as victims of systemic discrimination and feminism. Both these positions relate to a loss of perceived entitlement and a "narrative of imperilment" (Marcks and Pawelz 2020, p. 1), which allows for collective self-defense and possible legitimation for taking action.

From a broader perspective, the frequent use of CLASSIFICATION naming strategies relating to gender in the Manosphere blog posts creates a much larger potential readership and future membership. Berger describes this as the "eligible in-group" (2018, p. 62): "The broad identity collective that an extremist organisation claims it represents and from which it seeks to recruit." By focusing on men and "masculine victimhood" (Blommaert 2019), the bloggers are arguably appealing to a more extensive present and future readership than the Alt-Right bloggers, whose

lack of generic gendering and alternative focus on functional roles and status seems to be aimed at a more restricted collective.

Within this broad differentiation, four key themes emerge which show a degree of overlap between the Alt-Right and the Manosphere rhetoric: 1) the ideal perpetrator (and victim); 2) the reaffirmation of out-group identities; 3) the denigration of the legal system; and 4) a lack of personal identification naming strategies. These are summarised in the following sections.

The ideal perpetrator (and victim)

Throughout the analyses in both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere there are depictions of homogenised, racialised attackers, either through modifiers of *rapist* such as 'diverse' and 'multicultural' or through the use of GENERICISATION (e.g., *asylum seekers*), OVERDETERMINATION (e.g., *rapefugees*), and ABSTRACTION (e.g. *vermin*). This shifts culpability for sexual violence onto the out-group men vilified through racist tropes. References to 'real rapists' and 'masked intruders' further distance the assumed readership from the crime through the depiction of the 'stranger rapist', seen as a fiend outside social norms (Clark 1992). This representation of rape reflects findings by Tranchese (2019), whose studies on the framing of sexual violence against women in mainstream media reporting substantiate the 'stranger danger' myth despite 90% of rapes being committed by men known to the victim (p. 196). The bloggers in this study are not only perpetuating this rape myth but capitalising on it to reiterate the sexually-deviant foreigner trope in their collective frames of perception. As Tabbert (2015) points out, the establishment of an ideal perpetrator (in this case, a racialised out-group man) also creates an ideal victim (here, a white, non-feminist woman) as the two constructions are interdependent (p. 115). This can be seen in the analyses in Sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.5 above.

Reaffirming out-group identities

The analyses of both the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora show clear reiterations of socially shared frames of perception of out-groups (e.g., racialised men, feminists and single mothers). The repeated characterisations of these groups relates to the process of identity construction outlined by Berger in that the out-group must be constructed in a way that "that parallels the construction of in-group definition – a template that includes a description of the out-group's beliefs, traits, practices (past, present, and future)" (2018, p.57). The analyses in this study show an overlap in the way those beliefs and characteristics are articulated, particularly in relation to immigrants, refugees, and Muslim men, with the rhetoric in the Manosphere blogs seemingly being co-opted from the Alt-Right (for example the use of *rapefugee*). The overgeneralisation and suggestion that all sexual crimes are attributable to these social actors can be explained in terms of van Dijk's 'Ideological Square', the strategy used in ideological discourses to show a polarised 'us and them' stance (2011b, p. 397). This emphasises the out-group's negative characteristics and, by implication, exonerates the in-group from those same traits. It has been argued here that by creating a strong association of the generic migrant being responsible for sexual violence, the

bloggers are implicitly promoting a shared racist ideology while distancing white, American and British men from such crimes.

Denigration of the legal system

A key theme emerging from both Manosphere subcorpora supported to a certain degree in the Alt-Right is the denigration of legal systems deemed to be corrupt and discriminatory against men. These findings support those by Gotell & Dutton, 2016; Dragiewicz, 2018 and Marwick & Caplan, 2018, who documented backlash in the Manosphere against perceived legal and social sanctions against men, as well as the emergence of a moral panic caused by changes in the law seen to favour women (Gotell and Dutton 2016, p. 69). The analyses also strongly align with Burley's assertions that men within the Men's Rights Movement claimed they are being deliberately targeted by "systemic false rape allegations" (2017, p. 84). Manne describes feelings extended to men perceived to be the unjust victims of a rigged system as 'himpathy' (2018, p. 197). Relating this type of male support to that shown to Brock Turner, the Stanford student who was found guilty of rape in 2016 but given only a three-month sentence to mitigate an effect on his swimming scholarship, she defines the term as "excessive sympathy sometimes shown toward men perpetrators of sexual violence… frequently extended in contemporary America to men who are white, nondisabled, and otherwise privileged "golden boys"' (ibid.). In her exploration of the Turner case in the media at the time, Viehbeck's findings show that 'himpathy' was evident in the reporting, with Turner portrayed as the victim through transitivity and emotional language (2020, p. 386). In the UK, the reporting of the Ched Evans case, which involved rape accusations against a high-profile footballer, included similar strategies to shift the blame to his victims and away from him (Royal 2019). The blog posts in this study similarly espouse this rhetoric to not only distance accused men from any culpability but to reiterate the legal discrimination seen to threaten all men.

Lack of physical identification

Mirroring the data in the women social actor representations (see Section 4.3.5), there is a noticeable absence of categorisation based on physical features (other than those associated with race). With the exception of *Brad Pitt lookalikes* (1) in the Manosphere `men accused` subcorpus, there is no other indexing of social actors through physical characteristics. This runs contrary to findings documented in far-right literature on hypermasculinity (see, for example, Daniels 1997 and Brindle 2016b) and implies a disregard for physical traits in the collective frames of perception and group schema uniting members within these groups.

4.5   Conclusion

The analyses in this chapter focused on addressing the research question: *How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of social actors in discourses about sexual violence.* Examining the naming strategies to investigate the knowledge representation component of van Dijk's (2011a) critical epistemic discourse analysis (Section

2.1.2) has shown what collective frames of perception are shared with the readership by the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers. These map onto historic ideological positions, project culpability of sexual violence onto long-established out-groups, and promote victimhood to unite their membership. Chapter 5 extends these analyses by examining the ways the sexual violence itself is framed within the blog posts, specifically how it is (de)legitimised by the bloggers in line with their ideological stance.

Chapter 5: Legitimation Strategies

5.1   Introduction

The analyses in this chapter centre on the references to sexual violence in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts. Building on the analysis in Chapter 4, which examined the social actor representations in discussions on R/SA, the following sections investigate how these crimes themselves are linguistically framed. The chapter examines sexual violence through the lens of legitimation in order to address the research question: *How are ideological standpoints on acts of sexual violence against women legitimised in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses?*

Two overarching frameworks on legitimation are brought together in the analyses. Nodes which reference R/SA, marked up in XML (see Section 3.5), and their co-text are analysed within these frameworks to ascertain how the Alt-Right and the Manosphere bloggers discuss sexual violence in relation to their respective collective schematas, norms and values. These frameworks are detailed below, together with the ways in which they map on to van Dijk's (2011a) Critical Epistemic Discourse Analysis model (see Section 2.1.2), which underpins the analyses in this thesis. An explanation of the categorisation and coding for the analysis is then given, followed by a close examination of the (de)legitimation strategies present in the blog posts.

5.2   Theoretical frameworks

Fairclough (2010) summarises (de)legitimation as a macro-strategy. This strategy is designed to provide a combination of means and goals, and though political in nature rather than semiotic, is realised semiotically through discourse (2010, p. 242). Rojo & van Dijk refer to this discourse-level of legitimation analysis as the *micro level*, adding that it uncovers the relationship between overarching sociopolitical aims and the micro-level dimensions of legitimation (1997, p. 530) which create knowledge and reinforce ideologies, norms and values (ibid., p. 561). In line with this demarcation, the discussion section in this chapter (Section 5.8) is organised into micro and macro level summaries of the analyses.

5.2.1   van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation framework

van Leeuwen's discursive construction of legitimation (2007; 2008) identifies four main categories of legitimation strategy: 1) AUTHORISATION, with reference to custom, tradition and law; 2) MORAL LEGITIMATION, with reference to value systems; 3) RATIONALISATION, with reference to goals and uses of action as well as social knowledge and "cognitive validity", and 4) MYTHOPOESIS, legitimation strategies relating to narratives (2008, pp. 105-106). The blog posts being analysed in this chapter involve non-narrative discourses, with narrative blog posts acting as the focus for Chapter 6. Therefore, in relation to this current chapter, MYTHOPOESIS legitimation will not be considered. Although van Leeuwen (2007) does not state explicitly that the strategies in the framework apply to the analysis of *de*legitimation, Vaara (2014)'s analysis of the Eurozone crisis

adopts the framework to identify strategies to legitimise *and* delegitimise the transnational institution. Regarding the blog posts in this present study, the strategies outlined in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework are extended to also identify what is being *de*legitimised in discussions of R/SA. This includes, *inter alia*, women speaking out as experts or as celebrities; national and international laws; legal definitions; crime statistics; and those regarded as being part of the Establishment. The process of legitimising and delegitimising evidence and expertise in discussions of R/SA shows how the groups' ideological stance influences the extent to which sexual violence is framed by the bloggers and the hierarchy of belief systems held by the members.

The three relevant categories of legitimation strategies from van Leeuwen's (2007) framework are detailed below. Tables of linguistic features and example concordance lines follow each subsection.

Authorisation

The legitimation strategy of AUTHORISATION provides answers to the question of 'why' an action should take place or why an attitude is valid (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 94). Three types of AUTHORISATION, listed below and each with sub-categories, further define justification for views being expressed.

- Custom

This type of AUTHORISATION relates to the majority view, either through *conformity* (what an individual has always done) or through *tradition* (what 'we' have always done). This relies on fixed orders, habits and the assumption that something is justified because it is the norm (p. 96)

- Authority

Legitimation strategies relating to AUTHORITY can be divided into *personal* AUTHORITY and *impersonal* AUTHORITY. The former relates to the status of an individual. In effect, an attitude or action is legitimised because of a person's status within an institution or role within an organisation, for example teachers (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 94). The latter refers to AUTHORISATION through laws, regulations, policies, and guidelines (ibid., p. 96). The answer to why something should or shouldn't happen is then given in the form of 'the law or policy says so'.

- Commendation

COMMENDATION refers to 1) *expertise* and 2) *role model* status. With *expert* legitimation and in contrast to *personal* legitimation, it is the expertise and credentials of the person being referred to which legitimises the action or attitude rather than the status vested in the person within an organisation or institution (p. 95). Examples of this include scientists and researchers due to the assumed qualifications have and the specific work they do. Particularly relevant in this thesis is the self-proclaimed expertise of the writer which may be implied. In their study of pick up artists (PUAs) Dayter & Rüdiger (2019) found that men running workshops for other men interested in learning

the *game* (see Section 2.4.2) were positioning themselves as experts based on their own endorsement of themselves and supposed 'success' as a PUA. Similarly, reference through *empiricist discourse* is relevant here, which relates to legitimation based on implicit expertise on a subject. Burchell (2007) refers to this as 'empiricist repertoire': that subjective and biased beliefs are presented as objective and scientific, relying on the intellectual legitimacy of the speaker (p.145). Finally, in this subsection, legitimation relating to *role model* status relies on opinion leaders, media celebrities or those with prominent profiles influencing their followers (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95).

Table 5.1 (below) summarises these strategies and their key linguistic features. It also gives examples from the corpora to illustrate how they are expressed in the data.

AUTHORISATION (van Leeuwen, 2007)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Customs, conformity and tradition (CUSTOM)	• Referencing fixed order, what has always been done and reference to 'the majority' • Comparative language referencing what 'everyone else does' • Lexical items referencing 'tradition', 'custom', 'habit', and 'practice'	<u>In no sense should we accept cultural values</u> in which prisoners, most often already extremely violent, are applauded or slapped on the wrist for **raping** and sexually assaulting other inmates. (ROK12) **Rape**, for example, <u>back when it was recognized</u> that chastity and family-orientation was the one path to happiness. (AM2)
Personal or impersonal authority and status (AUTHORITY)	• Verbal processes, including impersonal verbal process clauses ('the law says…') • Nouns referencing policies, regulations, and laws • Adjectival and adverbial clauses referencing obligation ('compulsory', 'obligatory') • Modality referencing obligation ('must', 'have to')	Many <u>jurisdictions</u> around the world have so-called "**rape** shield" laws, which render a woman's broader sexual history with other men <u>inadmissible during prosecutions</u> for rape. (ROK1) Once the important people are safe and sound, these **rape** law thingies <u>have to</u> be put to some other useful purpose. (AM7)
Expert or role model status (COMMENDATION)	• Verbal processes • Referencing of endorsements or status held • Use of expertise data	I have now come to the conclusion that <u>Day is correct</u> – **rape** cannot exist within a marriage. (VP3) <u>Eugene Kanin</u> at <u>Purdue conducted a study</u> that showed, according to police reports from one city, <u>that 41% of **rape** claims were untrue</u> (CH1)

Table 5.1: Authorisation: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

Moral Legitimation

Under van Leeuwen's framework, legitimation relating to morals and values held by a community (2007, p. 97) is divided into three sub-sections: MORAL EVALUATION, MORAL ABSTRACTION and MORAL COMPARISON. van Leeuwen states that references to moral values can often be oblique (p.

92). He goes on to concede that they may be highly implicit, possibly marked through adjectives alluding to 'good' and 'bad' (2007, p. 97), and which trigger concepts of moral value which discourse analysts sometimes recognise simply on a "common sense cultural knowledge" basis (ibid., p. 98). To limit the scope of this category of legitimation analysis in this chapter, given the context and emotive theme of sexual violence, the node in particular is considered for MORAL LEGITIMATION, either the specific reference to sexual violence, its modifiers, or any punctuation changes to it, such as including scare quotes.

- Moral Evaluation

van Leeuwen positions this strategy in direct opposition to AUTHORITY LEGITIMATION, which is largely signaled through explicit references to authoritative sources (2018, p. 147). MORAL EVALUATION, on the other hand, relies on implicit and covert references to positive or negative moral values, often only hinted at and used to trigger sometimes unconscious moral concepts (van Leeuwen 2007, pp. 97-98).

- Abstraction

MORAL LEGITIMATION through ABSTRACTION relies on an action or opinion being appraised by "referring to practices (or to one or more of their component actions or reactions) in abstract ways that 'moralise' them by distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 99), for example through metaphor.

- Comparison

On the other hand, MORAL LEGITIMATION through COMPARISON, evaluates an action or opinion through its similarity to another (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 99), often through analogy or explicitly through similes.

These strategies are summarised below in Table 5.2 with the typical linguistic features associated with them. Example concordance lines from the corpora are also given.

MORAL LEGITIMATION (van Leeuwen, 2007)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Moral values and the naturalisation of good and bad (not always explicit)	• Adjectives evaluating values ('good', 'bad', 'right' and 'wrong') • Relational clauses • Nominalisation of concepts relating to values ('righteousness') • References to a natural moral order	Of course, <u>an unreported **"rape"** is not a rape in reality</u> because we have no idea whether it happened or not. (ROK2) No less than a few weeks after, the young woman who was slowly trying to adapt and recover from her initial <u>horrific **rape attack**</u>, found herself doubled up in pain in an alleyway screaming for help as her face and eyes burned, one late afternoon coming home. (VP7)
Values through ABSTRACTION	• Euphemistic, metaphoric and abstract references to values, practises and actions	In response, Spacey did not deny the allegation that he **sexually manhandled** a 14-year-old Rapp in the 1980s. (ROK19) So two high school freshmen (both 18 years old and of some dubious Hispanic origin) grabbed a fourteen-year-old classmate and **used her as a semen storage unit** in a bathroom of a Montgomery County School. (AM5)
Values through COMPARISON	• Implicit or explicit references of comparison • Comparative structures and conjunctions • Similes • Analogies	Are you ready for <u>the total conflation of hurt female feelings and **"rape"**</u>? (ROK25) If marital rape is a thing, <u>then 100% of the sex I have ever had with my husband has been **rape**.</u> (VP3)

Table 5.2: Moral Legitimation: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

Rationalisation

The legitimation strategy of RATIONALISATION focuses on the purpose, goal, cause, and truth of a practice, action, or idea (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 101). Two main subcategories of RATIONALISATION are included in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework: INSTRUMENTAL and THEORETICAL.

• Instrumental

The guiding principle underlining this strategy is that of *teleology*, or purpose, rather than cause. Three further categories within this overarching strategy have been identified. The first, *goal-orientation* applies to factors legitimating a practice or idea in terms of what a social actor is motivated by and ultimately trying to achieve (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 102). Secondly, *means-orientation* looks at the process of an action or practice as being a tool or a means (or potential means) to an end (ibid.). Finally, in this subcategory, *effect-orientation* focuses on the outcome of an action, often with hindsight and not necessarily planned by an agent (ibid., p. 103).

- Theoretical

THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION involves legitimation strategies which utilise truth-based concepts, specifically those which describe "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103). In contrast to the custom and tradition strategies listed as AUTHORISATION subcategories, THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION involves three strategies which focus explicitly on an action or idea being true, through 1) *definition*, 2) *explanation* and 3) *prediction*. The first of these, *definition* involves an idea or practice being defined in terms of another, generalised and moralised one (ibid., p. 104). *Explanation* focuses on addressing the reason for an idea or action as "because doing things this way is appropriate to the nature of these actors" through generalising attributes and habits associated with those actors (ibid.). Lastly, *prediction* legitimation strategies use voices of expertise but through statements of strongly expected outcomes from actions (ibid.).

Table 5.3 below summarises the rationalisation strategies and outlines the linguistic features associated with these strategies. Examples from the corpora are also given.

RATIONALISATION (van Leeuwen, 2007)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Purpose, use or effect of an action (INSTRUMENTAL)	• References to goals or aims through purpose clauses ('in order to', so as to') • References to the (un)conscious agency of an actor • References to the means and use of an action ('by doing') • References to the potential of an action ('allow', 'promote', 'help') • References to the result or effect of an action ('so that')	I cannot get you put on trial usually for theft or assault just on my testimony, without supporting evidence or injury, but close to any woman nowadays can achieve this by crying **sexual assault**, rape, or even just "he kissed me!" (ROK3) They do not care about the victim or the damage to society, but see **this event** as an opportunity to make themselves look good. (AM2)
The natural order of the way things are done and a given truth, predictions, and explanations through actors' characteristics (THEORETICAL)	• References to the process of rationalising ('because', 'this means', 'this symbolises') • Declarations ('it is') • Axioms, proverbs, and morals • References to personal characteristics or actions of social actors, with reasoning based on these elements • References to possible outcomes based on experience or expertise • Clauses and modality expressing predictions	A lack of objective evidence is a defining feature of most **rape** trials today, too. (ROK2) As we all know, feminists would never falsely accuse a man of **rape** just because they didn't like him. (MF1) With the watered-down requirements for **rape** convictions vis-à-vis other crimes, Cosby will be found guilty. (ROK13)

Table 5.3: Rationalisation: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

The strategies of legitimation considered above in all categories can occur independently or in combination with others and be used to legitimise as well as delegitimise or critique (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 92). In an updated paper on his legitimation framework, particularly focused on MORAL LEGITIMATION, van Leeuwen (2018) adds the proviso that external factors need to be taken into account when applying the framework. These include omissions and misrepresentations based on cultural, political, and ideological perspectives in the discourse being analysed. This brings the

framework more in line with what van Dijk (2011a) proposes with his Critical Epistemic Discourse Analysis model (see Section 2.1.2).

5.2.2 Reyes' (2011) legitimation framework

The second theoretical framework underpinning the analysis in this chapter is that put forward by Reyes (2011), which includes five categories of legitimation strategy: 1) EMOTION, 2) HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE, 3) RATIONALITY, 4) VOICES OF EXPERTISE, and 5) ALTRUISM (Reyes 2011, p. 781). In presenting the framework, Reyes argues that it extends and builds upon that of van Leeuwen's (2007), outlined above, and focuses on strategies employed by social actors to mentally or physically justify a type of behaviour, action, thought or idea (Reyes 2011, p. 782). These strategies also centre around the theoretical notions of shared belief systems, values, world visions, and a collective memory which is passed onto others (ibid., p. 787), all of which reflect the foundational theories in van Dijk's (2006) sociocognitive perspective on discourse and ideology running through this thesis.

While it can be argued that Reyes' framework does extend that of van Leeuwen's by incorporating additional considerations on the motivations of social actors, their personal experiences, and the context of political discourses (ibid., pp. 782-783), the latter point not being made explicit in van Leeuwen's framework, there are also areas of Reyes' model which overlap to the extent that it is difficult to demarcate the two. One example of this is Reyes' category of VOICES OF EXPERTISE, which focuses on direct and indirect speech from social actors projecting experience and authority. Reyes acknowledges the category's similarity to that of AUTHORISATION put forward by van Leeuwen (detailed in Table 5.1) but there is little evidence in the examples given in the study to show how it can be distinguished from *personal* AUTHORISATION, *expert* COMMENDATION, or *role model* COMMENDATION in van Leeuwen's framework. Therefore, this category will not be considered in the analysis in this study. Similarly, Reyes' category of ALTRUISM focuses on legitimising ideas and actions which could benefit others, most commonly through story world and narrative constructions. As this chapter analyses non-narrative blog posts and van Leeuwen's categories of MORAL LEGITIMATION (2007, p.9) and INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION (*goal-orientation* and *effect-orientation*, shown in Table 5.3) offer equivalent coding schema, ALTRUISM will also not be considered here.

The three categories within Reyes' (2011) legitimation framework which are employed in the analysis in this chapter are explained in more detail below. They are discussed in relation to how they can be differentiated from the categories in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework and how they add to ascertaining the knowledge representations (van Dijk 2011a) in this study.

Emotion
Reyes (2011) describes this category of legitimation strategy as appealing to the emotions of the audience to skew their opinions (p. 785). According to Reyes,

"Emotions are key in the legitimisation process, because they condition and prepare the audience to receive proposals and courses of actions. Emotions skew the audience towards accepting and supporting the proposal of the social actor, who has triggered the emotions in the first place." (2011, p. 790).

There is a preponderance of the rhetoric of victimhood, which is inherently associated with emotional reaction, hurt, loss, and suffering, in discourses produced by the Alt-Right and Manosphere (see Sections 2.3 and 2.4). Identifying linguistic features which trigger emotional responses is relevant to how the bloggers legitimise the metanarrative of victimhood with respect to R/SA in this thesis. The primary focus in this category of Reyes' framework is the emotion of fear, either of others or from actions and/or events, to (de)legitimise the framing of an event or belief. A key part of the strategy is fear of outsiders and is used in a way to reinforce an 'us versus them' dichotomy to (de)legitimise ideas and actions. For this, Reyes draws heavily on predication strategies, especially on methodological work by Wodak (2001), namely how negative attributes of out-group social actors are attributed (Reyes 2011, p. 785) and how these represent a threat to the in-group. While the focus of this chapter is not on social actors (see Chapter 4), certain groups who are not examined in the previous chapter, and who are key to discussions of the acts of sexual violence expressed in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts, feature as part of this legitimation strategy, for example, feminists and SJWs (Social Justice Warriors). Table 5.4 summarises the focus and features of this strategy, and gives examples from the corpora.

EMOTION (Reyes 2011)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Us v them, the negative representation of the other, and emotions of fear	• Semantic indexicality ('rapefugee') • Use of pronouns to construct an impersonal 'them' • Predication strategies (Wodak 2001) • Adjectival phrases associated with fear of outsiders through collective memory ('the bogeyman')	The people who peddle feminism could give a rat's rear-end less whether the average woman on the street gets **raped** and left for the maggots. (AM3) German SJWs allowed these **rapes** to happen with their cartoonish over-tolerance. (ROK7)

Table 5.4: Emotion: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

Hypothetical Future

The strategy coined by Reyes as HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE also relates to the emotion of fear but in relation to an imminent threat if action in the present is not taken (2011, p. 793). The strategy can be differentiated from van Leeuwen's (2007) THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION strategy of *prediction* (see Table 5.3) by way of its construction and modality despite both relating to future outcomes. The former offers a chance for this threat not to materialise, often if a suggested action or proposal is accepted to avoid the danger, while the latter strategy, *prediction*, suggests an inevitability regardless of the response. Table 5.5 outlines the key points of this strategy:

HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE (Reyes 2011)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Imminent threat or consequence	• Conditional structures • References to timelines • Modality referencing possible consequences • Rhetorical questions	Even after years of high-profile **rape** hoaxes, such as the Duke lacrosse case and Emma Sulkowicz's lies, <u>we should be wary of stories like this one that might help swing the pendulum back the other way</u> and again legitimize unproven, inconsistent accusations of rape, sexual abuse, or "harassment." (ROK20) If this rather moronic policy proposal is ever implemented, <u>it would be entirely illogical and indeed unfair for any person touching a woman's breasts to ever be accused, let alone convicted</u> of **sexual assault**. (ROK17)

Table 5.5: Hypothetical Future: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

Rationality

Finally, RATIONALITY is argued by Reyes (2011) to be connected to evaluated, thought-out procedures and processes based on information gained and which present the decision-maker as rational (p. 797). There is a clear overlap here with van Leeuwen's (2007) RATIONALISATION legitimation strategies (Table 5.3) but it can be distinguished through the focus on presenting an idea or action as seriously and evaluatively considered (Reyes 2011, p. 799) and in relation to the values shared by those being addressed: "Rationality is employed here as a social construct within a cultural group, that is, something that 'makes sense' for the community" (ibid., p. 797). This specific consideration can be seen in the sarcasm present in the example concordance line in Table 5.6, indicated by the use of "Hooray", the exclamation mark and scare quotes used (Predelli 2003) (underlined). The blogger here is making fun of the logical deduction ("therefore", underlined) assumed to be made by feminists that one guilty verdict automatically means Cosby is guilty of all other accusations. This indicates a *de*legitimation of feminist views through the employment of this strategy.

Rationality (Reyes 2011)		
Strategic Focus	**Linguistic Features**	**Examples from the Corpora**
Rational processing and thoughtful explanations	• Structures and conjunctions of process and consideration • References to the good judgment of the actor • Referencing to the natural order of events and lack of personal responsibility	Bill Cosby has been criminally charged with sexually assaulting one of his many accusers. <u>Hooray! Therefore</u> he's guilty of all the other **"rapes,"** plus this one. (ROK13)

Table 5.6: Rationality: Legitimation strategy focus, linguistic features and example concordance lines

The above sections (5.2.1 and 5.5.2) show that Reyes' (2011) framework adds essential analytical tools to that of van Leeuwen's (2007) to identify legitimation strategies in discourses on emotive topics. Wang's (2022) discourse study on rhetoric in political speeches (in China and the United States) on the containment of the spread of Covid 19, for example, shows how legitimation through appeal to emotions was used alongside legitimation through AUTHORISATION, MORAL LEGITIMATION,

and RATIONALISATION. The study shows the value of extending van Leeuwen's (2007) framework with that of Reyes' (2011) to ascertain how emotions such as fear can be operationalized to legitimise ideological perspectives. Both frameworks also allow for single or co-occurring strategies to be analysed and for a focus on the cognitive processes involved in validating ideologies. This analytical perspective is in line with the sociocognitive critical discourse analysis employed throughout this study, which examines the shared representations of social groups, their shared schema, and their norms and values (van Dijk 2016) (see Section 2.1 and Table 2.1) for how legitimation strategies map onto knowledge representations in the critical epistemic discourse analysis foundational framework).

The analysis in this chapter begins with an explanation of the data categorisation process, namely how the nodes from the non-narrative subcorpora were classified in terms of their contextual theme (Section 5.3.1) and the legitimation strategies identified in the nodes' co-text (Section 5.4). References to sexual violence in three thematic categories are then analysed with reference to the presence of single legitimation strategies and co-occurring legitimation strategies.

5.3   Thematic categorisation of the nodes
The nodes in the corpora analysed in this chapter consist of the legal terms for sexual violence (for example, *rape*) and indirect and/or alternative terms used by the bloggers to refer to sexual violence (for example, *the intrusion of a penis*). During the manual marking-up of the corpora, these references were tagged in XML to ensure all references, no matter how obscure, could be used for concordance analysis in Sketch Engine. A full list of the nodes and their frequency of occurrence is given in Appendix 1. The process of identifying these nodes; how the co-text was used to determine the meaning of alternative terms; a discussion on maintaining the bloggers' interpretation of sexual violence; and the referential strategies used to identify the nodes is given in Section 3.5.5

A total of 694 terms were tagged, with an additional 23 pronominal references to rape and/or sexual assault. This gave an overall total of 717 strategies used to refer to sexual violence in the non-narrative Manosphere and Alt-Right corpora. Table 5.7 shows the proportion of the nodes per subcorpus together with the relative frequency of occurrence based on the total number of tokens in each.

	Alt-Right Subcorpus	Manosphere Subcorpus	Total
No. of nodes	236	481	**717**
No. of blog posts	20	43	**63**
Dispersion (nodes per blog post)	11.80	11.19	
No. of tokens in the subcorpus	14,744	39,906	**54,650**
Relative frequency of occurrence (nodes per tokens in subcorpus)	1.60%	1.21%	

Table 5.7: Number and frequency of nodes denoting sexual violence in the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora

The above table indicates that the Alt-Right subcorpus has a slightly higher dispersion of nodes relative to the total number of tokens but the relative frequency of occurrence is near consistent in both subcorpora. In order to ascertain how R/SA are reframed in these non-narrative corpora of blog posts, the strategies used to refer to sexual violence were categorised according to the context in which the sexual violence is being discussed by the bloggers. This process of thematic categorisation is outlined in the following section.

5.3.1 Overarching themes

When manually marking-up the nodes referencing sexual violence it was clear that R/SA were being discussed within different contexts in the blog posts. For example, there were distinct themes within the posts discussing rape in the context of court cases and the evidential burden, and another context relating to how sexual violence is portrayed in the media. In line with the *abductive* approach outlined in Wodak's principles of CDA, which argues that it necessary to move constantly between theory and empirical data (2004, p. 188), and following the application of this approach in Vaara's (2014) study on legitimation strategies, the differing contexts in which sexual violence were discussed in the blog posts were used to further categorise the nodes.

Seven thematic categories were ascertained from the extended concordance lines generated with Sketch Engine. Table 5.8 shows the seven thematic categories alphabetically, the indicators I established to apply the categories consistently and example concordance lines exemplifying these context indicators.

Thematic Category	Category Description	Indicators (References to…)	Example concordance line
Allegations	Discussions of sexual violence but no belief shown by the bloggers that they believe it is a real or genuine case of rape or sexual assault	• false accusations • lying and ulterior motives for accusations • rape hoaxes and rape stories	So women lie about being **raped** for revenge against an insufficiently alpha man, to cover their asses when their boyfriend or husband catches them cheating (CH1)
Conduct	Sexual violence discussed in the context of it being equated to other aspects of male behaviour	• non-sexual actions taken by men • fears of acting in a way that might be seen as being predatory • women misconstruing actions	With so few examples going around of men beating girls in the head and forcibly penetrating them, a woman voluntarily entering a bed with you will now suffice as **sexual assault** if you do not later requite her feelings (ROK25)
Desired	Rape and/or sexual assault discussed as being sought or desired by women	• sexual violence being wanted by women • rape fantasies	Here are the reasons why feminists want to be **sexually assaulted**, and why they're working around the clock to aid rapists.(MF2)
Legal	Sexual violence discussed with reference to the legal system, legal processes, and/or in relation to crime and punishment	• evidence and procedure • courtroom experiences • sentencing • legal definitions	We cannot say the same thing about a pedophile. He has taken virtue from a child. This is more like the original crime of **rape** as was punished by the rope.(AM2)
Media	Media representations of sexual violence (e.g. from film, books or television programmes)	• filmed scenes of rape • actors • characters from books/films	When did the fictional but painful murder of an infant matter one thousand times less than a pretend **rape**? Enter the very cucked Alfie Allen. Alfie Allen, celebrity cuck, pictured with a member of the gender that owns him. (ROK10)
Prevalence	Sexual violence discussed in relation to its general frequency or prevalence	• rape hysteria • rape culture • rape hotspots	**Rape** hysteria has gone global and will continue to do so markedly in the coming years. Watch your back. (ROK3)
Real / Believed	Sexual violence discussed as an act which is genuinely believed to have been committed	• sexual violence using stative verbs and facts • past verb forms • details and facts about the crime	When a young, bright and highly intelligent woman from the district of Rawalpindi, in Pakistan was **raped**, there was a hushed and uneasy quiet that fell amongst the village whenever she passed through. (VP7)

Table 5.8: Thematic categories: descriptors, features and example concordance lines (node word in bold)

The frequencies of occurrence for each thematic category are given in Table 5.10 in Section 5.3.3, which follows after a brief examination of how ambiguous thematic categorisation was resolved.

5.3.2   Ambiguous thematic categorisation

While the categorisation of the nodes was largely straightforward, there were some instances where the reference to sexual violence was more challenging to contextualise and categorise. Table 5.9 below shows three examples of problematic contextualisation and how the nodes (in bold) were finally categorised.

