**Automated psycholinguistic analysis of the Anglophone manosphere**

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**Content warning:** Please be advised that the community of study frequently uses language that some readers may find shocking or offensive

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**Abstract:**

Masculinity seems to play a role in the recruitment and radicalization of lone-wolf terrorists and other violent extremists. In this chapter, we examine multiple dimensions of masculinity in six corpora. We do so via linguistic analysis of the corpora associated with and produced by a range of groups and individuals. In particular, we analyze two corpora from each of: men’s rights groups, male supremacists, and manifestos of male domestic terrorists. Our results indicate that there are four distinct strands of thinking, language, and behavior in these groups and individuals: *dominant masculinity,* which manifests in domination of both women and other men, *subsidiary masculinity*, which manifests in resentful reactions to domination by other men, *misogyny*, which manifests in resentful or outright hateful attitudes and actions towards women, and *xenophobia*, which manifests in fearful and vengeful reactions to perceived invasion by outsiders, especially foreign men.

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*Would anyone like to have a little look down into the secret of how* ideals are fabricated *on this earth? Who has enough pluck?... Come one! Here we have a clear glimpse into this dark workshop.*

-- Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, I:14

# 1 Introduction

The 2015 Charleston church mass shooting, which left nine people dead, was planned and executed by white supremacist Dylann Roof. According to prosecutors, Roof was radicalized online (Berman 2016: 1). As Alfano et al. (2018) document, the same is true of many other terrorists and white supremacists, some of whom have engaged in lone-wolf terrorism (Weimann 2012).

Scholars suggest that this form of terrorism is facilitated by the internet (Precht 2007; von Behr et al. 2013: §3). However, the specific mechanisms by which the internet facilitates self-radicalization are disputed. According to Bjelopera (2010), it does so by normalizing behaviors and attitudes which, in wider society, would typically be viewed as unacceptable and be met with disapprobation. By contrast, Silber et al. (2007) argue that the internet facilitates self-radicalization by generating an echo chamber: people interested in radical ideology tend to communicate directly or indirectly only with each other, reinforcing and exacerbating their pre-existing predilections. The combination of these predilections and social media recommender systems — tailoring content to personal preferences, biases and interests — is commonly termed the ‘filter bubble’ (Pariser, 2011). In a recent conceptual analysis, Nguyen (2020) argues that it is worthwhile to distinguish bubbles, which are characterized by ignorance of dissenting views, from echo chambers, which are characterized by intensive ingroup trust and outgroup distrust. A related view is that the phenomenon of online group polarization in chat forums drives radicalization (Sunstein 2011, 2017).[[1]](#footnote-2) Recent scholarship has associated filter bubbles and echo chambers with radicalization but, as Conway (2017) cautions, more research is needed to establish a causal relationship. Moreover, experimental research involving randomization to conditions is impossible because it would clearly violate principles of research ethics.

The construct of masculinity seems to play a significant role in the recruitment or radicalization of many perpetrators. Here we understand masculinity in simple terms as the social construction of what it is to ‘be a man’ (Kimmel and Bridges 2014). Connell’s body of scholarship is arguably the ‘central reference point for many, if not most, writers on men and masculinity’ (Wetherell and Edley, 1998: 156). Connell and Messerschmitt use two ideal types to explain the centrality of power to masculinity formation. ‘Hegemonic masculinity’ is ‘normative’, embodying ‘the most honored way of being a man’ and ideologically legitimating the subordination of women to men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). Subordinated masculinities by contrast are those that fall outside the spectrum of this ‘normative’ and socially acceptable masculinity. Subordinated masculinities intersect with race, class, sexuality and physical ability / disability amongst other categories. They may be variously represented as ‘threat’ (black male sexuality) or effeminate (gay masculinities) as a mechanism of coercion and forcible control or as in ‘deficit’ (disabled men). Responses from these men range from demonstrations of hyper masculinity, anger and resentment through to active and self-empowering advocacy and activism.

The vast majority of lone-wolf shooters are men, as are the vast majority of participants (and groups such as the Proud Boys) in violence such as the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville in 2017 and the US Capitol insurrection in 2021. As the present study shows, the definition, structure, and praxis of masculinity is particularly important to such men who populate what is sometimes called the ‘manosphere’. The manosphere is an amorphous grouping of social movements, gender theories, and sociality hosted on various websites, message boards and digital social spaces[[2]](#footnote-3). This otherwise loose (and at times contradictory) association of people and ideas is united through a “common preoccupation with male hegemony as it relates to heterosexual [...] gender relations” (Ging 2019, p. 653). Through the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) provide an “overarching framework for understanding how gender inequalities are produced and reproduced” (Jewkes et al. 2017). In this framework, the hegemonic structure of masculinity is relational; shaped by the domination of women and subordination of other men (Connell 2005). That is, masculinity is largely defined by the things that are avoided, dominated, or ‘cast out’ for their association with femininity (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, Connell 2005).

Some have argued that contemporary expressions of masculinity have become more fluid, dynamic, or egalitarian and thus look toward a future of ‘inclusive masculinities’, rejecting the hegemonic structure proposed by Connell and Messerschmidt (Anderson 2009, Kimmel, 2012). However, these works have been countered in subsequent scholarship (De Boise 2014, Ging 2019, O’Neill, 2014) as they generally downplay the accommodations for fluidity and dynamism in the definition of hegemonic masculinity and overlook expressions of masculinity in digital spaces (Vitale 2019). The manifestos analyzed in this study reflect a complicated interplay between hegemonic masculinity and the affordances of digital spaces.

In digital spaces, manosphere-aligned men respond to the (perceived) threat of feminism with severe, sometimes violent backlash, suggesting that they do not inhabit filter bubbles but rather echo chambers, as characterized above. The writings and manifestos analyzed here represent some of the most intense vitriol of the manosphere and reflect an unresolved irony that permeates manosphere writing and digital communities. Though not a cohesive or unified group, manosphere interpretations of gender relations assume men’s dominance over women to be natural. However, at the same time, manosphere men are frustrated with the structure of men’s dominance over other men predicated on men’s sexual dominance over women. Massanari (2017) identifies this particular irony as a (non-exclusive) trait of ‘geek masculinity’. Such men simultaneously reject and reify elements of hegemonic masculinity[[3]](#footnote-4) (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005), recreating the hegemonic structures they rail against. Indeed, in the digital communities and manifestos analyzed herein — particularly in the Rodgers Manifesto and texts produced by self-described ‘braincels’ and ‘spergs’ — acute attention is paid to the perceived rules and ‘unmet promises’ of masculinity.

