



**University of
Reading**

(The Cost Of) A Place At The Table:
Homo-Authoritarianism and the Log Cabin Republicans in
Trump's America.

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Abstract

LGBT+ conservatism is deeply under-researched; a small handful of articles and even fewer books, compared to veritable libraries' worth of content on LGBT+ liberalism. Most of these works were completed well before the Trump administration, and the conclusions drawn are typically based on privilege; assuming that LGBT+ conservatives are just voting their pocketbook. But the political landscape in the US is increasingly mainstreaming the far right, and it is prudent to revisit this issue and see how the Log Cabin Republicans (LCR), America's only serious political representation for LGBT+ conservatives, have been swept up in the tide.

Previously a fringe organisation, Trump offered LCR a place in the GOP mainstream, including appointing their members to high office. I argue in this thesis that LCR rewarded this by embracing authoritarianism, aligning themselves firmly to Trump and engaging in various discourses on social media that undermined his accountability and demonstrated their loyalty to him. I refer to this concept as 'Homo-Authoritarianism', an extension of Jasbir Puar's (2007, 2013) theory of 'Homonationalism'.

Using critical discourse analysis methods on a sample of 1300 LCR tweets, I argue that the onset of the Trump era has seen the group engage in discourse indicative of authoritarian followers; broad 'accountability sabotage' (Glasius, 2018), 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) and populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) designed to maintain constant ideological alignment to Trump and legitimise him. This is an exchange for political capital and security that ultimately leaves LCR unable to meaningfully oppose discrimination, and complicit in the weakening of Democracy.

Furthermore, it may be a model for other far right leaders; enabling them to strengthen their supporter base and engage in discrimination by first aligning certain LGBT+ groups to themselves in such a way that they end up unable to meaningfully critique them, and unwilling to try.

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Database Information Statement

The dataset used to conduct the research for this thesis has been deposited in the University of Reading's Research Data Archive. It will be made available as an *Open Access* database, under *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International*. Researchers are welcome to make use of the dataset, which includes the ID's of every tweet used in the work, as well as quantitative variable information. Researchers should note that the dataset has been stored as a list of TweetIDs, which will need to be rehydrated, rather than the text of whole tweets, in accordance with Twitter's terms of service regarding databases.

Those wishing to use the dataset should reference it as follows:

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Charting the Fall

1.1 Introduction

Twitter/X has gained an infamous reputation for communicating far right ideology in recent years, having been used heavily for such ends by the likes of Donald Trump. Dissecting the language and ideas communicated through it, and how these ideas change to become more insidious over time, is of increasing importance. This thesis uses critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016) methods to analyse these trends amongst an often overlooked and under-researched demographic of the American right wing; LGBT+ conservatives, specifically the *Log Cabin Republicans* (LCR). LCR are the only nationwide political organisation that represents this demographic, meaning they are often the first, and last, word in LGBT+ Republican politics. Other organisations, like *GOProud*, have had short reaches and shorter shelf-lives, whereas Log Cabin have been operating continually since 1977 (Log Cabin Republicans, n.d). Previously, this group was a byword for inclusive, libertarian politics within the GOP, with occasional moments in the media spotlight; such as their starring role in the *American Dad* episode "Lincoln Lover" (2006). In said episode the protagonist, Stan, a satirical card-carrying Republican, embraces the cause of gay rights with the hopeful refrain "Come on down to the big tent; the Grand Old Party just got grander!" The hopeful notes stop there however, as I argue in this thesis that LCR have made a turn to the far right that both demolishes their ability to fight for LGBT+ rights, and makes them willingly complicit in the erosion of US democracy; a turn that may have wider, damning, implications which are worth sustained scholarly study.

I argue that LCR have become a deeply authoritarian organisation, one which uses populist arguments against the left (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), as well as more general authoritarian follower behaviour (Adorno et al, 1950 [2019]) (Altemeyer, 1981) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020), to legitimise Donald Trump's once and future rule of the USA, and sabotage efforts at holding him accountable (Glasius, 2018). They do this to the point of 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). They are loyal to him to a fault, and willing to act against democracy in his defence. To this end, this thesis makes its original contribution to academia by introducing the concept of *Homo-Authoritarianism*, an extension of the theories of *Homonormativity* (Duggan, 2003) and *Homonationalism* (Puar, 2007). Where those theories entail an exchange of normative behaviour and nationalism, respectively, for acceptance and political mainstream status; *Homo-Authoritarianism* entails an exchange of *total loyalty* for the same. In short, Log Cabin have pursued the goal of mainstream GOP acceptance, and inner-circle status, to the extent that they are willingly complicit in the promotion, and normalisation of authoritarianism in the US, in order to achieve it. They will support a far-right dictator figure, so long as that figure promises to not be a homophobe.

Researching this demographic *at all* is almost enough to qualify it as an original contribution to academia. Studies of LGBT+ people generally focus on the community's marked *liberalism*. LGBT+ Conservatives normally only appear in academic literature as the exceptions which prove the rule that gays are liberal. Very few studies will focus on them as the lacunae of their research, and their conclusions are typically that LGBT+ Conservatives trend white, privileged and disdain alliance politics (Rogers and Lott, 1997) (Tafel, 2000) (Robinson, 2005) (Cimino, 2007) (Walsh-Haines, 2018) (Cravens, 2021) (Bergozza, Coco and Burnett, 2024) (Young, 2024).

A recent exception is Neil Young's "Coming Out Republican" (2024), published whilst I was making post-viva revisions to this thesis. In it, he devotes a chapter to Log Cabin's relationship to Trump; noting that they are more reactionary, and transphobic, than previously, and that they are more aligned to the 45th President. But he does not go into detail, nor chart the nuances of that ideological change beyond the broad strokes¹. Here, I put them fully under the microscope, and dissect their authoritarian turn in detail. More than simply reproducing the GOP's newfound trans-panic, LCR have wholly subsumed themselves into an uncritical devotion to Donald Trump, a devotion that manifests in multifarious ways, which I dissect herein.

Even with this gap in literature acknowledged, readers will still be wondering why a doctoral study into a fringe group in US politics is relevant? After all, only slightly above a quarter of the US LGBT+ population voted for Trump in 2020; 27 percent of a demographic that accounts for only 7 percent of the population as a whole (CNN, 2020). Why focus so heavily on the political representation of some 1.89 percent of the population, and draw grand conclusions about the power of authoritarianism from it? These are fair questions in a vacuum. What makes this study so deeply relevant is fourfold:

1. The LGBT+ Community is not as small as exit polls make them appear. Only those who are *open* about their sexuality *and* willing to speak to pollsters are recorded. Even then, that number has gone up from 5 percent to 7 percent between 2016 and 2022 (CNN, 2016, 2020, 2022). But the number of closeted LGBT+ people is incalculable. Meaning that there are, in all likelihood, many more LGBT+ people, including Republicans, in the US; such that these demographics are not the fringe that they first appear to be.
2. The LGBT+ Community represents one of the USA's staunchest *Democratic* voting blocs, who oppose the GOP at a rate well above the national average: 67 percent supported Biden over Trump in 2020 (CNN, 2020) and 84 percent supported the Democrats in the 2022 midterms (CNN, 2022)². This is consistent with historical exit polls, which typically put LGBT+ support for a Democrat presidential candidate at 70 percent or higher (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, n.d, a-e)³ (The New York Times, 2012) (CNN News 2016b, 2020). Trump being able to mobilise *any* of that community with such loyalty, is cause for concern, as it demonstrates how members of a minority group can be motivated to fight *against* the cause of their own civil rights.