Concordance Line	Ambiguity and Final Categorisation
ABC, CBS, and NBC continued their shameful blackout into Wednesday night of the horrifying <u>alleged</u> **rape** of a teenage girl in a Washington D.C. suburb high school bathroom by two men, including one here in the U.S'. (AM5)	Here, 'rape' is preceded by the modifier 'alleged', indicating this could be classified as Allegations. However, the article makes it clear that the writer believes it happened and it is not an unfounded allegation. The article goes into the details of the rape with no qualification concerning the account of the victim. The adjective 'alleged' is used here as the case has yet to be heard in court, which follows journalistic conventions (Papper 2016, p. 233) Final categorisation: Real / Believed
Men learning to become accountants, teachers, doctors, and lawyers at American colleges are <u>supposedly</u> the people most likely to **rape** girls . <u>Anything and everything</u> to restrict non-dangerous expressions of male sexuality will be pursued (ROK19)	It wasn't clear in what context this reference to rape was being used but the presence of *supposedly*, and the hyperbolic A*nything and everything* indicate victimhood and sarcasm as to the extent to which men are accused. Final categorisation: Allegations
Ten to one she was never raped. <u>One hundred to one</u> if she was **raped**, it was by a black guy. <u>One thousand to one</u> her conception of "rape" is really an ego-assuaging morning after regret rape (CH11)	Although the conditional structure implies there could be some belief in the rape (emphasised by the blogger's view that the perpetrator would be black), the exaggerated *one hundred to one* implies that the blogger doesn't believe the woman's claim. This is disbelief is supported by the addition of *one thousand to one*. Final categorisation: Allegations

Table 5.9: Ambiguous thematic categorisation (node word in bold and challenging linguistic features underlined)

The above table gives three examples of the decision-making process in categorising the thematic context of the node words. Generally, it was clear from the wider context how the references to R/SA were being used, which demonstrated the value of examining the extended concordance lines in detail. Although only affecting eight instances, the most problematic categorisation involved references to R/SA being pre-modified by "alleged", as exemplified in the first row in Table 5.9. There seemed to be a tendency to use this modifier routinely, despite it being clear in the wider context that the particular violence being describe was deemed by the blogger to be a genuine rape or sexual assault and not a false accusation. This may be due to the reporting conventions of having to hedge criminal accusations before convictions.

5.3.3 Thematic categorisation: Frequency of occurrence

Following the process outlined in Section 5.3 above, the frequencies of occurrence were calculated for each of the seven thematic categories for both the Manosphere and Alt-Right subcorpora of non-narrative blog posts. Table 5.10 below shows the occurrence (n) and frequency (percent of total nodes referencing sexual violence per subcorpus) of each thematic category, listed in descending frequency. The figures highlighted in bold show frequencies above 10%, which represents a substantial enough number of nodes for further analysis, and are discussed below.

Thematic category	Alt-Right (% frequency)	Manosphere (% frequency)	Total (both corpora)
Real / Believed	112 (47.46)	165 (34.30)	**277 (38.63)**
Allegations	27 (11.44)	149 (30.98)	**176 (24.55)**
Legal	52 (22.03)	84 (17.46)	**136 (18.97)**
Desired	29 (12.29)	13 (2.70)	42 (5.86)
Conduct	2 (0.85)	33 (6.86)	35 (4.88)
Media	13 (5.51)	20 (4.16)	33 (4.60)
Prevalence	1 (0.43)	17 (3.53)	18 (2.51)
TOTAL	**236 (100)**	**481 (100)**	**717 (100)**

Table 5.10: Frequencies of occurrence of nodes per thematic category (≥10% highlighted)

The most prevalent theme in the subcorpora, shown in Table 5.10, is that named Real / Believed, where the reference to sexual violence is discussed as a serious crime or a genuine case of rape or sexual assault (34.30% in the Manosphere and 47.46% in the Alt-Right corpus). The second most prevalent themes differ between two subcorpora, with the Alt-Right subcorpus showing 22.03% of references to sexual violence through discussions of the legal process or system (Legal) while the Manosphere subcorpus has 30.98% of nodes relating to allegations of rape and/or sexual assault (Allegations). There is a noticeable drop off in frequency of nodes in the remaining thematic categories, with the fourth most frequent category, showing only 42 occurrences (5.86%). As the nodes would be subject to further categorisation in terms of the legitimation strategies present, a decision to limit the analysis to only those thematic categories which contain nodes at a minimum of 10% frequency of occurrence was taken. This meant that the three most frequently occurring themes highlighted in bold in Table 5.10 were then selected for the analysis. In terms of van Dijk's (2011a) critical epistemic discourse analysis model and the knowledge representation being examined in this thesis (see Section 2.1.2), the category of 'topics' within the framework is relevant here. The fact that discussions on allegations, the legal system and R/SA as genuine crimes are the most frequent thematic categories in the corpora, indicates these are the most salient in the groups' shared schema.

5.4 Legitimation strategies per thematic category

The concordance lines from the three thematic categories named above: real/believed, allegations, and legal (Table 5.10), were exported into Excel, where they could be analysed in relation to the (de)legitimation strategies and linguistic features listed in Tables 5.1 to 5.6. Where there was more than one strategy indexed (discussed here as a *co-legitimation* or *co-occurring strategy*), this was recorded at this stage. Where co-legitimisation strategies were present, they were given equal weighting. Complete sentences from the concordance lines were considered as the co-text for analysis except where there was a run-on to another sentence (e.g. through a cohesive device). In that case, both sentences were analysed together. From this data, it was possible to recognise the most frequent strategies employed in the concordance lines and to ascertain whether there were patterns of strategies when more than one was present (e.g. whether there is a relationship between the employment of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (van Leeuwen 2007) and the presence of strategies associated with HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE.

The two examples below (lines [5-1] and [5-2]) show concordance lines where 1) there is a linguistic feature indicating a single legitimation strategy being employed from either van Leeuwen's (2007) or Reyes' (2011) framework and, 2) there is more than one strategy being employed. The examples show concordance lines which have been categorised as having nodes relating to allegations of sexual violence, all of which come from the Alt-Right subcorpus of non-narrative blog posts.

5.4.1 Single legitimation strategy: Example

Line [5-1] shows a single legitimation strategy in this complete sentence from the concordance line around the node *rape*.

[5-1] **Rape** allegations + art project = man guilty! (ROK3)

The linguistic features relevant here are in the form of a pseudo mathematical sum. The plus sign and equals sign represent definition and explanation in the form of reasoning, particularly symbolising what is seen as 'the truth' (see Table 5.3). The concordance line was therefore coded as including THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION legitimation.

5.4.2 Co-legitimation strategies: Example

Line [5-2] is an example of two legitimation strategies working together. The node word is modified by "male-on-female" (italics) which signifies a comparison (see Table 5.2). The blogger is deliberately marking the rape in this way, despite it being the more prototypically gendered type of sexual violence, to implicitly compare it to male-on-male rape discussed in the blog post. This part of the concordance line was therefore coded as MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON.

[5-2] Because many prison rape perpetrators are nominally heterosexual, <u>it is likely that</u> the *male-on-female* **rapes** committed in the community <u>are disproportionately committed by prison rapists</u>. (ROK12)

The second strategy present here is THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION. The underlined linguistic features show the language of reasoned explanation and causation, with no further supporting evidence other than this is seen as "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103). For example, the use of the modality clause ("it is likely that"); a reference to a possible outcome based purely on the blogger's opinion; and an association of this outcome based on characteristics or actions of the social actors ("rapes… are disproportionately committed by prison rapists") fall into the linguistic markers for this strategy (as shown in Table 5.3).

5.4.3 Relative frequency of single and co-legitimation strategies

Table 5.11 gives a breakdown of single legitimation strategies and co-legitimation strategies present in the data within the three key thematic categories. The frequency of single and co-legitimation strategies used by the Alt-Right bloggers in the Allegations thematic category is 59.26% and 40.74% respectively. Within the Real/Believed thematic category, the frequency is 50% for each type. However, co-legitimation strategies are more frequent in the Legal category of nodes at 69.23%, which will be discussed in Section 5.5.1. In contrast, the Manosphere bloggers use a consistent frequency of between 76.19% and 78.79% co-legitimation strategies in these three categories.

Thematic category	Legitimation Strategies Present	Alt-Right		Manosphere	
		n	%	n	%
Allegations	Single strategy	11	40.74	44	29.53
	Co-legitimation strategies	16	59.26	105	70.47
	TOTAL	**27**	**100**	**149**	**100**
Legal	Single strategy	14	26.92	12	14.29
	Co-legitimation strategies	38	73.08	72	85.71
	TOTAL	**52**	**100**	**84**	**100**
Real/Believed	Single strategy	36	32.14	34	20.61
	Co-legitimation strategies	76	67.86	131	79.39
	TOTAL	**112**	**100**	**165**	**100**

Table 5.11: Number and frequency of single and co-legitimation strategies per concordance line in each thematic category

The table shows that, in each of the three thematic categories, there is a relatively small number of single strategies in the concordance lines. The Manosphere Legal subcorpus shows the biggest difference between single and co-occurring strategies, with the lowest frequency of single strategies. This indicates that the blogger is doing more to (de)legitimise their views on sexual violence in this context (discussed in Section 5.6.2). A detailed breakdown of the legitimation strategies within both the single and co-occurring categorisation is given below in Sections 5.5 to 5.7.

5.4.4 Ambiguous legitimation strategies

There were some challenging instances of ambiguity in the process of identifying and recording the legitimation strategies in the node co-text. Two examples of these and justifications for how the final categorisations were reached are given in Table 5.12.

Concordance Line with Ambiguous Legitimation Strategy	The Ambiguity	Reasoning and Final Determination
Tell them that you believe that Rogers Park resident Matt Forney has **raped** a woman and you want the police to investigate and arrest him. That's it. If you're convinced that I'm a rapist (MF1)	• No clear indication of linguistic features from the three legitimation strategies being employed. • Initially, it was thought that MORAL EVALUATION may be evident, based on the fact that values were being discussed in the form of an "(oblique) reference to value systems" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 92) and which "trigger a moral concept" (ibid., p. 97).	• Taking the context and concordance line in the way it seemed to be intended, it seems to show the language of goals and purpose of practice ("Tell them…, If you're convinced…"). This indicates the blogger is attempting to goad the person he is addressing, the focus being on attempting to cause something to happen. Final determination: INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION
When a young, bright and highly intelligent woman from the district of Rawalpindi, in Pakistan was **raped**, there was a hushed and uneasy quiet that fell amongst the village whenever she passed through. (VP7)	• No clear legitimation strategy being employed as it is not clear why there was a "hushed and uneasy quiet" in the village in relation to the victim of the rape. • The reaction to the sexual violence could have been based on sympathy, pity, or sadness in relation to the damage it caused to the victim and so could be showing the AUTHORISATION legitimation strategy of custom and tradition. • The reaction could be based on judgment, shame and/or disgust and be more in line with a MORAL EVALUATION.	• This co-text was finally determined to show the legitimation strategy of MORAL EVALUATION. As posited by van Leeuwen, MORAL EVALUATION is often only hinted at. However, it can be ascertained by evaluative adjectives which "are then the tip of a submerged iceberg of moral values (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 97). • The "hushed and uneasy quiet" relates to the shame the victim is assumed to feel as someone responsible for her own pain and suffering. The "submerged iceberg" of moral values can be extended to refer to those around her being portrayed as morally reprehensible for blaming the victim instead of the attacker Final determination: MORAL EVALUATION

Table 5.12: Ambiguous legitimation strategies and final determination

As with the previous discussion on ambiguous thematic categorisation (see Table 5.9), a detailed examination of the linguistic features in the concordance lines helped to determine the legitimation strategies present. The most problematic categorisation involved MORAL EVALUATION, which, as van Leeuwen points out, is rarely explicit and often used to trigger concepts on a subconscious level (2007, p. 97). The recommendation to use "common-sense cultural knowledge" (ibid., p. 98) was employed to finally determine whether moral evaluation was being used in the more opaque co-text around the nodes.

5.4.5   Data and visualisation of co-legitimation strategies

Regarding the Alt-Right and Manosphere non-narrative corpora together, 438 concordance lines contained more than one legitimation strategy. Of these 364 (83.11%) showed linguistic features pertaining to two strategies and 74 (16.89%) showed features pertaining to three strategies. Concordance lines with single strategies were recorded and analysed within each of the thematic categories. However, having two or more strategies working together posed further challenges in how they work in conjunction and the resultant effects on the way sexual violence is (re)framed in the blog posts. To manage this, first, the total number of combinations were calculated in order to find the most frequent. Where three strategies were present in the concordance line, the combinations were considered in pairs, as shown in this example based on concordance line [5-3]:

[5-3] So *women* are <u>30 times more likely</u> to *deceive men of their paternity* than men are **to deprive women of their reproductive prerogative**. (CH1)

In the expanded co-text, it was clear that the node (in bold) was referring to rape and was coded for MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION (see Table 5.2). The use of unsubstantiated statistics (underlined) is a linguistic feature associated with AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION (expert) and the 'them v us' structure (in italics) is an example of a legitimation strategy associated with Reyes' (2011) category of EMOTION (fear). Therefore the data for this concordance line shows three dual combinations with regard to calculating the number of possible combinations:

- MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION + AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION
- MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION + EMOTION
- AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION + EMOTION

Following this process, 586 combinations of two strategies were calculated from the 438 concordance lines showing evidence of more than one legitimation strategy. This figure was then used to determine the most frequent combinations in each of the thematic categories.

To visualise the frequency of legitimation strategy combinations, heat maps are used to highlight which strategies co-occur as well as any clear patterns, or *clusters*, that emerge from the data. Colours are used on a gradient scale to show levels of frequency marking "low and high ends of the range visually distinct" (Gehlenborg and Wong 2012). In the heat maps in the following sections, the colours range from green, showing the least frequent occurrences for that thematic category, to red for the most frequent. The colours are generated on a relative basis for the data in that heat map only. The actual frequency of occurrence is also given as a percentage in each square on the map. The other advantage of using heat maps for the visualisation of this analysis is that the method emphases the lack of hierarchy in the variables being analysed. In other words, the legitimation strategies shown on the top of the heat map (x-axis) are of equal value to those down the side (y-axis) so the heat map represents only the combination of strategies and not that one is given more weight than another. The example which follows (Figure 5.1), showing the co-

legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right Legal subcorpus, demonstrates how the heat map can be read.
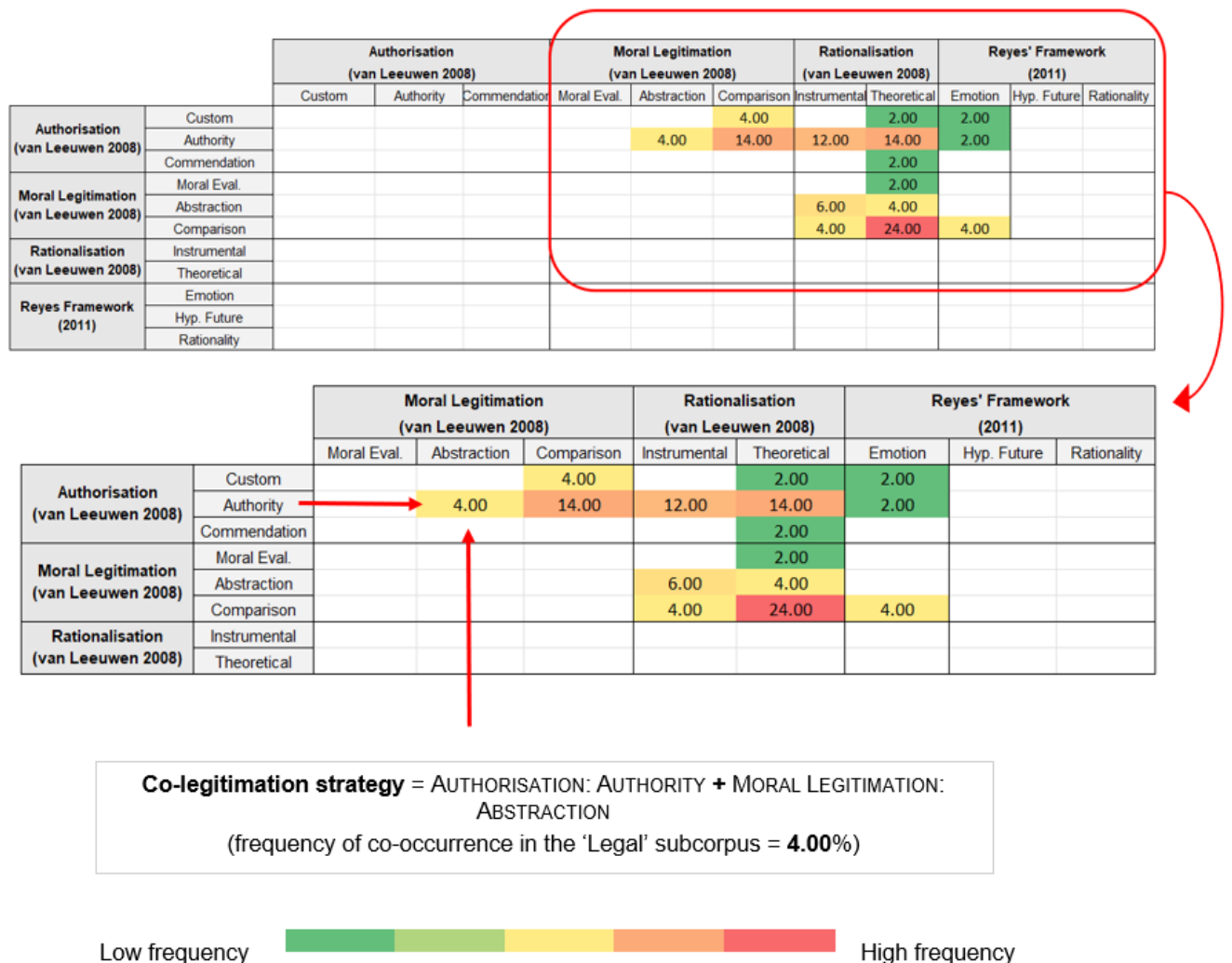
Figure 5.1: Heat map: Extended version to edited version, explanation of frequencies and colour coding

Figure 5.1 indicates that, of the 50 combinations of strategies in this subcorpus (derived from 32 concordance lines showing two strategies and six showing three strategies), the most frequent combination is MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION. This represents 12 occurrences of this combination, or 24.00%, shown in red. The heat map also highlights the relatively high frequency of strategies associated with AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY in this subcorpus, particularly with RATIONALISATION strategies (shown in orange). The analyses of the most frequent combinations of legitimation strategy per thematic category are given in the sections below.

5.5   Allegations

The first thematic category to examine in relation to the legitimation strategies present is that of Allegations. This category is based on nodes and co-text discussed in relation to sexual violence that is not believed to have happened and/or involves a claim of rape or sexual assault which is

considered false (see Table 5.8). These are discussed with reference to single and co-occurring legimation strategies in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts in the sections below.

5.5.1 Allegations: Alt-Right

Table 5.11 shows that of the 27 references to sexual violence in the Alt-Right blog posts which were categorised under this thematic category, 11 (40.74%) contained a single legitimation strategy and 16 (59.26%) showed co-legitimation strategies. These are analysed below.

Single strategies

The most frequent single legitimation strategy in this subcorpus is MORAL LEGITIMATION (five occurrences, 45.45%). Table 5.13 shows that, of these five occurrences, three showed linguistic features of MORAL EVALUATION and two of MORAL ABSTRACTION.

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	0	0.00
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	2	18.18
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	0	0.00
	MORAL: EVALUATION	**3**	**27.27**
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	2	18.18
	MORAL: COMPARISON	0	0.00
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	1	9.09
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	1	9.09
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	2	18.18
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	11	100.00

Table 5.13: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right 'Allegations' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

An example of the use of MORAL EVALUATION in this subcorpora is shown in line [5-4], where the node *rape* is modified by 'story' (underlined) to moralise it into something which is not only false but which is part of something deliberately fabricated and embellished.

[5-4] The UVA **rape** story, for example, turned out to be a lurid, masturbatory fantasy passed off as "news." (MF2)

The addition of 'lurid' moralises the allegation of rape further, showing the blogger's disgust in the sexual violence claim and evaluating it in terms of its unnecessary and explicit details. In relating this to the "news", the blogger is using the MORAL EVALUATION of rape to delegitimise journalistic ethics and reinforce the shared belief system within the Alt-Right membership which distrusts and denigrates mainstream media (Starbird 2017).

A similar delegitimation process in line with established ideologies can be seen in the use of MORAL ABSTRACTION. In this case, it is not the media being delegitimised but politicians, as shown in line [5-5], the MORAL ABSTRACTION being the node phrase in bold.

[5-5] Politicians such as Congressman John Conyers and Senator Al Franken, as well aspiring Senator Roy Moore, have all been accused of varying degrees of **perverted and degrading sexual behavior**. (AM6)

All three of these politicians, who represent the Republican and Democrat parties, have been accused of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Instead of being specific as to the actual accusations facing these politicians, the blogger has chosen to summarise the criminal acts themselves in a generic way to focus on perversion and degradation. In effect, in "distilling from them a quality that links them to discourses of moral values" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 99), the blogger is delegitimising the politicians by implying they are inherently deviant, corrupt, dangerous and contemptuous. This connection between politicians and the generalised reframed sexual violence underlines and builds on the established anti-government, libertarian ideology in the Alt-Right (Hawley 2017; Neiwert 2017; Cooper 2021), delegitimising the actions, norms and values of the those in power (van Dijk 1998, p. 259).

Co-legitimation strategies

There are 16 (59.26%) co-occurring legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right Allegations subcorpus. All of these are found in concordance lines with linguistic features relating to two legitimation strategies (i.e., there were no concordance lines exhibiting features relating to three or more strategies). The most frequent combination of strategies was that of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY + MORAL ABSTRACTION (4 occurrences, 25.00%), as indicated in Figure 5.2.

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom		6.25						
	Authority	6.25	25.00						
	Commendation								
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.						6.25		
	Abstraction				6.25	6.25	6.25		
	Comparison				6.25	18.75	6.25		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical						6.25		

Figure 5.2: Heat map of co-legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right 'Allegations' subcorpus (%)

This combination of legitimation strategies extends the process of delegitimation discussed in relation to MORAL ABSTRACTION and the Establishment (line 5-5 above). In line [5-6] below, sexual assault allegations against Edward Heath are described as *crimes* (the node in italics being the MORAL ABSTRACTION), which frames the sexual assault as a generic illegal activity and distilling the quality of criminality in the former UK Prime Minister.

[5-6] Astonishingly, Mr Veale is also understood to support claims that Sir Edward's alleged *crimes* were reported to police years ago but <u>covered up by the Establishment</u>. (VP6)

The use of *impersonal* AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY (underlined), here to delegitimise what is seen as a corrupt Establishment (see Table 5.1), further enhances the lack of respect for those in power. With these two strategies used together, the blogger is able to use the allegation to not only frame

the supposed sexual assault as a more pervasive issue but also one which has infiltrated multiple layers of authority, thus reinforcing the anti-establishment ideology mentioned above.

The combination of the legitimation strategies AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY + MORAL ABSTRACTION is also used in the Alt-Right blog posts to delegitimise the left-wing media. Line [5-7] shows how the node *misconduct* is again particularly vague and generic. Its use accentuates the ordinal "sixth" in that it attempts to encapsulate all the allegations under one term, effectively distilling the quality of generalised inappropriate behaviour.

[5-7] In just a month, Corn is the sixth <u>member of the media elite under investigation</u> for alleged **misconduct**. (VP9)

Instead of establishment authorities being delegitimised however, as in the example above, the underlined reference to the legal authorities investigating Corn adds weight to the allegations; the investigation indicates the allegations are being taken seriously and implies there must be some substance to them. The blogger here is legitimising his stance on the impropriety of those who run the media by utilising strategies to simultaneously genericise the negative characteristics of the media elite and use the investigative action to tap into the readership's distrust and disdain for the mainstream media (Starbird 2017).

Figure 5.2 shows the second most frequent combination of legitimation categories in the Allegations subcorpus is MORAL COMPARISON with THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (three occurrences, 18.75%). Line [5-8] below shows an example of this combination, with the node being analysed here as MORAL COMPARISON and the underlined declarative showing the THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION strategy (see Table 5.3):

[5-8] Julian Assange was a pain in the butt. <u>It was definitely</u> ***RAPE-RAPE***! *even if it never took place.* (AM7)

The MORAL COMPARISON in this concordance line, shown in the node *RAPE-RAPE*, is achieved through *contrastive reduplication* (CR). This is defined by Ghomeshi et al. as the repeating of a lexical item to emphasise the "real", prototypical meaning of that item is intended rather than the non-prototypical, looser or more ambiguous meaning (2004, p. 311-312). This contrast has also been described as existing on a sliding scale of semantic interpretation of the lexical item (Kallergi 2015; Widlitzki 2016). Here, the blogger is using CR to refer to an actual sexual crime, compared to 'rape', which is then deemed to be non-prototypical, vague or ambiguous. van Leeuwen (2007) states that MORAL COMPARISON allows for an assessment of one activity and its positive or negative values in relation to another activity and its values (p. 99). In this case, the comparative values are levels of criminality and believability. The use of the declarative "it was definitely" showing THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is used here to delegitimise the sexual violence claim. The use of capital letters and exclamation mark in the node, plus the negation at the end of the concordance line (in italics), makes the declaration sarcastic. The use of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION, which

states that an action is grounded in a kind of truth or "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103), is being used here to denigrate Assange's accusers as well as a system that believes them.

5.5.2 Allegations: Manosphere

In the Manosphere blog posts, 149 nodes are present in the Allegations subcorpus. There are 44 (29.53%) concordance lines showing a single legitimation strategy and 105 (70.47%) lines which contained more than one strategy (see Table 5.11).

Single strategies

Table 5.14 indicates that the single strategy used most frequently in this subcorpus is AUTHORITY: COMMENDATION, with 18 occurrences (40.91%). This strategy involves legitimising an action, belief or an idea through reference to expertise or through status as a role model (van Leeuwen 2007, pp. 94-95). The presence of COMMENDATION features signals a divergence from how views are legitimised in the Alt-Right blog posts, which showed no occurrences of this strategy.

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	0	0.00
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	3	6.28
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	**18**	**40.91**
	MORAL: EVALUATION	8	18.18
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	1	2.27
	MORAL: COMPARISON	1	2.27
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	0	0.00
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	10	22.73
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	3	6.82
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**44**	**100.00**

Table 5.14: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Manosphere 'Allegations' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

Of the 18 occurrences of this combination of strategies, six referred to a type of expertise to legitimise a point being made, as exemplified in line [5-9]. Here, the underlined sections, the first quoting data and the second referencing a study (see Table 5.1 which lists these linguistic features), show how the blogger attempts to support his claims through independent statistics and research to make his point more believable.

[5-9] 41% of **rape** accusations are fake, according to a study that examined rape cases over a nine year period in a small metropolis. (CH1)

In the above example, "according to a study" includes a hyperlink to an academic journal article, which has been heavily criticised to the point of rendering it insignificant (Lisak et al. 2010) but which attempts to add further legitimacy and credibility to the claim (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95).

An alternative to independent expertise is the presence of linguistic features implying the blogger himself is the expert. Line [5-10] shows how the blogger uses pseudo statistics, or the

interdiscursive reference to betting odds, to emphasise his disbelief in the woman's claim (underlined):

> [5-10] <u>Ten to one</u> she was never **raped**. <u>One hundred to one</u> if she was raped, it was by a black guy. (CH11)

These features not only attempt to add legitimacy to the denigration of the victim and to the blogger's racism ("it was by a black guy"), but also elevate the blogger's status as someone with the voice of experience and knowledge as to the reality of alleged crime. This mirrors findings by Dayter & Rüdiger (2019) in their work on Pick-up Artists (PUA), a sub-section of the Manosphere (see Section 2.4). Their research showed that those with experience and apparent success with *game*, i.e., using persuasion and seduction techniques to have sex with women, became self-appointed experts and gurus to teach other men how to achieve similar 'success'. This legitimation strategy based on an appeal to implicit expert knowledge (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95; Fairclough 2010, p. 249) also relates to *empiricist discourse* or *empiricist repertoire*, which is based on the supposed intellectual legitimacy of the speaker (Burchell 2007, p. 145) and where facts are presented as objective, scientific and "derived from the natural world" (ibid.). Reardon (2018) has shown how this discourse strategy is ubiquitous in journalism and broadcast reporting in the media. The bloggers in the is subcorpus are utilising AUTHORITY: COMMENDATION strategies to enact the same intellectual legitimacy to add weight to their views while increasing their cultural capital within their readership.

Twelve of the 18 instances of AUTHORITY: COMMENDATION refer to role model status, specifically the delegitimation of celebrities, who are included in the role model category (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95). The examples in the subcorpus relate to the #MeToo movement and the women who made allegations of sexual violence. One example of this is Janice Dickinson, described in line [5-11].

> [5-11] Rape memes involving him now permeate the internet and every major media outlet has sprayed their viewers with pieces sympathetic to the accusers, a group that includes <u>often bankrupt ex-supermodel Janice Dickinson, who spent most of the 1980s high on her own drugs</u> *but still* claims Cosby drugged and **raped** her. (ROK13)

The underlined reference to bankruptcy and drug use is included to delegitimise her celebrity status and credibility as a victim of Bill Cosby. The contrastive "but still" (in italics) is then used to emphasise the incredulity in her claim. A further example of delegitimising role models is shown in line [5-12] below. The Manosphere blogger uses the strategy of AUTHORITY: COMMENDATION to delegitimise the 'victim status' of a woman, Eramo, who is claiming defamation in a rape allegation story. Eramo was Dean of a university in which the alleged rapes took place, a position which falls under the description of role model in van Leeuwen's (2007) framework (p. 95), and explicitly describes herself as a victim in the blog post.

> [5-12] <u>I am yet to find instances of Eramo challenging</u> the shameful treatment of college students accused of **sexual assault**, whether in specific instances or more broadly. <u>She is neither a defender of these young men nor some kind of principled whistleblower</u>. (ROK9)

The underlined features show that the blogger does not believe Eramo deserves to be successful in her claim of defamation, and therefore a 'victim', because she did not act appropriately in her professional position. By delegitimising her professional status, the blogger is able to negate her claim to victimhood, a metanarrative extremely prevalent in Manosphere discourses and in the analyses of the blog posts in this study (see, for example, Section 4.4.5). This preserves the status of victimhood for the in-group and keeps Eramo, a women in authority seen as unsupportive of men, in the out-group.

Co-legitimation strategies

The Manosphere Allegations subcorpus contained 105 concordance lines containing co-occurring legitimation strategies. Of these, 88 contained two strategies and 17 had three strategies (giving 51 combinations of two strategies). This gave a total of 139 dual combinations, as shown in Table 5.15.

No. of legitimation strategies per concordance line	No. of occurrences
2 strategies	88
3 strategies	17
Total number of dual combinations	**139**

Table 5.15: Number of co-occurring strategy combinations for the Manosphere 'Allegations' subcorpus

Figure 5.3 below indicates another difference in the approaches to legitimation in the Manosphere Allegations subcorpus compared to that of the Alt-Right. Of the 105 (70.47%) concordance lines which contained co-occurring legitimation strategies 34 (24.46%) showed a combination of MORAL EVALUATION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (shown in red). This most frequent combination of strategies in the Manosphere subcorpus did not appear in that of the Alt-Right under this thematic category.

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom					0.72			
	Authority	1.44	2.16	2.88	0.72	3.60	0.72		
	Commendation	10.07	7.19	0.72	0.72	7.91			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				5.04	24.46	5.76	2.16	0.72
	Abstraction				1.44	7.91	0.72		
	Comparison					3.60			
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental						0.72		
	Theoretical						7.91	0.72	

Figure 5.3: Heat map of co-legitimation strategies in the Manosphere 'Allegations' subcorpus (%)

The combination of MORAL EVALUATION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION equates to a framing of R/SA in positive or negative value terms together with logical reasoning and whether it is "a kind of truth or 'the way things are'" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103). While originally implying that these two strategies lie in opposition, in a later paper van Leeuwen explains how this combination is seen in moral maxims or where legitimacy is developed through evolving bodies of knowledge (2018, p. 148). In the Manosphere subcorpus for Allegations, this development of knowledge is exemplified in line [5-13]:

[5-13] In London, for example, *the realization of one aging Game Of Thrones actress, Souad Faress, that she had hit the wall*–one far older, higher, and stronger than the one manned by the Night's Watch–*probably led to* the <u>most ridiculous false **rape** accusation of all time</u>. (ROK22)

The MORAL EVALUATION strategy, underlined here, shows a hyperbolic superlative negative valuation of the rape claim. The THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION, in italics, gives the explanation for this valuation through reasoned logic ("the realization… probably led to…") and capitalises on the personal characteristics of the social actors as a basis for the explanation (see Table 5.3). Together, the 'truth' being portrayed here, in line with the group's collective schema and reliance on traditional rape myths, is that the actress is desperate for attention because of her age (she has "hit the wall") and that it was impossible that she was raped because she is deemed undesirable, the rape myth being that rape only happens to attractive women.

This method of reasoning to portray the real truth (THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION), combined with MORAL EVALUATION, is also shown in lines [5-14] and [5-15].

[5-14] *Of course*, an <u>unreported **"rape"**</u> *is not a rape* in *reality because we have no idea whether it happened or not.* (ROK2)

[5-15] *If you didn't* support Emma and denounce Paul, *you were apparently* supporting <u>**"rape"**</u>. (ROK2)

In the first, the EVALUATION (underlined) is shown by modifying *rape* with "unreported" to mitigate the sexual crime. The use of scare quotes on the node word in both examples above is a strategy which enables the bloggers to evaluate the node word/phrase by adding detachment to its meaning (Predelli 2003). As Billig and Macmillan point out, the use of quotation marks around a word "distance[s] the writer from the words in a way that indicates disapproval" (2005, p. 469). In this case, the nodes are evaluated as indicating spurious accusations. In line [5-14], the MORAL EVALUATION is further supported by the THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION strategy, exhibited through the reasoning language (in italics) to explain why an unreported rape is not real. In line [5-15], conditional reasoning (in italics) is used as the THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION strategy to support the MORAL EVALUATION (underlined). The blogger here is delegitimising the rape culture schema familiar to the readership and using this combination of strategies to emphasise the threat posed to men in how they respond to accusations.

The sub-strategy of *prediction*, in THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is also seen in the legitimation in discussions of allegations in the Manosphere. As shown in Table 5.3, the strategy of portraying the truth and "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103) can be achieved through clauses of predicting certain outcomes. In line [5-16], the structure 'be going to + infinitive verb', used to predict the future and show an event is imminent (Swan 1995, p. 220), is combined with the MORAL EVALUATION (underlined) to highlight the long-term effects of false rape accusations.