As such, it is necessary to examine the interwoven tapestries of masculinity, violent extremism, and digital space. We do so via linguistic analysis of the corpora associated with and produced by a range of groups and individuals. In particular, we analyze two corpora from each of: manifestos of male domestic terrorists (Brenton Tarrant and Elliot Rodger), male supremacists (the Australian Lads Society and Men Going Their Own Way), and men’s rights groups (the Men’s Rights Agency and the Australian Men’s Rights Agency).[[4]](#footnote-5) We use semi-automated linguistic analysis of these corpora to profile and compare these groups and individuals. Our results indicate that there are four distinct strands of thinking, language, and behavior in these groups:

* *dominant masculinity,* grounded in the normative domination of women and other men perceived as threat, as somehow effeminate or in deficit,
* *subsidiary masculinity*, which manifests in particular responses grounded in anger and resentment at perceived domination by other men, [[5]](#footnote-6)
* *misogyny*, grounded in resentful or outright hateful attitudes and actions towards women (especially women who are perceived as withholding men’s entitlements), and
* *xenophobia*, which manifests in fearful and vengeful reactions to (perceived) invasion by foreigners and other outsiders (especially people of color).

As we show below, each of these four strands may lead to violent extremism, but dominant masculinity seems to be especially associated with collective action, whereas subsidiary masculinity seems to be more associated with individual action.

If this is on the right track, we can connect the current analysis with the existing philosophical literature in at least two ways. First, we see a connection to work in the philosophy of (political) language on the link between hate speech and the violence it inspires and licenses (Tirrell 2012). Tirrell argues that hate speech that demonizes, invokes contempt and disgust, and employs coded metaphors is sometimes treated as granting permission to engage in acts of violence that would otherwise be seen as morally impermissible. Her main example concerns the Rwandan genocide, which was a form of collective action taken by some members of the Hutu tribe against Tutsi victims. Our work suggests that hate speech in masculinist movements may similarly inspire and grant permission to engage in collective violence against both women and other groups of men who are seen as competitors in mating markets.

Second, and more critically, we see a connection to work on the nature of political speech, especially the overly constrained Rawlsian notion that political speech must refer to public reasons (Rawls 1997). What we find in this discourse is speech, most of which is produced in the allegedly liberal democracies that concern Rawls (he explicitly mentions western Europe, the United States, Israel, and India,) that cannot be denied political import and yet which is stridently addressed only to a parochial ingroup in order to pit them against both compatriots and foreigners (especially immigrants). Whereas Rawls only countenances speech that is addressed universally to fellow citizens, the speech under consideration here is primarily aimed at movement-building, coalition-strengthening (sometimes with the aim of excluding non-citizens), and (perhaps most importantly) meaning-making. In fact, such speech seems to operate *functionally* in the same way as the speech studied by those interested in hermeneutic injustice (e.g., Fricker 2007, but even more so Medina 2013) envision more palatable activist movements. Medina describes at length the ways in which social imaginaries -- which are interactively constructed by members of a community in conversation, trying to make sense of their world and their experience -- can make some experiences, phenomena, and action potentials salient while making others less so or even unintelligible. When a social movement forges new words and new concepts through discursive interaction over time, he argues, what they are doing is to make possible a new way of understanding one’s position in the social world, as well as to give one a sense of who one’s allies and adversaries are. Fricker famously uses the example of the coinage ‘sexual harassment’ by the women’s movement in the second half of the twentieth century to illustrate this phenomenon. What we find in the current research is that members of a range of masculinist movements have been doing the same sort of thing, but with examples such as ‘incel’ (a coinage that they appropriated from a bisexual Canadian woman) and ‘monkey-branching’ (marrying up multiple times). Indeed, perhaps the most notorious appropriation by these groups and allied right-wing political movements is of the term ‘red pill’, which in *The Matrix* movie trilogy refers to the epiphanic experience of seeing the social and political world in a new and different way -- and which the creators of these films have revealed to have originally been a metaphor for realizing that one is trans.[[6]](#footnote-7) To sum up: whereas Rawls sees political speech solely as the giving and taking of reasons in a universal public sphere, we find that much political speech functions to make meaning for parochial and sometimes violent social movements.

# 2 Methodology

We chose to examine digital corpora on websites for three main reasons. First, they are much more easily accessible than printed or spoken corpora. Second, they are already digitized, making their analysis with digital tools straightforward. And third, the internet increasingly seems to be a venue or pathway for radicalization, extremism, and conspiracy theories (Alfano et al. 2018, forthcoming).

We focused on examples of confirmed violent extremists / terrorists who had authored some form of manifesto prior to the act and progenitor groups. We then looked at progenitor groups. These may be considered progenitor political groups. These legal civil society groups are focused on developing and enacting ideas through political action and seek a fundamental reordering of society, though have not graduated to violent extremism. They therefore offer broad insights into groups that do or may eventually engage in political violence.

In particular, we downloaded and analyzed corpora associated with the following groups and individuals:

**Lone-wolf manifestos:**

* **Elliot Rodger** (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/05/25/us/shooting-document.html>): Entitled, “My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger,” this manifesto reads as an autobiographical account of the many real and perceived humiliations Rodger experienced during his youth, leading up to his resolution to go on a shooting spree in Isla Vista, California.
* **Brenton Tarrant** (<https://www.ilfoglio.it/userUpload/The_Great_Replacementconvertito.pdf>): Entitled, “The Great Replacement,” this manifesto reads as an eco-fascist call to arms directed in the first instance at white Australians and New Zealanders and more generally towards whites around the world.

**Male supremacy:**

* **Men Going Their Own Way** (<https://www.mgtow.com/>): This is a loosely-affiliated group of men who have decided to isolate themselves from women. Most seem to be heterosexual divorcés who have given up on the possibility of amicable inter-gender relations.
* **Lads Society** (<https://www.ladssociety.com/>): This is a masculinist and nationalist group that has engaged in harassment of African Australians, among other minorities. They portray themselves as champions of traditional values and have a strong emphasis on individual self-improvement and individual responsibility (though the responsibility is to a narrowly conceived “real” Australia). The group has since disbanded and reformed as the National Socialist Network, which actively uses fascist symbology

**Men’s rights:**

* **Australia’s Men’s Rights Association** (<http://australianmensrights.com/Mens_Rights_Agency-Australia.aspx>): This is an advocacy group that promotes men’s rights in Australia. They pay special attention to laws, regulations, and social norms that they perceive as unjust towards men (e.g., domestic violence, divorce, child support, etc.).
* **Men’s Rights Agency** (<https://mensrights.com.au/>): This group is very similar to the previous one.

Corpora were collected from 26 October 2019 to 19 December 2019. These corpora are not perfectly comparable because they differ in the amount of editorial control exercised by their authors or owners. For example, the authors of the manifestos exercised complete editorial control over their wording and publication. By contrast, the Lads Society features several authors, and the website for Men Going Their Own Way enables comments from pseudonymous users. In addition, the timing of their production differs in important ways: the manifestos are meant to explain particular acts of violence, whereas the other four corpora are more general reflections on and discourse about society. Despite these differences, the size of the corpora makes it possible to draw some illuminating comparisons. Table 1 represents the word count of each corpus.