¹Young's work is historical, and charts the influence of Gay Republicans at various points, as far back as the 50's. LCR, therefore, get only occasional attention in his book (Young, 2024).

²Data was only available for the House of Representatives election as no nationwide polling was taken for the Senate elections.

³The *Roper Center for Public Opinion Research* (n.d a-e) has records on the LGBT+ vote going back as far as 1992, when it was first utilised in exit polls, in response to Bill Clinton's promises towards LGBT+ military service. That year also saw George H.W Bush become the least LGBT+ -supported Republican candidate to date, with only 14 percent of the LGBT+ vote in the 1992 election. This percentage was equalled by Trump in 2016, though his LGBT+ support would rise sharply by the next election.

3. Log Cabin’s authoritarian turn appears very recent. Previously they were a critical organisation that worked to *improve* their party’s record on LGBT+ issues from the inside. This included withdrawing endorsement from several Republican Presidential candidates: George H.W Bush (1992), Bob Dole (1996), George W. Bush (2004) and Donald Trump (2016)⁴. For Trump to now command the uncritical loyalty of such a group is deeply concerning, as it demonstrates how authoritarians can win over their critics and further weaken their own accountability.
4. Donald Trump is not the only mainstreamed authoritarian with designs on leading a (currently) liberal democratic state. Nor is he the only one to have tried to court the LGBT+ vote. Marine Le Pen, Pim Fortuyn, Benjamin Netanyahu are other relevant examples of far right figures that have sought appeal from LGBT+ voters, usually in Islamophobic contexts. Trump is becoming increasingly successful in this; with his 27 percent polling in 2020, he is the most LGBT+-supported Republican candidate in history (CNN, 2020)⁵. In Log Cabin he has brought the only political organisation representing LGBT+ Republicans into the far right with him. In this thesis I introduce the concept of *Homo-Authoritarianism* to explain this process - it is a model that other leaders may well follow to great effect, including Trump himself in the 2024 election.

Scholars who are interested in the rise of authoritarianism have much to gain from this thesis. LCR may represent a small demographic, but their turn to the far right could be a model which other authoritarian leaders use to legitimise themselves within LGBT+ circles and thus mainstream harms against them, and against Democracy.

1.2 Overview of Research Findings

This thesis charts the fall of Log Cabin by analysing their rhetoric along three dimensions. These dimensions mutually reinforce, and each point to a commitment to accountability sabotage (Glasius, 2018) towards Trump. The third dimension does so most directly, but the former two are deeply intertwined with the issue also.

The first is *Doublethink*, an Orwellian concept that was discovered late in my research process. It signifies the simultaneous holding of contradictory beliefs for the express purpose of *not* questioning authority (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). Less a variable and more a running theme, it is examined qualitatively in Chapter 4. There, I demonstrate that LCR simultaneously endorse contradictory beliefs about *Victimhood*, *The Closet* and *Judicial Activism*, in order to ensure that they continually re-align themselves with Trump’s viewpoints. ‘Doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) periodically reappears in later chapters, as it plays into the populist and authoritarian rhetoric of LCR directly in many places.

The second dimension is *Populism*; a rhetorical framing device used to package political beliefs in the form of a struggle between a virtuous people and an evil elite (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Populism is a deeply contested concept, defined here as discourse that frames, and legitimises, ideologies; discourse that, I argue, is both dangerous and

⁴George H.W Bush lost LCR’s endorsement after he failed to denounce Pat Buchanan’s homophobic rant at the 1992 RNC. Bob Dole was initially amicable to LCR but his team returned LCR’s donation for homophobic reasons and Dole defended them (Tafel, 2000). George W. Bush’s attempts to pass a Federal Marriage Amendment cost him LCR’s support in 2004. Finally, Trump’s running alongside Mike Pence narrowly cost him endorsement in 2016.

⁵This beats the percentage of every other Republican candidate since 1992, with the exception of John McCain in 2008, who also polled at 27 percent. However, the turnout in 2020 was much higher, giving the advantage solidly to Trump (Roper Centre for Public Opinion Research, n.d e) (CNN, 2020).

anti-pluralistic. Such negative definitions of populism are heavily debated in the social sciences, and a nuanced breakdown of the subject, including where I agree and (gently) disagree with those debates, is provided in Chapter 2.

Though populism is a separate concept to authoritarianism, it frequently *legitimises* it; framing politics as a struggle by ‘the people’ against the ‘elite’ lionises whichever figure one casts as the champion of ‘the people’ in that struggle, even (and especially) if they are undemocratic in nature. Indeed, it is documented that many populist figures feel empowered to engage in authoritarian acts by virtue of their status as such champions; for example, claiming that they could not have legitimately *lost* an election since ‘the people’ support them (Urbinati, 2019). In Chapter 5, I demonstrate LCR’s use of *Populism* against elite enemies, real and perceived, relating to *Homophobia* from elite party sources, and *The Left*. Collectively they highlight LCR’s construction of an imagined, powerful left-wing LGBT+ activist elite (‘Gay Inc’) against which they cast Trump, in order to legitimise him.

The third dimension is *Right-Wing Authoritarian Follower Behaviour*; acts of ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018) that directly undermine efforts to constrain Trump’s authority. Literature on the authoritarian behaviour of followers, as opposed to state praxis, has been the prerogative of psychologists so far⁶, so this thesis has adapted some of the concepts discussed in Adorno et al’s *The Authoritarian Personality* (1950 [2019]) and the works derived from it (Altemeyer, 1981) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020) it, to assess LCR’s use of it. Chapter 6 demonstrates LCR’s engagement in *Calls to Violence*, *Veneration of the Leader*, *Dismissal of Accountability* and *Media Scepticism*. The findings are that whilst LCR are not violent, they do show signs of normalising it. Furthermore, they place Trump and his inner circle on rhetorical pedestals and they attack anyone and anything that might critique Trump, limit his power, investigate his dealings, or force him to acknowledge the authority of the other branches of government. LCR do this to the point of involving themselves in the 2020 ‘stolen election’ narrative. Finally, they encourage scepticism and disbelief in the mainstream media, thereby trying to exercise control of the public narratives to which their readers have access, and undermine those that are critical of Trump.