[5-16] Until that point is reached, *more males like Liam Allan are going to go to hell and back* following <u>false</u> **rape** accusations. (ROK6)

This epitomisation ("more males like Liam Allan") capitalises on the supposed threat false rape accusations pose to the readership, activating their collective schema, and uniting them as all facing the same supposed danger.

In sum, the Manosphere bloggers most frequently legitimise their discussions on sexual violence by framing their stance as logical, reasoned and how things really are. Combining this strategy with MORAL EVALUATION to depict R/SA as contrived, portrays these bloggers as truth-tellers and veracious, reliable reporters on the facts.

5.6 Legitimation strategies: Legal

The second thematic category to examine in relation to the legitimation strategies present in the corpus is that of Legal. This category is based on nodes and co-text discussed in relation to legal definitions, trail processes, legal evidence, and sentencing (see Table 5.8). The sections below detail the strategies and their effects for both single and co-occurring strategies in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts.

5.6.1 Legal: Alt-Right

In the Alt-Right Legal subcorpus, there were 14 (26.92%) instances of single legitimation strategy being used in discussions on sexual violence and 38 (73.08%) co-legitimation strategies. These are explored below.

Single strategies

Table 5.16 indicates that the most frequent strategy in this subcorpus is that of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY, with eight occurrences (57.14% of all single strategies). As the macro discourse in which these nodes are situated generally referred to the legal system and legal process, the high frequency of legitimation strategies referencing *impersonal* authority, such as laws and regulations (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 96), is to be expected.

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	0	0.00
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	**8**	**57.14**
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	0	0.00
	MORAL: EVALUATION	0	0.00
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	0	0.00
	MORAL: COMPARISON	2	14.29
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	0	0.00
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	4	28.57
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	0	0.00
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**14**	**100.00**

Table 5.16: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right 'Legal' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

In line [5-17], the blogger is using the legal definition of rape (underlined) to determine common ground with the person he is addressing (italics). He then goes on to reaffirm a standard definition in order to portray an understanding of the legislation before his more extreme views are given later in the post. Using AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY here establishes the blogger as knowledgeable and reasonable.

> [5-17] *We agree* on <u>the definition of **rape** – that rape is when one party forces sex on the other without their consent?</u> (VP1)

Despite the seemingly robust definition to establish his credibility and the common ground, the blogger uses "sex" here instead of the term 'penetration', which is written in sexual crime legislation[31]. This is a type of pre-framing to give him flexibility in his later arguments about sex within marriage and how the concept of marital rape should not exist. This perspective aligns with the Alt-Right's ideological stance on 'women as property' (Brigley Thompson 2020), discussed below in more detail.

The single strategy of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY is also used in this subcorpus to delegitimise the legal system. Line [5-18] uses the strategy to justify the blogger's opinion, seen in the wider context of the blog post, that rape laws are pointless.

> [5-18] It's like <u>there are **rape** laws in the United States that encompass only particular subsets of the population</u>. (AM7)

The blogger frames the laws in the United States as being biased against particular demographics (underlined), legitimising his opinion that they are ineffectual and so should be repealed. The delegitimation of legislation is also found in the blog posts in relation to other countries. In line [5-19], the blogger is countering the view that incidences of sexual violence have increased in Sweden:

> [5-19] Sweden has a <u>broad judicial definition of acts that are considered as **rape**</u>. In addition, Sweden uses a <u>broad definition when calculating crime statistics</u>. (VP2)

The blogger's view that rape is not as common as reported, seen in the wider co-text, is supported here by delegitimising the ways in which rape is defined and how statistics are calculated (underlined), implying that the high number of rapes in Sweden is due only to the way sexual violence is legally determined. The strategy of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY in referencing both legislation and statistical data to rebut claims of rape prevalence, without any other evidence to support his claim, suggests an overlap with the Manosphere bloggers and their counterclaims against what they refer to as 'rape hysteria.' (see Section 2.2).

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[31] See, for example, the FBI Uniform Crime Reporter (UCR) Program, used by law enforcement for crimes at federal level (https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ucr) and the Sexual Offences Act 2003, Sections 1 and 2 for the law in England and Wales (https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/1)

Co-legitimation strategies

There are 38 concordance lines containing co-occurring legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right Legal subcorpus, with 50 combinations in total (32 double strategies and six concordance lines containing triple combinations, giving a total of 18 ways in which the strategies are combined), as shown in Table 5.17.

No. of legitimation strategies per concordance line	No. of occurrences
2 strategies	32
3 strategies	6
Total number of dual combinations	**50**

Table 5.17: Number of co-occurring strategy combinations for the Alt-Right Legal subcorpus

Figure 5.4 shows that the most frequent combination of legitimation strategies is MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (12 occurrences, 24.00%). It also indicates the frequent employment of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY strategies (highlighted in orange), as also seen in the above section on single strategies in this subcorpus.

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom			4.00		2.00	2.00		
	Authority		4.00	14.00	12.00	14.00	2.00		
	Commendation					2.00			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.					2.00			
	Abstraction				6.00	4.00			
	Comparison				4.00	24.00	4.00		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical								

Figure 5.4: Heat map of co-legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right 'Legal' subcorpus (%)

The combination of MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is exemplified in line [5-20]. Here, the blogger is comparing *rape* to a property crime, using comparative language and analogic nouns, as underlined (see Table 5.2). The type of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION being used is *explanation*, whereby reasoning is given based on the nature, actions and characteristics of the social actors involved (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 104), in this case "women" as shown in italics.

[5-20] *When women have casual sex at the drop of the hat, especially while spuriously intoxicated,* there is no virtue to be taken. Thus **rape** should be a lesser crime in those situations, more like a property crime or someone parking in the wrong parking space. (AM2)

The reference to women's sexuality here (in italics) is used to justify the view being expressed and aligns with established attitudes associated with the far right (Burley 2017, Mudde 2019). Mudde points out that the traditional attitude of "so-called *benevolent sexism*" (original emphasis retained), regards women as physically weak but simultaneously morally pure and this has led to an idolisation of good women by the men in the far right (ibid., p. 150). However, he argues that this is now changing to reveal a far more dangerous attitude:

> Hostile sexism objectifies and degrades women, who are often viewed as trying to control *men* through feminist ideology or sexual seduction. Whereas benevolent sexism sees women as morally pure and physically weak, hostile sexism considers them morally corrupt" (Mudde 2019, p. 150)

The employment of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (definition) in line 15, comparing rape to a property crime, therefore legitimises this view that women who transgress traditional conservative expectations and who are raped do not deserve to be treated as having personally suffered. This effectively denigrates them for what is seen as evidence of moral corruption. The view also reiterates a long-established ideology in the far-right which considers women the property of men. In the far-right manifesto by F. Roger Devlin (2006), Devlin's view of women being the burden of white men lead him to suggest that rape should be re-categorised in a way which focuses only on the effect it has on the victim's father and husband, to whom she is subordinated (2006, p. 18, cited in Brigley Thompson 2020, p. 112). In line [5-20] above, this stance is legitimised through the comparison to damaged and used property.

Further examples of the MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION combination of strategies can be seen lines [5-21] and [5-22]. Both show linguistic features of comparison, the former comparing rape to sex in marriage and the latter to simply getting confused about consent (underlined). The RATIONALISATION features include rationalising through conditional reasoning and 'this means' (Table 5.2), shown in italics.

> [5-21] If marital rape is a thing, then <u>100% of the sex I have ever had with my husband has been **rape**</u>. I have never obtained his consent and he has never obtained mine. (VP3)

> [5-22] *This means that* barring a masked intruder in the bushes who leaps out with blackjack in hand, "rape" means mostly **<u>confused consent</u>**. (AM2)

The bloggers in these posts are re-categorising rape in order to dehumanise women, to reinforce ideological standings on women as the property of men, and to obscure the effect sexual violence has on victims. The use of COMPARISON to represent the violence and RATIONALISATION to propound the idea that this is the truth and the way things are (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103) is a clear example of the reframing of sexual violence to legitimise an ideological perspective.

5.6.2   Legal: Manosphere

Table 5.11 above shows that there are 84 nodes in the Manosphere LEGAL subcorpus, 12 (14.29%) of which contain single legitimation strategies and 72 (85.71%) with co-occurring strategies. These are examined below.

Single strategies

The most frequent legitimation strategy in this thematic category appearing on its own is AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY, with eight occurrences (66.67%) as shown in Table 5.18.

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	0	0.00
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	**8**	**66.67**
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	0	0.00
	MORAL: EVALUATION	0	0.00
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	0	0.00
	MORAL: COMPARISON	1	8.33
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	0	0.00
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	2	16.67
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	1	8.33
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**12**	**100.00**

Table 5.18: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Manosphere 'Legal' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

The frequency of occurrence in this Manosphere subcorpus mirrors that in the Alt-Right for single legitimation strategies (eight occurrences, 57.14%). However, the views being (de)legitimised through reference to *impersonal* authority differ between the two Legal subcorpora. While the Alt-Right bloggers focus on a generic bias in the legal system and their denunciation of the legal definition of rape (see above), the Manosphere bloggers focus on what they deem is the unfair privilege legal process affords women. This point is shown in line [5-23], which uses AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY, through reference to both the justice system, government and legal process (underlined, see Table 5.1) to delegitimise the proposal of phasing out in-person cross-examination of R/SA victims.

> [5-23] The *feminization* of <u>the justice system</u> has continued unabated, with the nominally <u>Conservative British government of *Theresa May*</u> pledging to <u>ban courtroom cross-examinations of alleged **rape** victims</u>. (ROK5)

Here, the blogger links "feminization" and superfluous reference to the female Prime Minister (both in italics) to portray a process of implementing anti-male bias within three impersonal authoritative bodies (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 96), i.e. the justice system, the government, and the requisite evidential process of cross-examination. This delegitimation of such wide-ranging authoritative power utilises what van Dijk (2011b) terms "delegitimising access to social resources" (p. 386), reinforcing the Men's Rights Activist (MRA) ideology of systemic misandry (see Section 2.2) and male victimhood. This pattern of delegitimation is also seen in line [5-24]:

> [5-24] Anyone familiar with rape accusations and convictions will be aware that <u>the requirement of *"evidence"* to convict is *artificially* lowered for women</u> accusing men of **rape** or sexual assault. (ROK13)

The use of scare quote to delegitimise "evidence" (Predelli 2003) and the adverbial (both in italics), show how the blogger is undermining impartiality in the legal process and furthering the misandry ideology through conspiratorial language. These findings link directly to those in Sections 4.3.4 and 4.4.4 which highlight the ways in which bloggers in the Manosphere portray social actors within the legal system, namely as benefactors and victims of a corrupt and bias system.

Co-legitimation strategies

In the Manosphere `Legal` subcorpus, 72 concordance lines contained co-legitimation strategies, giving a total of 112 dual combinations, as detailed in Table 5.19.

No. of legitimation strategies per concordance line	No. of occurrences
2 strategies	52
3 strategies	20
Total number of dual combinations	**112**

Table 5.19: Number of co-occurring strategy combinations for the Manosphere Legal subcorpus

Figure 5.5 shows that the Manosphere bloggers combine AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY and THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION most frequently, with 27 occurrences (24.11%, shown in red).

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom								
	Authority	10.71	5.36	2.68	13.39	24.11	0.89	0.89	
	Commendation	4.46	1.79	1.79	3.57	10.71	0.89		
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				2.68	6.25			
	Abstraction				2.68	4.46			
	Comparison					1.79			
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical						0.89		

Figure 5.5: Heat map of co-legitimation strategies in the Manosphere 'Legal' subcorpus (%)

In contrast to the single legitimation strategy of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY detailed in the previous section, whereby the legal system, process or government are delegitimised directly, combining this strategy with THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION allows the bloggers to (create) their own definitions, explanations, and interpretations of what is legal. For example, line [5-25] shows the use of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION features of declarative language and references to definition (in italics, see Table 5.3) together with the underlined feature of *impersonal* AUTHORITY:

[5-25] A lack of objective evidence is a *defining feature* of most **rape** trials today, too. (ROK2)

The blogger here is reframing evidential process in line with MRA ideology on bias, as discussed in the single strategy section above. With no supporting evidence for this statement, he is positing the view that it is simply "the way things are" (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 96). This is also seen in line [5-26] in the blogger's interpretation of legal testimony:

[5-26] *Unlike*, say, burglary cases, which typically have more concrete proof like CCTV footage or fingerprints, *allegations of **rape** are invariably "he said, she said" battles* over the testimonies of the accuser… (ROK4)

van Leeuwen (2007) states that a key feature of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is defining an activity "in terms of another, moralised activity" (p. 104). Here, the blogger is using comparison (in italics) of objective CCTV footage in property crime to moralise what he sees as the subjective evidence used in sexual crimes (the AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY, underlined) and a supposed bias based on misandry.

The general combination of AUTHORISATION and RATIONALISATION legitimation strategies can also be examined in relation to their subcategories of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY + INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION. This combination is seen in 15 occurrences (13.39%) in the Manosphere Legal subcorpus and is exemplified in line [5-27]:

[5-27] <u>Exceptions for **rape** accusers</u> *are being pushed* by people like this. (ROK5)

The presence of *impersonal* AUTHORITY is shown in the indirect reference underlined and, within the wider context of the blog post, refer to anonymity of women rape accusers and the proposals to remove their cross-examination. INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION is shown in the features in italics, namely those relating to process and *means* (see Table 5.3) through the use of "by + gerund". This highlights the fact that the system is being deliberately rigged against men, is in the process of change, and is not an inherited characteristic of the court system. Together, the combining of AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY + RATIONALISATION (both THEORETICAL and INSTRUMENTAL) portrays the blogger as a legal interpreter, revealing the "truth" in this supposed evolution of the legal system and the motivations of those seen as corrupting it. This mirrors findings by Marwick and Caplan, whose research into online and networked harassment within the Manosphere, particularly on Men's Rights' Activist sites such as Return of Kings, found websites designed to expose systemic misandry in the legal system (2018, p. 551).

5.7   Legitimation strategies: Real/Believed

The final thematic category considered in this chapter is that of Real/Believed. This category of nodes relates to R/SA being discussed as having actually happened or sexual violence as a real possibility (see Table 5.8). This thematic category contains the most nodes, in both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere corpora, with a total of 277 nodes representing 38.63% of all those categorised by theme (detailed in Table 5.10).

5.7.1   Real/Believed: Alt-Right

The Alt-Right bloggers used nodes referring to R/SA in real terms with 112 occurrences: 36 (32.14%) of these using single legitimation strategies (32.14%) and 76 (67.86%) with co-legitimation strategies. These are explored below.

Single strategies

Table 5.20 shows that, of the 36 concordance lines containing features from one legitimation strategy, linguistic features relating to THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION were most frequent (10 occurrences, 27.78%).

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	1	2.78
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	8	22.22
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	1	2.78
	MORAL: EVALUATION	9	25.00
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	2	5.56
	MORAL: COMPARISON	0	0.00
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	5	13.89
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	**10**	**27.78**
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	0	0.00
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**36**	**100.00**

Table 5.20: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right 'Real/Believed' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

The linguistic features signaling THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION in this thematic category relate to the subcategories of *definition* and *explanation* to legitimise ideological stance. In line [5-28], the former can be seen, with assault being defined in terms of other activities, in this case by placing it on a spectrum (underlined).

[5-28] This #MeToo paranoia *isn't all baseless*. While some worries should rate only an eye roll, others highlight <u>the precariously gray continuum from annoyance to harassment to **assault**</u>. (AM6)

While the concordance line legitimises victims' allegations during the #MeToo movement to a certain extent (italics), the line is also used to legitimise the blogger's stance on redefining sexual assault and rape (as discussed in Sections 5.5.1 and 5.6.1 above) and comes before further discussion on this in the blog post. Using "precariously" to describe this spectrum of criminality underscores the assumed danger and threat to men who may find themselves committing an act deemed to be on this continuum.

An example of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION through explanation to legitimise ideological stance is seen in line [5-29]. Here, explanation and reasoning is based on the actions of social actors (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 104), namely feminists calling for an end to victim-blaming (underlined):

[5-29] "<u>Don't teach women not to get raped, teach men to not rape</u>," *is an explicit call for girls to place themselves into situations where they're likely to get **sexually assaulted**, then dodge all blame.* (MF2)

The declarative interpretation (in italics) of the quoted maxim is used to delegitimise conventional feminist activism which attempts to re-place the focus of sexual violence on men. This effectively counters the claim (with no supporting evidence) that the reality of feminist activism is that they deliberately harm women, reiterating the established ideological in-group and out-group positioning against feminists.

Co-legitimation strategies

Table 5.21 shows the ratio of two to three legitimation strategies per concordance line in the Alt-Right Real/Believed subcorpus.

No. of legitimation strategies per concordance line	No. of occurrences
2 strategies	74
3 strategies	2
Total number of dual combinations	**80**

Table 5.21: Number of co-occurring strategy combinations for the Alt-Right Real/Believed subcorpus

The most frequent combination of strategies in this subcorpus is that of MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (12 occurrences, 15.00%), indicated in red in Figure 5.6.

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom	1.25	7.50	1.25	2.50		1.25		
	Authority	1.25	3.75	1.25	1.25	6.25			
	Commendation	2.50	7.50		3.75	7.50			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				1.25		2.50	2.50	
	Abstraction				3.75	15.00	5.00	5.00	
	Comparison				1.25	1.25	1.25		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental					1.25	3.75	1.25	
	Theoretical					6.25			

Figure 5.6: Heat map of the co-legitimation strategies in the Alt-Right Real/Believed subcorpus (%)

The combination of MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION allows the bloggers to reframe sexual violence in moralistic terms, in line with the Alt-Right's shared beliefs, norms and values (van Dijk 2018), together with a representation of an ultimate truth and without the need for further supporting evidence (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103). In line [5-30], they type of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION being used is *prediction*, marked by the use of modal verbs to denote future predictions, the adverbial *always*, and references to generational inheritance (all in italics):

> [5-30] Sex *will never be* an innocent pleasure for her again but *always* haunted by **a dark spirit**, and *that may be passed on through her family,* spreading neurosis like a wave of infection. (AM2)

The MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION is seen here in the node word which, in the context of the blog post was referring to rape, and in terms of an affliction (underlined). Describing rape as "a dark spirit"*,* and likening it to a disease affecting future generations, links directly to the idea of victims of sexual violence being seen by the Alt-Right as damaged property and the act of rape primarily affecting the father and husband of the victim (Brigley Thompson 2020).

Further ABSTRACTION with THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is seen in line [5-31], with the violence and criminality of rape removed, shown in the node, together with the underlined declarative (see Table 5.3).

[5-31] As I wrote in two controversial articles, rape is no longer ***the intrusion of a penis where it should not go***. <u>It is</u> the intrusion of the wrong penis. (AM2)

This combination of strategies not only distances men generally from the act of rape, through the synecdoche part of the node phrase (*penis*), but also allows the blogger to legitimise the position that there is an established pre-judgment about the type of men who commit this crime. This is also mirrored in line [5-32] which uses the same combined strategies of ABSTRACTION (node) and THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (underlined) to define rape as endemic among left-leaning men.

[5-32] In fact, you could say that <u>rape is</u> **an inherently leftist form of sex** (MF2)

This distances the readership from the crime of rape while also delegitimising the norms, values, and actions (van Dijk 2011b, p. 386) of liberal men.

A final example of MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION can be seen in a reference which very much relies on the Alt-Right's self schema. In line [5-33], *Rotherham* is used to denote the rape and sexual exploitation of at least 1400 girls by a group of South Asian men in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, some of whom were convicted in 2012 (Gill and Harrison 2015).

[5-33] What are we supposed to conclude from this, that **Rotherham** <u>is the modern equivalent of the Rape of the Sabine Women and therefore justified in the name of diversity?</u> (VP8)

This MORAL ABSTRACTION to denote sexual violence requires a complex range of knowledge and awareness among the readership and is designed to be particularly emotive. In terms of distilling a quality that links to moral values (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 99), the metonym epitomises considerable hatred felt by the readership towards Muslim men. The declarative THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION *definition* strategy (underlined), which references a Roman myth relating to the abduction of women by outsiders (the Rape of the Sabine Women), delegitimises the view that what happened in Rotherham should be reconsidered.

Figure 5.6 also shows that the legitimation strategy of AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION is used frequently in this thematic category. The combination of COMMENDATION + MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION and COMMENDATION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION both show a frequency of 7.5% (6 occurrences). Regarding the former, this co-legitimation strategy allows for reference to *role model* status (Table 5.1) while using an abstracted term to moralise, as shown in line [5-34]:

[5-34] We all wanna forgive <u>the "good guys" like Roman Polanski</u> **an occasional faux paus**. (AM7)

Here, epitomisation (underlined) is used to delegitimise those in Hollywood who are deemed to have escaped liability for sexual crimes, the scare quotes around *good guys* marking skepticism and sarcasm (Predelli 2003). This sarcasm is reinforced with the MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION strategy shown in the node term to underplay the seriousness of Polanski's sexual crime, the rape of a child (McGuigan 2008). The combination of strategies delegitimises both

Polanski and the film industry more generally, reiterating the Alt-Right's antipathy for Hollywood elites (Galuppo 2017).

The second strategy with which AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION is most commonly combined in the Alt-Right Real/Believed subcorpus is THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (7.50%). In contrast to the above use of COMMENDATION to (de)legitimise role model status, here the focus is on expertise (see Table 5.1). Line [5-35] is taken from a blog post which attempts to cast doubt on the rising crime statistics in South Africa, particularly concerning an increase in the number of black women being raped.

> [5-35] The notion that **rape in South Africa is** a specifically post-apartheid problem is dismantled by <u>Gqola, a professor at the University of the Witwatersrand</u>. (AM1)

The strategy of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (definition), shown with the declarative (in italics), is used to reframe the idea that reported R/SA is increasing, effectively delegitimising the statistics. This view is then legitimised by the inclusion of a reference to an expert and their university role (underlined) to give weight to the blogger's view. The combined strategy allows the blogger to promote the group's ideological stance supporting racism and sexism.

5.7.2   Real/Believed: Manosphere

Table 5.11 shows that there are 165 nodes in the thematic category of Real/Believed from the Manosphere blogs. Of these, 34 (20.61%) contain single legitimation strategies and 131 (79.39%) show co-occurring strategies.

Single strategies

The most frequent single strategy in the concordance lines in this subcorpus is THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION at 38.24% (13 occurrences). The strategy of AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION is also particularly common, at 35.29%, or 12 occurrences, as Table 5.22 shows.

Framework	Legitimation Strategy	Number of Occurrences	Frequency (%)
van Leeuwen (2007)	AUTHORISATION: CUSTOM	0	0.00
	AUTHORISATION: AUTHORITY	1	2.94
	AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION	12	35.29
	MORAL: EVALUATION	1	2.94
	MORAL: ABSTRACTION	2	5.88
	MORAL: COMPARISON	3	8.82
	INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION	2	5.88
	THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION	**13**	**38.24**
Reyes (2011)	EMOTION	0	0.00
	HYPOTHETICAL FUTURE	0	0.00
	RATIONALITY	0	0.00
	TOTAL	**34**	**100.00**

Table 5.22: Number and frequency of single legitimation strategies in the Manosphere 'Real/Believed' subcorpus (most frequent highlighted)

The strategy of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (prediction) can be seen in line [5-36]. The blogger explicitly states that the sexual violence was predictable (underlined) but offers no further

supporting evidence for his claim, relying instead on the readership accepting this as a basic truth (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103).

> [5-36] The sexual assaults and **rapes** in Cologne, like all the other crimes that night, <u>were entirely predictable</u>. (ROK7)

The strategy here taps into the *black pill* ideology, common in sections of the Manosphere such as the incel movement (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 166). This refers to a sense of inevitable nihilism, hopelessness and predictions of negativity (ibid.). At the same time, it allows the blogger to express established racial hatred and emphasise the sexually-deviant migrant trope[32].

The type of blanket assertion of "truth" afforded by the use of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is also used in line [5-37], this time using *explanation* (Table 5.3).

> [5-37] Single Motherhood <u>Causes</u> More Sexual Violence Than A Mythical "Rape Culture" (ROK14)

This line comes from a blog heading and directly states the supposed cause and rational explanation for sexual violence (underlined) as being single mothers; another out-group vilified by the Alt-Right (Rosen et al., 2009).

With 35.29% of the single legitimation strategies showing linguistic features relating to AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION, an examination of these show that 9 out of the 12 occurrences used the sub-strategy of role model status to delegitimise people in the public eye (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95). Line [5-38] exemplifies this, with the description of Hillary Clinton particularly vitriolic.

> [5-38] Add to that the well-documented herstory of <u>thecunt vilifying and intimidating Bill Clinton's sexual assault and **rape** victims</u>, and you get a pretty clear picture of thecunt's [sic] soul: <u>autistic and sociopathic</u> (CH3)

The underlined references to the actions and characteristics of Clinton are used to delegitimise her authority and imply corruption in the way she is deemed to have covered up her husband's sexual violence.

Co-legitimation strategies

The concordance lines in the Manosphere Real/Believed subcorpus showed a total of 189 combinations of two legitimation strategies. Of these 102 contain two strategies combined and 29 have three strategies (or, 87 dual combinations), as shown in Table 5.23.

No. of legitimation strategies per concordance line	No. of occurrences
2 strategies	102
3 strategies	29
Total number of dual combinations	**189**

Table 5.23: Number of co-occurring strategy combinations for the Manosphere Real/believed subcorpus

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[32] see Daniels (1997) for a discussion on this construct of migrant men in far right discourses

Unlike the combined strategy analyses of the two subcorpora discussed above, there is not one combination of legitimation strategies in this subcorpus which stands out as being substantially more frequent. Table 5.17 indicates the highest frequency of combined strategies is 10.05% (19 occurrences) for AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION. This is only marginally higher than the second most frequent combination, MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION, at 9.52% (18 occurrences).

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstract	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom		0.53		1.59	0.53			
	Authority	3.70	3.17	2.12	3.70	4.76	3.17		
	Commendation	4.76	5.29	5.82	3.70	10.05	6.88		
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.			0.53	1.59	3.70	2.12		
	Abstract				1.06	5.29	0.53		
	Comparison				1.06	9.52	3.17		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental						3.17		
	Theoretical						8.47		

Figure 5.7: Heat map of co-legitimation strategies in the Manosphere Real/Believed subcorpus (%)

The data suggest the bloggers utilise a much wider range of strategies to justify their views. This may be because this thematic category, i.e. concerning belief in an incidence or possibility of sexual violence, is less directly linked to an overt ideological stance i.e. compared to a theme such as 'allegations'. The use of EMOTION, under Reyes' (2011) framework, for example, is present in the third most frequent combination of strategies, together with THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION, at 8.47% (16 occurrences), indicating the bloggers are attempting to employ more visceral justifications.

Turning to the AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION combination of legitimation strategy first (10.05% frequency), it can be seen that expertise (COMMENDATION), particularly the bloggers' implied expertise, is used to legitimise a *prediction* (THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION). In line [5-39], the underlined prediction is supported by reference to a strongly stated fact (italics) posited by the blogger who portrays himself as knowledgeable on R/SA statistics across the "Western world".

[5-39] That the police in a place like Rotterdam will have to chase men who cat-call *is a testament to the fact that* **rape** *has fallen to historic lows across the Western world*, at least prior to the present migrant crises. (ROK22)

The reference to statistical data with no supporting evidence, indicating expert COMMENDATION (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 95), particularly alongside a hyperbolic prediction which reinforces male victimhood, mirrors the strategy discussed in Section 5.5.2 regarding the fostering of intellectual legitimacy and cultural capital with the readership. This is also seen in line [5-40], whereby the blogger positions himself as having inside knowledge of the types of crimes committed by ex-offenders (italics):

[5-40] Prisoners who **rape** or sexually assault within the prison system are likely to commit *the foulest of acts, and not just sexual crimes*, once they are released. (ROK12)

The strategy of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION is also combined with MORAL LEGITIMATION: COMPARISON 18 times (9.52% as shown in Figure 5.7 above). Line [5-41] demonstrates this co-legitimation strategy with the underlined THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (showing reasoning and explanation through the juxtaposed statements of not needing evidence and believing women, together with the use of the equals sign, underlined) and the comparison of flirting to rape (in italics).

[5-41] <u>"Don't need to literally witness a man being horrible in order to believe that he's horrible. Trust and believe women."</u> = *Allegation of flirting = actual **rape***. (ROK15)

This combination allows the blogger to create a hyperbolic representation of what he sees as a social bias against men and in favour of women, reinforcing the metanarrative that spans Manosphere ideology (see Section 2.2)

The final combination to consider in this subcorpus analysis is that involving EMOTION. The combining of this strategy with THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION accounted for 8.47% of the combinations in this subcorpus (16 occurrences). According to Reyes, the strategy of EMOTION involves linguistic features relating to the 'us v them' dichotomy; using elements of fear, particularly in terms of a culturally recognised 'bogey-men'; and semantic indexing of social actors, their characteristics and actions (2011, pp. 785-786). In line [5-42], for example, the 'us v them' narrative is set up with the Red Cross and similar organisations, here held in a position of reverence and framed as the heroic "defence" in an implied battle against migrants (all in italics).

[5-42] <u>I am sure we can all look forward to</u> many New Year's Eve celebrations in Germany and elsewhere where *the Red Cross and comparable organizations are the last line of defense* for combating sexual assault and **rape** *by migrants*. (ROK16)

The THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (prediction, underlined), utilises the sense of hopelessness, dread, and nihilistic view as discussed above in relation to the black pill ideology (see Section 5.7.2).

Another out-group referred to in this Manosphere subcorpus using the strategy of EMOTION is gay men. Line [5-43] shows how this out-group are perceived in contrast to heterosexual men (italics), namely as being able to freely sexually abuse others without consequence. This is combined with the (supposed) reasoned truth (THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION) that homosexuality is responsible for the increase in sexual abuse cases in Hollywood (underlined).

[5-43] An *actor's homosexuality*, *which normally protects them from the scrutiny a heterosexual man would receive*, <u>only compounds any **sexual abuse** crisis in Tinseltown</u>. (ROK19)

This perspective relies on the collective group schema of gay men being seen as hypersexual, sexually-deviant, and paedophiles, more commonly seen in far-right discourses (Brindle 2016, p. 82; Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 183). In literature on the Manosphere, there seems to be division of opinion as to the extent homosexuality is accepted among its members. Ging (2019), for example, argues: "While homophobic language is rife, the culture is generally accepting of homosexuality, as

it is of any sexual expressions that are perceived to be transgressive." (p. 651). However, in Cockerill's (2019) study of memes from MRA sites, she found that homophobia was extremely prevalent. The data here indicates that the Manosphere bloggers are using homophobic linguistic markers to reiterate the narrative of victimhood perceived to be suffered by heterosexual men while capitalising on the sexual deviancy trope perpetuated by the more extreme far right.

5.8   Summary and Discussion

In order to demarcate the summary of the linguistic strategies used in the data from the overarching socio-political themes which emerge, this summary and discussion section is divided into the micro (discourse) and macro (socio-political) levels of analysis mentioned in Section 5.2.

5.8.1   Micro analysis summary

The most frequently used legitimation strategy in the corpus is that of THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION. Table 5.24 below, which provides an overview of all the heat maps considered in this legitimation analysis, shows the consistently high frequency of this strategy being used in all subcorpora. It is also the most frequently used single strategy in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere Real/Believed subcorpora. This indicates that the bloggers are providing "explicit representations of 'the way things are'." (van Leeuwen 2007, p. 103) and characterise themselves as truth-tellers while providing no further evidence for their claims. The most common legitimation strategy which is combined with this is one within the MORAL LEGITIMATION group of strategies (see Table 5.24). The findings support the literature outlined in Section 5.2 on the struggle over ideas and legitimacy within social and ideological conflict, particularly in relation to delegitimation being used to reflect a group's shared norms, values and beliefs (van Dijk 1998, p.256-258). It is suggested that, particularly with the Alt-Right data, a rudimental template of (de)legitimation strategies can be formulated with the combination of MORAL LEGITIMATION: ABSTRACTION/COMPARISON + THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION. This communication strategy within the Alt-Right blog posts represents the way sexual violence is reframed and could provide a paradigm for counter discourses.

Alt-Right subcorpora

Thematic category: Allegations

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom		6.25						
	Authority	6.25	25.00						
	Commendation								
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.						6.25		
	Abstraction				6.25	6.25	6.25		
	Comparison				6.25	18.75	6.25		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical						6.25		

Thematic category: Legal

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom			4.00		2.00	2.00		
	Authority		4.00	14.00	12.00	14.00	2.00		
	Commendation					2.00			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.					2.00			
	Abstraction				6.00	4.00			
	Comparison				4.00	24.00	4.00		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical								

Thematic category: Real / Believed

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom	1.25	7.50	1.25	2.50		1.25		
	Authority	1.25	3.75	1.25	1.25	6.25			
	Commendation	2.50	7.50		3.75	7.50			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				1.25		2.50	2.50	
	Abstraction				3.75	15.00	5.00	5.00	
	Comparison				1.25	1.25	1.25		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental					1.25	3.75	1.25	
	Theoretical						6.25		

Manosphere subcorpora

Thematic category: Allegations

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom					0.72			
	Authority	1.44	2.16	2.88	0.72	3.60	0.72		
	Commendation	10.07	7.19	0.72	0.72	7.91			
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				5.04	24.46	5.76	2.16	0.72
	Abstraction				1.44	7.91	0.72		
	Comparison					3.60			
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental						0.72		
	Theoretical					7.91	0.72		

Thematic category: Legal

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstraction	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom								
	Authority	10.71	5.36	2.68	13.39	24.11	0.89	0.89	
	Commendation	4.46	1.79	1.79	3.57	10.71	0.89		
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.				2.68	6.25			
	Abstraction				2.68	4.46			
	Comparison					1.79			
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental								
	Theoretical						0.89		

Thematic category: Real / Believed

		Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)			Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)		Reyes' Framework (2011)		
		Moral Eval.	Abstract	Comparison	Instrumental	Theoretical	Emotion	Hyp. Future	Rationality
Authorisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Custom		0.53		1.59	0.53			
	Authority	3.70	3.17	2.12	3.70	4.76	3.17		
	Commendation	4.76	5.29	5.82	3.70	10.05	6.88		
Moral Legitimation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Moral Eval.			0.53	1.59	3.70	2.12		
	Abstract				1.06	5.29	0.53		
	Comparison				1.06	9.52	3.17		
Rationalisation (van Leeuwen 2008)	Instrumental						3.17		
	Theoretical						8.47		

Table 5.24: Overview of heat maps per thematic category for the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora

Other similarities in the subcorpora can be seen in the infrequent use of INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION. This strategy is used to (de)legitimise through highlighting the purpose of a practice or action and focuses on the goals, means and effect of that practice (see Table 5.3). However, the strategy is used more frequently by both the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers in the Legal subcorpora. This creates conspiratorial discourses, that is, the *true* purpose and goal of the legal system is being uncovered, linking to the respective ideological stances on corruption and bias seen as inherent in legal process, evidence and legislation.