**Table 1: summary word counts for six corpora.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **corpus** | **word count** |
| Elliot Rodger | 105,946 |
| Brenton Tarrant | 17,045 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | 960,565 |
| Lads Society | 13,943 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 423,533 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 705,257 |
| **total** | **2,226,289** |

Naturally, over two million words is too much to analyze via close reading, so we approached these corpora using both pre-built and custom dictionaries of Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC, see Pennebaker (2011) and Pennebaker et al. (2015) for more details). LIWC works by counting the number of words belonging to various categories in a text. For instance, LIWC combs through a text to examine how many first-person singular pronouns (e.g., *I, me, my*), how many first-person plural pronouns (e.g., *we, us, our*), and how many articles (e.g., *a, an, the*) are used per 100 words. Beyond these so-called *function words*, LIWC has dictionaries for words that indicate complexity of thinking (e.g., *nevertheless, whereas, but*), asking questions (e.g., *who, what, why*), and a range of psychological processes that includes positive and negative emotions, discrete emotions such as anger and sadness, and drives for affiliation, achievement, power, reward, and risk.

Over the last few decades, Pennebaker and his collaborators have shown that this seemingly simple method can reveal quite a bit about individuals, their relationships, and the groups to which they belong. In the context of this study, it is highly relevant that Pennebaker and his colleagues have done consulting work for American police and Homeland Security to try to predict the likelihood that various groups will engage in violence to advance their causes. Independent researchers have also used LIWC to study the language used by Islamist terrorist groups (Vergani & Bliuc 2018; Smith 2013).[[7]](#footnote-8)

One useful functionality of LIWC is the ability to create and share custom dictionaries for categories of interest. Recent work in social and political psychology suggests that, when groups engage in violence, they often believe that they are doing the morally right thing (Fiske & Rai 2014). A popular framework for understanding and comparing the moral values of individuals and groups is Moral Foundations Theory (Haidt 2013). Moral Foundations Theory posits that there are five moral domains to which people are sensitive, and that different people (and groups) focus more on some domains than others. The domains include *care, fairness, loyalty, authority*, and *sanctity*. The first two domains (care and fairness - sometimes called the *individualizing* domains) tend to be associated with left-wing and educated people & groups. By contrast, the other three (loyalty, authority, and sanctity - sometimes called the *binding* domains) tend to be associated with right-wing and uneducated people & groups. Each domain is bipolar, with the positive pole indicating a range of virtues and the negative pole indicating a range of vices. For instance, virtues related to care include *kindness, compassion*, and *empathy*, whereas vices related to care include *cruelty* and a disposition to cause *harm*. Research suggests that groups with heightened emphasis on the binding domains display greater liability to violence — including both punishment of in-group deviants and attacks on outsiders viewed as threats (Leidner & Castano 2012). Frimer et al. (2019) have created a custom LIWC dictionary that contains words associated with both poles of all five dimensions (meaning it contains ten sub-dictionaries).

Additionally, we created four custom LIWC dictionaries that are keyed to specific aspects of masculinity. Based in tandem on research by philosopher and social critic Kate Manne (2017) and sociologist RW Connell (2005), we conceptualize masculinities in terms of dominance and subordination along three dimensions: intra-gender, inter-gender, and inter-group. More specifically, many men evince intense concern for (what they take to be) their position in male dominance hierarchies. Some are (or see themselves as) dominant with respect to other men, whereas others are (or see themselves as) subsidiary to other men. Likewise, many men are (or see themselves as) dominant or subsidiary with respect to women.[[8]](#footnote-9) Finally, many men perceive their group as dominant or subsidiary with respect to other groups, especially racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

To study the language used to talk about such (perceived) dominance hierarchies, we developed custom LIWC dictionaries for the categories of *dominant masculinity, subsidiary masculinity*, *misogyny*, and *xenophobia*. The first two dictionaries include terms that are used to describe men: the dominant masculinity dictionary includes words that refer to men who are (perceived as) dominant in relation to other men, whereas the subsidiary masculinity dictionary includes words that refer to men who are (perceived as) dominated by other men or by women. Note that these words are not necessarily used reflexively: a man who feels subsidiary might, for instance, complain about the ‘Chads’ (dominant men) in his community. The misogyny dictionary includes terms of abuse that are sometimes hurled at women in these corpora.[[9]](#footnote-10) Finally, the xenophobia dictionary includes terms of abuse that are sometimes hurled out perceived outsiders in these corpora, along with words and phrases that refer to inter-group domination and subordination (e.g., ‘white genocide’).

The dictionaries were developed via a two-step process. First, we brainstormed lists of words and n-grams that seemed, intuitively, to be distinctively associated with the four categories of interest. Second, one of the authors read through the corpora and noted words and n-grams that seemed to be associated with the same categories. The manifestos and Lads Society corpus were read in full. Approximately 10% of each of the other corpora was ready. The full dictionaries are available in the online supplementary materials associated with this chapter.

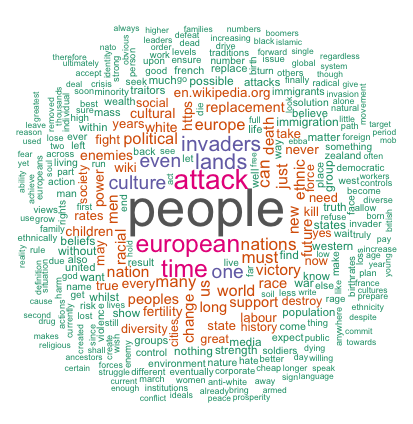
# 3 Results

The results section is subdivided into three parts. First, we present summaries of the corpora under study in the form of word clouds, topic models, and a dendrogram. Next, we use the built-in LIWC dictionaries to begin analyzing the corpora. Finally, we use custom dictionaries to explore the role of moral foundations and masculinity in the corpora.

## 3.1 Corpora summaries

In this subsection we use the quanteda package for R (Benoit et al. 2018) to provide thumbnail summaries of each corpus in the form of word clouds (Figures 1-6), followed by a dendrogram that clusters the corpora based on similarity (Figure 7). In each word cloud, word size represents prevalence in the corpus, with larger words being more prevalent than smaller ones. To aid legibility, text color divides words into bands of roughly equivalent prevalence. The most prevalent words are also placed in the center of each cloud, with less prevalent words at the periphery.

**Figure 1: Word cloud representing the Brenton Tarrant manifesto.** Word size represents prevalence.



As this word cloud makes immediately clear, Tarrant is obsessed with intergroup relations of dominance and subordination.

**Figure 2: Word cloud representing the Elliot Rodger manifesto.** Word size represents prevalence.



As this word cloud makes clear, Rodger’s manifesto is much more focused on specific individuals and personal relationships.