Finally, Chapter 7 brings the thesis to a conclusion, re-summarising all of the evidence gathered in Chapters 4-6, and speculating about what LCR would do, should Trump actively turn on their community in the future. This short chapter reaffirms this thesis’ conclusions on LCR’s fall to Homo-Authoritarianism, the phenomenon that I seek to introduce to political science. More than simply a populist trend, or another type of Homonationalism (Puar, 2007), this is something new and dangerous.

1.3 Supplements to Research Findings: A Guide to the Appendices

My primary supervisor, Dr Mark Shanahan (now based at the University of Surrey), once told me that editing a thesis is the process by which one ‘kills their favourite child’. So

⁶As far back as Theodor Adorno et al’s *The Authoritarian Personality* ([1950] 2019), scholars have attributed authoritarian beliefs to psychological development. Adorno and his colleagues found answers in Freudian psychology – disciplinarian parenting moulded children to be uncritical followers of authority figures later in life. Log Cabin have moved from an ostensibly libertarian position to an authoritarian one in the span of four years, something that one would not normally expect to be possible if authoritarianism is the result of long-term psychological development. Whilst this paper is not in the field of psychology, it may be of interest to later research on how such core beliefs in our psyche can seemingly change so fast. It may indeed be possible that Log Cabin were always authoritarian at heart, it just took an ostensibly non-homophobic authority figure to awaken these impulses? I will leave such questions to the psychologists, and I hope this thesis sparks fruitful research amongst them.

it has proven. Much went into creating this thesis that was ultimately removed from its pages. Some of it is, however, preserved in the Appendices, where the results of the work were ultimately only *tangential* at best to this thesis' conclusions, yet may be of interest. Readers are not required to use the Appendices in any capacity in order to understand my research, argument and conclusions, they are wholly supplemental, as they should be. However, should readers wish to fill out their reading experience, they will provide fruitful supplementary material.

Appendix A contains all the statistical tables that were used in the creation of this work. Their results have been typed out in the body of the text, with footnotes directing readers to the relevant tables where needed. As a result, one does not need to actually observe them, but may do so if they wish for illustration or verification.

Appendix B contains commentary on Log Cabin's Islamophobic rhetoric. This is included in the Appendices as a supplement to the work in Chapter 5 on populism. LCR occasionally make use of Islamophobic tropes as part of their arguments undermining the left and legitimising Trump; such instances are included in this thesis' research chapters. However, they also engage in broader Islamophobia as well. This is *not* directly relevant to their Homo-Authoritarianism, and so is relegated to an Appendix, but a short examination of this broader rhetoric is included in Appendix B. Such work is iterative of the work of Jasbir Puar (2007) and Mondon and Winter (2020), on homonationalism and liberal Islamophobia respectively, but serves as useful contextual information, as well as a wholehearted confirmation of the continued relevance of Puar's seminal text *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007).

Appendix C contains commentary on Log Cabin's use of *Media Misrepresentation*, and their biases towards Right-Wing media. These are not signs of authoritarianism in their own right, rather they represent political bias; thus they are best addressed in an appendix rather than a research chapter, as they are unnecessary to my conclusions. However, understanding the right-wing media landscape in which LCR exist provides useful context to the findings of Chapter 6 concerning *Media Scepticism*. Readers who wish to add supplementary context to understanding LCR's promotion of *Media Scepticism* may be interested in seeing the kind of media diet Log Cabin consume, and are thus directed to Appendix C.

Finally, Appendix D represents a continuation of this thesis' conclusions into the Biden era. It qualitatively demonstrates many of the reactionary narratives LCR have gone on to promote since the end of this thesis' sampled time frame. My work demonstrates an authoritarian turn over the period 2013-2021, with emphasis on the Trump Presidency, and my research chapters (4, 5 and 6) deal with that period alone. But readers who want to test my conclusions in the context of 2024, particularly those seeking to replicate my methods, are directed to Appendix D as a useful jumping off point. In a nutshell, LCR have gotten, if anything, even more reactionary, and my conclusions have stood the test of the intervening years.

1.4 Defining Homo-Authoritarianism

As mentioned in the introduction, this would not be the first time that the LGBT+ community and its activists have been observed exchanging political demonstrations for political capital (through social acceptance). Urvashi Vaid (1995) and Lisa Duggan (2003) commented on the gradual movement of LGBT+ people to the political centre, and the marginalisation of queer identities and radical action, in order to gain acceptance for normative LGBT+ people - whose lives most resembled heterosexuals, a process Duggan refers

to as *Homonormativity*. Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013) built on this to introduce the concept of *Homonationalism*. This represents the practice by which post-9/11 LGBT+ spaces and groups started to display visible alignment to the state, overt (and subliminally Islamophobic) patriotism and support for the War on Terror. In doing so, they could leverage their status as patriotic, upstanding Americans, to win acceptance. Simultaneously, the state would get involved in the pageantry of LGBT+ pride, thereby giving the image of inclusion to leverage LGBT+ support, whilst committing only minimally to change (ibid). Both processes are exclusionary for some parts of the LGBT+ community, namely queer, non-native and non-white LGBT+ people, in the name of winning inclusion for the rest.

I build on this concept and introduce *Homo-Authoritarianism*; whereby LGBT+ spaces and groups leverage their status as loyalists to an authority figure in order to promote themselves and receive insider status. This compounds the problems of exclusionary politics by blinding oneself to discrimination; not only allowing some parts of the community to be targeted, but by normalising the weakening of LGBT+ rights more broadly. Furthermore, it makes one complicit in the erosion of democracy, allowing many other material and symbolic harms to take root. This is most definitively seen in two ways.

1. When the authority figure engages in attempts at de-democratisation and autocratic behaviour, such as election subversion, and the LGBT+ group openly defends and supports them in doing so. Thus demonstrating that the group will endorse known right-wing authoritarian behaviours.
 - This is directly addressed in Chapter 6 on *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* (Glasius, 2018).
2. When an LGBT+ group will repeatedly defend instances of homophobia and related discrimination by the authority figure, thus demonstrating that their loyalty to the authority takes precedent over the cause of LGBT+ rights.
 - This itself takes two forms, one steadily leading into the other. Both are addressed progressively in different forms in Chapters 4 and 5, on *Doublethink* (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), and *Populism* (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).
 - (a) The first is the recognition that the behaviour in question (for example, overt support for traditional marriage) is homophobic, but adopting a double-standard. This involves selectively finding ways to excuse the authority and their allies from blame, whilst criticising those same behaviours in others.
 - (b) The second is no longer recognising that the behaviour in question is discriminatory *at all*, and instead promoting it as a good thing. Examples include engaging in transphobic fearmongering about women's spaces in the name of 'protecting' cisgender women. This often comes with the rhetorical excision of the victim from the demos, no longer seen as an ally. This incorporates elements of *Homonormativity* (Duggan, 2003), with the important caveat that the group in question comes to normalise certain forms of discrimination that they *used to oppose*, because their favoured authority engages in it. The purpose is the demonstration of *loyalty* first and foremost.