The legitimation framework put forward by Reyes (2011) is also rarely used by the Alt-Right or Manosphere bloggers in these corpora, particularly as a single strategy. It has six occurrences as a single strategy across all subcorpora (out of 151 instances, or 3.97%). It does, however, feature more frequently as a co-legitimation strategy, particularly in the Alt-Right and Manosphere Real/Believed subcorpora (see Table 5.24) to legitimise views through fear and the metanarrative of 'us v them'. The results suggest that Reyes' (2011) framework, while not suitable in this instance in place of van Leeuwen's (2007), works well in conjunction with the latter. The analysis also demonstrates the value in combining theoretical frameworks to achieve a more nuanced analysis.

The micro level analysis of legitimation strategies diverges slightly between the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora in the use of AUTHORISATION: COMMENDATION. This strategy is only used by the Alt-Right bloggers in combination with other strategies within the Real/Believed subcorpus, mainly to delegitimise those with perceived power. In contrast, the Manosphere bloggers use this strategy repeatedly, particularly to present themselves as experts or denigrate people of influence.

5.8.2 Macro analysis summary

A number of key topics and themes emerge from the analysis of legitimation strategies in the subcorpora. These reiterate as well as extend those discussed in Section 2.7 and are summarised below.

Victimhood

The metanarrative of victimhood is particularly salient in the data analysed in this chapter, as well as in Chapter 4. However, the analysis of what is (de)legitimised in the subcorpora reveals a more distinct understanding of victimhood at the intersection of white and male supremacy. In the Alt-Right subcorpora, a loss of entitlement to women emerges from the repeated delegitimation of the way R/SA is defined and in how the statistics are presented. This is discussed in more detail below. The status of being powerless in an immoral society also emerges from the analysis, with the Establishment depicted as particularly corrupt. In the Manosphere data, victimhood through lack of access to representation (e.g. through unbiased media) and social resources (e.g. a fair judicial system) (van Dijk 2011b, p. 386) is portrayed, as is the refuting of women's claims to victimhood in order to preserve that status for men.

Legal system

The legitimation strategy analysis shows that both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere consider the system to be biased in favour of others but in different ways. The way R/SA are reframed in the Alt-Right blog posts, particularly with reference to their legal definitions, relates directly to the 'loss of possession' ideology traditionally associated with far-right groups (Brigley Thompson 2020) and the "venerating the housewife" trope (Hermansson et al. 2020, p. 184). The legal system is seen to be biased but not necessarily in favour of women, unlike the salient discourses in the Manosphere subcorpora. Through the analysis of the legitimation strategies, the latter group also see the legal system as in a state of negative change, unlike the Alt-Right bloggers. This reflects the literature on the enduring anti-establishment ideology held by the far right.

The delegitimation and dehumanisation of women

The analyses show very few references to individual, non-celebrity women victims in the discourses of R/SA. The women who are mentioned are feminists seen as threatening the rights of men, women celebrities, journalists, and politicians. This indicates a desire to delegitimise women with social power and the lack of perceived representation, supporting van Dijk's description of "ideological and social conflict tak[ing] the form of a struggle not only over ideas…but also over legitimacy." (1988, p. 258). The exception to this is the Alt-Right's discourses on 'women as objects' and the dehumanising discourses emerging from the legitimation strategies around the redefinition of rape. These women are not seen as having any agency to delegitimise and, instead, are framed as damaged property mitigating their value to men.

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the research question: *How are ideological standpoints on acts of sexual violence against women legitimised in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses?* The analyses showed how single and combined legitimation strategies are used to reframe R/SA in line with established shared group schemata, particularly in relation to male victimhood and male entitlement to women. The fourth of van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategies, MYTHOPOESIS, which relates to narrative discourses, is considered in the following chapter (Chapter 6), together with the findings from the social actor analyses in Chapter 4.

Chapter 6: Narrative analysis

6.1   Introduction

Following the previous chapter, in which the strategies of AUTHORISATION, MORAL LEGITIMATION, and RATIONALISATION were applied to the analysis of non-narrative blog posts in the corpus, this chapter considers the fourth and final category of strategies in van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation framework: MYTHOPOESIS. This strategy examines legitimation through narrative discourses and so will be applied to the blog posts in the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora which contain narrative elements (see Section 6.3). Research into the communication of extremist groups has found that narratives are widely utilised to reaffirm and legitimise the groups' ideologies through the promotion of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (see, for example, Bennett Furlow and Goodall, 2011; Braddock, 2015; Braddock and Horgan, 2016; Marcks and Pawelz, 2020). This is achieved through encouraging identification with story characters; stimulating emotional responses; and re-establishing in-group and out-group boundaries (Braddock 2015, p. 50) (see Section 2.8.1 for further discussion).

Informed by the above observations, this chapter considers the narrative discourses in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts and addresses two research sub-questions. The first (sub-question 3) asks: *What role do narrative discourses play in the framing of sexual violence against women?* To address this question, an examination of the frequency and type of narrative content in the blog posts (i.e., narratives based on personal experiences or those reporting others' experiences) will be conducted (Section 6.3). The analysis in Sections 6.4 (news narratives) and Section 6.6 (personal narratives) looks at how the bloggers construct the narratives for their readers and the extent to which this achieves *psychological transportation,* i.e. how the reader is moved from their present reality and into the story world (Braddock 2020, p. 78).

The analyses in this chapter also address research sub-question 4. This question builds on the structural analysis of the narrative blog posts and incorporates findings from Chapter 4 to ask: *To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the narrative structure affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?* It examines if there is a relationship between the placement of social actors in the narrative and the function of the narrative component, and, if so, how does this contribute to the framing of R/SA (see Sections 6.5 and 6.6.2). Finally, Section 6.7 focuses on the key findings and themes from the analyses.

6.2   Theoretical and analytical frameworks

Narrative analysis maps onto the critical epistemic discourse analysis (CEDA) framework (van Dijk 2011), underpinning this thesis and outlined in Section 2.1.2. Three of the discourse structures and strategies relating to ascertaining *knowledge representations* in the CEDA framework can be applied directly to narrative analysis: local coherence, argumentation, and rhetorical devices (ibid.,

pp. 37-39). Regarding local coherence, which relates to the ways in which propositions are sequenced and how an event is framed through its organisation (van Dijk 2011, p. 37), analysing the ways narrative components are selected and arranged can help to determine how knowledge between members of the groups is represented and shared. Busselle and Bilandzic point out, in relation to this, that framing arguments into narratives allows for an implication that there is causality among the story events (2008, p. 258). The strategy of argumentation examines how discourse is arranged to defend opinions and represent beliefs as facts, both explicitly and implicitly (van Dijk 2011, p. 38). Finally, with reference to rhetorical devices in the CEDA framework, referring to strategies that (de)emphasise shared knowledge (van Dijk 2011, p. 38), narrative analysis can identify which narrative components are the most prominent and how evaluation in the narrative is used in conjunction with other components.

The narrative analytical framework on which the following investigations are based is that of Labov and Waletzky's (1967; 1997) six-component, sociolinguistic approach to narrative. These components are: the *abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation,* and *coda*. As discussed in Section 2.8.2, Eisenlauer and Hoffmann's (2010) study showed how oral narratives can be remediated within blogs as they were shown to contain all six of the components identified by Labov and Waletzky, albeit in a different order to that found in the paradigm of oral Personal Experience Narratives (PENs) (Johnstone 2001, p. 637). As well as being applicable to the analysis of personal narratives, these elements of narrative are present in news reports and newspaper articles (Bell 1991). Subsequent studies by discourse analysists such as Porto and Belmonte (2014) and de Fina (2016) have identified the Labovian canonical narrative framework in stories told in personal blogs, on internet fora, and narratives "shared by communities that have social or political objectives." (de Fina 2016, p. 477). Given the nature of the blog posts examined in this thesis, the application of this framework is, therefore, appropriate (see also Rejno et al. 2014; Dayter 2015; Minami 2015; Dayter and Rüdiger 2016; Evans 2019 for studies adopting a structuralist approach to narrative analysis using the Labovian framework and Section 2.8.2 for further discussion).

For the purposes of the sections within this chapter, the overall function of these components are summarised in Table 6.1 (adapted from Labov and Waletzky 1967; 1997; Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010; and Labov 2014) (see also Section 3.5.2, which has full examples of these components using a blog post, to demonstrate the XML mark up of the components).

Narrative component	Function
Abstract	To signal to the reader that a narrative will follow and/or to summarise the main theme of the narrative
Orientation	To introduce the characters, places, and time in order to familiarise the receiver with the main background information for the narrative
Complicating Action	To describe the sequence of events that make up the body of the narrative and explain what happened
Resolution	To signal the end of the narrative and how the events/complications were solved
Evaluation	To demonstrate the narrator's attitude to the elements in the story and explain why the story is worth telling
Coda	To connect the narrative to the present and shift the narrative to a current relevance

Table 6.1: Summary of narrative components and their function (Labov & Waletzky 1967;1997)

Regarding the evaluation component, Labov clarifies that it can be conveyed in three ways (1972, pp. 370-396). First, it can be *external* to the narrative (i.e. the narrator interrupts the narrative to add evaluative comment separately to the recounting of narrative events). It can be *embedded* into the narrative (i.e. the narrator adds evaluative comment in a way that implies it has just occurred to them, without breaking out of the story world). Finally, it can be *internal* to the narrative (i.e. through the use of linguistic devices such as intensifiers, comparators, and explicatives when narrating the complicating action (ibid.)). In the analysis in this thesis, the external and embedded evaluation will be considered only, given the focus of the analysis is on the way in which the narratives are structured.

The following table (Table 6.2), which goes over two pages, shows a complete blog post from the *Chateau Heartiste* blog titled "Another White Woman Spreads For Islam" (CH19). It is separated into its narrative components, with explanations as to how these sections of the narrative correspond to the components identified by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and listed above in Table 6.1. It can be seen that the evaluation component appears multiple times as the blogger leaves the narrative to add evaluative comment to the action events.

Blog post divided into narrative component	Narrative element or component	Component function and explanation
Another White Woman Spreads for Islam (CH19)	**Blog post title**	
News clippings about shitlib/antifa White women suffering the all-too-predictable consequences of taking their anti-White ideology seriously are an almost weekly occurrence. The latest is a howler, *if you're into schadenfreude so delicious the aftertaste lingers for weeks.*	**Abstract**	The blogger primes the readers by addressing them directly and implying they will enjoy the narrative (in italics). The hyperlink (blue underlined) links to a far-right blog which has found the story online.
"Antifa Chick Goes to Turkey With Muslim Loverboy, Gets Raped and Beaten." Lacy MacAuley is a **well known radical left-wing Antifa organizer** in Washington D.C. She was featured in Project Veritas' undercover videos which exposed the #DisruptJ20 plot to violently **disrupt President Trump's inauguration**.	**Orientation**	The blogger uses the linked title (in italics) to introduce the characters and overall story. Further information about the protagonist is given, focusing on characteristics which place her in assumed opposition to the readers' ideological stance (in bold).
Just like every other lunatic leftist, Lacy *fell in love* with Islam and *became obsessed with helping Syrian 'refugees'*, wholeheartedly believing that Islam is the religion of peace. MacAuley details her experience dating a Turkish Muslim man, describing *the hell and fear she lived in* because *he controlled every move she made, beat and raped her*.	**Complicating Action**	The action events of MacAuley's story are given through past verb forms (italics).
You should go to the link and read about the **Rapefugee Enrichment** Lacy MacAuley received in her own words (she **lovingly** detailed her international romance on her blog, **natch**). A few revealing excerpts:	**Evaluation**	The blogger leaves the narrative to address the reader using the second person pronoun and directing them to find out more information (italics). Sarcasm with the words "Rapefugee Enrichment", "lovingly" and "natch" (in bold), signal the bloggers attitude to what happened.
The first two weeks were quite the love story. I *observed* that he was drinking heavily, and *called* him an "alky," but it *was* just a joke at first.	**Complicating Action**	The action events of MacAuley's story continue (past actions in italics).
Recall CH Maxim #[X]: A woman will hold a beta male endlessly accountable for the slightest infractions while promptly forgiving an alpha male the worst transgressions.	**Evaluation**	The blogger leaves the narrative again to address the readers with the imperative "Recall" (italics) and then adds his opinion on how he is interpreting MacAuley's actions.

Text from the blog post (continued)	Narrative element or component	Component function and explanation
Then *came* our first fight. I *had wanted* to interview a local woman for an article on Syrian refugees. He *did not* approve. He *knew* the woman and did not like her, so he strictly *forbade* me from speaking with her. After I *questioned* his rationale, he *yelled* and *stormed out* of the room to go smoke a cigarette. I just *stood* in the middle of the room not knowing what to do. Of course, as a Western woman, no one *had ever forbidden* me from speaking with anyone else. It *was* a strange feeling: Don't I have a mouth to speak? Why can I not use it as I wish?	**Complicating Action**	The action events of MacAuley's story continue (past actions in italics), told in the first person as a quote taken from the original news article.
There was another strange feeling in her vagina: SPLOOGE. **You think I'm kidding? Nope. Read on**. <u>She stayed with the inbred sandwog for more than two months of sex (non-consensual, she claims, though this post-cock rationalization is likely subject to alternative interpretation), after experiencing numerous episodes of his charming vibrancy. #LoveWins!</u>	**Evaluation**	The blogger adds his own interpretation of what MacAuley felt as an embedded evaluation (italics) then addresses the readers again, encouraging them to read on (bold). Further evaluative opinion given (underlined).
I honestly think that one of the reasons that I have been silent about this for two months has been that *I did not want to feed into the narrative of Muslim men being aggressive. I didn't want to fuel hatred or racism.* But silence breeds complicity, and *am now telling this story in order to heal.*	**Resolution**	MacAuley's story ends through her own words of explanation (italics).
"*I didn't want to feed the narrative of anti-Muslim hatred or racism, so I covered up a story of a hateful, abusive Muslim man feeding the narrative.*" Are empowered feminist shitlib women **sick in the head**, or are social pressures and dysfunction in the West simply permitting the omnipresent female id, including its worst instincts, to break out of its cage and roam freely? Perhaps **feminist cunts** with a **pathologically enlarged empathy gland for foreign scum** are more susceptible to indulging their primitive sexual compulsions when societal guardrails are removed? Or maybe these **shitlib chicks are unattractive and lonely and ignored by the alpha White men** who are in vanishing supply among their shitlib social set. Are they just **garden variety attention whores**?	**Evaluation**	The blogger uses a quote from MacAuley, requoting it inline with his ideological stance (italics). He then expresses his attitude towards her and her actions (in bold) for the benefit of the readers, focusing on an interpretation of her actions as a characteristic of her political leanings. This effectively shows why he felt the story was worth telling (see Table 6.1).
This is Lacy MacAuley: Manjaw. Manlips. Thousand cock stare. *A bad combo for the continuation of Western Civ.* This woman is a walking biohazard sign warning that you'll have to check your sanity and illusion of paternity certainty at the door if you get involved with her. *How many women are like Lacy, in full-throated assault against their own culture and White men as they scuttle to shitholes to sexually adopt gutter filth pets as vanity projects to affirm their twisted libshit morality and soothe their undernourished maternal instinct? A thousand? A million? Tens of millions?* Canary in a coal burner. *The Lacys of the West are a wide-open omen of social collapse coming to an endocrine-disrupted globalized outpost near you.*	**Coda**	The blogger leaves the narrative to link the action events and protagonist with the threat they pose to all men, "white culture" and western civilisation (italics), shifting the narrative to a current relevance for the readership.

Table 6.2: Complete blog post (CH19) with narrative components marked and functions given.

6.3   Narrative post data

The 99 blog posts in the corpus were classified according to their narrative and non-narrative content. This initial classification employed Hoffmann's definition of narrative, which necessitates the presence of a *narrative sequence* (based on the presence of both temporality and causality) and an *evaluation* (2010, p. 3). The posts were examined and categorised according to whether they contain only narrative content; contain narratives as well as unconnected non-narrative elements in the same blog post (classified here as 'mixed narrative'), and posts that have no narrative content at all but, instead, could be classed as non-narrative opinion pieces (these were analysed in Chapter 5).

6.3.1   Frequency of narrative posts

Of the 99 posts collected from the blogs, 36 were considered as having either narrative or mixed-narrative content. A full list of these posts, their classification, source, and date can be found in Appendix 7. Table 6. shows the number of posts in each classification for both the Alt-Right and Manosphere corpora, with the most frequent occurrences emphasised in bold.

	Alt-Right Corpus		Manosphere Corpus		TOTALS	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Narrative posts	**17**	**41.46**	11	18.97	28	28.28
Mixed narrative posts	4	9.76	4	6.90	8	8.08
Total narrative posts	21	51.22	15	25.86	36	36.36
Non-narrative posts	20	48.78	**43**	**74.14**	63	63.64
Total number of posts in corpora	41	41.41	58	58.59	99	100

Table 6.3: Breakdown of narrative and non-narrative content in the corpora (most frequent in bold)

The table shows that, overall, narratives are not the preferred genre of discourse with the bloggers in my corpus, with 63.64% of the posts having no narrative content. This finding contradicts literature on the prevalence of narratives in extremist discourses, which asserts that narratives are "one of the most pervasive" communication strategies in material produced by extremist entities (Braddock and Horgan 2016, p. 381). The Alt-Right bloggers use more narratives in their posts, with 51.22% containing all or some such content, twice that of the narrative posts in the Manosphere (25.86%). In this respect, the Alt-Right discourse strategy aligns more towards the findings of Braddock and Horgan (2016) although the preference for narrative discourses is negligible.

6.3.2   Type of narrative post

The discourses containing narrative elements were further classified into those based on news stories about R/SA (*news narratives*) and those that showed the blogger as being personally involved in a story about R/SA (*personal narratives*). The classification process and linguistic markers used to differentiate the blog posts into news narrative and personal narrative corpora are discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5.2). Based on these two overarching classifications of narrative, Table 6. shows the breakdown of narrative and mixed-narrative posts in the subcorpora. It can be

seen that there is a clear preference for using news stories, with 80.56% of all narrative posts being based on news reports of sexual violence.

	Alt-Right Corpus	Manosphere Corpus	TOTALS
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
News Narratives	14 (38.89)	15 (41.67)	29 (80.56)
Personal Narratives	7 (19.44)	0 (0.00)	7 (19.44)
Total narrative posts	21 (58.33)	15 (41.67)	36 (100)

Table 6.4: Breakdown of narrative classification in the subcorpora

The lack of personal narratives from Manosphere bloggers (0%) could indicate a need to distance themselves from this kind of personal experience. This may perhaps be explained through the influence of Pick-Up Artists (PUAs), a subsection of members of the Manosphere, have developed rules of 'game' based on how to avoid rape accusations while persuading women to have sex (see Dayter and Rüdiger 2019, Wright 2020). By focusing solely on news reports of *others* involved in stories of (alleged) sexual violence, the Manosphere bloggers can strengthen their own position and community as being successful in avoiding rape accusations, while simultaneously using news narratives to castigate those on the outside of the community. The following sections analyse the news narratives further and in line with research sub-questions 3 and 4.

6.4   News narratives

The 29 blog posts (14 from the Alt-Right corpus and 15 from the Manosphere corpus) classified as *news narratives* use a news report as their basis. These narrative posts therefore can be classed as *factual* narratives as opposed to *fictional*. An established requisite of fictional discourse is that it is "intendedly untrue" (Ryan 2005) whereas the narratives in these subcorpora are all reframing true stories of experiences with sexual violence. While the resulting narratives may be questionable to those outside the intended readership of the blogs, the bloggers present the narratives as true representations of what happened. Research on the fictionality or non-fictionality of a narrative in terms of how persuasive it is has shown that there is no ascertainable difference in the effect on the reader (Braddock and Dillard 2016). However, it can be argued here that using non-fictional cases in the blog posts and reframing them in the way that will be seen below gives the accounts integrity in a way that fictional narratives may not. The retelling of news stories or personal anecdotes about R/SA which are based on real life lends credence to the storyteller and, consequently, validates the attitudes, values, and morals he is advocating.

The particular selection of what news stories to report on, or cherry-pick, from other media allows for further ideological reaffirmations. This form of mediation and the "imbrication of media in ideological processes" (Fairclough 2006, p. 19) enables the bloggers to focus on specific aspects of R/SA without having to acknowledge the wider issues. Regarding the presence of hyperlinked news sources in the blog posts, Leccese describes hyperlinking as a form of internet gatekeeping

(2009, p. 579). It follows that the provision or restriction of alternative sources of information also has the practical function of controlling access to sites deemed ideologically in line with the author's attitudes or, alternatively, as a way to exemplify sources considered in opposition to the community's values. Furthermore, according to Borah, the perception of the author's credibility is increased by the presence of hyperlinks when the news story reflects the readers' values and "resonates with individuals' pre-existing schema" (2014, p. 578).

As detailed in Chapter 3, the six narrative components were identified in the blog posts and marked up in XML. The hyperlinks within these components were also identified and marked up during this process. To determine the degree to which the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers employ each of the six narrative components summarised in Table 6.1, a quantitative analysis was carried out. The number of words per component was calculated as a percentage of the total words within each of the news narrative corpora, as shown in Table 6..

	Alt-Right News Narratives	Manosphere News Narratives
No. of blog posts in corpus	14	15
Total no. of words	8,336	12,742

Table 6.5: Word counts in the Alt-Right and Manosphere news narrative corpora

With posts that contained a combination of narrative and non-narrative discourses (tagged 'mixed narrative'), the narrative content was included in the word counts shown in Table 6. but not content from the non-narrative sections.

6.4.1 Narrative components: words per component

Figure 6.1 below shows how the percentage of words used in each component differs across the Alt-Right and Manosphere news narrative blog posts. The abstracts, orientations and resolutions in each corpus share comparable frequency, in terms of the percentage of words within each of these three components in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere narratives.
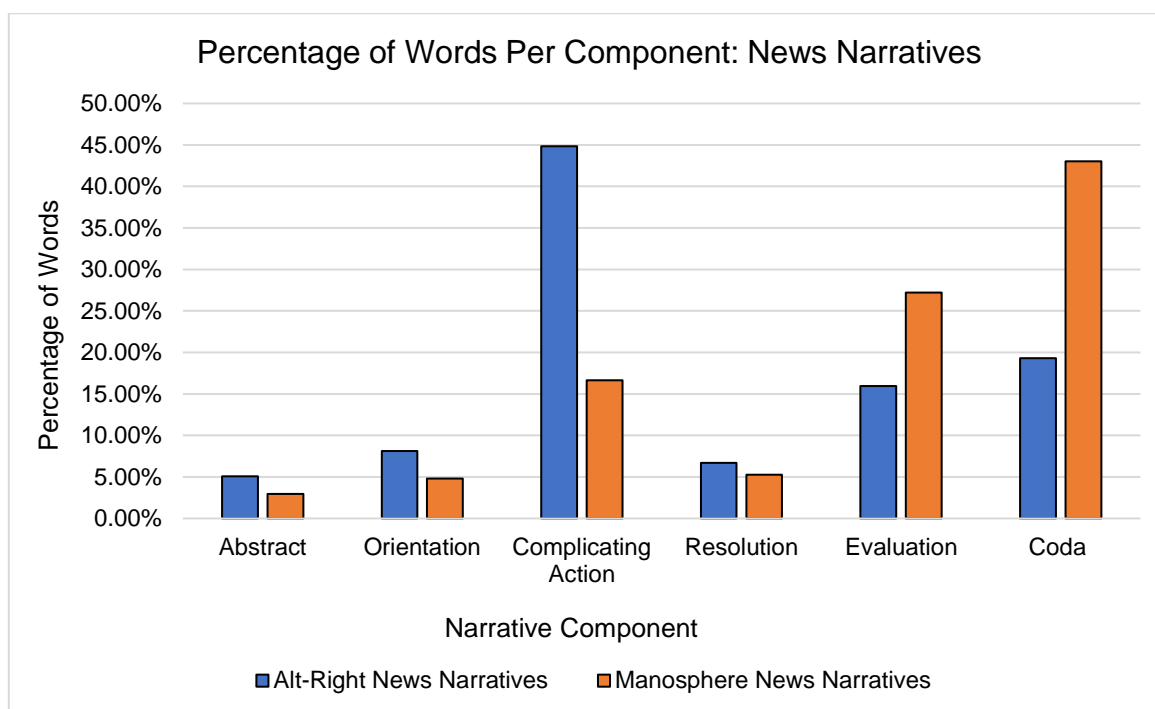
Figure 6.1: News narrative component breakdown for the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora

The bar chart above shows a clear discrepancy between the extent to which complicating actions are described in the Alt-Right corpus (using 44.9% of the words compared to 16.6% in the Manosphere). Conversely, the Manosphere corpus shows a higher percentage of words used for the evaluation (27.2% compared to 16.0% in the Alt-Right) and for the coda (43.0% compared to 19.3%). When the components are viewed together, seen in Figure 6.2 below, the relative proportions of the components show a clear disparity between the Alt-Right and the Manosphere blog posts in the corpora. It should be noted, however, that the organisation of the components in Figure 6.1 is based on the Labovian canonical narrative framework outlined in Section 6.2 and is not necessarily the order in which they appear in each narrative post. The actual ordering of the narrative components is discussed below.

The stacked chart shows how much of the Alt-Right discourses are dominated by the complicating action (44.85% of the narratives) compared to only 16.65% in the Manosphere narrative discourses. In contrast, the Manosphere bloggers use far more of their narrative as coda (43.04%) compared to the Alt-Right bloggers (19.29%).

Comparison of Narrative Composition (News Narratives)

Figure 6.2: Bar chart showing comparative percentages of words per narrative component (news narratives)

The quantitative analysis shows that the Alt-Right bloggers use more words overall on the narrative elements connected to the original story (abstract (5.09%), orientation (8.12%), and complicating action (44.85%)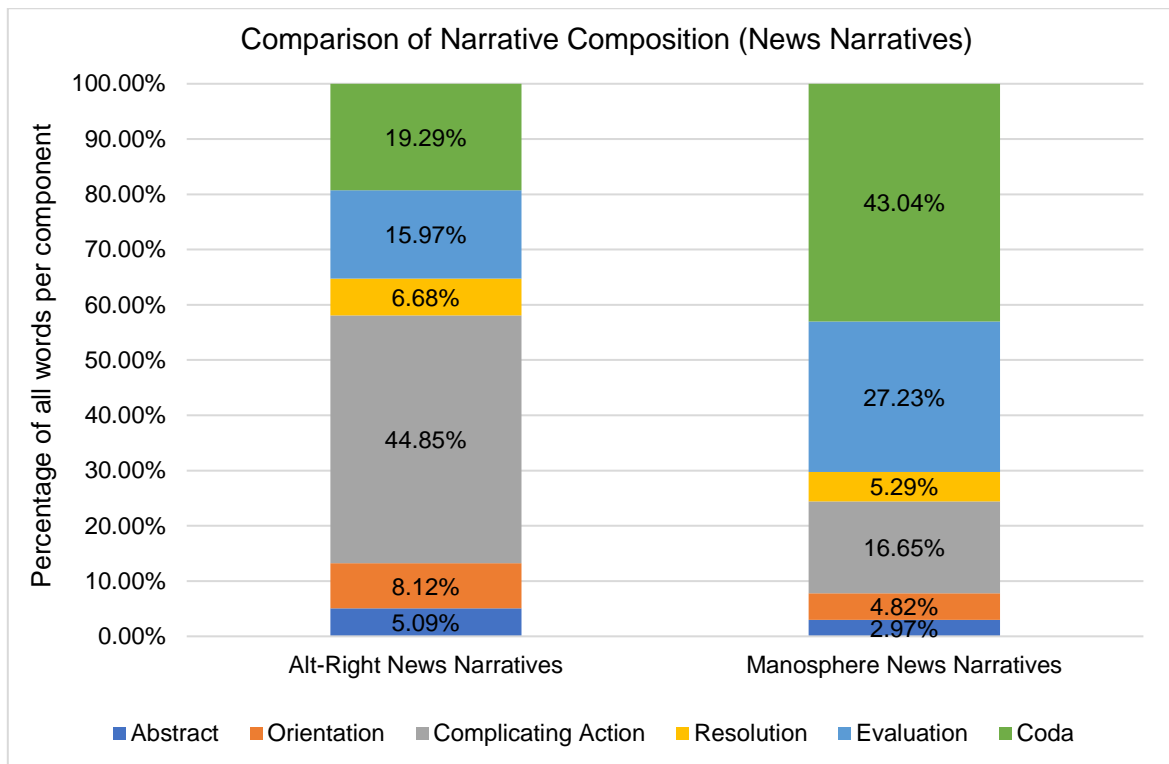) whereas the Manosphere bloggers have a higher percentage of words on the components used to evaluate the narrative (27.23%) and establish its past and present relevance (43.04%).

The particularly stark difference between the Alt-Right and the Manosphere's focus on these components suggests distinct motivations in how the two factions are using news narratives. This reflects theories put forward by Busselle and Bilandzic (2008). In their review of mental models associated with the level of engagement with narratives, they found three cognitive (and intertwined) processes through which a reader constructs meaning from a narrative: through *character models* (relating to the characters in the narrative); *story world models* (relating to the conceptual domain of the narrative, including place and time); and *situation models* (relating to the events and actions within the narrative and, to a certain extent, combining both the character and story world models) (2008, p. 257-259). In relation to the quantitative data shown above and the high frequency of words dedicated to the complicating actions (44.85%), the Alt-Right narratives seem to focus heavily on generating the situation model by focusing primarily on the events of the narrative. This model places greater emphasis on "what the story is about including …the chronological sequence of episodes in the plot" and the intentional actions of the characters (ibid., p. 257). Braddock argues that, in their attempt to make sense of these events and the causality between them, readers become psychologically immersed in the story and the narrative becomes more persuasive (2020, p. 78).

In contrast to the Alt-Right bloggers' focus on the action of the narrative, the Manosphere narratives are dominated by the evaluation and coda components and so can be categorised as falling into the story world model (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008, p. 259). This is a predominantly static mental model which places more importance on the conceptual domain of the narrative, that is to say, the relevance of its setting; the state of affairs in that setting; and the logic within that domain. The story world model "starts with the assumption that the fictional world works like the actual world" (ibid.). For psychological immersion to be maintained, the reader must remain convinced of this parallel and remain unconscious of the narrative processes at work, with any departure from the real-world logic of that domain breaking the immersion (ibid.). The dominance of the coda in the Manosphere news narratives maintains this parallel between the story world and the actual world by highlighting the relevance of the news story about R/SA to the readers' present situation. This can be phrased in terms of warnings or expressions of the perceived danger faced by men at the hands of others, as exemplified in concordance lines [6-1] and [6-2] (underlined). The use of imperatives and second person pronouns to address the reader directly (see bold examples in lines [6-1] and [6-2]) are also used for this effect, and, as Porto and Belmonte (2014) point out regarding the coda, "the text may address the audience as if exhorting them" (p. 19). This is achieved through direct appeals to action, as seen in [6-2] (in italics).

[6-1]   This woman is <u>a walking biohazard sign warning</u> that **you**'ll have to check **your** sanity and illusion of paternity certainty at the door if **you** get involved with her… <u>Canary in a coal burner</u>. The Lacys of the West are <u>a wide-open omen of social collapse</u> coming to an endocrine-disrupted globalized outpost near **you**. (CH19)

[6-2]   It is incumbent on all sane-minded men to contribute to reversing <u>this totalitarian climate of witch hunts and social lynchings</u>... Facts and fair processes are being divorced from reality like never before. So *start small and work **your** way up* to help foster positive change. (ROK30)

In terms of van Leeuwen's (2007) legitimation strategy of MYTHOPOESIS, these linguistic features in the Manosphere blog posts indicate legitimation through *both* cautionary tales and moral tales (pp. 105-106). Regarding the former, the underlined warnings of danger caution the readership, while moral outcomes are implied if the reader takes on the hero role (articulated in [6-2] through "incumbent on all sane-minded men to contribute…to help foster positive change."). The combination of these narrative consequences supports the argument by Reshef and Keim that these two storytelling outcomes are often embedded within each other (2014, p. 152). The extended coda in the Manosphere news narratives can be viewed through the perspective of Fairclough and Thomas' concept of *imaginaries* i.e. projections of possible futures, alternative realities, and ideological misrepresentations of existing realities (2004, p. 383). In relation to lines [6-1] and [6-2] above, the ideological misrepresentations can be considered to be the "social collapse", "witch hunts", and "social lynchings" described to reaffirm the metanarrative of victimhood and existential threat from those outside the subcommunity. These horrific predictions can also be viewed through the lens put forward in Vaara's updated conception of mythopoetic

legitimation, that of "nightmare scenarios" and "hyperbolic dramatisation" (2014, pp. 512 & 513 respectively) (see Section 2.8 for further discussion on the limitations of separating cautionary and moral tale outcomes).