**Figure 3: Word cloud representing the Men Going Their Own Way corpus.** Word size represents prevalence.



As this word cloud makes clear, Men Going Their Own Way tend to focus on inter-gender relations generally, and less on specific individuals or hierarchical relationships between groups.

**Figure 4: Word cloud representing the Lads Society corpus.** Word size represents prevalence.



As this word cloud suggests, the Lads Society manifests an obsession with order and white ethno-nationalism.

**Figure 5: Word cloud representing the Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency corpus.** Word size represents prevalence.



As this word cloud makes clear, Australia’s Men’s rights agency focuses primarily on legal and legislative regulation of the family.

**Figure 6: Word cloud representing the Men’s Rights Agency corpus.** Word size represents prevalence.

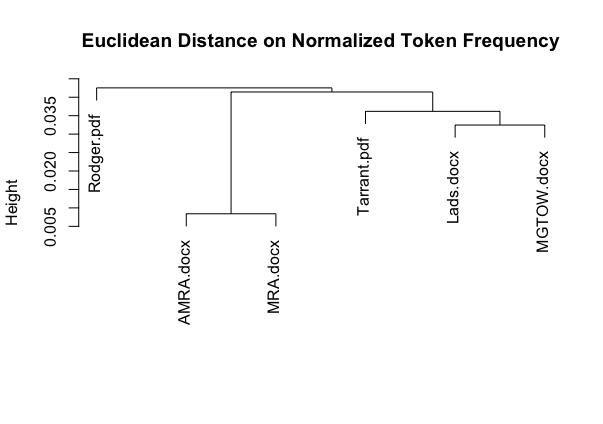


Finally, as this word cloud makes clear, the Men’s rights agency also focuses primarily on legal and legislative regulation of the family.

Altogether, these corpora represent a range of topics and underlying interests and concerns. For example, the Tarrant manifesto is primarily about race, culture, and violent intergroup conflict. By contrast, the Rodger manifesto is much more focused on a small number of individuals (especially Rodger’s parents and friends) and (potential) sexual relationships. The Men Going Their Own Way corpus evinces less emphasis on specific individuals and more on broad generalizations about men and (even more so) women. Next, the Lads Society corpus seems to resemble the Tarrant manifesto in its emphasis on intergroup conflict, paired with intense focus on hierarchy and social order. Finally, the men’s rights corpora look very similar, with two primary focal points: family relations and the law.

These impressions are borne out by the dendrogram pictured in Figure 7, which clusters the corpora hierarchically based on their similarities and differences. The men’s rights corpora are quite similar to one another and very different from the other four corpora. The Lads Society and Men Going Their Own Way corpora are most similar to each other and also quite similar to the Tarrant manifesto. The Rodger manifesto appears, at least in this context, to be one-of-a-kind.

**Figure 7: Dendrogram of the corpora under study.** Greater vertical distance represents greater dissimilarity.



## 3.2 Analysis using built-in LIWC dictionaries

We now turn to more fine-grained analyses of the corpora under study, beginning with four aggregate measures developed specifically for the most recent edition of LIWC: Analytic, Clout, Authentic, and Tone (Pennebaker et al. 2015). These categories are based on proprietary algorithms that draw inputs from multiple sub-categories. The Analytic dimension is associated with formal, logical, and structured thinking and expression; higher scores represent more analytical thinking. The Authentic dimension is based on algorithms from a string of studies by Pennebaker and his colleagues that examined honesty and deception. Higher scores are associated specifically with honest self-disclosure (and not necessarily with other aspects of honesty). The Clout dimension is associated with social status and leadership; higher scores represent greater clout. Finally, the Tone dimension represents the relative emotional and affective positivity versus negativity of a corpus, with higher scores representing a predominance of positivity and lower scores a predominance of negativity. All scores are normalized on a scale that ranges from 0 to 100. Table 2 represents these normalized scores for all four categories.

**Table 2: Normalized scores (ranging from 0 to 100) for the categories of Analytic, Clout, Authentic, and Tone.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **Analytic** | **Clout** | **Authentic** | **Tone** |
| Brenton Tarrant | 77.38 | 77.61 | 32.08 | 13.65 |
| Elliot Rodger | 62.62 | 35.58 | 83.96 | 38.20 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | 54.81 | 69.57 | 29.27 | 35.61 |
| Lads Society | 78.41 | 82.00 | 28.71 | 40.33 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 91.01 | 82.17 | 12.14 | 13.57 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 89.21 | 81.82 | 13.32 | 10.72 |

These numbers present broad-strokes sketches of each corpus. Most are highly analytic, with the exception of Men Going Their Own Way. Most speak with a good deal of clout, with the exception of Men Going Their Own Way and, even more so, Elliot Rodger. By contrast, with the exception of Elliot Rodger, most score quite low on authenticity, suggesting a lack of honest self-disclosure. Finally, all have predominantly negative tone, with Brenton Tarrant and the men’s rights groups scoring lowest in tone.

To shed further light on these corpora, we now turn to more specific categories that provide inputs to the aggregate measures. The first category we examine is use of first-person pronouns. Two indicators that LIWC tracks are the frequencies of first-person singular and first-person plural pronouns. One might intuitively think that use of the first-person singular would be associated with narcissism and high status. However, Pennebaker has consistently found across many studies that the first-person singular is used more by people who are self-conscious, low-status, depressed, or socially isolated.[[10]](#footnote-11) In addition, frequent use of the first-person plural is associated in some cases with high status (e.g., the so-called *royal* *‘we’*) or of strongly identifying with one’s group. Unfortunately, LIWC is not able to distinguish these two uses of the first-person plural. Table 3 represents the frequency of both types of pronouns in each corpus under analysis, along with their ratio.

**Table 3: frequency and ratio of first-person singular and first-person plural by corpus.** Values for 1st-singular and 1st-plural represent the percent of total words; values for the ratio greater than 1 indicate greater individual self-focus, which is associated with self-consciousness, low status, and depression, whereas values less than 1 indicate greater identification with one’s group, and potentially also greater confidence, status, and arrogance.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **1st-singular** | **1st-plural** | **singular/plural** |
| Brenton Tarrant | 1.34 | 1.43 | .93 |
| Elliot Rodger | 8.55 | .62 | 13.80 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | 2.80 | .50 | 5.65 |
| Lads Society | .65 | 2.97 | .22 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | .63 | .32 | 1.97 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | .76 | .44 | 1.71 |

The corpora associated with Elliot Rodger and Men Going Their Own Way stand out as intensely individually self-focused. At the opposite extreme, these results suggest that members of the Lads Society are high-status, confident, and/or identified with their community. Whereas the Tarrant manifesto is heavily focused on the first-person plural, the Rodger manifesto is highly focused on the first-person singular. In this sense, the Tarrant manifesto resembles more the Lads Society corpus while the Rodger manifesto resembles the Men Going Their Own Way corpus. To illustrate, contrast the following examples (relevant terms are highlighted in boldface):

Brenton Tarrant: “**We** must crush immigration and deport those invaders already living on **our** soil. It is not just a matter of **our** prosperity, but the very survival of **our** people.”