This thesis will steadily build up a picture of LCR's engagement with *Homo-Authoritarianism* over time, showing the narratives they have adopted, the behaviours they have excused, and the ways they have reshaped their own identities. Furthermore, it does so using the

group’s Twitter communication as a base, meaning that this transformation into Homo-Authoritarians is publicly viewable, and will have been very much intended for public consumption. LCR want the world to see how loyal they are to Trump and his reshaped GOP.

1.5 Considering Other Explanations

There are, I believe, three theoretical explanations for the rise in Log Cabin’s support for Trump, two of which are comparatively benign. These two are, I argue, far less compelling than an authoritarian ideological turn.

The first possibility is that Donald Trump was a pro-LGBT+ President by an objective standard, and thus LCR’s support of him is straightforward. This would be measurable in both rhetorical and legislative terms, and there is no evidence for it. His castigation of the trans community (including the trans military ban), his fumbles and backtracks on legal protections for LGBT+ people (see his administration’s amicus curiae briefs in *Bostock v Clayton County* (2020)), and his stuffing of the executive with known homophobes, like Mike Pence and Jeff Sessions, is evidence enough that we may discount this explanation.

However, the dismissal of the first explanation leads us to our second; that Trump was pro-LGBT+ *where it counted* in LCR’s limited worldview. There is a strong trend in gay conservative thought (discussed in section 1.5) that what truly mattered in the fight for equality was marriage and military service. Because Trump largely left those issues alone (except for trans military service), it’s possible that Trump qualified as pro-LGBT+ by LCR’s comparatively lower standards.⁷ This would be the most compelling answer, assuming no rhetorical evidence of an ideological shift was observable. It therefore serves as the basis for a null hypothesis (see Chapter 3).

Instead, this thesis derives its hypotheses from *Homo-Authoritarianism*; that Log Cabin came to support Trump so vocally because he brought them into an ideologically authoritarian position. The evidence for this, as opposed to Trump simply qualifying by LCR’s standards, would be found in *rhetoric*. *Homo-Authoritarianism* leaves its mark on communication in explicit wording, tone and frequency of utterances. For example visible changes in beliefs, and then a reversion to earlier positions (‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000])), the framing of beliefs as a struggle against a ‘woke’ left elite (‘Populism’ (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005)), and rhetoric that attacks those who hold Trump accountable (‘authoritarianism’ (Glasius, 2018)). These facets of belief can be seen and measured in discourse; a person supporting Trump because they believe he is, on balance, the better man for the job, sounds wildly different from someone supporting Trump because they are ideologically committed to him.

If LCR only supported Trump because he ticked their boxes, we would not find evidence of discursive change. This thesis will demonstrate ample evidence that more than a perceived good record led LCR to support Trump. Rather they have ideologically committed to *Homo-Authoritarianism*.

⁷One might contend further that it is possible that LCR were always transphobic at heart and thus never qualified Trump’s actions against that community as harmful to their own cause, so he was all the more qualified according to their narrow worldview. This theory does not stack with evidence. LCR opposed the trans military ban at first and were at least giving verbal affirmation to being pro-trans prior to this. This did not last, and they are openly transphobic now; regularly lambasting so-called ‘gender ideology’.

1.6 Background: Gay Republicans?

When I have aired my findings at conferences, eyebrows are often raised at the mere *existence* of Log Cabin, or LGBT+ Conservatives more broadly, as political conservatism is usually anti-LGBT+. Indeed, an enduring factor in the fight to win equal rights and recognition for America’s sexual minorities, is an entrenched opposition from the right. As far back as the late 1940s, GOP legislators were remonstrating about ‘sex offenders on the federal payroll’ (D’Emilio, 1992b: 59), meaning all closeted gay civil servants, who were thought to be ‘security risks’ because of their supposed moral weakness. (D’Emilio, 1992a: 25). McCarthyism branded gay Americans as potential destabilising influences (D’Emilio, [1983] 1998) (Faderman, 2015). The religious right, particularly Anita Bryant’s ‘Save our Children’ campaign, sought to purge gay teachers, claiming that ‘the civil rights of parents’ were under threat from homosexuals trying to ‘recruit’ children (Frank, 2013). This was part of a wider reaction by the growing ‘Moral Majority’ against women’s rights, African American civil rights, and issues like abortion (Harder, 2014). As AIDS killed a generation of gay activists, it was seen by the right as either divine punishment for the sin of being gay, or a medical imperative to keep homosexuality suppressed (Kowaleski, 1990). In 1992, Pat Buchanan launched into a homophobic tirade at the RNC (C-SPAN 1992), and in 2004 President Bush stated his commitment to constitutionally enshrine traditional marriage (Bush, 2004), whilst Republican legislators repeatedly put (unsuccessful) constitutional amendments on the table to do just that. Even now, the ‘Project 2025’ movement seeks to restrict federal support for LGBT+ marriages (veiled homophobia at best) if the GOP takes control of the Presidency and Congress in 2024 (Heritage Foundation, 2023). The only outspokenly pro-LGBT+ voices on the political right are libertarians, who associate themselves with conservative parties for *economic* reasons, but are *socially left-wing* and therefore aren’t an exception to the rule in this case. As a result, *prima facie* it appears as though LGBT+ Conservatism is a strange contradiction.

This seeming contradiction is reductionist, and does not withstand much scrutiny⁸. Nor have accusations of contradiction ever stopped Log Cabin. The group take their name from the legend that Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican President and a famous emancipator of the oppressed, was born in such a dwelling. They argue that Republican ideals have been socially liberating to the marginalised before, and can be again. They are also *not* the only LGBT+ voice that has ever seen the spotlight on the American right.