6.4.2   Narrative components: organisation

The above sections have outlined the ways the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers choose to allocate lexical resources on different narrative components in their news narratives. However, considering the differing functions of each narrative component, the order in which the components are presented also needs to be examined. The flexibility within the Labovian narrative framework allows for countless combinations and repetitions of components, as chosen by the narrators. Therefore, it is argued that the placement of components in the narrative represents a proactive ideological stance being taken by the bloggers. While it is impossible to determine exactly what the bloggers intended (if anything) when they were constructing their narratives, an examination of the ordering of narrative components reveals aspects of rhetoric present in the blog posts.

To analyse and visualise the varying combinations of components within the news narrative posts, I adopted 'move analysis', an analytical tool used in genre analysis and developed extensively by Swales (2004). Swales defines a 'move' as "a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse." (2004, p. 228). This definition mirrors that of the narrative components in the corpora in this study. As far as can be ascertained, rhetorical move analysis has not been applied to deconstructing online extremists narratives but has been used, by Chiang and Grant (2017; 2018), in a forensic linguistics context to analyse the steps taken by child abusers attempting to groom victims in online chat rooms. Their corpus of online conversations between one offender and 20 victims, for example, was examined using rhetorical move analysis to determine the strategies used to build trust, persuade, and ultimately groom his victims. They identified nineteen moves the offender used to influence the conversation and present "micro-identity positions" as strategies to, among others, build rapport, plan meetings, initiate sexual conversations, and reprimand the victims (Chiang and Grant 2018, p. 21). Other relevant studies employing move analysis to examine discourses include Connor and Upton's (2004) study of moves in grant proposals written to legitimise research projects and attract funding. While the discourses did not involve narrative content, the study looked at how the elements of the grant proposals were identified and organised as rhetorical moves; an aim mirrored in the analyses in this thesis (see also Upton and Cohen's (2009) work on rhetorical moves in birthmother letters and move analysis applied to the comments sections on blogs where there is agreement or disagreement with the bloggers (Bolander 2013)).

To analyse the moves in the blog posts, I used the XML tags that I had created previously to mark up each component in the narratives (see Section 3.5.2). Using the document navigation features in Notepad++, I could highlight these component tags from each post and transfer their sequence to Excel. From here, the number of moves between each component was calculated. Figure 6.3

below shows an example of how the moves within the Labov and Waletzky narrative framework have been identified. It was necessary to include a move from the headline or beginning of the post to show the opening component, and one at the end to show which component was used to complete the narrative. As mentioned before, the components can be used in any order but the evaluation in particular is used in multiple positions (Labov 1972; Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010) and is therefore shaded grey (see also Table 6.2).
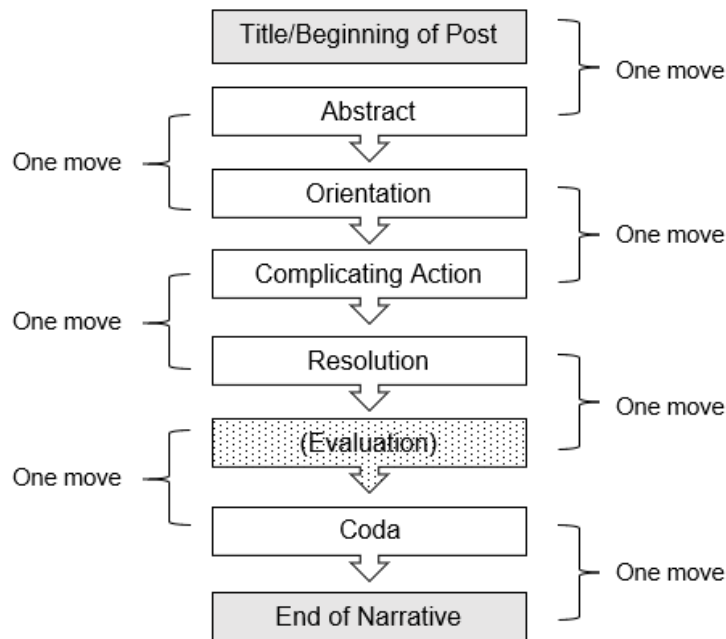
Figure 6.3: Rhetorical move analysis applied to Labov & Waletzky's (1967/1997) narrative framework

In the above model, there are seven rhetorical moves from the beginning of the post to the end. A set of moves was recorded for each narrative post and calculated. The lowest number of moves in any narrative was four and the highest number was 20. As can be seen from Table 6., the Manosphere narratives have a higher frequency of moves (171 compared to 114 in the Alt-Right corpus).

	Alt-Right News Narratives	Manosphere News Narratives
No. of blog posts	14	15
No. of words	8,336	12,742
Total no. of rhetorical moves	114	171
Average no. of rhetorical moves per post	8.14	11.40
Average no. words per rhetorical move	73.12	74.51

Table 6.6: Average no. of rhetorical moves in the Alt-Right and Manosphere news narrative subcorpora

Having established the number of moves for each blog post and the total number for each subcorpora, the actual sequence of moves could be calculated. I constructed a square matrix in Excel with a set of rhetorical moves listed at the top of the matrix (on the X axis) and a set of moves listed along the side of the matrix (on the Y axis), as shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Example of a matrix for rhetorical move analysis

Using this matrix, I recorded which component follows which. For example, there were 13 instances of the beginning of the narrative (the headline) leading to an abstract in the Alt-Right subcorpus. This was calculated as 11.4% of the 114 total moves found in that subcorpus, As can be seen in Figure 8, this percentage was recorded at the intersection of Beginning → Abstract (Beginning leading to Abstract). If we reverse the X→Y reading to Y→X, we can also say that an abstract followed the headline in 11.4% of the total moves in the Alt-Right subcorpora. The results were then visualised using the XY Bubble Scatter chart in Excel and are discussed below.

Alt-Right news narrative analysis

Figure 6.5 shows the bubble matrix results for the Alt-Right news narratives. It can be seen that a clear pattern emerges that deviates very little from the canonical Labovian narrative framework.

Figure 6.5: Bubble matrix showing rhetorical moves in Alt-Right news narratives (%)

Overall, the pattern of rhetorical moves is highly organised, with the blogger leading the reader through the full set of components to formulate a structured narrative. The slight deviations from this is what follows from the complicating actions. There is a fairly even split of follow-on components, either a resolution (9.6% of moves / n=11) or an evaluation (7.0% of moves / n=8). The other slight discrepancy is the 2.6% of moves from the coda to the abstract (n=3). In each of these cases, there was a new narrative introduced after the original one finished. This led straight into another narrative, in the same post, which began with an abstract and then followed the pattern above. It should be noted here that the evaluation component moves very little from its 'traditional' place within Labov and Waletzky's (1967;1997) framework (i.e. before the coda) and is not used to any great extent to scaffold or influence other components in the narrative. The bloggers of these posts generate a very strong narrative flow, with little diversion offered or break from the narrative action, creating an immersive, and potentially persuasive, experience for those reading the post.

Manosphere news narrative analysis

In comparison to the bubble matrix shown for the Alt-Right news narratives, the rhetorical move analysis of the Manosphere subcorpus is more elaborate. Figure 6.6 shows how the classic order of components within the framework put forward by Labov and Waletzky is not followed as strictly

as in the Alt-Right narratives, with the evaluation and the coda doing far more work with more components.
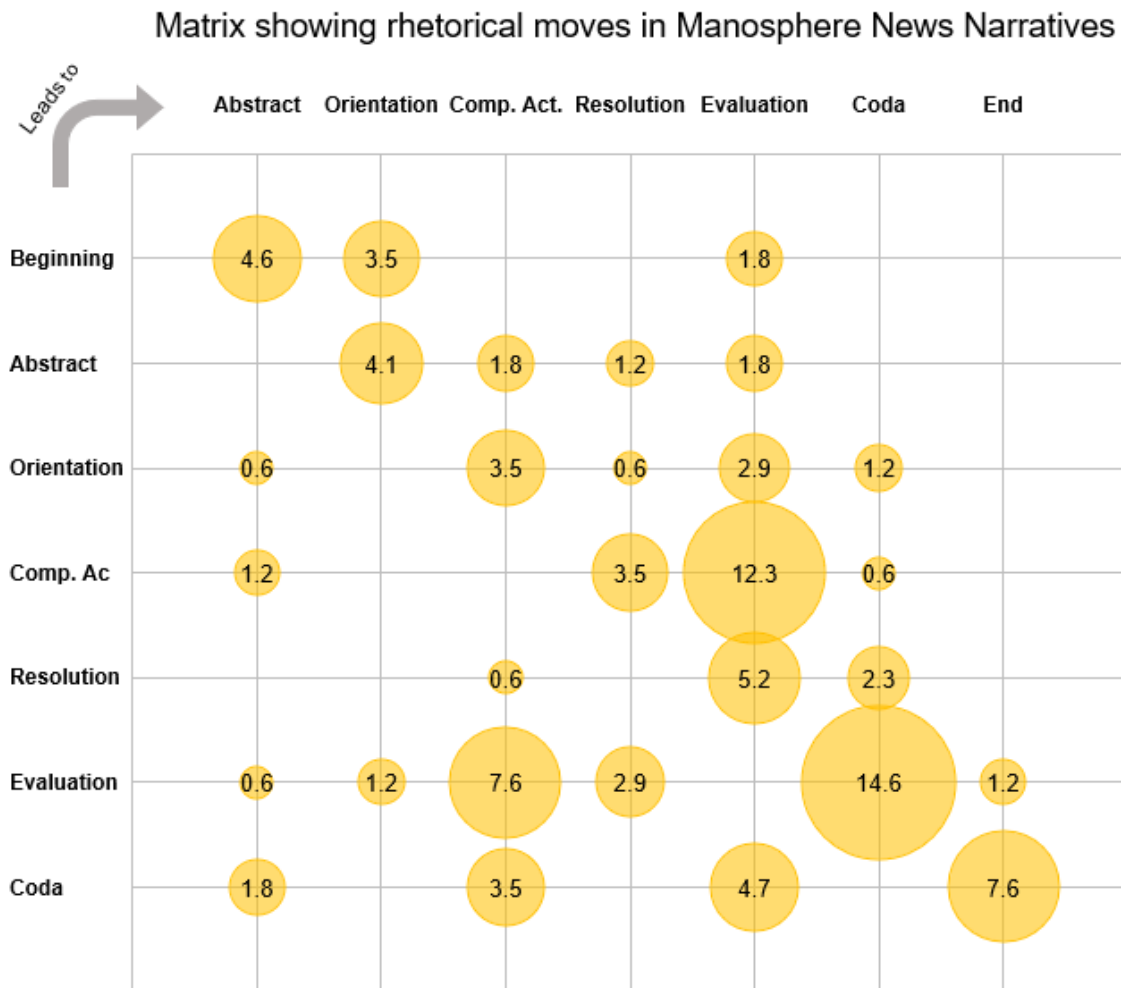
Figure 6.6: Bubble matrix showing rhetorical moves in Manosphere news narratives (%)

The structure shows a high level of "*disrupted adjacency* of narrative segments" (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 97), where establishing a clear progression through the narrative elements is challenging, particularly through the extensive use of evaluation (ibid.). As can be seen in the bubble matrix, the evaluation is used in all six of the possible move positions. Although the evaluation→coda rhetorical move is the most frequent (14.6% / n=25), there is a significant frequency of evaluation→complicating action (7.6% / n=13). This suggests that the bloggers need to frame the action of story beforehand to establish its relevance to the overarching attitude being taken by the blogger. This can also be seen with the complicating action→evaluation rhetorical move (12.3% / n=21), again indicating that the action of the story needs scaffolding in terms of its importance to the narrative. Similarly, the coda appears in four of the six possible move positions. This shows the bloggers are using the coda to maintain the parallels of the story world with the actual world, not just at the end of the narrative but throughout. These Manosphere news narratives are highly granular, with components being interspersed throughout. The cognitive load on the reader is likely to be much higher than with the Alt-Right narratives and immersion into the story world seems to be sustained by frequent reminders of the narrative's relevance.

Prototypical news narratives: comparison

The rhetorical move analysis above shows the total frequency of moves between the narrative components. By extending the matrix to allow for a more detailed analysis and particularly repeated rhetorical moves within one narrative, it was possible to model a prototypical news narrative. I constructed a much larger matrix to allow for five sets of rhetorical moves (see Figure 6.4), effectively a grid of 35 x 35 squares. As well as recording the frequency of moves, I calculated the average number of words found in that component in that position. For example, the average word count for the first occurrence evaluations and the average word count in evaluations that appear a second time. Finally, the hyperlink frequencies and where the links are found in these repeated components were also recorded to indicate where they are most likely to appear (e.g. hyperlinks in codas are far more likely to appear in the first instance (83%) than when the coda is repeated later in the narrative (17%)). Based on this process, Figure 6.7 and Figure 6.8 show suggested prototypical news narratives for both the Alt-Right and the Manosphere. Reading from left to right (i.e. the beginning of the narrative to the end), the charts show a typical word count per component and the position that component is most likely to occupy. Although the use and analysis of hyperlinks is outside the scope of this thesis, the places where they are most likely to appear are marked with (HL). A full list of the external sources linked to in the narrative blog posts is also given in Appendix 8: in descending order of frequency.
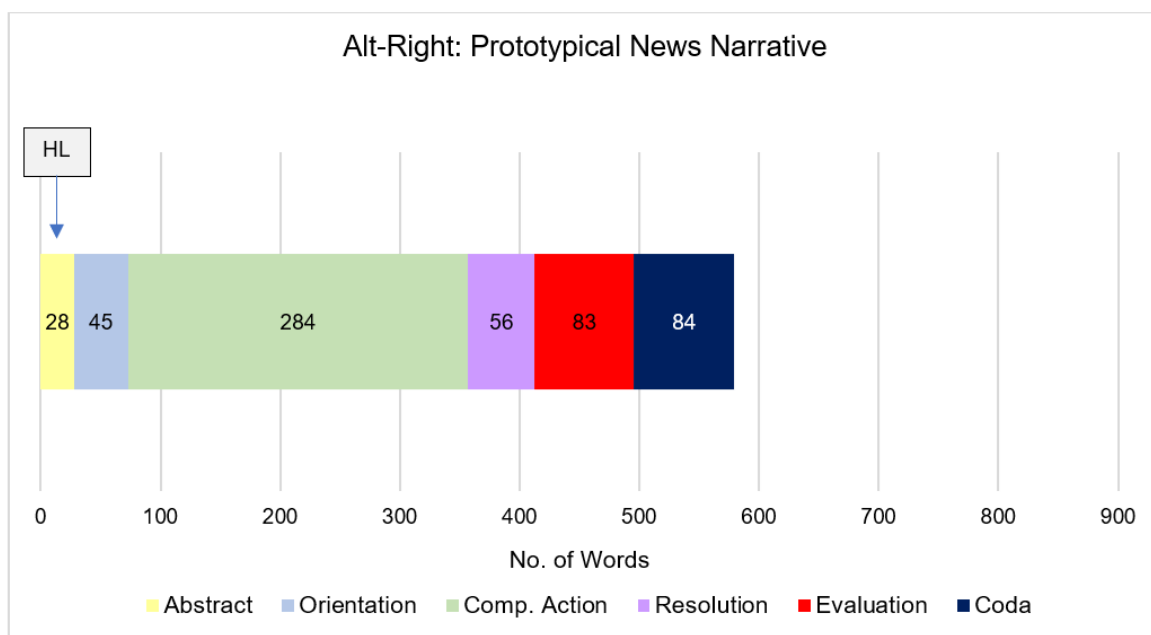
Figure 6.7: Alt-Right prototypical news narrative (hyperlink (HL) position shown)
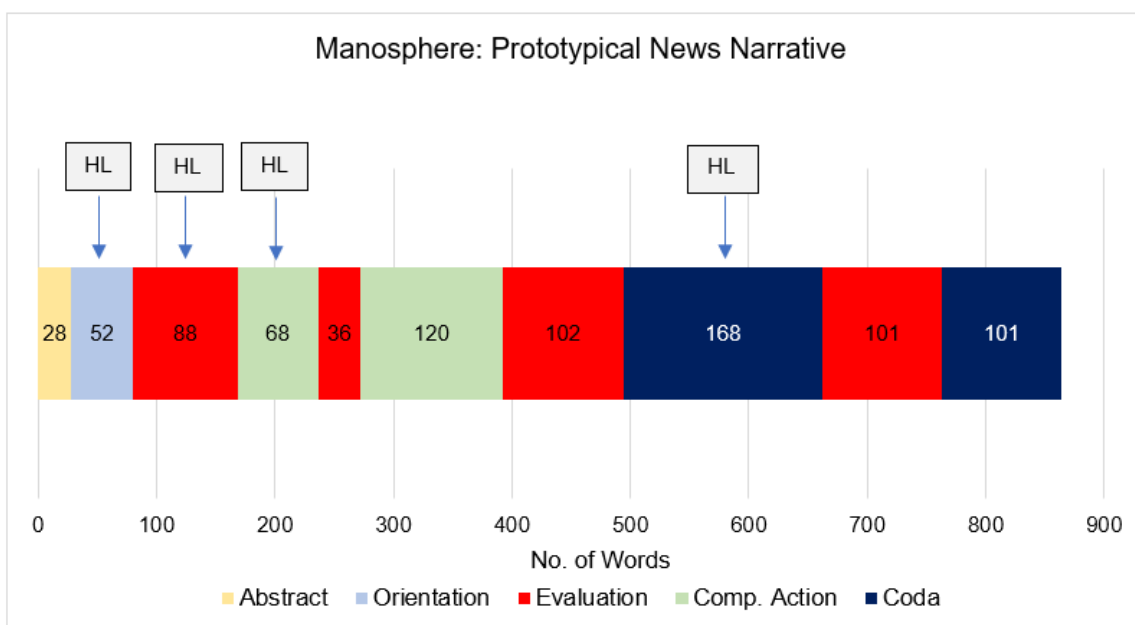
Figure 6.8: Manosphere prototypical news narrative (hyperlink (HL) positions shown)

The prototypical news narratives emphasise the different ways in which the Alt-Right and Manosphere posts are structured and the proportion of words allocated to each component. The Alt-Right prototypical narrative demonstrates how the Labovian canonical narrative framework is employed and how it relies on limited hyperlinks at the beginning of the discourse, instead keeping the reader within the blog. It is relatively shorter than the Manosphere posts and focuses most heavily on the action events of the story to immerse the readers. The Manosphere prototypical narrative, on the other hand, shows how the end of the narrative tends to repeat a pattern of extended critique on the internal relevance of the narrative events (evaluation) and the external relevance of the events (coda). The effect of this is to fictionalise the narrative, a point discussed in more detail in Section 6.7.1. The blogger's voice, therefore, is far more present than in the Alt-Right narratives and so belief in the narrative's value rests, to a certain extent, on the credibility of the blogger. de Fina and Georgakopoulou point out that the evaluation component, with its focus on the relevance of the narrative, is more widespread in narratives relating to events personally experienced by the narrator, rather than those reported as having happened to others (2012, p. 29). However, this prototypical narrative suggests that, in this subcorpus, this is not the case and the prevalence of the bloggers' commentary is noteworthy.

6.5   News narratives: Social actor placement

Having established how the news narratives in the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora are structured, the following sections examine how the social actor representations, identified in Chapter 4, relate to their narrative context. The interrelationship between narrative and identity construction has been well-documented, analysed and examined by discourse analysts (see, among many others, Holmes 1997; de Fina 2006; Mishler 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Bucholtz 2011; Semino et al. 2014; and Evans 2019) but less so in relation to *where* in the narratives identity is being indexed. As far as can be ascertained, the relationship between social

actor placement and narrative component function has yet to be examined, particularly in discourses produced by extremist groups online. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, the indexing of social actors within the blog posts relies on a complex combination of representations to index the collective identities of social actors in discussions of R/SA. These representations can be seen to underpin the ideologies of both the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers (see Section 2.3 and 2.4 for this discussion). Mapping the social actor representations onto narrative components, each of which has a specific function, can arguably give a more nuanced understanding of how narrative discourses are used to frame these ideological perspectives on R/SA.

6.5.1 Relationship between narrative component and social actors

To examine whether there is any variation in the placement of social actor representations through the narrative blog posts, five of the six components are used for the analyses. The resolution component is *not* included in this analysis as the proportion of words dedicated to this part of the narrative, in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora was relatively small, 6.68% (557 words) and 5.29% (674 words) respectively (see Figure 6.2). Therefore, there is a limited lexical resource to analyse. Regarding the abstract and orientation components, which similarly represent a relatively small proportion of the total words in the narratives, Labov notes that there is sometimes an overlap between them (1972, p. 365), with both setting the scene for the narrative. With this in mind and considering the importance of these components for introducing the social actors in the narratives, they are consolidated for the purposes of the following analyses. Table 6. lists the components which are examined in the following sections and summarises their function with reference to social actors within the narrative frame.

	Components analysed for social actor placement	Function with relevance to social actors
1	Abstract / Orientation	• Introduces the characters, as well as the time, place, and general context for the subsequent discourse. • Acts as a "formal anticipator of story characters" (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 94) to hook the reader in and often contains exaggerations about the story characters
2	Complicating Action	• Focuses on the actions and events of the narrative, that is, what the social actors do • Indicates turning points in the narrative taken by the social actors (Rejno et al. 2014), which signal possible changes in the roles of social actors
3	Evaluation	• Establishes the construction of relevant and relatable identities; to generate and reinforce the social cognition necessary to represent shared social values (van Dijk 1998) • Convinces the reader they are being addressed as a member of that 'community' by someone presenting themselves as a producer of the truth • Ensures the reader continues to feel engaged with the identities being constructed
4	Coda	• Signals how the events affect the narrator and moves the reader from the distal narrative of the sexual violence happening to other participants to the proximal time and space seen as affecting the audience now. • Encourages the adoption or rejection of the perspectives of the characters involved and "increasing audience members' perceptions of similarity with the characters" (Braddock 2020, p. 78)

Table 6.7: Summary of narrative components used in the 'social actor placement' analysis and how their functions relate to social actor representations

Four new subcorpora were constructed, each containing the narrative components (previously marked up in XML) as categorised above. The marked up social actor representations, which were examined in Chapter 4 (i.e. representing women victims, women accusers, men perpetrators, and men accused) were then quantified within those components. Table 6. gives the ratio of words per narrative component to social actor representations. It can be seen that the frequency of social actor representations across both subcorpora ranged between one per 58 words (Manosphere abstract/orientation) and one to 82 words (Manosphere coda), with the exception of the complicating action and coda in the Alt-Right subcorpus (shown in bold).

	Alt-Right News Narratives			Manosphere News Narratives		
	Total no. words	Total no. social actor representations	Ratio of words to social actor representations	Total no. words	Total no. social actor representations	Ratio of words to social actor representations
Abstract & Orientation	1,101	16	1:69	993	17	1:58
Complicating Action	3,739	27	**1:138**	2,122	29	1:73
Evaluation	1,331	22	1:60	3,470	48	1:72
Coda	1,608	7	**1:230**	5,486	67	1:82

Table 6.8: Ratio of social actor representations per word in each component category for the Alt-Right and Manosphere news narratives (outliers highlighted in bold)

The outlier ratios in the complicating action and coda components indicate that the Alt-Right include fewer social actor representations in these components relative to the number of words

dedicated to them. In the case of the complicating action, and despite the function of this component being to detail the events of the narrative/what the characters *do*, the focus is not on describing these actions through predicative strategies inherent in social actor representations. This suggests that, having established the representations in the abstract/orientation, the social actors in the Alt-Right posts are then referred to nominally or pronominally, and the re-establishment of shared identities through the indexing of social actors is deemed unnecessary. This can be contrasted with the ratio of social actor representations to word count in the evaluation (1:60). This component shows the highest social actor to word count ratio in the Alt-Right subcorpus, indicating that the bloggers are re-establishing shared collective identities when they offer critique and opinion on the events. As the rhetorical move matrix and prototypical narrative show (see Figure 6.5 and Figure 6.7), the evaluation is generally offered *after* the complicating action. This retrospective focus on social actors positions the blogger more as an observer, or expert, on the events in the narrative. This can be contrasted with the social actor to word count ratio in the Manosphere complicating action (1.73). Here, social actors are represented far more frequently in relation to the action of the narrative, allowing the blogger to maintain the shared schema of identities as the chronological events unfold. This is also reflected in the almost identical ratio of social actor to word count (1.72) in the evaluation.

Along with the complicating action in the Alt-Right subcorpus, the coda is an outlier in terms of social actor to word count ratio (1: 230) (see Table 6.). This ratio represents the lowest frequency of social actor representations per word of all the components in the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora and suggests that the Alt-Right bloggers are not using the coda to attach the current relevance of the narrative to social actors. More specifically, the bloggers are indicating that those involved in the discourses on R/SA have little relevance outside the events of the narrative. This can be contrasted with the ratio of social actors to word count in the Manosphere coda subcorpus. These bloggers include social actor representations at a ratio of 1:82, showing those indexed in R/SA discussions are deemed to have relevance externally to the narrativised events.

To determine if there is any variation in social actor representations in the narrative components, the participant classes of social actors in discussions of R/SA were identified (as seen in Chapter 4). Table 6. shows the number of occurrences and the frequencies per category of social actor, i.e. women victim, women accuser, men perpetrator, and men accused, in each component for the Alt-Right and Manosphere narratives.

		Abstract / Orientation (%)	Complicating action (%)	Evaluation (%)	Coda (%)	Total
Alt-Right News Narratives	Women victim	3 (4.17)	2 (2.78)	5 (6.94)	<u>0</u> <u>(0.00)</u>	10 (13.89)
	Women accuser	2 (2.78)	6 (8.33)	1 (1.39)	<u>0</u> <u>(0.00)</u>	9 (12.50)
	Men perpetrator	3 (4.17)	2 (2.78)	5 (6.94)	2 (2.78)	**12 (16.67)**
	Men accused	8 (11.11)	17 (23.61)	11 (15.28)	5 (6.94)	**41 (56.94)**
	Total	16 (22.22)	27 (37.50)	22 (30.56)	7 (9.72)	72 (100.00)
Manosphere News Narratives	Women victim	3 (1.86)	2 (1.24)	0 (0.00)	3 (1.86)	8 (4.97)
	Women accuser	8 (4.97)	11 (6.83)	21 (13.04)	27 (16.77)	**67 (41.61)**
	Men perpetrator	2 (1.24)	3 (1.86)	6 (3.72)	4 (2.48)	**15 (9.32)**
	Men accused	4 (2.48)	13 (8.07)	21 (13.04)	*33* *(20.50)*	**71 (44.10)**
	Total	17 (10.56)	29 (18.01)	48 (29.81)	67 (41.61)	161 (100.00)

Table 6.9: Summary of social actor representation in Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora per participant class (frequencies in bold show n= >10 social actors in the subcorpus)

Extending the point above regarding a lack of external relevance of social actors in the Alt-Right coda, Table 6. shows this is specifically in relation to women victim and women accuser social actors (underlined). Instead, women victims depicted in the narratives are used as a tactic to show, distally, the attitude towards out-group males deemed to be sexually deviant. This is achieved through de-emphasis, or *backgrounding* (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 29). Conversely, the Manosphere coda component for men accused is shows 33 occurrences (20.50%) of social actors (shown in italics). This is the highest number per component in the data and indicates that the narratives are being used to discuss R/SA on a wider scale than the local events reported to be happening to others

The following sections examine the placement of social actors in the narrative components according to their categorisation in van Leeuwen's (2008) framework. To ensure an adequate analysis, participant classes with more than 10 occurrences of social actors in total are included (shown in italics in Table 6.), i.e. women accuser in the Manosphere subcorpus, and men perpetrator / men accused in the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpus.

6.5.2   Social actor placement: women accuser

There are 67 social actor representations of women accuser, which represents 41.61% of the social actors in the Manosphere news narratives components being examined. The majority of these appear in the evaluation (21) and coda (27) (see Table 6.). The variation in the social actor representations is shown in Figure 6.9. To clarify the frequencies, the values relating to the evaluation component in the chart have been labelled. Of the 21 social actor occurrences in the evaluation (which equates to 31.34% of the 67 women accuser representations), 12 (17.91%) are

indexed through FUNCTIONALISATION; 8 (11.94%) are through CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION; and 1 (1.49%) through INDETERMINATION.
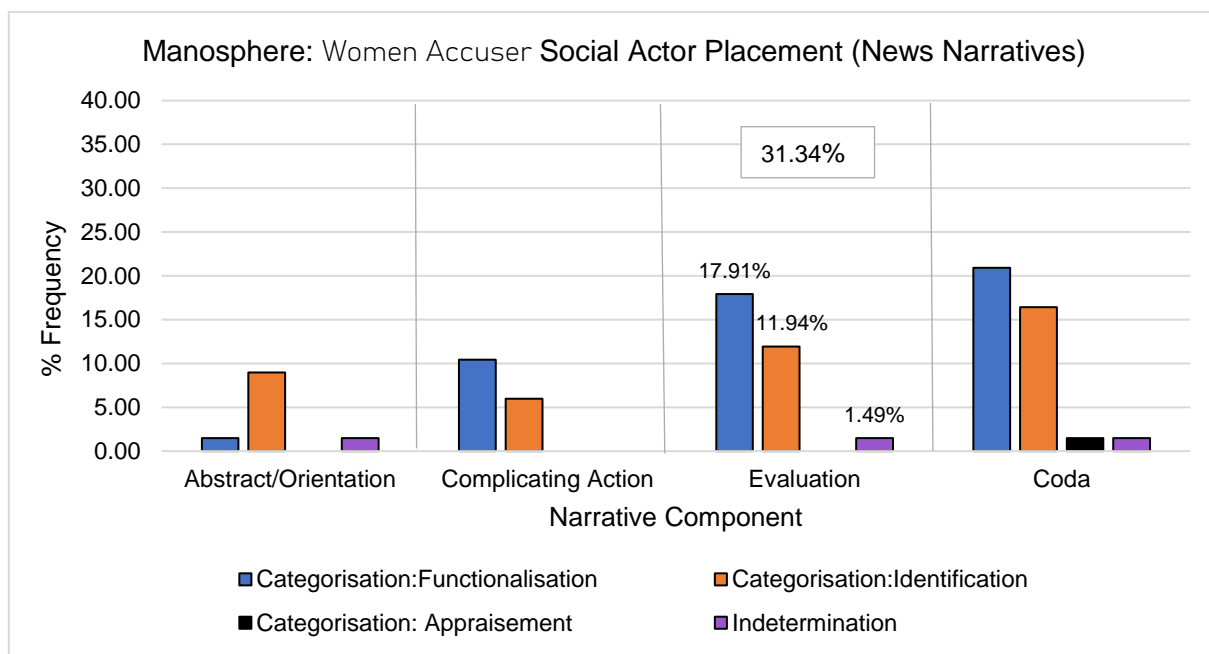
Figure 6.9: Social actor placement (per component) in the 'women accuser' Manosphere news narrative subcorpus

The abstract/orientation component contains six occurrences of CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION (8.96%): three instances of RELATIONAL IDENTIFICATION: *daughter* (3), and three instances of CLASSIFICATION: *woman* (3). Examples of this are shown in concordance lines [6-3] and [6-4].

[6-3]   Even as feminists claim that "rape survivors" are not believed enough by society, a British court has nearly convicted a man of incestuous rape, <u>based *solely* on the testimony of his **daughter**</u>. (ROK29)

[6-4]   An award-winning actress appearing in the upcoming sixth season of Game of Thrones has been <u>outed</u> as the **woman** who <u>falsely accused Mark Pearson</u> of rape. (ROK36)

By placing the RELATIONAL CLASSIFICATION for women accusers in the abstract/orientation, the *tellability* of the narrative (the quality of the narrative which makes it worth telling (Ryan 2005)) is established[33]. This hook into the narrative, for example in [6-3], engages the readership with the juxtaposition of a woman deemed close to the assumed readership (e.g. daughters) being untrustworthy. The underlined sections of the above concordance lines show how these social actors are connected to the legal system, with both examples indicating that the system is rigged in their favour. This further strengthens the tellability of the narrative by activating the established ideological cynicism within the readership of the courts.

In the above bar chat, the complicating action, evaluation and coda components all show more functional categorisation than that based on gender or relationships. In the coda, for example, there are 27 social actor occurrences, 17 of which use naming strategies relating to FUNCTIONALISATION (*accuser(s)* (9), *actress(es)* (3), *thieves* (1), *victim* (1)). Placing these social

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[33] The evaluation component and coda can also be used to assert tellability (see, for example, Labov 1972; Norrick 2005; Semino et al. 2014)

actors in the coda relates these depictions of women accusers to the narratives' external relevance. In [6-5] for example, the relevance is to give advice (in italics) to men assumed to already be accused of R/SA (see in the use of the possessive pronoun in "your accuser"):

[6-5] The ease with which police believed—or were forced to believe—Jemma Beale provides further evidence that the only truly effective way to fight against a false rape accusation is to *wait for your **accuser** to completely unravel herself*. <u>Remember: there is no need for "proof beyond reasonable doubt" for you to be convicted, imprisoned for years or decades, and officially branded a sex offender for life.</u> (ROK34)

As seen in Section 6.4.2, hyperbolic dramatisation (Vaara 2014) is also portrayed using functionalised representation of women accusers. This is seen in the use of *actresses* in line [6-6] to hyperbolise the view of a biased evidential process in the coda:

[6-6] The current system rewards good or eloquent **actresses**, <u>not the presentation of evidence</u>. (ROK29)

Here, the blogger is extending the narrative events of a news report to a view of the current evidential system in the courts (underlined) and the assumed mendacity of women giving testimony. The placement of social actors in the coda who are represented through FUNCTIONALISATION are disparaged through their actions in the legal system. This can be contrasted with social actors placed in the coda who are indexed through CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION naming strategies (*woman/women* (7), *girl(s)* (3), *hag* (1)). These social actor representations show how the coda globalises the narrative events (Porto and Belmonte 2014, p. 19) to extend the specific narrative to represent all women, as shown in [6-7] (underlined):

[6-7] They are *repulsive, sociopathic oxygen thieves whose only manner of making themselves feel important is to ruin the lives of random innocents*, invariably mendaciously accused men. **Women** <u>like this comprise a tragically too common motif in modern society</u>… (ROK36)

The news narrative here is used as the underlying basis upon which a scaffolded denigration of women takes place. The women in the specific news report are denigrated (see italics) and these characteristics are then extrapolated to apply to women more generally in modern society.