Elliot Rodger: “As **I** made my way back from school one day during the first week, **I** stopped at a stoplight in Isla Vista when **I** saw two hot blonde girls waiting at the bus stop. **I** was dressed in one of **my** nice shirts, so **I** looked at them and smiled. They looked at **me**, but they didn’t even deign to smile back. They just looked away as if **I** was a fool. As **I** drove away **I** became infuriated. It was such an insult. This was the way all girls treated **me**, and **I** was sick and tired of it. In a rage, **I** made a U-turn, pulled up to their bus stop and splashed **my** Starbucks latte all over them.”

Lads Society: “National Socialism is the worldview of Truth. Another word for Truth is Nature. By Truth or Nature, **we** are referring to the Natural laws of the universe. **We** affirm that there are Natural laws that make up reality, an example being gravity. **We** have decided to obey these laws as **we** know that **we** will be punished if **we** do not; if you deny the Truth of gravity, and decide to jump off a cliff without a means of slowing your descent, then you will be punished with death.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “**I’m** new to the site so **I’m** just now learning the ropes. **I** thought **I’d** tell you guys this site feels like it was made for **me**. **I** just wish **I** found it sooner. **I** recently went through a traumatizing experience with a woman. For so long **I’ve** been seeking the companionship and approval from these parasites, but no more. **I** must improve **myself** for **myself** from now on. **I** must go my own way.”

Next, we address several indicators of mental health and illness. In his previous work using LIWC, Pennebaker has found that people who have the best mental health outcomes display a particular profile: they tend to use many positive emotion words, a middling number of negative emotion words, and many words associated with cognitive processes that help people to make sense of their lives and the world (e.g., words related to insight and understanding, as well as words that represent causal and inferential connections).[[11]](#footnote-12) Table 4 represents the frequencies of each of these types of words.

**Table 4: frequency of positive emotion, negative emotion, and cognitive process words.** Values represent the percent of total words. The cogproc category includes the following sub-categories: insight, causation, discrepancy, tentativeness, certainty, and differentiation.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **pos-emo** | **neg-emo** | **cogproc** |
| Brenton Tarrant | 2.64 | 3.30 | 9.74 |
| Elliot Rodger | 3.16 | 2.32 | 9.25 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | 2.97 | 2.14 | 10.49 |
| Lads Society | 2.49 | 1.66 | 10.04 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 2.14 | 2.78 | 8.40 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 2.07 | 2.94 | 8.54 |

By these measures, most groups look similar. The two male supremacist groups talk more than the others about cognitive processes. To illustrate, consider these examples from Men Going Their Own Way and the Tarrant and Rodger manifestos:

Men Going Their Own Way: “She may, of course, go on to obtain various degrees and diplomas. These increase her market value in the eyes of men, for men **believe** that a woman who can recite things by heart must also **know** and **understand** them.”

Brenton Tarrant: “Whilst we may use edgy humour and memes in the vanguard stage, and to attract a young audience, eventually we will need to show the reality of our thoughts and our more serious intents and wishes for the future. For now we appeal to the anger and black comedic nature of the present, but eventually we will need to show the **warmth** and genuine **love** we have for our people.”

Elliot Rodger: “My life turned into a living hell after I started desiring them when I hate puberty. I desire them intensely, but I could never have them. I could never have the experience of holding hands with a beautiful girl and walking on a moonlit beach, I could never **embrace** a girlfriend and feel her **warmth** and **love**, I could never have passionate sex with a girl and drift off to sleep with her sexy body beside me. Women deemed me unworthy of having them, and so they deprived me of an **enjoyable** youth, while giving their **love** and sex to other boys.”

In addition, there seem to be differences in the use of positive and negative emotion words among these groups. However, negative emotions are quite diverse, including both high-arousal approach emotions such as anger and low-arousal withdrawal emotions such as sadness. To shed further light on the emotional states of these groups, we examine three distinct negative emotions in the corpora: anxiety, anger, and sadness. Anxiety is an anticipatory emotion. It prompts attentional narrowing on (potential) future risks and harms, as well as motivation to seek relief from perceived threats (Derryberry 2001). Anger, by contrast, is more focused on the present. It is also more active and typically involves an approach-orientation that leads the angry person to confront whomever they are angry with.[[12]](#footnote-13) Finally, sadness is a more passive, past-oriented emotion. It responds to the loss of someone or something valuable.[[13]](#footnote-14) Table 5 represents the frequencies of each of these three types of words.

**Table 5: frequency of anxiety, anger, and sadness.** Values represent the percent of total words.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **anxiety** | **anger** | **sadness** |
| Brenton Tarrant | .39 | 1.92 | .51 |
| Elliot Rodger | .43 | .87 | .67 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | .30 | .79 | .39 |
| Lads Society | .25 | .68 | .29 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | .31 | .93 | .34 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | .33 | 1.03 | .35 |

These numbers help to shed more light on the emotional tone of each corpus. Whereas the Tarrant manifesto stands out for being overwhelmingly angry, the Rodger manifesto (while still angry) expresses a good deal more sadness. To illustrate, consider the following examples:

Brenton Tarrant: “The only muslim I truly **hate** is the convert, those from our own people that turn their backs on their heritage, turn their backs on their cultures, turn their back on their traditions and become blood **traitors** to their own race. These I **hate**.”

Elliot Rodger: “I felt so **heartbroken** that I left the two of them and **cried** to myself, ruining my whole experience at the museum. *How could girls check out Addison but not me?* I asked myself repeatedly as I tried to hide my **tears** from people who walked by me. I walked out to the edge of the grant terrace of the museum, looking out at the city lights of Los Angeles as well as the stars above. In that moment, I fell into a sort of **despair**-ridden trance.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “One morning, a woman comes downstairs, to the kitchen, to find her husband **crying**, inconsolably, over his coffee. Worried, she tries everything to find the reason for his upset. Finally, the husbank takes a short break from his **grief**, and asks his wife ‘Do you remember when your father caught us fooling around, with your panties around your ankles ?…and he told me that if I didn’t marry you, he would have me arrested and sent to prison ?’ The wife smiled, and said ‘Yes, I could never forget that !’. The husbank began **sobbing** again, even louder than before.”[[14]](#footnote-15)

Next, we examine words that represent social relations. In particular, LIWC has dictionaries for family (e.g., *daughter, uncle*), friends (e.g., *buddy, neighbor*), women (e.g., *girl, mom*), and men (e.g., *boy, dad*). Table 6 represents the frequencies of each of these four types of words.