The writings of gay conservative journalists in the 1990s are the versions of LGBT+ conservatism that most readers will be familiar with, if at all. In 1993, Bruce Bawer authored *A Place at the Table*, advocating for the need for a conservative approach to LGBT+ rights in the United States. This change in method would, he argued, demonstrate to heterosexuals that their gay neighbours weren’t a threat (Bawer, 1993 [1994]). The book, controversial as it was, became a best-seller, as did the later, similarly-minded, works of Andrew Sullivan, such as *Virtually Normal* (1995 [1996]). Their calls for a narrow, normative approach, based solely on the pursuit of marriage, workplace anti-discrimination and military service, were a sea change. They called for emancipatory reforms that would take decades to implement, such as equal marriage and military service, and were (and are) bitterly opposed by reactionaries. But they also professed an *acceptance* of private and religious discrimination, and an abandonment of alliance politics that represented a whiplash-change from mainstream LGBT+ ideas. This thesis derives its title from Bawer’s work; LCR represent the continuation of these ideas, and the worsening of their flaws. They predated *A Place at the Table* (1993 [1994]) by 16 years, but their similarity in aspect to

⁸There are, nevertheless, important issues related to epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997) and normativity (Duggan, 2003) that should not be overlooked, and are discussed in Chapter 2

Bawer and Sullivan's arguments suggests a strong influence. In any case, the argument that what LGBT+ people needed most of all was a 'place at the table', so as to avoid being *on the menu*, has proven influential. Gay Republicans are not the only LGBT+ activists to advocate such proposals; abandoning radicalism for reform and normativity (Duggan, 2003) is bipartisan, and legal activism, rather than revolutionary social change, has been pursued by liberal and conservative LGBT+ activists for decades. LCR, however, pursue such goals in the most narrow and literal sense.

Since this section represents a history lesson, it is worth beginning by going back *very* far, since LGBT+ identity can appear as a rather new concept to some, but it really isn't. Sociological consensus dates our current understanding of the term 'homosexual' as a discreet identity to the Victorian age, when medicalisation and cultural/religious stigma shaped sexual behaviour into something that defined a person's identity (McIntosh, 1968) (Foucault, [1978] 1990). But that consensus relates solely to 'homosexual' as an identity signifier. In practice, same-sex love has always existed in North America in some form. Reports reach us of cohabiting same-sex couples, correspondence suggesting homosexual erotic longings, and transgender Native Americans (Two-Spirit). The earliest written records this thesis has uncovered date from the period of European colonisation, but I speculate that LGBT+ identity formation was a factor in the life of the first nations well before that. Despite some people's best efforts to the contrary, history is gay, and always has been.⁹

Just as history has always been gay, when it comes to politics, gays have always been amenable to conservatism. What made Bawer and Sullivan so controversial was not that LGBT+ politics had *always* been left-wing, but, rather, that the community's conservatives had been reduced to the fringe of the movement for decades, after having initially been the mainstream. In the wake of the publication of the first Kinsey Report (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin 1948)¹⁰ the Mattachine Society was formed in 1950. They were the first American LGBT+ advocacy organisation, and were led initially by a secret society of LA-based communists, before falling under more conservative, libertarian leadership during the red scare¹¹ (D'Emilio, [1983] 1998) (Faderman, 2015) (Timmons, 1990). Mattachine, and the 'homophile' organisations which succeeded it, caught headlines and made some gains, winning entrapment cases (Jennings, 1953), protesting in front of the Pentagon and White House (Duberman, [1993] 1994: 111-113) against homophobic federal hiring praxis, and seeking the advice of medical and psychiatric experts to help normalise the idea of homosexuality to the public (Bernstein, 2002).¹²

The Stonewall Revolution ultimately killed the mobilising power of such homophile groups in favour of more radical queer activism that overlapped with anti-war and anti-racist protests. The socio-cultural climate of the 60s, particularly its sexual mores, influenced by hippie culture, rock music (Eisenbach, 2006) and the porn industry (Weeks, 1985) would

⁹Literature comments on a variety of premodern and early modern LGBT+ peoples, including the following; accounts of cohabiting lesbians in the 19th century (The Editors at Finchers 1863), allusions to homosexual eroticism in correspondence in the colonial and revolutionary period, including between the Marquis du Lafayette and George Washington (Bronski, 2018), and accounts of LGBT+ identity formation among various Native American nations, such as the Crow *Badé* (McIntosh, 1968) (Bronski, 2018).

¹⁰Alfred Kinsey et al's reports on human sexuality shocked America with their findings, particularly that as many as 1 in 3 adult males in the sample had engaged in at least one homosexual act in their lifetime (Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin, 1948: 623-625). The same research team also published on female sexuality in 1953 (Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard, 1953).

¹¹There was a concerted effort to suppress the idea that Mattachine had ever been communist-led, historian John D'Emilio is credited with revealing this (D'Emilio, [1983] 1998, 1992a, 1992b).

¹²Whilst such experts would often cast LGBT+ people as the victims of developmental anomalies (Freud, 1953), and this created problematic narratives of gay people being sick, this was acceptable to homophile activists, since it at least combatted the idea that gay was a moral failing (Bernstein, 2002).

have been unthinkable in the 50s, yet it was an environment in which a new generation of LGBT+ people were incubated. Likewise where older LGBT+ activists, who had held their positions since the 50's, shunned the direct action embraced by other movements (the Black civil rights movement, for example), the younger generation had assisted in such movements, and they found irreconcilable differences with the older homophiles. The levee broke when the NYPD raided the Stonewall Inn, after which the homophile organisations folded and the movement shunted hard to the left. This radicalism, encapsulated in the calls for 'Gay Liberation', was not part of the mainstream for very long, but its effects were permanent.

The post-1960s LGBT+ movement was a diverse beast, and so it remains. Steven Epstein commented that really there is no single movement at all; each fragment of it wants to achieve a different and distinct set of socio-political goals (Epstein, 1999: 30-31). The initial 'Gay Liberation Front' (GLF) formed in the wake of Stonewall, maintained a broad left-wing umbrella: It opposed capitalism, war, sexual boundaries, and an unjust society, but it progressively splintered under the weight of intersectionality. Lesbian feminists (Devoe, 1974: 5) (Krebs, 1987: 17), black gay activists (Altman, 1971) (Cornerly, 2001: 13-15), S.T.A.R (Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries), and a wealth of others continued to break away over the decade; even the GLF was slow to fight the unique prejudice heaped onto black, female, poor and transgender LGBT+ people, so they broke away and did it themselves. This helped create a diverse LGBT+ movement that ranged from legal activism to breakaway polyamorous communes. Even as the movement gradually became less radical over the 1970s and 80s and focused on legal activism against discriminatory laws (Vaid, 1995) (Epstein, 1999) (Mertus, 2007) (Ghaziani, Taylor and Stone, 2016), the passive, conservative, homophile activism of prior decades remained firmly on the fringe. The younger generation, who had cut their teeth in the civil rights movements of the 60s, did not want to win their liberation by making themselves palatable to straights; they wished instead to march with *pride*. The genie was out of the bottle, and it was seemingly never going back in.