6.5.3   Social actor placement: men perpetrator

This category of social actors refers to men who are deemed to be guilty of R/SA (see Section 4.X). Table 6. shows that there are relatively few occurrences of these social actors in the Alt-Right (12) and Manosphere subcorpora (15). These occurrences represent 16.67% and 9.32% of their respective totals and are discussed in more detail below.

Alt-Right

The analysis of men perpetrator social actors in the Alt-Right news narrative components shows a clear pattern of placement (Figure 6.10Figure 3.10).
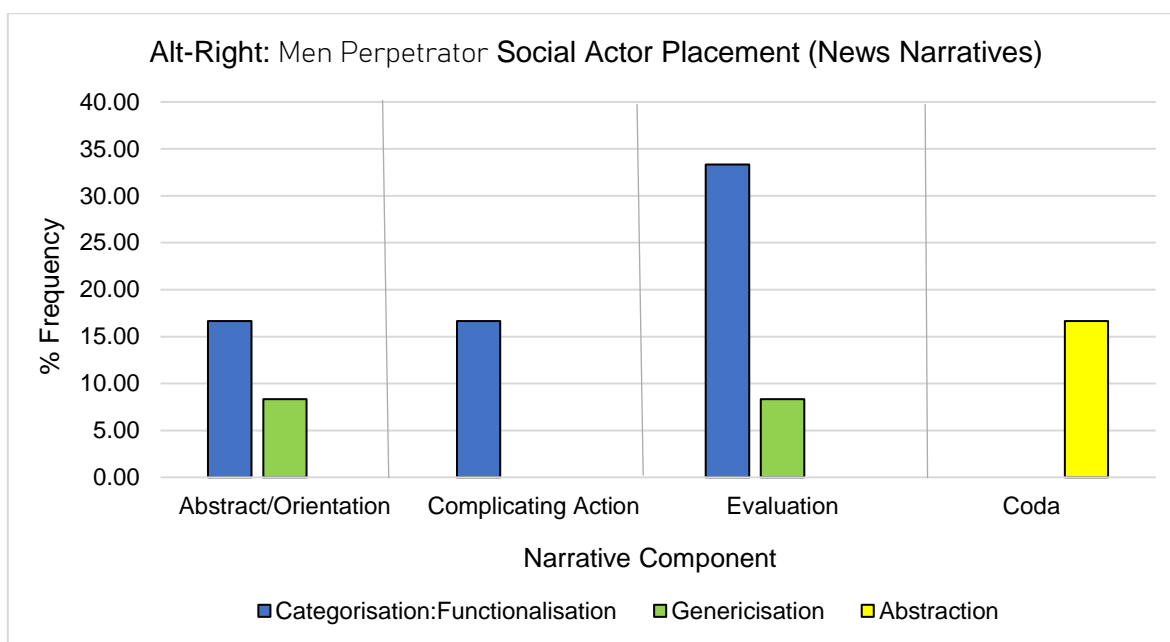
Figure 6.10: Social actor placement (per component) in the 'men perpetrator' Alt-Right news narrative subcorpus

Unlike the analyses of social actor placement seen in other sections, there are no instances of CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION in the narrative posts (it is, in fact, the only dataset to not include this classification of social actor representation). This can be contrasted with the men perpetrator social actor analysis in *all* Alt-Right blog posts seen in Chapter 4 (see Table 4.10), which shows 18 occurrences of men being categorised through CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION. Therefore, the 18 representations associated with permanent and inherent identification characteristics (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 42) come from non-narrative posts only. The lack of social actors referred to in terms of categories relating to CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION suggests that the bloggers are avoiding creating character models whereby their own and the readers' shared characteristics, e.g. gender, are seen to also be associated with men who commit R/SA. This implies an avoidance of overlap between the in-group and out-group when generating the story world, which, in turn, reinforces in- and out-group boundaries (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008, p. 260).

There is little variation in the naming strategies of the functionalised social actors in the abstract/orientation (*teacher* (2), *refugee* (1)) and the complicating action (*teacher* (1), *rapist* (1)). These social actors are represented as out-group men either due to their position as teachers, who are traditionally vilified in the Alt-Right's anti-establishment rhetoric (see Section 2.3) or due to their status an immigrant or criminal. The situation model being created in the narratives (see Section 6.4.2) is not relying on re-establishing the shared social representations of the actors. However, the number of social actor occurrences increases slightly in the evaluation: *black football player* (1), *rapist* (1), *refugee* (1), *teacher* (1), *third world invaders* (1)). Here, the relevance of the narrative is made salient through the re-establishment of out-group identities, for example through references to paleoconservative ideologies and white victimhood (see Section 2.3.1) as seen in [6-8]. In this concordance line, the narrator is clearly seen to leave the narrative (signposting in italics)

to evaluate the out-group men as beneficiaries of a system that is complicit in oppressing white people (underlined).

[6-8]   *This implies a few things.* First, the court obviously wanted to reach the "right" decision, which is that <u>indigenous people are always wrong</u> and **third world invaders** are always right, <u>because this advances the liberal agenda of destroying culture and replacing it with Leftism.</u> (AM10)

The placement of social actors represented through ABSTRACTION in the coda clearly shows how events in the narrative are then conflated to create an external relevance of threat. The two social actor representations (*predators*) are from the same blog post and are used to capitalise on the nightmare scenario promoted in Alt-Right anti-establishment ideologies delegitimising schools and promoting home-schooling:

[6-9]   You can talk the "my kids go to a great school" talk all you like, but the fact is that **predators** *always* go where the prey is (VP16)

[6-10]   the statistics clearly indicate that *every* school, public or private, is concealing one or more sexual **predators** among its employees (VP16)

Using ABSTRACTION to represent the men perpetrators in the coda links the events of the narrative (about the rape of girl at school) to a generalised threat of harm latent in all schools (italics in [6-9 and [6-10]).

Manosphere

There are 15 occurrences (9.32%) of men perpetrator social actors in the narrative components in the Manosphere news narratives, seen in Figure 6.11. As in the above section, the majority of these are in the evaluation (6 or 3.72%). The placement of social actors classified through ABSTRACTION ("*gifts of love*") and RELATIONAL IDENTIFICATION (*loverboy*) are found in the abstract/orientation components, arguably to assert the tellability of the narrative. Line [6-11], for example, shows how the narrative is introduced as a "big news story", together with the cataphoric referencing of the social actors through ABSTRACTION and marked for sarcasm with scare quotes to further generate engagement.

[6-11]   A big news story is exploding in the dissident corners of the wokeweb, and it concerns our **"gifts of love"** streaming across the southern border. (CH18)
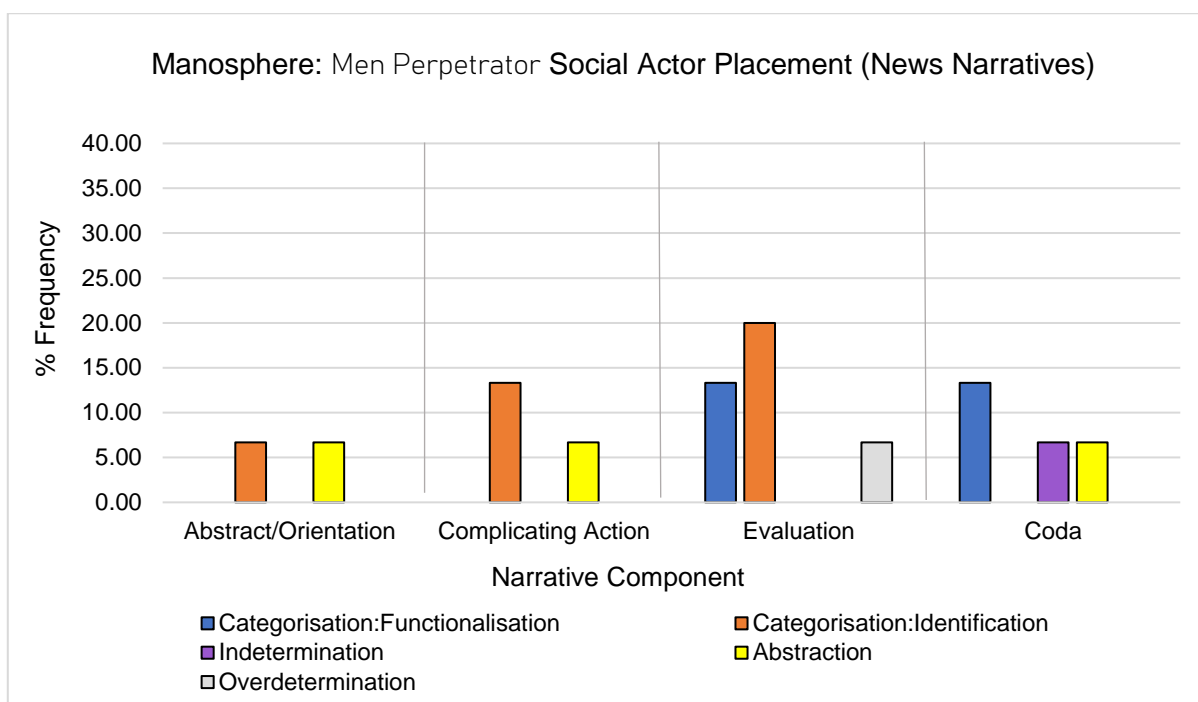
Figure 6.11: Social actor placement (per component) in the 'men perpetrator' Manosphere news narrative subcorpus

Unlike the Alt-Right blog posts for MEN PERPETRATORS, there are representations of social actors through CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION here. The majority of these are placed in the evaluation (*man* (2) and *sexual partner* (1)). However, these social actor representations do not appear in coda, mirroring the trend of placement in the Alt-Right blog posts. This implies the narratives events are seen to have no current or external relevance to the readership in terms of shared characteristics like gender; instead FUNCTIONALISATION based on criminality (*criminals* (1), *border jumpers* (1)), ABSTRACTION (*gutter filth pets* (1)) and SPECIFICATION (*depraved individuals* (1)) is used to link the narrative to a wider context. These representations show that the readership associate MALE PERPETRATORS in a more general sense with criminal migrants and as being sub-human. This collective identity construction, which distances the readership from those believed to be guilty of sexual violence, fuels their prejudice, obscures white perpetrators, and indicates an ideology that supports the trope of the sexually-aggressive, sexually-deviant non-white male often promoted by the far right (Daniels (1997) for a discussion of this trope).

6.5.4   Social actor placement: men accused

As discussed in Chapter 4 (see Section 4.4), the MEN ACCUSED category of social actors refers to men who are considered not to have committed R/SA but have been accused of doing so. In the Alt-Right news narratives, there are 41 occurrences (56.94%) of social actors in this category and 71 (44.10%) in the Manosphere news narratives (see Table 6.).

Alt-Right

Figure 6.12 shows a clear dominance of FUNCTIONALISATION as a social actor naming strategy in the Alt-Right news narratives components. There are 5 occurrences (12.20%) in the abstract/orientation, all of which reference jobs: *cop* (1), *directors* (1), *executives* (1), *police officer*

(1) and *producers* (1). The one instance of CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION, while indexing RELATIONAL IDENTIFICATION, is also indirectly references a work position: *teammates* (1). This frames the narrative in terms of the professional status of those accused and, like the social actors seen in the female accused category of tags which followed a similar trend, juxtaposes the professional with the 'fall from grace' trope. Although these social actors are not explicitly considered guilty of R/SA, they are all disparaged in the narratives and are linked to out-groups. For example, the directors, executives, and producers appear in the anti-Semitic triple parenthesis slur discussed in Section 4.4.3.
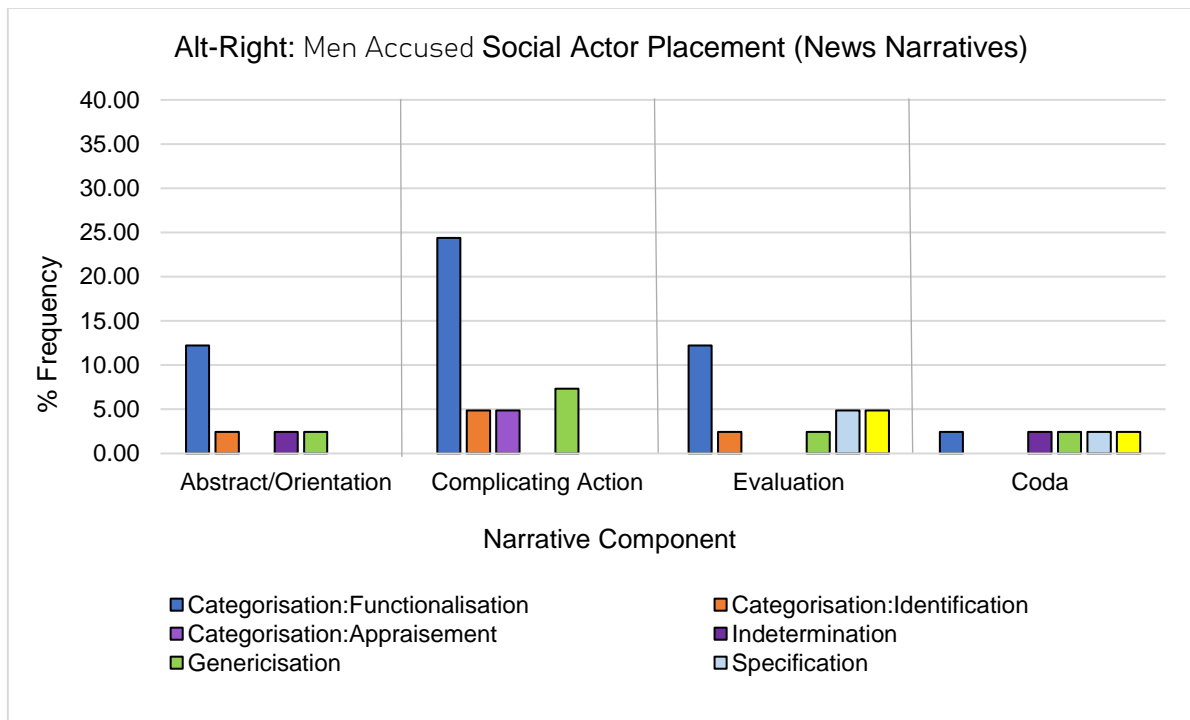
Figure 6.12: Social actor placement (per narrative component) in the 'men accused' Alt-Right subcorpus

Of the 17 occurrences (23.61%) of social actors in the complicating action, 10 of these also index FUNCTIONALISATION naming strategies. However, unlike the social actors placed in the abstract/orientation, social actors referenced through occupations in the complicating action are not disparaged. There are two instances of an academic seen to be the victim of an accusation from a student and four instances of football players seen as unfairly targeted, an example of which is seen in [6-12]:

[6-12] …the father of defensive back Ray Buford Jr., one of the suspended **players**, said Wednesday the suspensions resulted from a Title IX investigation conducted by the university into an alleged sexual assault… (VP14)

The choice to describe the men at university as *players* in the complicating action, significantly without any vilification or semiotic signalling for anti-Semitic slurs, suggests that there is support for the men, conferred by indexing them as being socially important. This is amplified by their connection to football, which has been identified as representing patriotism and white masculinity (Brindle 2016a; Falcous et al. 2019) (see Section 4.4.1). Finally, there is minimal placement of social actors in the coda, indicating the bloggers consider the narrative events have little external

relevance, particularly to those assigned social status. The absence of CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION naming strategies for social actors in the coda similarly implies that the narrative events concerning men accused of R/SA do not apply to the readership as a whole. This can be contrasted with the analysis below for the Manosphere news narratives.

Manosphere

Figure 6.13 outlines a very different trend to that seen for the Alt-Right's identity representation for men accused of sexual violence. The abstract/orientation for the Manosphere subcorpus includes only four instances of social actor naming strategies: three based on IDENTIFICATION (*man* (2) and *Welshman* (1)) and a reference relating to SPECIFICATION (*those* (1)).
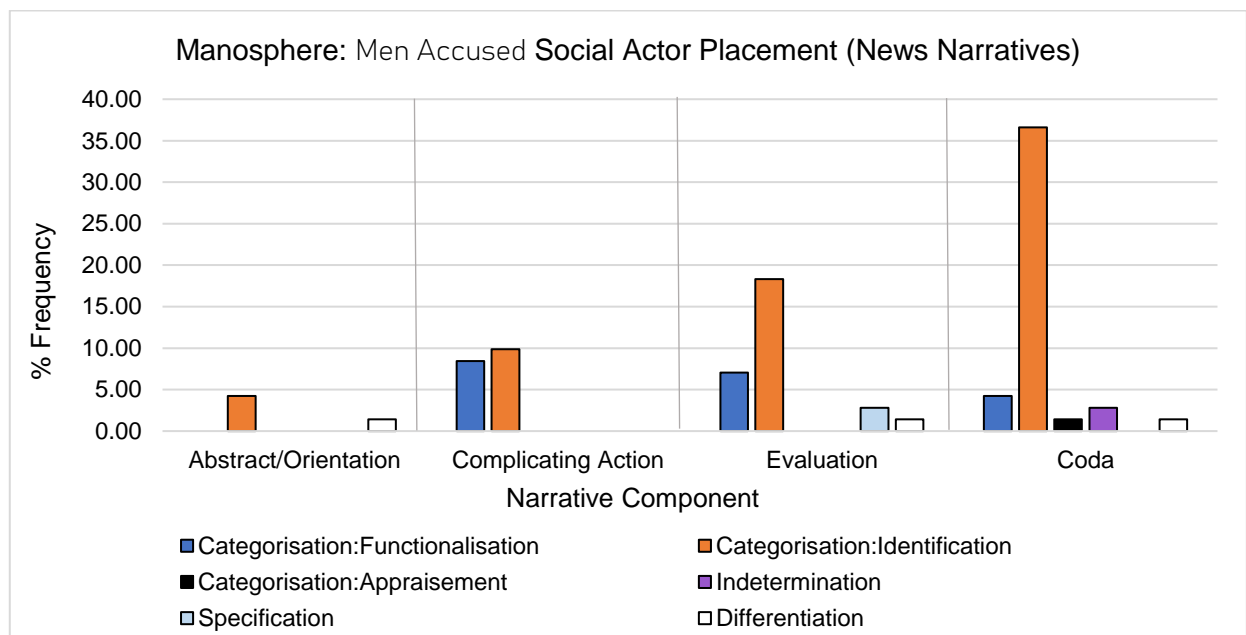
Figure 6.13: Social actor placement (per component) in the 'men accused' Manosphere news narrative subcorpus

Unlike the composition of this component in the Alt-Right, these narratives do have reference to identity features (gender) directly related to their readership. However, compared to the evaluation and coda in this particular group analysis, the frequency of social actors is very low.

The evaluation shows a higher frequency of social actor placement, particularly through naming strategies associated with IDENTIFICATION. The majority of these (8 occurrences) are classification based on indexing gender (*man/men*) and five referencing RELATIONAL naming strategies *(father* (3), *fraternity* (2)). The focus on gender and relationships to index identity in the evaluation indicates that the bloggers are sustaining the readers' engagement by emphasising the injustice of the accusations towards relatable, seemingly unassuming men who have been targeted, effectively the 'ideal victim' in these allegations (see Clark 1992). The coda shows the most frequent placement of CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION naming strategies, with 23 out of 26 instances of social actors indexed as *man* or *men.* Line [6-13] shows how reference to the man's innocence is indexed lexically through adjectival modifiers and passive constructions removing agency:

[6-13] This is just one example, but in my native Australia a **man** <u>was shamed for taking a selfie</u> for his children in a crowded mall, as if he were some kind of would-be pedophile (ROK31)

This is supported by the point made above in Section 5.3.3 that, unlike the social actors in the women accuser subcorpus, the legal status of 'accused' is rarely used to describe these men: *accused* (1) and *suspect* (1) are the only two references to men through this functional categorisation. This removal of the legal language from the naming strategies used for these men in the coda distances them from a system that they see as conspiring against them. Being seen as part of that system can be considered conflating them with the women the court process supports. With so few references present in the abstract/orientation compared to the evaluation and coda, as discussed above, this is a clear reframing of the narrative space, moving from a focus on specific individuals accused by women of sexual violence to a hyperbolic narrative of proximal male victimhood.

The following section shifts the focus of the analysis from narratives based on news reports to those based on the personal experiences of the bloggers. The ways in which these two types of narrative are similar and where they differ are discussed in line with the analyses outlined in the sections above.

6.6   Personal narratives

Only the Alt-Right subcorpus has narratives tagged as personal (see Table 6.). These narratives are based on the authors' personal experiences with issues relating R/SA, specifically being accused of rape. There are seven posts in the Alt-Right personal narrative corpus, giving a total of 3,228 words. To mirror the analyses above on news narratives and provide a comparison, the following sections look at the proportion of words in each narrative component and how rhetorical move analysis can highlight the ways in which the narratives are organised. This is then followed by a suggested prototypical personal narrative.

6.6.1   Narrative components: words per component

Figure 6.14 shows that the Alt-Right subcorpus, the complicating action has the highest percentage of words (36.28%). The narrative component with the lowest proportion of words is the abstract (4.09%).
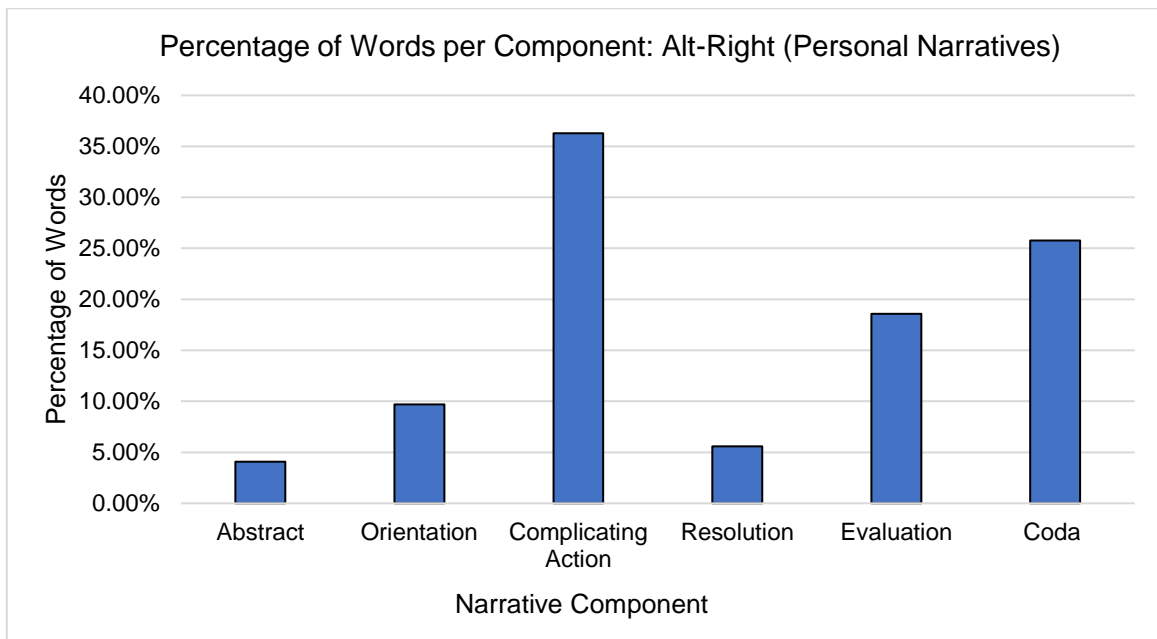
Figure 6.14: Personal narrative component breakdown for the Alt-Right subcorpus

The proportion of words per component in the personal narratives reflects those in the news narratives produced by the Alt-Right bloggers. As Figure 6.15 below shows, there is a slight variation in the proportion of words used for the complicating action (36.30% in the personal narratives compared to 44.85% in the news narratives). Regarding the coda, this comprises a slightly larger proportion in the personal narratives (25.80% compared to 19.29% in the news narratives).
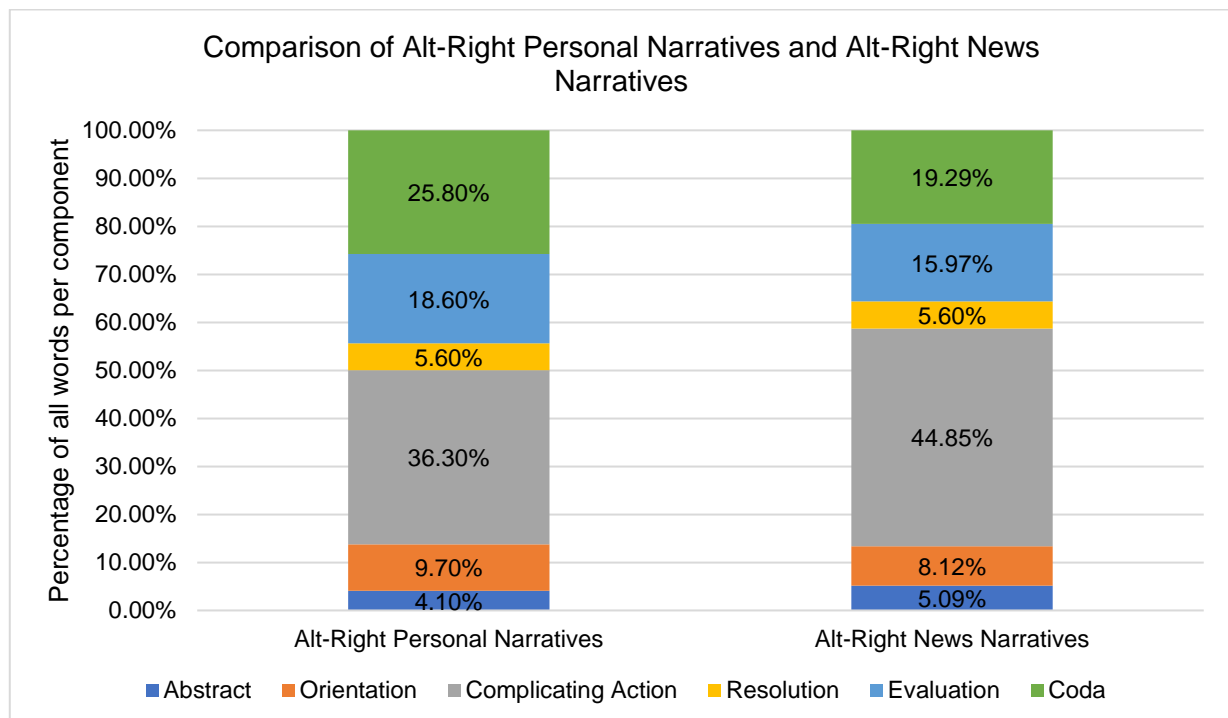
Figure 6.15: Bar chart showing comparative percentages of words per narrative component in the Alt-Right personal narrative and news narrative subcorpora

The stacked bar chart shows slight variations in the general proportions of words per component in the Alt-Right narrative corpus but these proportions are largely consistent, regardless of the type of

content. The following section examines how the personal narrative components are arranged and the extent to which their organisation shows any similarity to the Alt-Right news narratives.

6.6.2   Narrative components: organisation

The process carried out to ascertain the placement of components in the news narrative posts (see Section 6.4.2) was replicated for the smaller subcorpus of personal narrative posts. The following matrix of rhetorical moves was then created to show a different arrangement of components to that of the Alt-Right news narratives.
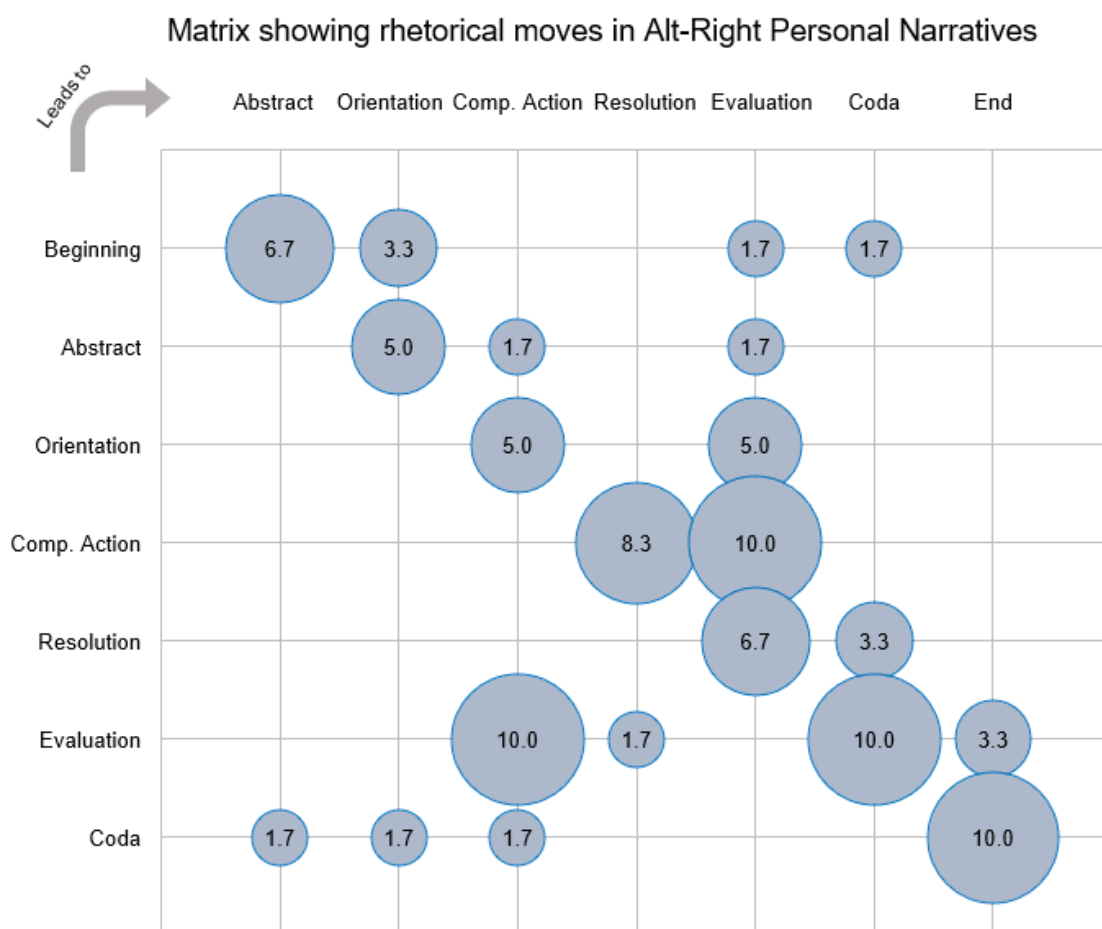
Figure 6.16: Bubble matrix showing rhetorical moves in Alt-Right personal narratives (%)

Compared to the news narratives, which followed the Labovian canonical structure very closely (see Figure 6.5), the Alt-Right personal narratives are far more fragmented and display more disrupted adjacency (Eisenlauer and Hoffmann 2010, p. 97) of the components. There is more interjection of evaluative statements before and after the complicating action, reflecting an organisation which is more in line with the Manosphere news narrative structure (see Figure 6.6). This suggests that the bloggers' are relying more heavily on their own evaluative input and making their voices more salient than when narrative events which have happened to others and reported in the news, supporting the observations made by de Fina and Georgakopoulou on a higher frequency of evaluation being found in personal narratives compared to those based on others'

experiences (2012, p. 29). Here, there is an equal frequency of evaluation→complicating action (10.00%) rhetorical moves as complicating action→evaluation (10.00%). The bloggers seem to be priming the readers by pre-emptively explaining why the story is worth telling and then reminding them after the events are detailed. This makes their voice and self-conferred expertise prominent in the narrating of their experiences of R/SA.

6.6.3 Prototypical narrative

In line with the analyses above for news narratives (see Figure 6.7), a prototypical narrative was constructed to model those in the subcorpus. Figure 6.17 shows the evaluation→complicating action→evaluation pattern dominating the narrative and the most frequent placement of hyperlinks (HL).
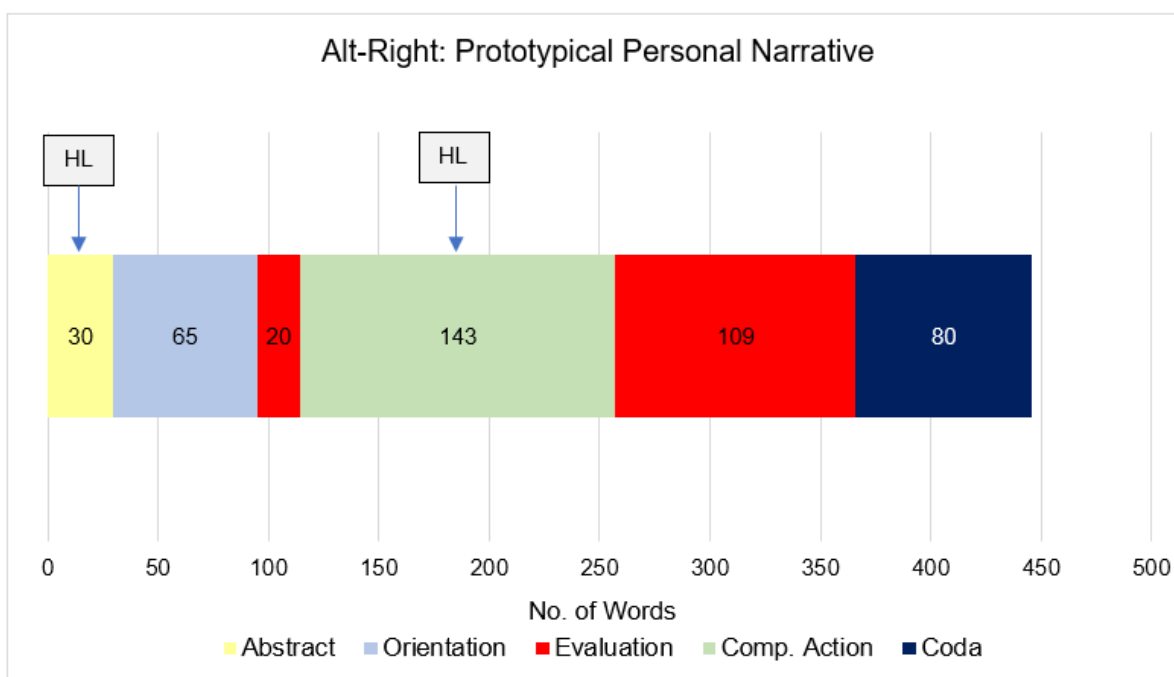
Figure 6.17: Alt-Right prototypical personal narrative (hyperlink (HL) position shown)

Unlike in the news narratives, there are more hyperlinks in the complicating action, suggesting intertextual reliance on support for what the bloggers report happened to them or to add credibility to their version of events. Finally, it is worth noting that there is no resolution component in the prototypical narrative, used to signal the end or consequences of the events being narrated (see Table 6.1). This can be contrasted with the prototypical Alt-Right news narrative (Figure 6.7), which shows this component being implemented. The repeated evaluation and a lack of resolution suggest the aim of these blog posts is to highlight the events which led to the accusations of R/SA, perhaps as a warning to other men, rather than focus on the outcomes experience by the blogger.