**Table 6: frequency of family, friend, female, and male references, along with female:male ratio.** Values represent the percent of total words except for the ratio: when the ratio is greater than 1, there are more references to women than to men, whereas when the ratio is less than 1, there are more references to men than to women.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **family** | **friend** | **female** | **male** | **f:m** |
| Brenton Tarrant | .20 | .04 | .13 | .32 | .42 |
| Elliot Rodger | 1.02 | .42 | 1.35 | 1.46 | .92 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | .59 | .33 | 1.76 | 1.52 | 1.16 |
| Lads Society | .21 | .13 | .43 | .77 | .56 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 2.35 | .30 | 1.45 | 2.21 | .66 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 2.02 | .27 | 1.52 | 2.14 | .71 |

Across the board, the men’s rights groups have a lot to say about family and gender, as well as (to a lesser extent) friends. While they talk more than most of the other groups about women, they focus even more on men. Men Going Their Own Way displays a slightly different pattern: they have relatively little to say about family but are intensely interested in friends and gender. In addition, and perhaps ironically, they focus more on women than on men. To illustrate, consider the following examples:

Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency: “Coercion into sexual intimacy under threat; whether it be to end the relationship or marriage, to withhold your rights during Property Settlement or to abuse the **children** including threats to seek intimacy with your **daughter** or **son**.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “In a span of about three years virtually all gone .. **neighbor** **buddy** died, probably my best **friend**.”

Next, we turn our attention to words related to various aspects of embodiment. LIWC has four separate dictionaries of such words that represent bodies generally, health, sexuality, and eating. Table 7 represents the frequencies of each of these four types of words.

**Table 7: frequency of body, health, sexuality, and eating words.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **body** | **health** | **sexuality** | **eating** |
| Brenton Tarrant | .31 | .48 | .13 | .07 |
| Elliot Rodger | .33 | .84 | .28 | .39 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | .52 | .70 | .37 | .37 |
| Lads Society | .41 | .74 | .08 | .25 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | .19 | .57 | .17 | .08 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | .22 | .62 | .25 | .11 |

Across the board, Men Going Their Own Way seems to be concerned with all aspects of embodiment. By contrast, the Lads Society seems to pay a lot of attention to all aspects of embodiment *except* sexuality. The high value of the men’s rights groups on the health dimension seems to be driven by the fact that they frequently talk about the ‘red pill’, and *pill* is one of the words in the health dictionary; this result should therefore be disregarded as an artifact of the methodology. To illustrate, consider the following examples:

Men Going Their Own Way: “I’m not **bald**, but thinning. I cut off my almost **waist** length **hair** earlier this year to go back to a crew cut that was easier to take care of. My **beard** is **chest** length.”

Men’s Rights Agency: “Within the men’s rights movement, activists commonly refer to their ‘**red** **pill**’ moment- the moment when they were exposed to the truth, discovering a reality which they never knew existed. Having spent an entire weekend engaging with the perspectives and ideas of the men’s rights movement, I can now proudly say that I have had my own **red** **pill** moment. Will you take the **red** **pill**?”

Men Going Their Own Way: “If an average girl works hard enough, she will be able to have a **one-night stand** with a ‘**hot**’ guy every now and then because he happened to be **horny** and wanted an **easy lay**. The girl then thinks that she actually can get such a man to commit to her for the long term, and so doesn’t give the average guys a chance, holding out for the type of **stud** that she had a brief **sexual** encounter with in the past.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “I wouldn’t waste the money hiring a cleaning lady and I don’t **eat** out every **meal** because **cooking** and cleaning are so easy…why would I want an over priced wife to **cook** and clean for me?”

Next, we consider the drives that seem to motivate each group and individual. These include affiliation, achievement, power, reward, and risk. In her work for the US Department of Homeland Security, Allison Smith has found that those who display high focus on *both* affiliation and power are the most likely to engage in collective action in support of their goals (Pennebaker 2011, p. 281 endnote; see also Pennebaker & Chung 2008). Table 8 summarizes these results.

**Table 8: frequency of drives to affiliation, achievement, power, reward, and risk, along with the product of affiliation and power.** Values represent the percent of total words except for the final column, which represents the value of the affiliation column multiplied by the value of the power column.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **affiliation** | **achievement** | **power** | **reward** | **risk** | **aff\*pow** |
| Brenton Tarrant | 2.31 | 1.84 | 4.24 | .96 | .57 | 9.79 |
| Elliot Rodger | 2.03 | 1.21 | 2.06 | 1.15 | .33 | 4.18 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | 1.52 | 1.08 | 2.20 | 1.27 | .62 | 3.35 |
| Lads Society | 4.34 | 1.97 | 3.66 | .96 | .50 | 15.91 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 2.83 | 1.11 | 4.20 | .75 | .68 | 11.88 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 2.72 | 1.09 | 4.08 | .74 | .71 | 11.12 |

The results for the affiliation category are consistent with those found for the first-person plural category above, with the Lads Society showing the greatest sense of affiliation. The results in the final column of the table indicate that the groups most likely to engage in collective action are the Lads Society and the men’s rights organizations, as well as those inspired by Brenton Tarrant. By contrast, the Elliot Rodger manifesto most resembles the corpus of Men Going Their Own Way. To illustrate, consider the following examples:

Brenton Tarrant: “There is no nation in the world that wasn’t founded by, or maintained by, the use of **force**. **Force** is **power**. History is the history of **power**. Violence is **power** and violence is the reality of history.”

Elliot Rodger: “I continued to build up my faith that I am destined to win the Megamillions jackpot. It is the future that was meant for me; the perfect, **happy** conclusion to the tragic life I’ve had to experience in the past. I couldn’t wait to rub my **status** as a **wealthy** man right in the faces of all the people who looked down on me, and all of the girls who thought of me as **unworthy**. I mused that once I became **wealthy**, I would finally be **worthy** enough to all of the beautiful girls.”

Lads Society: “**[W]e** are the rightful heirs to **our** civilisation. For if there was not **power** in **our** ideas, why would **we** need to be shut down? If there is **power** in **our** ideas then why?”

## 3.3 Analysis using custom LIWC dictionaries

Next, we turn to our custom dictionaries. As mentioned above, groups that engage in violence tend to have a very positive view of their own moral standing. Moreover, groups that place greatest weight on the binding moral foundations of loyalty, authority, and sanctity display a greater propensity to violence than groups that emphasize the other two dimensions of care and fairness. To help differentiate the corpora under study, we used a custom LIWC dictionary of moral foundations to compare corpora. Table 9 represents the moral foundations profiles of each corpus.