This embracing of radicalism should not be confused with the *death* of conservatism, only its shunting out of the mainstream. Even in the post-Stonewall radical era, no great natural alliance existed between LGBT+ groups and electoral campaigning of any kind (Proctor, 2022a). It was not until the late 1970s that LGBT+ activists began sustained 'get out the vote' efforts in an explicitly *two party* strategy, helped on by LGBT+ people who had been card-carrying Republicans for decades (ibid) (Young, 2024). The resistance to Anita Bryant was championed by such LGBT+ conservatives, rallying around gay veterans of the Vietnam war, and fighting prejudice with affirmations of their 'normality' and patriotism (Young, 2024). Exemplifying this longstanding trend of conservative activism was Dorr Legg, who had founded ONE Incorporated in the 50's and was the driving force behind it's famous SCOTUS victory (*ONE Incorporated vs Olesen* (1958))¹³. Legg went on to found a 'Lincoln Republican' group in the 1970s; these 'Lincoln Republicans', 'Teddy Roosevelt Republicans' and 'Log Cabin Groups' were the foundational organisations that would merge to form the modern Log Cabin Republicans (Young, 2024). These groups were founded to fight California Proposition 6, a referendum on the exclusion of known homosexuals from the teaching profession, and won some support from the then Presidential-hopeful Ronald Reagan (Log Cabin Republicans, n.d). In spite of all of this however, political alliances in general were few, especially on the right, and the gay liberation movement's leftism had a lasting and profound cultural impact.

¹³This case established that speech and written content pertaining to homosexuality was not inherently obscene, and could not be censored in a similar manner to pornography.

This liberation helped to create a culture of sexual difference, including a subculture of anonymous sex; from hook-ups at gay bars, to sex parties in bathhouses, to losing your virginity to a stranger under a pier (Sullivan, 1995 [1996]). Whilst undeniably socially liberating, this promiscuous, polyamorous, and often pseudonymous subculture unknowingly helped to circulate HIV particularly amongst gay men. Furthermore, it helped to further stigmatise the victims, who were often seen as bringing the disease down upon themselves through sin (Kowalewski, 1990)¹⁴. Compounding the social isolation of the LGBT+ community was a political abandonment; both parties dropped gay rights like a stone, as the Christian right gained leverage in the GOP, and stigmatised AIDS victims, and the Democrats sought to distance themselves from the label of ‘special interests’ (including LGBT+ interests) after their massacre in the 1984 Presidential election (Proctor, 2022a).

In response, some conservative LGBT+ organisers sought a way forward in a pivot back to the normative approach of the homophiles. In a society that pervasively thought of them as freaks, the likes of Bawer and Sullivan advocated the fighting of stereotypes via an emphasis on just how *normal* they actually were: LGBT+ people were your neighbours, your teachers, your friends, essentially no different to the straights next door. Whilst thoroughly homonormative (Duggan, 2003) and suppressive towards queer identity, this assimilationist mentality was understandable for a movement that was suffering and looking for an out. In the 50’s, the homophile movement, with its limited, assimilationist agenda, was operating against the backdrop of McCarthyism. Being a known homosexual was liable to have you investigated as a communist spy by both Democratic *and* Republican administrations.¹⁵ A response to pervasive stereotyping had been to stress assimilation and normativity *then*; so in the wake of the mass suffering that the LGBT+ community had just endured, and the stigma heaped on top of it, it is understandable that these conservatives sought a return to such methods. That such calls would come from *Republicans* like LCR is also not a surprise, considering that when Bill Clinton made overtures to the LGBT+ community in 1992, it resulted in promises that he would break. The limited agenda of equal social access, assimilationism, and toleration for private discrimination informed LCR’s activism from their inception through to the rise of Donald Trump.

LCR’s relationship with its parent party has been fractious. They have been repeatedly denied a presence at GOP conventions, and they still are in certain states, such as Texas. They have also been counter-protested by evangelicals, and had their endorsements spurned by Republican candidates, most famously during the 1995 Dole check scandal (Tafel, 2000). Only with the rise of Trump did LCR approach mainstream status in the GOP. The 45th President showed them unprecedented favour, and appointed several of their members to positions in the executive and judiciary, most famously Richard Grenell; first as ambassador to Germany, and then as acting Director of National Intelligence, making him the first openly gay man to serve in the US Cabinet. Prior to this, LCR promoted a narrative that identified homophobia as anti-Republican; since it necessitates government intervention in personal life. They further argued that theocratic policy, which denies LGBT+ people rights by appealing to Christianity, is unconstitutional.

By the same token, LCR argued that there was nothing inherently leftist in an LGBT+ identity, a statement to which I agree. It is both acceptable and defensible that an LGBT+

¹⁴Mark R. Kowalewski (1990) notes that religious literature and sermons on the topic of AIDS at the height of the crisis did not always characterise AIDS as a punishment; many re-emphasised the Christian commitment to aid the sick, but these often included advising those living with AIDS that ‘forgiveness of sins includes (giving up) a life-style not acceptable to the Lord’ (ibid: 95).

¹⁵Such investigations were common, operating on the assumption that LGBT+ people were open to Soviet blackmail because of their sexual secrets, or otherwise morally weak for being gay in the first place (D’Emilio, 1983 [1998]) (Faderman, 2015).

person might value their rights to bear arms, want strong borders and limited government, and vote Republican for those reasons, even if that means enabling homophobes. That people sometimes make compromises on their beliefs when they feel they cannot achieve them *all* is a truism. Counterarguments related to privilege are invited thereby, and indeed, what prior research on LGBT+ Republicans exists identifies them as largely white and male, and thus benefitting from social privilege (Rogers and Lott, 1997) (Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor, 2017) (Cravens, 2019). But whilst the ability to compromise on discriminatory praxis, that a female and/or non-white person might not have, should not be discounted, it would also be undemocratic to accuse LGBT+ people of making the *wrong* choice by supporting the GOP. That would be tantamount to removing their agency, and demanding that they politically prioritise their sexuality, which may not reflect their lives and needs accurately. Nevertheless, LCR have taken seemingly endless flak for supposedly failing their identity by supporting the GOP, even though they have historically never done so uncritically and worked to end its most homophobic excesses¹⁶. Indeed, a core element of this thesis involves LCR's abandonment of their long, libertarian struggle: Where before they compromised on LGBT+ rights by supporting the party, but still held it to account for its failings, now they deny the existence of the discrimination within the GOP's ranks altogether. The flak may now be thoroughly deserved, but that is a recent development.

Though they initially critiqued some of Trump's worst excesses, and several leading members of the organisation would resign in protest against the group's endorsement of Trump 2019 (Evans, 2019) (Krakow and Rosenberg, 2019), those who left at that stage no longer represented the organisation's core beliefs. The normalisation of authoritarianism by LCR had steadily grown over Trump's term in office, and by the time the 2020 campaign was in full swing, LCR were full-throated in their support of him. Their formal endorsement recontextualised his discriminatory administration as governing 'from a place of inclusion' and that 'his policy agenda has benefitted not just LGBTQ individuals but all Americans' (McShane, 2020). They held 'Trump Pride' rallies and launched *OutSpoken*; a far right LGBT+ news platform that ran regular transphobic, Islamophobic and anti-left stories (OUTSpoken, n.d). Rainbow flags were spotted being held aloft by some rioters in the Washington DC insurrection on 6th January 2021 (Tabberer, 2021), and Brandon Straka, a high profile ally of the LCR and founder of the *Walk Away* campaign (which encouraged LGBT liberals to leave the Democratic Party), was arrested in connection with the insurrection (Avery, 2021)

This is all to say that critiquing the nature of a conservative approach to gay rights is not the purpose of this thesis, and though we will do so in places (particularly when reviewing Bawer and Sullivan's literature in Chapter 2), we will take it as a given that LGBT+ rights can be authentically fought for from the right-wing. Instead, this research is concerned with the troubles that come with identifying the proverbial 'place' at the table, and with it, socio-political 'insider' status, as the be-all and end-all; a goal for which anything can, and should, be sacrificed.