6.6.4 Personal narratives: Social actor placement

This subsection extends the analysis carried out for research sub-question 4 (in Section 6.5), regarding the placement of social actors within the narrative components, to include those relating to the bloggers' personal experiences. As with the process outlined above, four subcorpora were

constructed (abstract/orientation, complicating action, evaluation, and coda) to examine the relative frequency of social actors in the personal narratives blog posts. Table 6. shows these frequencies.

	Alt-Right News Narratives		
	Total no. words	Total no. social actor representations	Ratio of words to social actor representations
Abstract & Orientation	445	9	1:49
Complicating Action	1171	8	**1:146**
Evaluation	600	9	1:67
Coda	832	8	**1:104**

Table 6.10: Ratio of social actor representations per word in each component category for the Alt-Right personal narratives (outliers highlighted in bold)

The ratios show that the abstract/orientation contains a higher frequency of social actors per word count compared to the other components in this dataset (1:49), and compared to those in the news narrative data (1.69) (see Table 6.). The social actors within the four classes of participants in discourses relating to R/SA were then quantified and are shown in Table 6.1.

		Abstract / Orientation (%)	Complicating action (%)	Evaluation (%)	Coda (%)	Total
Alt-Right Narratives	Women victim	2 (5.88)	4 (11.76)	2 (5.88)	0 (0.00)	8 (23.53)
	Women accuser	2 (5.88)	1 (2.94)	1 (2.94)	0 (0.00)	4 (11.76)
	Men perpetrator	2 (5.88)	2 (5.88)	4 (11.76)	2 (5.88)	10 (29.41)
	Men accused	3 (8.82)	1 (2.94)	2 (5.88)	6 (17.65)	*12 (35.29)*
	Total	**9 (26.47)**	**8 (23.53)**	**9 (26.47)**	**8 (23.53)**	**34 (100.00)**

Table 6.11: Summary of social actor representation in Alt-Right personal narrative components per participant class (italicised occurrences show n= >10 total social actors)

As with the previous sections, an adequate analysis was deemed to include more than 10 social actors in a participant class. In the personal narratives, this resulted in the `men accused` subcorpus being examined further (occurrences in italics) for social actor placement. Figure 6.18 displays the results of this analysis.
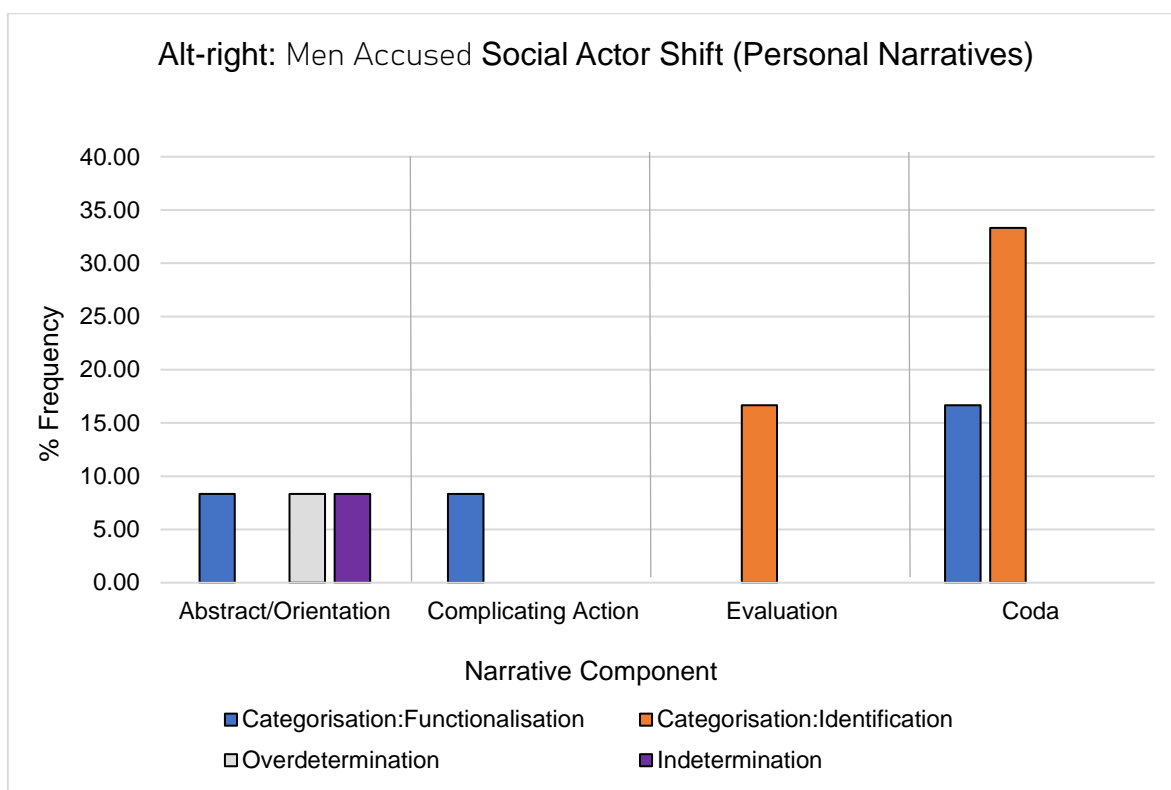
Figure 6.18: Social actor placement (per component) in the 'man accused' Alt-Right personal narrative subcorpus

In the abstract/orientation components, three social actor representations are indexed under the following categorisations: INDETERMINATION (*individuals* (1)), OVERDETERMINATION (*Patient Zero* (1)), and CATEGORISATION: FUNCTIONALISATION (*rapists* (1)). Line [6-13] shows how the blogger refers to himself through OVERDETERMINATION:

[6-13] I was **Patient Zero** to the false rape epidemic. "Date rape" was common, <u>the media</u> <u>said</u>, and thus there was pressure to <u>prosecute rape cases where there was no evidence of rape</u>. (VP23)

The blogger uses the abstract/orientation to establish his character for the narrative; as someone infected by an epidemic (*Patient Zero*). This indexing capitalises on the metaphorical references of disease seen in National Socialist (Nazism) and paleoconservative literature in relation to disease spread by out-groups (see Section 2.3.1). The out-groups in the example in line [6-13] include the media and a legal system deemed to be biased (underlined). This characteristic as an infected patient is coupled with the status of being the first to be diagnosed, giving the blogger a kudos and conferring a level of expertise on himself. These traits connect the social actor representation to two social practices, much like van Leeuwen's example of the "Unknown Soldier" (2008, p. 48) to exemplify a classification of OVERDETERMINATION. Apart from establishing the character of *Patient Zero*, however, the bloggers are not using the abstract/orientation to portray shared social representations in the narrative and are, therefore, relying on nominal and pronominal strategies to introduce themselves, perhaps because their online personas and status in the subcommunity is already established.

Figure 6.18 shows that the social actors placed in the evaluation component are indexed as CATEGORISATION: IDENTIFICATION, specifically *guy* (1) and *man* (1). Line [6-14] demonstrates how the blogger leaves the narrative action to add external evaluation to the story by conflating his own experiences with many others':

[6-14] I keep hearing stories every day about how some woman <u>destroyed a **man**'s life on a whim</u>, just because *she refused to accept the consequences of her actions*. (MF6)

The diversion from the chronological events of the narrative in order to extend the personal experience to a more global frame, reminds the readership of the relevance of the blogger's narrative. This relevance is seen to be to affirm men's vulnerability and the threat they face (underlined), and to denigrate women by describing them as irresponsible and capricious (italics). This reinforces the group's socio cognition, i.e. the combination of shared mental representations and their relevance to social contexts (van Dijk 1998, p. 47), to support their ideological stance of victimhood.

The coda shows the majority of social actors placed there are indexed through naming strategies associated with CLASSIFICATION: IDENTIFICATION. Specifically, these are *men* (3) and *man* (1). This inclusion and placement of social actors is markedly different to the `men accused` news narratives in the Alt-Right blog posts (see Figure 6.12), which show no social actors referenced through this naming strategy in the coda. In the personal narratives, the external relevance of the narrative is linked to reaffirming in-and out-groups, particularly with reference to the wider considerations of the men's rights' movement (MRM) in lines [6-15] and [6-16] (underlined in both):

[6-15] *A man* who levels false accusations against **men** *has no right to call himself a <u>men's rights' activist</u>* (VP23)

[6-16] One of the driving issues of the <u>men's rights' movement</u> is the prevalence of false rape accusations and how destructive they are to the **men** who are victimized by them. (MF8)

The bloggers here are connecting their personal narratives to the external relevance of the MRM by aligning themselves and, arguably their readership, explicitly to the Men's Rights Activists (MRA) subcommunity of the Manosphere. In [6-16], another man is the target of the blogger's criticism and shows how men are deemed unworthy of the status of MRA (italics) if they position themselves with another out-group (i.e. women who make false rape accusations).

Overall, the Alt-Right personal narrative analysis shows that the bloggers devote comparable proportions of words in the personal narratives to the news narratives in their blog posts. However, the way these components are organised and the social actor placement differs greatly. In the news narratives, the organisation of the narrative components largely followed a strict Labovian sequence, creating an immersive story world for the readership (see Section 6.4.2). The personal narratives, however, are far more disjointed, with disruptive adjacency of the story to add external and/or embedded evaluation in a similar way to the Manosphere news narratives. This structural organisation foregrounds the narrators' voice and critique, and allows him to maintain the shared

sociocognitive relevancy of the narrative. In the news narratives, naming strategies for `men accused` focused on FUNCTIONALISATION, with a particular focus on jobs and status conferred by role in society. In the personal narratives, there are only four social actors referenced through FUNCTIONALISATION (rapists) across all components, all of which are used to deny any alignment with this status. Instead, much like the Manosphere news narratives, the Alt-Right personal narratives connect the internal and external relevancy of the narrative to their readership, through the gendered CLASSIFICATION: IDENTIFICATION naming strategy *men/man*. Together, the Alt-Right personal narratives in this analysis, closely mirror the news narratives of the Manosphere.

6.7   Discussion and summary

This chapter details the analysis carried out on the narrative discourses in the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts to address research sub-questions 3 and 4. The sections above examine these discourses through the lens of MYTHOPOESIS, that is, (de)legitimation through narratives (van Leeuwen (2007)), and how knowledge representations are shared to frame discourses on R/SA. The findings from the analyses are discussed in the following two sections, each focusing on sub-questions 3 and 4 respectively. The chapter is then concluded with a brief summary.

6.7.1   The role of narrative discourses

To address research sub-question 3: *What role do narrative discourses play in the (de)legitimation and framing of sexual violence against women?,* the narrative blog posts were quantified and categorised into narratives based on news reports or on the personal experiences of the bloggers. This analysis shows that, contrary to the literature on the prevalence of narratives in extremist discourses (see Braddock 2015; Braddock and Dillard 2016; Braddock and Horgan 2016), the Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses do not contain a high frequency of narratives. In this dataset, therefore and from a quantitative standpoint, they play a limited role in the (de)legitimation and framing of R/SA. This is particularly the case in the Manosphere subcorpus, which contains comparatively few narrative posts compared to non-narrative discourses (25.86% narratives). The preference seen in the corpus as a whole, therefore, is one for opinion pieces and comments (analysed in Chapter 5), rather than narrativising discourses on R/SA. This may be because of an inclination, particularly in the Manosphere subcopora, for the blogger's voice to be salient (see also Section 5.8). It can be seen in the prototypical Manosphere news narratives, for example, that even within a narrative frame, the blogger's presence, via the evaluation and coda, dominates the narration. However, the absence of personal narratives in the Manosphere subcorpus indicates that these bloggers prefer to occupy the status of critic and expert on the actions of *others* rather than share their *own* experiences. This supports previous findings in Chapter 5 regarding the use of legitimation strategies which assume a level of expertise in the bloggers.

Within the narratives that are present in the corpus, two key findings emerge which add a more nuanced understanding to the role narratives play in the (de)legitimation and framing of R/SA: 1)

the differences in the organisation of components to create mental models and, 2) the reframing of news stories in line with the hybrid genre of *narrative journalism*. These are explored further in the subsections below.

The organisation of narrative components

Section 6.4.2 shows how the narrative components in the blog posts are organised, with the Alt-Right news narratives largely following the Labovian canonical framework while the Manosphere news narratives containing more disrupted adjacency. These findings show that the narrative posts created by each group of bloggers are performing different roles in the way they (de)legitimise ideological perspectives. Applying Busselle and Bilandzic's (2008) mental models in narratives, the Alt-Right narratives can be seen to create a situation model. This focuses on the events of the narrative and achieves "psychological transportation" (Braddock 2020, p. 78) by keeping the reader in the narrative world. It has been argued that this generates less critique and more engagement in the readership (ibid.). In the Manosphere, a story world model is created, whereby the narrativised events are consistently framed in line with the real world. This allows the Manosphere bloggers to include narratives of imperilment (Marcks and Pawelz 2020) and nightmare future scenarios (Vaara 2014) in their coda as the logical consequence of the narrative. Regarding R/SA, these threats are seen as coming from women, the media, and the legal system. The generation of a sense of imperilment can then easily be extended to include an appeal for action from the readership.

The extended use of coda in the narrative blog posts supports van Dijk's observation that it can be used as an argumentation device in narratives espousing ideological views (1984, p. 93). According to Labov, the coda is found less frequently than other components and is generally brief as it does not directly address a question for the narrative to answer (see Section 2.8.2) (1972, p. 370). However, the structural analyses of the narratives in this study show its importance to the bloggers' rhetoric through its frequent use and the number of words dedicated to it (e.g. 19.29% of all words in the Alt-Right news narratives and 43.04% of all words in the Manosphere news narratives). This *macro coda* effectively act as a paratext for the narratives (Spiridon 2010; Cecconi 2020) and can so can be seen as the main reason for choosing to blog about the news report detailing a case of R/SA.

Narrative journalism

In line with the above discussion, the findings from the analysis indicate that the news narrative blog posts, particularly in the Manosphere subcorpus, can be classified as examples of *narrative journalism*. This hybrid genre, advanced by van Krieken and Sanders (2017; 2019), is characterised as reporting real news events in a purely subjective way by focusing on *why* something happened as opposed to *what* happened. This is usually achieved by giving a voice to the real people in the news report in a way that generates empathy or, in this case, also derision, in the readership. The news reports effectively become fictionalised while maintaining the illusion that

they represent true events (2017, p. 1367) and often focus on minority groups and social/cultural injustices, forming "an overarching macro-narrative that not only restores but reinforces society's moral and cultural values" (van Krieken 2019, p. 3). The role of narratives in the framing of R/SA in the corpus in this study follows this paradigm in the way they challenge and delegitimise what are seen as mainstream social, cultural, and legal norms, reinforcing the bloggers' moral and cultural values instead. Fictionalising the cases of R/SA in the news through the extensive use of evaluation and coda, gives the bloggers the freedom to present their version of the events while maintaining an illusion of observational journalistic integrity and credibility.

6.7.2 Placement of social actors

The fourth research sub-question asks: *To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the narrative structure affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?* Social actor representations associated with women victims, women accusers, men perpetrators and men accused were mapped onto five narrative components and analysed according to the function of the component. Two main discussions emerge from the findings, as detailed below.

Salience of social actors

The findings show that the presence of social actors differs per component in the narrative subcorpora, particularly in Alt-Right blog posts. This variation in the "degree of salience" (Hart 2011, p. 757) of social actors shows the extent to which the bloggers need to reaffirm the shared social representations of the characters of the narratives. Matching this to the function of the components reveals ideological stance and the way narratives are used to frame cases of R/SA. For example, despite the complicating action in the Alt-Right news narratives making up the largest proportion of the narratives in terms of word count, there are very few social actor representations included in the component. This implies that the "participants of social practices" (van Leeuwen 2008, p. 23) in the Alt-Right news narratives are either represented through nomination and/or pronomination to give them agency; that actors are generally backgrounded or passivised in the description of the actions; or the complicating actions involve actions taken by the state or institutions involved in issues regarding R/SA (e.g. the legal system or legislative bodies passing laws). In the latter case, there is a clear ideological separation between the system and the social actors within them. This can be contrasted with the Manosphere news narratives, for example, which show the prevalence of social actors within the legal system (e.g., *accuser*). These social actors are foregrounded and considered complicit in what is seen as a biased, broken system even though they have little influence in its processes.

The relatively consistent ratio of social actors to word count in the Manosphere news narrative components indicates that social actor representations are relied upon to engage the readership and affirm the shared identities of those involved in the narrative events. This strategy of social cognition is particularly the case with the coda and the higher frequency of men accused social actors. As the coda links the internal narrative events to an external relevance, this shows how the

narratives are being used specifically to highlight how R/SA affects men being accused of R/SA on a wider, undefined, and, arguably, hyperbolised way.

Overlap in Alt-Right personal narratives and Manosphere news narratives
The narrative structure and social actor placement analyses together show that there are strong similarities between the Alt-Right personal narratives and the Manosphere news narratives. Both types of blog posts show disrupted adjacency with the evaluation being dispersed around the complicating action to remind the readership of the relevancy of the actions. Although the word count proportions per component in the Alt-Right news narratives and personal narratives are broadly similar, this change in component organisation shows that the personal narratives play a different role to those reporting news events. Regarding the placement of social actors, the use of coda to externalise the relevancy of the narrative to men social actors accused of R/SA is comparable between the Manosphere news narratives and Alt-Right personal narratives.

To conclude, the above discussions have outlined the role narratives play to (de)legitimise and frame R/SA and how the placement of social actors within the components affect this further. Although there are comparatively fewer narrative discourses in the blog posts, analysing how they are structured and how social actors are placed, has shown differing techniques to engage the readership and promote ideological stance.

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusion

7.1   Thesis synopsis

This thesis has explored the ways in which sexual violence is framed in blog posts written by members of 1) the Alt-Right and 2) Men's Rights Activists (MRAs) within the Manosphere. It was seen in the review of literature on these two communities (Sections 2.3 and 2.4) that there is uncertainty and dispute as to how the ideologies of these two groups converge and diverge with regard to their stance on women, misogyny and the extent to which their anti-feminist views inform their belief systems. The overarching research question in this thesis asked: *How is rape and sexual assault framed in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses and what similarities and/or differences does this framing reveal about the ideologies of these two extreme right-wing communities?* To answer this question, four research sub-questions were addressed. The findings from the analyses informed by each of these are given in detail in Chapters 4 to 6 but are brought together here and summarised in the sections below (Sections 7.1.1 to 7.1.4). Some critical reflections on the study are then given (Section 7.2) before outlining possible applications and future directions in which this work can continue (Section 7.3). Finally, I give some concluding thoughts on the project (Section 7.4).

7.1.1   Summary: Research sub-question (1)

How are ideological standpoints in the Alt-Right and Manosphere reflected in the representations of social actors in discourses about sexual violence?

Although the naming strategy *victim* is present in the data, the most common naming strategy to describe victims of R/SA is *woman* and/or *women*. Strategies relating to obscene OBJECTIVATION (e.g. *rape-meat, fuckdoll*) are also present (see Table 4.6). This homogenisation of women victims; lack of recognition of their legal status; and use of dehumanising terminology to refer to those who are perceived to have genuinely experienced R/SA in the analysis, supports the literature on the prevalence of misogyny in the Alt-Right and Manosphere. Using Manne's conception of misogyny as the enforcement of the patriarchal order and punishment of women seen to be occupying public spaces (2018, p. 63, see Section 1.4.6), the findings indicate this repression of women extends to not recognising their status as the victims of crime. Women are, however, referred to by their legal status when they are considered accusers of rape, suggesting that the legal system is complicit in what is seen as a system not only biased against men but actively targeting them. This view of the legal system is compounded by further findings in the analysis regarding the roles of victimhood in representations of men accused of sexual violence (see Section 4.4); in the use of INSTRUMENTAL RATIONALISATION strategies to legitimise the conspiratorial beliefs that the goals and purpose of the legal system is to target and punish men (Section 5.8.2); and in the narrative analysis depicting men being threatened and facing nightmare future scenarios based on false rape accusations (see Sections 6.5 and 6.6).

While the link between male victimhood and the legal system is more prevalent in the Manosphere blog posts, it is also reflected in the Alt-Right stance on the definition of rape. The shared belief that rape can exist within marriage and that rape should be classed as a property crime indicate a similar reframing of R/SA that purports to give women more power and bodily autonomy than they are seen to deserve (see Section 5.6.1). These findings lend support to new research being carried out on the relationship between disengagement with the law and propensity for violent extremism. Rottweiler and Gill use the term *legal cynicism* to define a detachment from the internal obligation to adhere to legal rules and recognise the legitimacy of the law, usually due to perceptions of persistent injustices and deprivation of rights (2020, p. 5). This then allows those in extremist communities to justify criminal behaviour and are deemed more likely to commit violence (ibid., p. 13). The ubiquitous trope running through the data from the Alt-Right and Manosphere blog posts relating to a corrupt legal system and women being its benefactors suggests this is an area of ideological overlap between the groups which not only fuels the victimhood metanarrative but also one which poses a potential threat to women.

An unexpected finding from the analysis, and one which also links the shared norms and values of the two groups, is the lack of physical identification categorisation for women (see Section 4.3.5). This can be seen in contrast to studies on other subcommunities of the Manosphere, where physical characteristics of women are prominent within online sites and forums (see, for example, Koller and Heritage, 2020; Krendel, 2020). The findings in this study instead seem to indicate both the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers create a hierarchy of women who are deemed to be deserving of sexual violence and those who are not. This is not based on sexual availability as seen in incel communities, but based on the public space they are seen to be occupying. Categorising women in this way is also seen in the construction of the ideal victim (and perpetrator) in the legitimation analysis (see Section 4.4), whereby young girls and elderly women are portrayed as genuine victims and feminists seen as enabling R/SA.

7.1.2   Summary: Research sub-question (2)

How are ideological standpoints on sexual violence against women legitimised in Alt-Right and Manosphere online discourses?

The findings from the analysis challenge those in previous research on the use of legitimation strategies in extremist discourses. The strategy of RATIONALISATION is the most common strategy found in the Alt-Right and Manosphere discourses, specifically THEORETICAL RATIONALISATION (Section 5.8.1). This relates to legitimation based on 'the way things are' and the bloggers presenting themselves as truthtellers, with no further evidence needed to support their claims. The findings support arguments put forward by Bednarek (2006) and Hart (2011) on epistemic positioning and evidentiality to legitimise assertions in media discourses. Specifically, the findings in this thesis reflect what Hart describes as 'subjectification', which "profiles the speaker's

assessment of the proposition, and as a legitimising device, [and] relies solely on their reputation as a reliable source of information" (2011, p. 759). The results of the research indicate that, in the Alt-Right and Manosphere communities - in which there is no designated leader, spokesperson or figurehead - bloggers situate themselves in positions of authority and readerships do not expect further evidence to give bloggers' views credibility. These findings are further supported by those discussed in Chapter 6 on the way narratives in the Manosphere blog posts are constructed to make the bloggers' voice more salient (see Section 6.4.2), both within the narrative events and external to them.

7.1.3   Summary: Research sub-question (3)

What role do narrative discourses play in the (de)legitimation and framing of sexual violence against women?

Based on the literature on the prevalence of narrative discourses in extremist material online (Section 2.3), the expectation was for the majority of blog posts to include narrative accounts, which are theoretically more persuasive (see Section 2.8.1). However, there were fewer narrative discourses than non-narrative ones (see Section 6.3). This indicates that the bloggers prefer to use alternative legitimation strategies - for example those explained in Section 7.1.2 above - and rely on opinion pieces to persuade.

Regarding the blog posts which were classified as narrative texts, the exploration of narrative components allowed me to construct a prototypical narrative for the Alt-Right and Manosphere subcorpora, each showing a different method of constructing mental worlds (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008; Braddock 2020) in which to immerse the readers and develop *psychological transportation* (Braddock 2020, p. 78). It was seen that the Alt-Right bloggers tended to create 'situation model' story worlds, which focus on the action of the story (Section 6.4.2). This connects to the findings from research sub-question (1) whereby social actor representation of in-group men were predominantly categorised through FUNCTIONALISATION (see Section 4.4.3). Together, the results of the research point heavily towards ideological views in the Alt-Right centring around men's role in society and their assumed value being ascribed by what they do. In contrast, the Manosphere narratives showed the 'story world' model (Busselle and Bilandzic 2008, p. 259), a static model of narrative which focuses on the conceptual domain, its state of affairs and the logic within that domain. The social actor analysis for the Manosphere in-group also support this finding, with IDENTIFICATION:CLASSIFICATION being the most predominant social actor categorisation. This indicates an appeal to the readership based not on their active role in society but in their gendered characteristics. With few studies investigating how exactly narratives add legitimacy in texts, with the focus instead on the thematic content of the narrative (Braddock 2015; Braddock and Dillard 2016) or its overall message of moral tale or cautionary tale (van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; van Leeuwen 2007; Reshef and Keim 2014), these findings point to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of MYTHOPOESIS in legitimising actions and beliefs.

7.1.4 Summary: Research sub-question (4)

To what extent does the placement of social actors throughout the narrative structure affect the way sexual violence against women is framed?

The findings indicate that the placement of social actors throughout the narratives reflects the extent to which the bloggers consider sexual violence against women to be currently relevant to the victim, accuser, perpetrator and/or men accused of R/SA. The analysis of social actor placement in the Alt-Right news narratives suggested that the reports of R/SA had little relevancy outside the story world created in the blog post, while the personal narratives produced by the same bloggers showed that men being accused of sexual violence face an on-going threat from women (see Sections 6.5.4 and 6.6.4). This use of narratives of imperilment and the denigration of women in accounts of personal experiences of rape accusations aligns the Alt-Right bloggers more closely with those in the Manosphere. The findings from both these datasets indicate that the narratives are being used to warn and advise men about the threats posed by women and a legal system assumed to be complicit in targeting them.

Findings in the analysis relating to Alt-Right news narratives revealed anti-establishment ideologies being perpetuated in the blog posts. The placement of social actor representations categorised as indexing ABSTRACTION (namely, *predator*), while functional representations of social actors were used in components unrelated to the present, suggest historic ideological positions based on distrust of institutions (see Section 2.3) are involved in the reframing of R/SA in their narrative discourses. This analysis showed that children in the schools were the focus of the warning about sexual violence, tapping into traditionalist ideologies while backgrounding the issue of violence against women.

In bringing these summaries to a close, in terms of the concept of anti-feminism and misogyny being a gateway, slip road or pipeline from the Manosphere to the Alt-Right (Romano 2016; Lawrence et al. 2021; Marmie et al. 2021), as noted in Section 1.2, it is argued here that this is not the case. The concept of a gateway or slip road implies an escalation of extremism and/or a more threatening and consuming ideology. The findings in the study indicate that the Alt-Right and Manosphere bloggers exhibit equally insidious and dangerous levels of extremism; that they are already merged; and are not running alongside each other as the slip road analogy suggests. The results of the research in this thesis support Ebner's (2017b, 2017a) analogy of a "melting pot" of extremism, with both the Alt-Right and Manosphere being key components. The reframing of R/SA in the blog posts show evidence of fascist rhetoric associated with Nazism from the Manosphere bloggers (Section 4.4); shared language on the denigration of migrants (e.g. *rapefugee*); and language promoting/excusing rape which is associated with the Manosphere (see Section 2.4.3) from Alt-Right bloggers. Both communities expand established rape myths (Sections 4.3 and 5.5) and distance their in-group from the stereotypical, sexually-deviant (migrant) fiend, framed as existing outside social norms (Clark 1992). This serves to not only espouse racist invective but also

distance the in-groups from any responsibility for or association with sexual violence. Both corpora promoted 'himpathy' (Manne 2018) for in-group men accused of rape or sexual assault and the social actor representations and legitimation strategy analysis frequently revealed portrayals of women as dehumanised and deserving of punishment for holding feminist views or acting with sexual autonomy. In both corpora, these strategies again distance the male readership from any emotional connection to the women discussed and denigrated (see Sections 4.3 and 5.8.2).

7.2   Critical reflections

The findings outlined above need to be considered in light of a number of limitations. The critical reflections on the study, particularly on the data collection process (see Section 3.2), and on how it could be improved are detailed in the following three sections (Sections 7.2.1 to 7.2.3).

7.2.1   The corpus

Firstly, the size of the corpus makes this study very much an entry point into the discourse and the theoretical contributions discussed above. Although, as a relatively small specialised, opportunistic corpus (McEnery and Hardie 2012, p. 11) it was able to be manually annotated, enabling close analysis, the scope of the data collection could have been widened. Developing a web scraping tool to extract blog posts from a wider sample of sites highlighted in my network analysis (see Section 3.2.3) may have increased the amount of data I could collect. This would have also circumvented the risk of missing lexis in discourses of interest which did not show in the search results when using the blogs' search functions. Including transcribed content from multimedia embedded in the blog posts (e.g. memes and/or doctored photographs) may have enriched the data further. Data collection was also limited by the number of blogs I could access without having to register my name and contact details. Ethical considerations prevented me from setting up a non-trackable email account with which to register my membership to sites protected through sign-up requirements (see Section 3.2.2 for parameters of exclusion in data collection). This meant that some websites were inaccessible to me but may have been influential in the network analysis and selection of sites from which I collected data.

From a linguistic perspective, the study would also have benefitted from carrying out further searches on terms that were frequently used to reference R/SA. The search terms *rape* and *sexual assault* are relatively formal, i.e. they reference sexual violence using terminology which is also used in legislation and in the legal system. Using searches based on these terms allowed data to be collected which discussed cases, reports, or news[34] about R/SA and the way in which these cases were then reframed in the blog posts could then be explored. Synonyms of these terms which were similarly formal, such as *abuse* and *violation,* were also used but did not result in relevant data being found (see Section 3.3.2 and Appendix 3). However, including more

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[34] For example, the case of Brock Turner, which galvanised both the Alt-Right and Manosphere (see Section 1.1)

neologisms, slang, and more sexually explicit terms for these crimes may have increased the number of blog posts studied as well as provided a more comprehensive perspective on how R/SA is reframed in those discourses. Given the need for a parameter around the scope of this research project, however, and the difficulty in ascertaining which informal terms are used, this perhaps offers an opportunity for a further study in the future.

7.2.2   The coding

Regarding the analyses, an increase in internal validity could have been achieved by incorporating inter-rater reliability in the coding of the legitimation strategies and the narrative components. While every effort was made to code the strategies and components through the identification of linguistic strategies outlined in the literature, the results could have been made more robust by having another person's interpretation of the features being analysed. Similarly, cultural references caused some challenges in the identification of social actor categorisation for Chapter 4. Although only a small number of representations posed this issue and the nature of the study and its content made this unfeasible, having another person categorising them would improve the strength of the findings.

7.2.3   Triangulation

Related to the point made above, the study would benefit from methodological triangulation (Thomas 2017, p. 153), namely collecting views from the members of the Alt-Right and MRA communities. Interviewing the bloggers themselves would have been unrealistic for this project, both from an ethical and logistical perspective, although this has been done beforehand with prominent members of extremist groups and would have provided valuable insight into the opinions they espouse (see, for example, Neiwert 2017; Pilkington 2017; Pearson 2019; Ebner 2020). However, collating the comments left by the readers of the blogs for further data analysis could have ascertained which views expressed in the blog posts were most salient for the readership and resonated with them most frequently. This approach reflects research on data collected from Manosphere internet forums (see, for example, Koller and Heritage 2020; Krendel 2020; Wright 2020).

7.3   Applications and future directions

With the above caveats in mind, there are a number of ways in which this research can be extended and applied. The following three sections (Sections 7.3.1 to 7.3.) outline possible future directions for this study.

7.3.1   Inoculation narratives and digital literacies

One of the most exciting developments in counter-extremism research is that of *inoculation narratives*. The concept, analogically relying on vaccination discourse[35], is based on the idea of priming recipients for messages linked to harm; initiating *psychological reactance* (reluctance to be manipulated); and arming them with pre-formed counter arguments – or 'antibodies' (Braddock 2020, p. 116). The strategy has recently been applied to inoculating against extremist discourses in pilot studies (Braddock 2019; Braddock 2020; Hughes et al. 2021). In these early stages, it has proven to be more effective than using traditional counter-narratives, which present alternative views and perspectives to those who have already been radicalised. The findings from research sub-questions 1 to 4 indicate areas for researchers to investigate further in line with inoculation narrative development. The analysis on narrative construction, particularly the intermittent evaluation and extended coda, and the construction of the prototypical narratives, could inform inoculation strategies and work in conjunction with the more extensive research on the thematic content of narratives.