**Table 9: Moral foundations profiles of all corpora.** Numbers represent the percentage of words in the total corpus that refer to each foundation.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **care** | **fairness** | **loyalty** | **authority** | **sanctity** |
| Brenton Tarrant | 1.73 | .37 | 1.23 | .88 | .89 |
| Elliot Rodger | .96 | .21 | .33 | .41 | .41 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | .84 | .32 | .34 | .36 | .89 |
| Lads Society | .84 | .45 | 1.18 | 1.37 | .81 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | 2.62 | .83 | 1.09 | 1.10 | .44 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | 2.45 | .77 | .95 | .98 | .48 |

The men’s rights groups place much more emphasis on the care foundation than the other eight groups, which should be unsurprising given their focus on fatherhood and fatherly care of children (especially during and after divorce). They also focus more on fairness than the other groups, though not by as large a margin; this too makes a certain amount of sense because they often complain about what they perceive to be unjust and unfair laws and norms that favor women over men. The corpora most focused on the binding dimension of loyalty are associated with Brenton Tarrant, the Lads Society, and Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency. The corpus most focused on the binding dimension of authority is the Lads Society. In light of the findings discussed above, this suggests that the groups most likely to engage in what Fiske & Rai (2014) call “virtuous violence” are the Lads Society and anyone inspired by Tarrant’s manifesto. To illustrate, consider these examples:

Brenton Tarrant: “Unsurprisingly, **ethno-nationalists** and **nationalists** seek employment in areas that **serve** their **nations** and **community**. I would estimate the number of **soldiers** in European armed forces that also belong to **nationalist** groups to number in the hundreds of thousands, with just as many employed in **law enforcement** positions.”

Lads Society: “Our first **loyalty** is to our direct Family, then to our **tribe** or community, then to our greater **Nation** or Ethnic group (in the case of new world Europeans such as Australians or Americans this is a Pan-European heritage) and finally for all Europeans our **loyalty** is to the Race, that is to a European World.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “MGTOW is not a group. It’s a population of individuals.”

In order to further investigate the role of masculinity in these corpora, we now turn to analysis using our own custom dictionaries. Table 10 represents the frequencies of words and n-grams associated with each category.

**Table 10: frequency of dominant masculinity, subsidiary masculinity, misogyny, and xenophobia.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Corpus** | **hegmasc** | **submasc** | **misogyny** | **xeno** |
| Brenton Tarrant | .22 | .05 | .01 | .56 |
| Elliot Rodger | .07 | .27 | .02 | .00 |
| Men Going Their Own Way | .15 | .24 | .17 | .02 |
| Lads Society | .46 | .06 | .04 | .04 |
| Australia’s Men’s Rights Agency | .08 | .02 | .02 | .00 |
| Men’s Rights Agency | .09 | .02 | .02 | .00 |

In line with the analyses above, the Tarrant manifesto and -- even more so -- the Lads Society corpus demonstrate intense focus on dominant masculinity. By contrast, the Elliot Rodger manifesto demonstrates heightened focus on subsidiary masculinity. As measured by our new custom dictionary, the Men Going Their Own Way corpus is unique in showing a high focus on both dominant and subsidiary masculinity, as well as being by far the most misogynistic. Finally, the Tarrant manifesto is the most xenophobic. To illustrate, consider the following examples:

Brenton Tarrant: “**Mass immigration** will disenfranchise us, subvert our nations, destroy our communities, destroy our **ethnic binds**, destroy our cultures, destroy our peoples. Long before **low fertility levels** ever could.Thus, before we deal with the **fertility rates**, we must deal with both the **invaders** within our lands and the **invaders** that seek to enter our lands. We must crush immigration and **deport** those **invaders** already living on our soil. It is not just a matter of our prosperity, but the very survival of our people.”

Elliot Rodger: “My father drove up to Santa Barbara to meet me a few days later. The two of us went to have lunch at a restaurant in the Camino Real Marketplace, an area that I often frequented. When we sat down at our table, I saw a young couple sitting a few tables down the row. The sight of them enraged me to no end, especially because it was a dark-skinned Mexican guy dating a hot blonde white girl. I regarded it as a great **insult** to my dignity. How could an **inferior** Mexican guy be able to date a white blonde girl, while I was still suffering as a **lonely** **virgin**? I was ashamed to be in such an **inferior** position in front my father. When I saw the two of them kissing, I could barely contain my rage. I stood up in anger, and I was about to walk up to them and pour my glass of soda all over their heads. I probably would have, if father wasn’t there. I was seething with **envious** rage, and my father was there to watch it all. It was so **humiliating**.”

Men Going Their Own Way: “Being so closely affiliated with MGTOW on Youtube, people identifying as ‘**incel**’ usually get exposed to MGTOW and end up on soft-mgtow channels like TFM or Sandman… if they’re inquisitive enough, they get tired of the cheap content and search for the original content by Barbar and Stardusk.…they continue down the rabbit hole going through phases of MGTOW growth: exposure, **red-pill** acquisition, understanding **hypergamy** & evo-psych, then **red pill** rage, then internalization, **black pill** acceptance, self-actualization.The **incel** fad-trend is another symptom of how the MGTOW message is growing larger sociologically.”[[15]](#footnote-16)

Lads Society: “What we got wrong about the ‘**Chad**/**Sperg** ratio’ was that we believed we needed both **Chads** and **Spergs** in order to have a functioning movement. There was differences between States, and some managed to have a ‘culling of the **Spergs’** while in others the **Spergs** outnumbered the **Chads** and eventually the **Chads** stopped bothering to attend **holocaust revision** society. What we must do differently this time is realise that we must embody the old ways. We must not be of **Chad** or **Sperg** alone, but that every man must take the best qualities of both and live the **14 words**, becoming the **Warrior** Poet, the Scholar **Athlete**, the **Freeman**, the **Übermensch**, the **Hyperborean**... the **Chad** **Sperg**.”[[16]](#footnote-17)

As these examples illustrate, gender and race are tightly intertwined strands in the language and attitudes of these individuals and groups. Even the Rodger manifesto, which does not register as highly xenophobic when using word counts, evinces an obsession with racial and ethnic hierarchies, with white blondes at the top and people with darker skin tones and hair color below. Likewise, the Tarrant manifesto, which does not register as highly misogynistic when using word counts, evinces an obsession with women as bearers of children. The Men Going Their Own Way corpus includes many terms and phrases related to subsidiary masculinity and misogyny, whereas the Lads Society corpus includes many terms and phrases related to dominant masculinity. This ties into broader international studies that assert the intersection of far right and anti-women attitudes (DiBranco 2017; Roose 2020).

# 4 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, we used automated psycholinguistic analysis to profile and compare six corpora. Two were manifestos authored by men who went on to commit terrorist violence. The other four were authored by men who have not, to our knowledge, committed any acts of violence. However, two of those four resemble the manifestos in disturbing ways: The Lads Society corpus is strikingly similar to the Tarrant manifesto, while the Men Going Their Own Way corpus resembles the Rodger manifesto. By contrast, the corpora associated with the men’s rights agencies resemble each other but are notably different from both the manifestos and the corpora associated with the Lads Society and Men Going Their Own Way.