Trump was, to his credit, far more willing to engage with and support LGBT+ causes than any of his Republican predecessors, and this included active engagement with, and appointment of, members of the Log Cabin Republicans. The support given to LCR, both rhetorical and literal, has granted the organisation an unprecedented level of insider

¹⁶An example being their repeated targeting by ACT-UP (Tafel, 2000). ACT-UP being the famous radical activist movement that protested the government and medical establishment's long silence on the matter of AIDS, they were well known for their tactic of 'die-ins' (Deparle, 1990) (Ghaziani, Taylor and Stone, 2016). Rich Tafel, a former head of LCR, writing in 2000, remembers that ACT-UP would target the group for being Republicans, and thus, presumably, complicit in Reagan's failings (Tafel, 2000).

status within the Trump White House; moving them from the fringe of the party, to its mainstream, in a single term. It appears that Log Cabin saw this willingness to give at least a surface-level of support and attempted to secure it by demonstrating increased loyalty to Trump and his agenda. This is not to say that LGBT+ activism *should* be an outsider movement, far from it. But with insider status comes privilege, and with privilege can come conditions. For example, what does one do when acceptance becomes conditional on abandoning your agenda, or your community? Furthermore, what are the implications and ends involved when one proposes to trade total, uncritical loyalty to an authority figure, in exchange for political capital and security? The answer is an eventual loss of all ability to actually fight for LGBT+ rights, because one can no longer recognise discrimination.

Log Cabin have their place at the table, now we examine the *bill*.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review is divided into four sections. The first introduces Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this thesis' epistemic and methodological grounding. CDA is a text-analysis methodology devoted to both the assessment of a 'social wrong', and the discursive praxis that relates to our social context, including the influence of that wrong (Fairclough, 1989 [2015], 1992 [2006]). This implicates socio-political power, ideology and hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) (Foucault, 1975 [2020], 1978 [1990]) (Marx and Engels, 1848 [2002], 1939 [2011]). A study of text, ideology, rhetoric and the influence of a leader who built his rule on propagating 'social wrongs', and the reproduction of said rhetoric by his followers, is perfectly suited to CDA.

The second section covers literature related to this paper's studied key concepts, namely *Doublethink*, *Populism* and *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*. 'Doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) refers to one seemingly holding two conflicting viewpoints at the same time, a rhetorical display that frequently pervades LCR's rhetoric in both populist and authoritarian narratives. We also take care to introduce Charles Mills' (1997) concept of the 'racial contract' and epistemologies of ignorance, as these relate to doublethink. Populism refers to the structuring of ideological narratives around 'the people' struggling against 'the elite', which frequently incorporates rhetoric targeting 'others' as well (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) (Wodak, 2021). *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* is a series of political and psychological factors promoting both a right-leaning ideology and 'accountability sabotage' (Glasius, 2018); efforts to subvert democratising, and power-balancing, influences; concentrate authority in a few figures, or one; and legitimise this accountability sabotage by having the population willingly submit to it (Altemeyer, 1981).

The third section covers literature related to two supplementary concepts to this thesis. These inform the coding of the three key concepts at various times, but are not operationalised variables themselves, as they are not core parts of *Homo-Authoritarianism*. These are, respectively, *Islamophobia*, and the *Alt-Right*. The former represents structural anti-Muslim racism (Ali and Whitham, 2021) that is often reproduced in a 'liberal' form that juxtaposes orthodox and/or extremist Islam against values like freedom of speech and expression (Mondon and Winter, 2018, 2020). This is often engaged in to promote LGBT+ acceptance by comparison, a concept called 'Homonationalism' (Puar, 2007, 2013). The latter is a rhizomatic far right movement that evolved in online spaces, promoting far right beliefs through specific slang and memes to a wide audience (Flisfeder, 2018)(Vandiver, 2020) (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020).

The fourth section covers LGBT+ political identity formation broadly and LGBT+ conservatism in particular, thus defining the expectations of this paper's research subjects.

LGBT+ people have developed an entrenched liberal group ethic, through a combination of ‘selection’, and ‘conversion’ in response to homophobia (Egan, 2008) (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). LGBT+ conservatives are considered to have filtered these views through an assimilationist lens, perhaps having experienced greater privilege and less negativity. As part of this section, the works of gay conservative journalists Bruce Bawer and Andrew Sullivan are also heavily used; these two prolific writers made a name for themselves in the 1990s and 2000s, arguing for not just assimilationism, but asserting that the American gay community was *already assimilated*, and needed to break away from the narratives of the left (Bawer, 1993 [1994]). This section will also return in depth to the concept of epistemologies of ignorance, as it may strongly relate to foundational elements of LCR’s beliefs, though not their sudden and dramatic fall to authoritarianism.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis

2.2.1 Theory: Power Relations in Communication

CDA evolved out of the schools of *critical linguistics* in the UK and Australia in the late 1970s, with the goal of exposing and challenging systems of inequality legitimised through language (Van Dijk, [2015] 2018: 466-467). The discipline views social institutions and cultural praxis as *constructed by*, and *constitutive of* discourse, which it uses as its’ means of legitimising social control or coercion. Discourse is defined as pervasive ideas, brought about through communicative acts, that shape (and are shaped by) our understanding of the social world. As an example, Norman Fairclough (2016: 88) identifies that how we interpret the lives and experiences of the poor is shaped by discourse related to social policy, economics, welfare, sociology, and so on, as well as our own material situation. Institutions, defined broadly as a social body with coercive power (Mayr, [2015] 2018: 757), are ‘sites of struggle where different groups compete to shape the social reality of organizations in ways that serve their own interests.’ (Mumby and Clair, 1997: 182).

In essence, there is a link between even everyday conversation and the power relations of society. Norman Fairclough calls this the ‘three dimensions’ model of CDA. At the most micro-level is ‘text’; images or the written/spoken word, and the linguistic praxis that forms it. The latter includes the grammar, metaphors, foregrounding, lexicon, and so on, contained within. This affects the next level, ‘discourse practice’, in which the text, and others, are circulated and affect each other, and the ideas of the speakers. This in turn affects the most macro-level, ‘social practice’, the networking of social activities to create institutions. This process also works in reverse, with social practice shaping discursive practice, which shapes the creation of text. As such, all three of these stages are deeply interwoven (Fairclough, 1992: 231-240).