An example of how attitudinal inoculation can be applied pragmatically appertains to digital literacy education in schools. The Home Office report for 2021 shows that there were more cases of extreme right-wing referrals than for any other recognised ideology, with 88% of those involving men or boys and 63% of those being under the age of 20 (Home Office 2021, p. 13). Highlighting the (false) representations analysed in this thesis; showing the legitimation strategies used by extremists; and educating students in further and higher education about how narratives are constructed to produce *psychological transportation* (see Section 6.4.2) could help extend digital literacy education. Furthering the vaccination analogy, 'booster' messages (Braddock 2020, p. 130) are also needed intermittently as attitudinal inoculation has been seen to decline over time (ibid.). Developing a real time network analysis to show migrating ideological affiliation could make these booster messages more relevant and effective.

7.3.2   Online interventions

Another possible application of an extended version of this study is its use in online interventions. Work is currently being carried out on designing material to infiltrate search results for individuals looking for radicalising content. Following a particular search online, individuals are "instead directed to thematically similar content that counters extremist propaganda" (Braddock 2020, p. 246). This 'Redirect Method' (Moonshot 2022) has been proven to undermine harmful messaging when it is organised and targeted effectively (ibid.). The effectiveness derives from giving those online the impression that they are viewing content they have found themselves, thus increasing their perception of personalisation, which has been seen to increase persuasiveness (Braddock 2020, p. 246). The findings in this thesis could contribute to this work by helping to construct

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[35] This is a particularly satisfying aspect of this conclusion given the thesis was written during the Covid pandemic

messaging which mirrors the extremist discourses more closely, as well as informing how the content within the messaging can be adapted.

7.3.3   Addressing grievances

In her extensive longitudinal studies into extremist groups, Ebner notes that "Extremism is about grievances, identities, and ideologies." (2017b, p. 198). The issues, resentments, and animosity shown towards the legal system by the bloggers in this study, particularly those from the Manosphere, highlight a need to address these grievances. It is clear from the data analysis that misunderstood aspects of the legal process, laws on evidence and procedure, and new policies which receive prominent media focus are being used to legitimise and perpetuate the legal cynicism and narratives of imperilment outlined throughout. Complexities inherent in legal systems and their traditionally impenetrable language lend themselves to creating conspiratorial beliefs and misinterpretations. In their review of Men's Rights Activist (MRA) websites, Gotell and Dutton acknowledge the need to engage with the issues raised by the readership and warn that "[F]eminist denial of the realities (though unequal) of men's victimisation plays into the vilifying rhetoric of MRAs" (2016, p. 76). As much as I do not support the views expressed in the blog posts analysed in this study, I do agree with Gotell and Dutton's (2016) proposition to acknowledge the realities expressed in them. Ebner predicts that politicised violent misogyny is a real and growing threat for the next decade (2020, p. 270) and advocates that education is the most successful remedy against this (ibid., p. 204). The findings outline in this thesis hint towards areas of legal practice and process which need to be targeted in educational programs and generally be made more transparent.

7.4   Final thoughts

This thesis was designed and situated within a particularly volatile time politically, coinciding with an increase in nationalistic rhetoric since Brexit and a rise in populist parties in Europe. It was inevitable that, during the course of this research project, the groups in the study would evolve. As emphasised in the Literature Review (see Section 2.3), the Alt-Right is amorphous and fluid and went through a period of increasing prominence. This was then followed by an equally dramatic drop off in cohesion, leadership, exposure and following (Thompson and Hawley 2021). However, the attitudes, beliefs, and grievances which propelled the Alt-Right are still present and need addressing (ibid., p. 1169-1170). Together with Ebner's (2020) predictions noted in the previous section, these factors make this thesis feel as relevant as when it was conceived. It has been particularly galling to study the opinions of men who are either promoting rape, denying its existence, or complaining about female bias in the legal system when currently only 1.6% of reports of rape in the UK lead to a charge or court summons (Open Access Government.org 2020). While it is clear that men can be victims of sexual violence and that men's grievances relating to the legal system need to be addressed, it has been difficult to constantly read about men's victimhood, imperilment, and the threats deemed to be posed by feminism when sexual violence

against women seems so unrelated to those metanarratives. The risk assessment carried out as part of the ethical clearance stage of this project emphasised the need to observe any indications of being radicalised by far right rhetoric and my awareness of the Prevent Scheme (Home Office 2021b). However, the hardest challenge has been to avoid becoming misandrist; a possibility which was not reviewed in the risk assessment.

To finish on a hopeful note, the case of Brock Turner, which inspired this study in 2017, has led to a positive change in the law on rape in California by introducing mandatory minimum sentencing, along with an acknowledgement of the value of hearing victim impact statements (Davies and Bartels 2021). When I started this study, little research was being done on the anti-feminist ideologies of online extremist groups but there has been a significant increase in the amount of research being done in this area in order to address the issues outlined throughout this thesis. I am very pleased to be part of that growing field of academics who are shining a light into those online spaces.

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List of Appendices

Appendix 1: List of codes used to label nodes in the network analysis

Faction codes (listed alphabetically)

Faction	Code Used	Colour Used	No. of Nodes (%)
Anarchist	An	dark brown	4 (0.57)
Anti-feminist	Anti fem	pink	7 (0.99)
Anti-Semitic	Anti sem	pale blue	15 (2.12)
Alternative Right	AR	orange	32 (4.53)
Christian Right	Theo	turquoise	38 (5.37)
Communist	Com	grey	1 (0.14)
Conservative	Con	green	62 (8.77)
Centre Right	CR	grey	1 (0.14)
Far Right	FR	pale orange	12 (1.70)
Human Biodiversity	HBD	bright yellow	11 (1.56)
Hard Right	HR	grey	13 (1.84)
Libertarian	Lib	grey	12 (1.70)
Manosphere	Man	red	21 (2.97)
Nationalist	Nat	grey	16 (2.26)
New Right	NR	grey	2 (0.28)
Neoreactionary	NRx	purple	23 (3.25)
Republican Heritage	Rep	grey	1 (0.14)
Traditionalist	Trad	grey	13 (1.84)
White Nationalist	WN	dark blue	55 (7.78)
NO IDENTITY EXPRESSED	-	white	368 (52.05)
Total			**707**

Appendix 2: Visualisation of the Network Analysis (using *Gephi*)
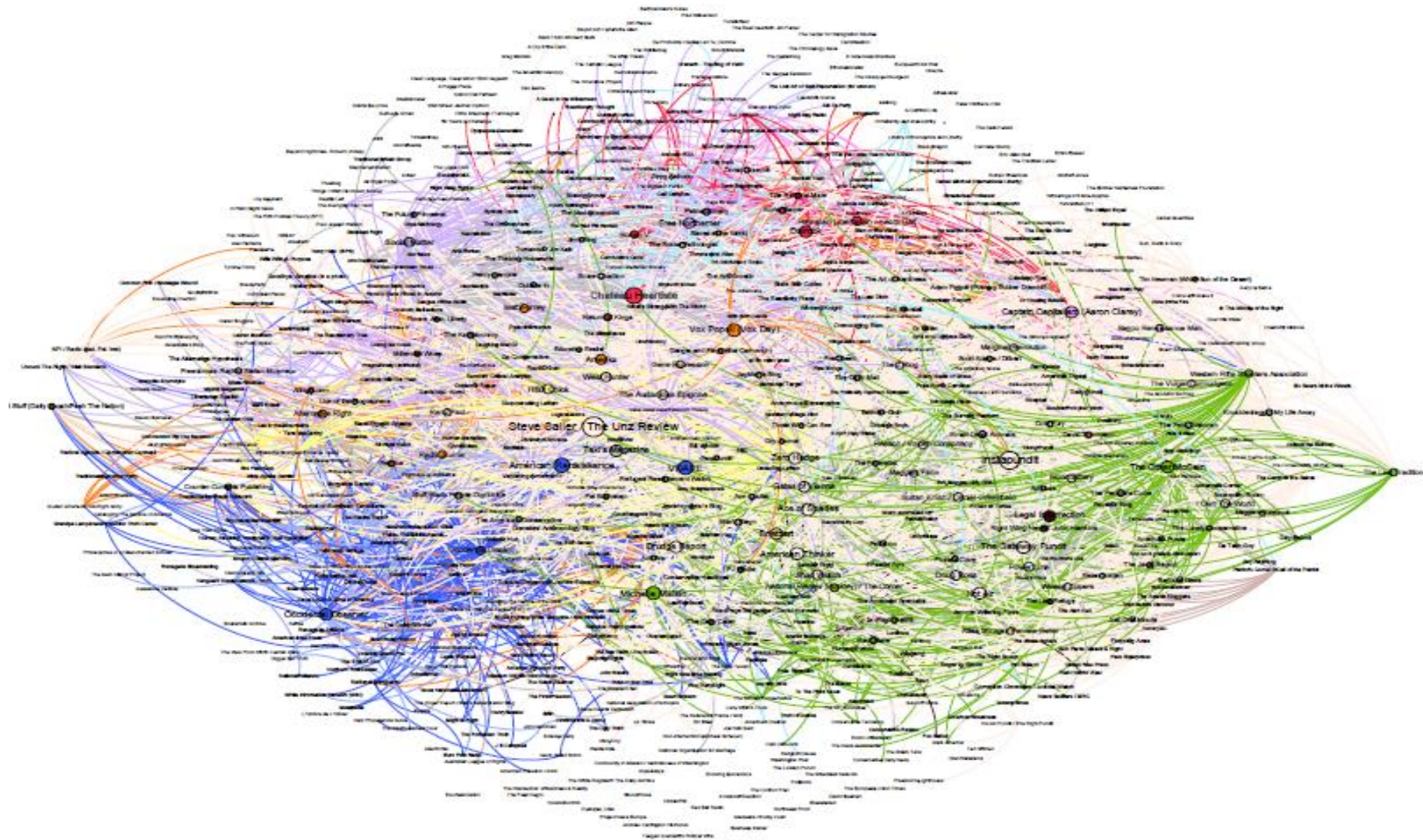
Appendix 3: List of Alternative Search Terms and Their Collocations

		Search term: *molestation/molest*	
Site/Data Source	**No. of posts**	**Collocations (#)**	**Other uses**
Amerika	10	*child (6), homosexual (1), wave (1)*	in a comic (1), in jokes (1)
Matt Forney	0	*-*	
Vox Popoli	6	*child (5)*	as a topic for a book (1)
Chateau Heartiste	1	*loving (1)*	
Return of Kings	6	*child (5)*	as a social nuisance (1)
TOTAL	**23**		

		Search term: *violation/violate*	
Site/Data Source	**No. of posts**	**Collocations (#)**	**Other uses**
Amerika	37	*laws(11), human/civil rights (6), policy (4), ethics (2), free speech (2), principles (2), taboos (2), bible (1), compromise (1), conventions (1), fair play (1), privacy (1), social rules (1), standards (1)*	college campus rape (1)
Matt Forney	8	*policy (4), code (1), human rights (1), laws (1), policy (1)*	
Vox Popoli	5	*code of conduct (1), free speech (1), honor (1), law (1), terms (1)*	
Chateau Heartiste	16	*law (7), code (3), driving (1), equal opportunities (1) ethics (1), first amendment (1), rights (1), terms (1)*	
Return of Kings	31	*law (12), rights (4), privacy (3), agreement (1), article 19 (1), commandment (1), constitution (1), ethics (1), free speech (1), natural order (1), phobias (1), policy (1), privacy (1), trust (1)*	about a feminist writer being violated (1)
TOTAL	**97**		

	Search term: *sexual/sexually abuse*		
Site/Data Source	**No. of posts**	**Collocations (#)**	**Other uses**
Amerika	6	*children (4)*	in cults (1), causing disassociation (1)
Matt Forney	4	*child (2), sex worker treatment (1)*	to the disabled by carers (1)
Vox Popoli	2	*child (2)*	
Chateau Heartiste	4	*child (2), online (1)*	men wanting to be (1)
Return of Kings	8	*child (8)*	
TOTAL	**24**		

Appendix 4: Risk Assessment Form

Date:	6th November 2017
Researcher's Name:	Kathryn Barber (Student No. C1474318)
Supervisors:	Dr Frances Rock and Dr Amanda Potts
PhD Thesis Title:	The re-framing and recontextualisation of sexual violence cases as an online radicalisation tool by right-wing extremists.
Issues:	Gaining access to far right and 'alt-right' websites, including some 'pick up artist' websites; protection against harm (research team and others); Security-sensitive Research/Prevent Duty; assessment of risk; notification requirements.
Action taken to date**:**	Notification to Research and Innovation Services; Strategic Planning and Governance; University IT; Head of School; School Manager. Discussion with ENCAP Ethics Officer. Dedicated workstation set up in ENCAP.

Prevent Lead/Prevent Strategy Group has been notified by Emma Cullen. |

Risk Assessment Considerations and Mitigation Factors

Topic	The nature of the risk	Measures taken to mitigate the risk
1. Security services and external surveillance	Accessing blocked and filtered websites of an extreme nature increases the chance of surveillance by the authorities and possible investigation.	University IT services have been informed and authorisation from the Head of School is being sought. Using only Cardiff University computers and servers will allow for a 'paper trail' which shows the research is being carried out in an academic environment only. This makes any investigation more likely to be directed at the University, which can then show the approved proposal for the research.
2. Risk to others	There is a risk that others using the research office may view the extremist material, either directly while the researcher is working or by accessing files where the material has been stored.	A dedicated workstation has been set up where no-one can inadvertently see offensive/extremist material while it is being collected.

The researcher is aware of her own responsibility regarding potential criminal liability in circulating extremist material and will ensure this does not happen. This includes taking screenshots or sharing material from the websites to anyone other than her supervisory team.

Regarding the storage of material collected from the websites, data will be treated with regard to the Cardiff University Information Handling Procedure, where it will be classified as C1 – Highly Confidential. In line with this procedure, significant |

		security measures will be taken. These include: marking internal emails 'confidential' if they contain extremist material; any files attached to emails being password protected; computer screens being locked when unattended; a dedicated file being set up on the University PC hard drive and it being password protected; no files being viewed in public; no data being collected or stored on the researcher's personal computer and her laptop made secure at all times; encrypting large capacity storage devices (kept in a secure place) and securing them with strong passcodes. A safe store will also be arranged for any paper records that may contain extremist material.
3. Human participants in the research	Not applicable. The material being used is published online.	
4. The welfare of the researcher	The potentially extreme nature of the material being viewed may cause emotional distress and upset to the researcher.	The researcher is familiar with a range of extreme online material and has worked with far-right content before. She is aware of the University's counselling services and has a strong, personal support network which includes family members in the counselling sector. She can also contact other researchers at the University, via Emma Cullen, who are studying extremist material. However, regular reviews of the researcher's well-being need to be carried out, including quarterly discussions with her supervisors about the continual availability of the Student and Staff Well-being services and to assess the cumulative effect of viewing the extremist material. The line management should also be aware that these reviews are taking place and monitor the supervisors' well-being.
5. The personal safety of the researcher	There is a risk of potential backlash against the researcher, including online harassment or threats.	Care needs to be taken by the researcher to ensure that any future reference to the research is presented objectively and to limit reference to the research on social media sites. The type of journals she approaches towards the end of her study should be appropriately chosen, for example publications that specialise in hate studies, extremist research, conflict, politics or online media. These choices need to be sensibly managed while not limiting future publishing opportunities. The researcher will not use her own internet service or personal computer to access the material so all online identification will be linked to Cardiff University's IT facilities. She will not post messages on or interact directly with the extremist websites.
6. Potential radicalisation of the researcher	The researcher may adopt extremist views or be drawn into the far-right after accessing material used to radicalise website users.	The researcher holds strong views that are unlikely to be changed by accessing the online material. She is also very familiar with the Prevent Strategy (through her previous job in teaching). Prevent Lead has been notified and the supervisory team

		will also review any changes in the researcher's attitudes throughout the period of the PhD.
7. Exposure to criminal activity	The researcher may uncover material online that discusses future or past criminal activity.	The researcher needs to be aware of this possibility and will alert her supervisors if criminal activity is uncovered. The supervisory team can then discuss what action to take and whether to notify the University's Safeguarding team. However, it has been pointed out that any criminal activity that is unknown to the police is unlikely to be found.
8. Future publication plans and research output	Any published work or public presentations resulting from this research could give rise to criminal liability if it promotes extremism, or may result in an adverse reaction by the producers of the extremist material.	The selection of material to use in published work will be carefully considered to avoid any promotion of extremism, all data will be anonymised, and an objective stance will be taken throughout (with a focus on the academic value of the research rather than an opportunity to express the researcher's own views). The selection of journals and conferences where the research may be seen will also be sensibly considered.

Appendix 5: List of nodes denoting rape and/or sexual assault

List of nodes identified in the corpora which refer directly or indirectly to sexual violence (in both the Alt-Right and Manosphere non-narrative corpora).

The nodes are listed order of frequency of occurrence (n) and alphabetically.

Nodes in the non-narrative subcorpora (n)	
rape (362)	criminal deviancy (1)
sexual assault (98)	deprive women of their reproductive
assault (10)	prerogative (1)
sexual abuse (10)	digitally assault (1)
a crime (9)	feel up for sexual gratification (1)
harassing or harassment (8)	flirting (1)
pedophilia (7)	forcibly DP'ed (1)
incident (6)	forcibly fondle (1)
sex (6)	forcibly touch (1)
groping (5)	gang-bang (1)
kissing (5)	git me some (1)
sexual harassment (5)	have vaginal walls torn up (1)
sexual misconduct (5)	holding a girl's hands (1)
a thing (4)	inappropriately touch (1)
a way of creating a mixed society (4)	issue (1)
act (4)	looking at women (1)
force sex (4)	male behavior (1)
penetrate or penetration (4)	malicious male perversion (1)
sex crime (4)	masturbatory fantasy (1)
sexual violence (4)	misbehavior with young boys (1)
violate (4)	parking in the wrong parking space (1)
abuse (3)	pay the humiliating price (1)
child sexual abuse (3)	pederasty (1)
not replying to a text (3)	perversions (1)
sexual offense (3)	perverted or degrading sexual behaviour (1)
taking a woman's virtue (3)	pleasuring himself in front of grossed out
touching breasts (3)	females (1)
a fetish (2)	political weapon (1)
a line (2)	problem (1)
actions (2)	pussy grabbing (1)
an affair (2)	rape attack (1)
clothes grabbed and pulled off (2)	rape-like (1)
event (2)	redistributing nookie (1)
grabbing ass/backside (2)	Rotherham (1)
hurt female feelings (2)	Roy Moore-style allegation (1)
misconduct (2)	sex assaults (1)
mistaken or confused consent (2)	sex attacks (1)
molestation of a child (2)	sex scandals (1)
r-selected sexual strategy (2)	sexual activity (1)
sexual impropriety (2)	sexual assault/rape (1)
sexual transgression (2)	sexual atrocities (1)
the intrusion of a penis (2)	sexual harm (1)
violence (2)	sexual predation (1)
#Pussygrab (1)	sexual socialism (1)
a dark spirit (1)	sexually deal with (1)
a faux pas (1)	sexually hound (1)
a felony (1)	sexually manhandled (1)
a lesser crime (1)	sexually seduce (1)
a man whistling (1)	showcase his half-blood chub (1)
a property crime (1)	spit roast (1)
a sexual act (1)	stick their penises in girl's vaginas (1)
a slight (1)	stuff (1)
abusing sexually (1)	take virtue from a child (1)

act of entitlement (1)	the encounter (1)
approaching a woman (1)	the first (1)
assume the submissive position (1)	the nightmare in Cologne (1)
attack (1)	touch buttocks (1)
bad manners (1)	used as a semen storage unit (1)
benign moves (1)	vicious and hateful pummelling (1)
buyer's remorse (1)	voluntarily entering a bed (1)
consensual sex (1)	

Appendix 6: List of non-narrative blog posts with concordance line codes

Key:

Source		Blog (Author)	
AR	Alt-Right blog	**CH**	Chateau Heartiste
Mano	Manosphere blog	**ROK**	Return of Kings (David G. Brown)
		AM	Amerika (Brett Stevens)
		VP	Vox Popoli (Vox Day)
		MF	Matt Forney

Code	Source	Title	Date Posted
AM1	AR	*Daily Nonsense (#1) (BS)*	06/06/2016
AM2	AR	*Realistic Approaches To Sex Crimes (BS)*	14/03/2016
AM3	AR	*Why Diversity Trumps Feminism Every Time (JPW)*	11/01/2016
AM4	AR	*If You Were Uncertain About Whether You Live Under Totalitarianism, Now You Know (BS)*	22/05/2017
AM5	AR	*Maryland Flies The White Flag On Civilization (JPW)*	24/03/2017
AM6	AR	*Pervnado Is The End Of A Sexual Visigoth Holiday (JPW)*	04/12/2017
AM7	AR	*Rape Laws Are Just Ways To Assassinate The Reputation Of Politically Incorrect Men (JPW)*	08/05/2017
VP1	AR	*Heat Street Debate: Marital Rape*	14/08/2016
VP2	AR	*In Which Clarification Is Required*	21/08/2016
VP3	AR	*Marital Rape' Does Not, And Cannot, Exist*	12/09/2016
VP4	AR	*When The Coverup Fails*	09/01/2016
VP5	AR	*Milo Chooses Coulter Over Cathy*	13/05/2016
VP6	AR	*Prime Pedophile*	19/02/2017
VP7	AR	*The Blessings Of Immigration*	15/07/2017
VP8	AR	*What Part Of 'Cruelty Artist' Do They Not Get?*	03/08/2017
VP9	AR	*Hollywood Values In The Media*	03/11/2017
VP10	AR	*Viktor Orban Was Right*	06/01/2016
MF1	AR	*A Challenge To Feminists Accusing Me Of Rape*	06/02/2016
MF2	AR	*Why Feminists Want You To Rape Them*	22/02/2016
MF3	AR	*The Rise And Fall Of Hillary Clinton*	09/11/2017

CH1	Mano	*Fake Rape*	13/12/2017
CH2	Mano	*False Memory Syndrome*	18/11/2016
CH3	Mano	*Hillary Clinton, Rape Enabler*	11/10/2016
CH4	Mano	*Importing Rape Culture To The West*	28/09/2017
CH5	Mano	*Rapefugee Game*	26/01/2016
CH6	Mano	*Study: Physiognomy Is, Indeed, Real*	18/11/2016
CH7	Mano	*Video Released Of Bill Clinton Sexually Assaulting An Assistant*	10/10/2016
CH8	Mano	*Comment Of The Week: Chateau Heartiste Was The Trumpening Before There Was Trump*	14/10/2016
CH9	Mano	*Donald Trump's Stone Cold Truths About Women*	15/03/2016
CH10	Mano	*Foreigners, Refugees, And Crime: The Stone Cold Truth*	25/07/2017
CH11	Mano	*Meet The CUNDT: Converged, Urban, Narcissistic, Delusional, Tubbo*	08/08/2017
CH12	Mano	*President Gay Mulatto Flaunts His Erection, Hypocritical Shitlib Female Reporters Giggle Like Schoolgirls!*	12/10/2016
CH13	Mano	*The Feminine Mistake*	25/01/2016
CH14	Mano	*The Pathologization of Male Sexuality*	06/11/2017
CH15	Mano	*The Reason Why Pussy Grabbing Triggers Manlet Manginas*	19/01/2017
CH16	Mano	*When An Uppity Feminist Meets An Impervious POC*	20/11/2017
ROK1	Mano	*4 Ways To Win Divorce Trials, Child Custody Disputes, And False Rape Accusations*	04/05/2016
ROK2	Mano	*5 Ways That The Modern 'Rape' Hysteria Resembles Stalin's Great Terror*	31/10/2017
ROK3	Mano	*Arrests Of Two Olympic Boxers In Rio Shows How False Rape Hysteria Has Gone Global*	11/08/2016
ROK4	Mano	*British Authorities Will Now Use The Sexual Histories Of Men Accused Of Rape To Better Convict Them*	03/11/2017
ROK5	Mano	*British Government Bans Female Rape Accusers From Being Cross-Examined In Court*	24/03/2017
ROK6	Mano	*British Police Withhold 40,000 Messages Proving Male Student Didn't Rape A Woman*	20/12/2017
ROK7	Mano	*Congratulations To Feminists For Helping Import Actual Rape Culture To Germany*	06/01/2016
ROK8	Mano	*Editor Of Newspaper That Accused ROK Of Being Pro-Rape Has Resigned For Sexual Harassment*	06/12/2016
ROK9	Mano	*Federal Jury Finds UVA Rape Hoax Journalist Sabrina Rubin Erdely And* Rolling Stone *Liable For Defamation*	06/11/2016
ROK10	Mano	*Feminist Senator Demands End To Filmed Rape Scenes - But Dogs Eating Babies Is Okay*	09/05/2016
ROK11	Mano	*Harvard Newspaper Says Rating The Attractiveness Of Women Makes You Complicit In Rape*	22/12/2017
ROK12	Mano	*If Feminist Laurie Penny Was Serious About Stopping Rape, She Would Protest Outside Prisons*	15/09/2016
ROK13	Mano	*Sexual Predator Lena Dunham Convicts Comedian Bill Cosby Of Rape*	06/01/2016
ROK14	Mano	*Single Motherhood Causes More Sexual Violence Than A Mythical 'Rape Culture'*	10/01/2017
ROK15	Mano	*The Guardian's Nicole Silverberg Tells Men To Believe All Rape Claims And Always Apologize To Women*	20/10/2017
ROK16	Mano	*Berlin Establishes New Year's Eve 'Safe Zones' To Stop Vibrant Migrants From Raping Women*	31/12/2017
ROK17	Mano	*Feminist Move To Desexualize Breasts Could Allow Men To Squeeze Them With Impunity*	04/09/2017
ROK18	Mano	*Feminists Want To Deprive Casey Affleck Of An Oscar Because Evidence Is For Misogynists*	16/02/2017
ROK19	Mano	*Kevin Spacey 'Bravely' Comes Out As Gay After He's Accused Of Sexually Assaulting A Child Actor*	31/10/2017
ROK20	Mano	*Liberal Hollywood Had Decades To Expose Harvey Weinstein's Sexual Predation But Did Nothing*	07/10/2017

ROK21	Mano	*Montreal Celebrates 8-Year Old Drag Queen And The Perverted Sexualization Of Boys*	20/06/2017
ROK22	Mano	*New Amsterdam Law Criminalizes The Act Of Unsuccessfully Flirting With Women In Public*	21/07/2017
ROK23	Mano	*Roy Moore's Loss Shows How 'Sexual Harassment' Is Nothing More Than A Political Weapon*	15/12/2017
ROK24	Mano	*Some Men Are Fighting Back Against Anti-Male Hostility By Identifying As Women*	10/02/2017
ROK25	Mano	*The #MeToo Campaign Compares Not Replying To A Girl's Texts With Raping Her*	24/10/2017
ROK26	Mano	*Tone Deaf Leftists Lavish Praise On Book That Features A Man Falsely Accused Of Rape*	03/03/2016
ROK27	Mano	*When Will Homosexuals Take Personal Responsibility For The Spread Of HIV?*	07/02/2017

Appendix 7: List of narrative blog posts with concordance line codes

Key:

Source		Blog	
Mano	Manosphere blog	**CH**	Chateau Heartiste
AR	Alt-Right blog	**ROK**	Return of Kings
		AM	Amerika
		VP	Vox Popoli
		MF	Matt Forney

Code	Source	Blogger	Type	Title	Date Posted
CH18	Mano	CH	NN	*The Rockville Rapefugees*	21/03/2017
CH19	Mano	CH	NN	*Another White Woman Spreads For Islam*	04/05/2017
CH20	Mano	CH	NN	*The Crisis of Supportive Beta Husbands*	21/06/2017
CH21	Mano	CH	NN	*Here's How Trump Can Win The Election*	27/10/2016
ROK29	Mano	ROK	NN	*Girl Plagiarizes* Fifty Shades Of Grey *To Falsely Accuse Her Father Of Rape*	22/08/2016
ROK30	Mano	ROK	NN	*Kesha Receives Support From Big-Name Celebrities For A 'Rape' She Said Never Happened*	27/02/2016
ROK31	Mano	ROK	NN	*Childless Feminist Journalist Tries To Secretly 'Breastfeed' A Cucked Politician's Child*	19/04/2017
ROK32	Mano	ROK	NN	*British Soccer Star Ched Evans Found Not Guilty Of Rape After Years Of Abuse From Feminists*	17/10/2016
ROK33	Mano	ROK	NN	*Feminists Go Crazy After Jian Ghomeshi Found Not Guilty Of Rape*	24/03/2016
ROK34	Mano	ROK	NN	*This Ugly Woman Invented 15 False Rape Accusations Before Finally Being Jailed*	26/09/2017
ROK35	Mano	ROK	NN	*Why Hasn't Jackie Coakley Been Punished For Starting The Biggest Rape Hoax Of The Decade?*	16/01/2016
CH22	Mano	CH	NNM	*Roosh Rapes The Media*	09/02/2016
ROK36	Mano	ROK	NNM	Game Of Thrones *Actress Souad Faress Falsely Accuses Man Of Rape For Walking Past Her*	14/02/2016
ROK37	Mano	ROK	NNM	*Two Major Media Outlets That Defamed ROK As 'Pro-Rape' Are Laying Off Hundreds Of Journalists*	19/03/2016
ROK38	Mano	ROK	NNM	*Katie B. Nelson, Sometimes Homeless Drug User, Has Been Identified As Roosh's Montreal Assaulter*	16/04/2016

AM9	AR	AM	NN	*Molestation Wave Sweeps American Media (BS)*	11/11/2017
VP12	AR	VP	NN	*Remember, Women NEVER LIE About Rape*	11/08/2016
VP13	AR	VP	NN	*Breaking The Circle Of Lies*	26/02/2017
VP14	AR	VP	NN	*Fighting For Due Process*	16/12/2016
VP15	AR	VP	NN	*Flying In The Face Of Reality*	09/01/2016
VP16	AR	VP	NN	*Homeschool Or Else*	10/12/2016
VP17	AR	VP	NN	*Immigrant Sex Attacks In Finland*	08/01/2016
VP18	AR	VP	NN	*Kristallnacht Zwei*	12/01/2016
VP19	AR	VP	NN	*The Culling Of The Cucks*	12/02/2017
VP20	AR	VP	NN	*The Lies Of Lunatics*	09/01/2016
VP21	AR	VP	NN	*Why Didn't They Speak Out?*	29/10/2017
VP22	AR	VP	NN	*Women, Science, And Sex*	10/02/2016
MF5	AR	MF	NN	*The Castration Of Bill Clinton*	08/11/2017
AM10	AR	AM	NN	*Why Diversity Can Never Work (BS)*	22/10/2016
AM11	AR	AM	PNM	*Legalize Rape III (BS)*	20/04/2016
VP23	AR	VP	PNM	*Interview With Mike Cernovich*	24/02/2016
VP24	AR	VP	PNM	*Transcript: Roosh V Press Conference 6/2/16*	08/02/2016
VP25	AR	VP	PNM	*Today's Lesson In Rhetoric*	21/06/2016
MF6	AR	MF	PN	*The 'I Didn't Rape You Text'*	11/08/2017
MF7	AR	MF	PN	*Why Did Dean Esmay Call The Cologne Rape Victims 'Liars'?*	12/01/2016
MF8	AR	MF	PN	*Why Is Dean Esmay Falsely Accusing Roosh And Me Of Rape?*	13/01/2016

Appendix 8: List of Hyperlink Categories and Target Source

(Labels listed in order of occurrence in data)

Label	Explanation	Links	
Mainstream Media	The definition used for the purposes of the categorisation is media "situated completely within (and concomitantly co-creating) the ideological norms of society, enjoy a widespread scale of influence, rely on professionalized reporters and are heavily connected with other corporate and governmental entities (Kenix 2011, p. 3)	*9 News* *ABC* *BBC* *CBC* *CNN* *The Daily Telegraph* *Global News* *The Guardian* *The Independent*	*The Mail Online* *The Mirror* *NBC* *The National Post* *The Sun* *The Sydney Morning Herald* *USA Today* *The Washington Post*
Own blog	Links that take the reader to another post in the blogger's own blog	*Amerika* *Chateau Heartiste* *Matt Forney*	*Return of Kings* *Vox Popoli*
Social Media	Web-based sites which allow social interaction, personal posting, and networking (Zappavigna 2012, p. 2)	*Facebook* *Instagram*	*Twitter* *YouTube*
Magazine / Journal	An online periodical publication of articles	*The Atlantic* *The Jewish Journal* *The New Yorker* *Reason.com*	*Serendipity* *Slate* *XOJane*
Local News	News services serving defined local communities	*The Global and Mail* *London24*	*NY Daily* *The Toronto Star*
A website in the Far-Right Network	A website which appears on the network analysis outlined in Chapter 3, identified through the Alt-Right aggregator sites *Shitlord Hub* and *Alt-Right Portal*	*28Sherman (blog)* *Breitbart* *The Gateway Pundit*	*RooshV* *Scott Adams/Dilbert (blog)* *The Unz Review*
Specialist	Mainstream sites specialising in specific topics such as sport, politics, and science	*ESPN (sport)* *Mimesis Law* *Parliament TV*	*The Political Insider* *Science*
Think Tank	An institute or body involved in policy planning or public policy research (Juergensmeyer and Anheier 2012, p. 1646)	*Anti-Defamation League* *Canary Mission*	*The Free Thought Project* *Pew Research*
Finance	Sites focusing on financial news or advice	*Bloomberg*	*Economy In Crisis*
Alternative News	Defined by "their ideological difference from the mainstream their relatively limited scale of influence in society, their	*Buzzfeed* *Huffington Post* *Latin Times*	*Stuff* *Vice*

	reliance on citizen reporting and their connections with social movements" (Kenix 2011, p. 3)		
Blogs	"A frequently updated webpage with dated entries, new ones placed on top" (Blood 2002, p. vi)	*Dean Esmay / A Voice For Men*	
Wiki	A collaborative site which is edited and updated by its own readers	*Infogalactic*	*Rational Wiki*
Commercial / Retail	Sites with the prime purpose of selling products	*Amazon*	