All six corpora engage with the topics of gender and race in interrelated ways. To better understand these strands of thought, we developed four custom dictionaries for the categories of dominant masculinity, subsidiary masculinity, misogyny, and xenophobia. We hope that these dictionaries will be of use in future research on masculinity and online radicalization. To that end, we have made them available via the Open Science Framework.

In closing, we want to suggest that philosophical reflections on political discourse need to move beyond analyses of the exchange of reasons and arguments in an idealized public sphere. A robust democracy is not only a state in which Rawlsian public reasons are offered by various parties but also a state that recognizes and responds to existential threats. In other words, even in an ideal Rawlsian democratic state, people need to be aware of and critically responsive to the use of *non-public* reasons such as those employed by the masculinist movements studied in this chapter. Simply ignoring people and movements who don’t play by the utopian rules is not a viable option.

 The corpora documented in this chapter are clearly not addressed to the full population with the aim of persuading via reasons. Elliott Rodger had no interest in persuading women to treat him differently. Brenton Tarrant had no interest in rationally persuading immigrants of color not to relocate to Australia or New Zealand. The only exceptions may be the men’s rights agencies, which seem to be genuinely interested in changing laws and social norms via persuasion. The other corpora are better understood as recruitment tools for extremist ideologies and attempts to forge a hermeneutical framework that warrants such ideals -- and perhaps even as hate speech and incitement to violence. If this is right, then the current study may help to expand the range of types of language considered by empirically oriented political philosophers.

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1. Other researchers question the underlying assumption that the internet is the sort of thing we should blame. Omotoyinbo (2014: 58), for example, argues that in these cases the “Netizen [user of the Internet] is the criminal and that the Net is a guiltless accomplice.” Those inclined to turn an eye away from the medium itself have sought various alternative explanations for the phenomenon of self-radicalization, such as social alienation (Abrahams 2002; Torok 2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. With no single ‘home’, the manosphere populates various digital social spaces including: Reddit (r/TheRedPill, r/MGTOW, and (now defunct) r/incels & r/braincels), image- or message-boards (4chan’s /b, (now defunct) PUAHate, (now defunct) SlutHate, conventional social media sites (Facebook, Twitter), ‘free speech’ alternative social media sites (Voat, Parler) and a collection of others such as A Voice for Men, Return of Kings, and MensRights. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. For example, men who do not embody hegemonic masculine traits (e.g. athleticism) may valorize a different subset of traits associated with masculinity (e.g. intellect). While they are themselves subordinated to lower rungs on the hierarchy, the performance of and hyperfocus on their subset of masculine traits enables subordinate men to uphold the hegemonic exclusion and domination of women and other men (see: Massanari 2017 & Vitale 2019) [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. It is noteworthy in this context that, in his manifesto, Tarrant writes, “**From where did you receive/research/develop your beliefs?** The internet, of course. You will not find the truth anywhere else.” Likewise, Rodger writes in his manifesto, “Joining chatrooms through AOL temporarily filled in the social void for a few weeks. This will definitely not be the first time I would try to fill in that void with the internet.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. This line of thinking is summed up in the Rodger manifesto, where he writes, “The boys who girls find attractive will live pleasure-filled lives while they dominate the boys who girls deem unworthy.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. For a similar diagnosis of the so-called “Dark Enlightenment” advocated by the alt-right, see Aikin (2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. In the interest of open science, we decided whenever possible to use the R package LIWCalike, which imitates and expands the functionality of LIWC. Doing so introduces slight discrepancies because of the way LIWC and LIWCalike tokenize and count words. However, the patterns remain the same regardless of which software is used. The LIWCalike package was created and is maintained by Kenneth Benoit at <https://devhub.io/repos/kbenoit-LIWCalike>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. For instance, in his manifesto, Rodger writes, “The world truly is a brutal place, where a man must fight a bitter struggle against all other men to reach the top.” Later in the manifesto, he says, “I wanted to inflict pain on all young couples. It was around this point in my life that I realized I was capable of doing such things. I would happily do such things. I was capable of killing them, and I wanted to. I wanted to kill them slowly, to strip the skins off their flesh. They deserve it. The males deserve it for taking the females away from me, and the females deserve it for choosing those males instead of me.” [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. In the interest of open science (including open data and open methods), corpora and code are available at the Open Science Framework page associated with this project: <https://osf.io/4nyuz/?view_only=2cc86ad8b4564063ba3a092171add5f7>. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. See Pennebaker (2011, chapters 2 and 3) for a summary of these studies. See also Pennebaker & Chung (2011), Campbell & Pennebaker (2003), Seih et al. (2011), Stirman & Pennebaker (2001), and Rude et al. (2004). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. See Pennebaker et al. (1997), Moore & Brody (2009), and Graham et al. (2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. See, among others, Cherry & Flanagan (2018). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. See, among others, Gotlib (2017). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The term ‘husbank’ is a portmanteau of ‘husband’ and ‘bank’ that expresses the idea that the only reason a woman would marry a man is to gain access to his money. It is one of many terms included in the subsidiary masculinity dictionary. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Popularized on 4chan, reddit and other digital social spaces populated by ‘the manosphere’, the term ‘incel’ refers to a man who is involuntarily celibate, i.e., who would like to and believes he has a right to have a sexually-active relationship but is unable to find a willing partner. The term ‘hypergamy’ refers to the act of ‘marrying up’ in a social hierarchy; men in these groups seem to believe that women tend to try to marry up, whereas they themselves would be content to be with someone who is their status equivalent. Drawing an analogy with the movie *The Matrix*, men who participate in this discourse distinguish between ‘red’ and ‘blue’ pills. In the movie, Morpheus (a mentor figure) offers Neo (the main character) a choice between taking a red pill or a blue pill. The red pill will reveal to him the true, horrifying nature of reality, whereas the blue pill will put him to sleep and erase his memory. In the context of the manosphere, to be ‘redpilled’ is to ‘wake up’ to a dystopian vision of intra-masculine and inter-gender hierarchies. In this dynamic, ‘bluepilled’ men remain ignorant to this ‘true nature’ of the world. An additional term coined in the manosphere, the ‘black pill’, refers to an even more extreme nihilistic & fatalistic version of ‘red pill’ beliefs. To be ‘blackpilled’ is to conclude that one will always be too low on various, immutable hierarchies to ever have a sexually satisfying (and, therefore, worthwhile) life. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. The term ‘sperg’ is a colloquial term for a person with a form of Autism Spectrum Disorder formerly known as Asperger’s Syndrome. Some who participate in the manosphere use the term to describe themselves (and others in the community), associating their perceived lack of social prowess and single-minded obsessiveness about an *idée fixe* with stereotypes about people with ASD. The phrase ‘14 words’ refers to the neo-Nazi slogan, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children,” which Tarrant also alludes to in his manifesto. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)