The process of CDA, therefore, is the analysis of spoken and written communication to understand the discourse, and thus the ideologies and hegemonies, that shaped its creation. (Machin and Mayr, [2012] 2015: 20). This includes not just the linguistic process, but also semiotics, the study of meanings, (Halliday, [1978] 1993: 108-126); and multi-modality, meaning the definition of ‘text’ can include any communicative form, including images. For the purpose of this thesis, the definition of ‘text’ is centred around *tweets*. These are short communicative acts on the social media platform, X (called ‘Twitter’ at the time the research was undertaken). They are each between one sentence and a short paragraph long, and can include images, videos and links to other sources, such as newspapers. This creates a substantial lack of consistency in the size, and content, of the texts in question, but with variety comes important communicative nuance. These tweets are then circulated online and reproduced through ‘likes’ and ‘retweets.’ The former is an endorsement of the text’s

message, and the latter can agree or disagree (though a tweet that receives a greater ratio of retweets to likes is considered to be unpopular, or ‘ratioed’). Both methods circulate a tweet to a wider audience.

CDA’s primary concern is the exertion of power by one series of parties over others; the abilities of some to make others do their bidding, with, or without, their consent, so as to create or sustain a social wrong (Mayr, 2008: 8-12) (Van Dijk, [2015] 2018: 469). It is achieved through *directive* and *constitutive* praxis. The former represents the communication of X to compel response Y, and the latter represents the articulation of institutions, positions and ideas that legitimise the speaker’s ability to pursue directive praxis towards the listener (Fowler, 1985: 64).

It must be noted that CDA does not view discourse as a one-way street, only serving the interests of authority. It is also concerned with the ways the powerless construct discourse to create resistance to authority; how individuals negotiate their identity within an institution, subvert dominant discourses to create change, and the relative success of such (Mayr, [2015] 2018: 760). For example, this concerns why one might sympathise and identify with striking retail staff, and not with striking prisoners. In this thesis we are, at times, dealing with rhetoric in which LCR discursively reformulate their identity to align with their ideology. This creates narratives of sameness and otherness as Trump’s rhetoric becomes hegemonic within their worldview.

CDA has taken inspiration from the series of evolving Marxist ideas that eventually became critical theory. Firstly, there is the conception of *ideology*, as introduced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in *The German Ideology* ([1939] 2011)¹, in which the ruling class propagates a system of socio-political beliefs that obscure the material power relations of society. Secondly, there is *hegemony*, or ‘rule by consent’ as elaborated by Antonio Gramsci (1971) in which a propagated ideology becomes so pervasive that the controlled classes willingly buy into it, and reproduce those discursive measures that sustain it².

Michel Foucault’s philosophy builds outwards from this, assessing how social control is exerted through medical discourse (Foucault, [1968] 1989) and the prison system (Foucault, [1977] 2020) amongst others. Of especial relevance in this case is Foucault’s assessment that our modern hegemonic discourse on homosexuality began with the medicalisation of sexual behaviour in the Victorian era, which emphasised the active stigmatisation of non-heterosexual desires (Foucault, [1978] 1990). He had been influenced by Mary McIntosh’s conception of the ‘homosexual role’, the discursive construction of the homosexual as a deviant Other to foreground the supposed propriety of heterosexuality (McIntosh, 1968).

Queer theory further extends CDA into the power relations of sexuality and gender. An example is Judith Butler’s theory of *performativity*, the discursive production and reproduction of gender roles so as to make them appear natural and entrenched (Butler, [1990] 2007, 1993, 2004)³. Raewyn Connell’s theory of *hegemonic masculinity* is another; the

¹ *The German Ideology* was published as a series of separate theses in 1845-46. The version that appears in this thesis’ Bibliography is the combined work, first compiled together in 1939.

² Jürgen Habermas’ ideas of the *colonisation of the lifeworld* extend from this; arguing that the systems of the state and economy increasingly dominate interpersonal relations, via the gradual replacement of ‘communicative’ language (promoting understanding) with ‘strategic’ language (compelling others) (Habermas, 1984, 1987, as cited in Mayr, 2008: 5-6).

³ Wodak and Reisigl (2015 [2018]) further note the contributions of CDA to the study of discrimination. Namely that discrimination involves the stereotyping and generalisation of natural and cultural differences between groups to homogenise the Other, the naturalisation of cultural difference, implying cultural differences extend directly from natural difference, and the hierarchisation of said cultural differences to negatively portray the Other and legitimate power differences between the groups. (ibid: 578-579).

creation of an unattainable, mythologised masculine ideal against which all men's gendered worth is judged, with the most domineering behaviours rewarded (Connell, [2005] 2016). Queer Theory has also given rise to Queer Linguistics (Leap, [2015] 2018), which 'queers' patriarchal and heteronormative (Duggan, 2003) discourses in language use, and language construction, so as to oppose the regulation of desire and sexuality (Hall, 2011) (Leap, 2015 [2018]). Everyday forms of discrimination are also a point of interest for CDA, such as media portrayals of minority activities or controversial current events, which can be deliberately constructed to portray the subject negatively (Sykes, 1985: 85-86)(Van Dijk, 2015 [2018]: 477). Other examples include the selective use of terms like 'unequal treatment' (Sykes, 1985: 84), 'black militant' (ibid: 87), 'immigrant' (ibid: 95), or in our case, 'Gay', 'Queer' and 'Conservative', which can convey positive, or negative, meanings, depending on the ideology of the writer and reader.

2.2.2 Praxis: Dialectical-Relational, Discourse-Historical and Sociocognitive Approaches.

A breakdown of the specific praxis used to identify the different studied variables and 'emergent themes' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) is supplied in depth in Chapter 3, where particular attention is played to the works of Charles Fillmore (1985) and Robert Fowler (1985), who provide the most accessible breakdown of communicative nuances of any literature I have studied. That said, the methodology draws upon three major fields within CDA which it is best to cover here, in the literature review. These being the *discourse-historical* approach, popularised by Reisigl and Wodak (2016) (see also Wodak and Reisigl, 2015), the *dialectical-relational* approach, associated with Fairclough (2016), and the *socio-cognitive* approach of Teun Van Dijk (2016). Of the three, this thesis draws more commonly on the former two, but all are useable simultaneously. Different texts will lend themselves to different modes of analysis, and as this research was significantly inductive, it was prudent to keep them all in mind, rather than approach the sample from a narrow episteme.

All the key approaches to CDA share linguistic analysis in common, though they approach it from different angles. This involves an assessment of *language production*, including the specific lexicon used, the modal lexical forms that were omitted, the phonetics, grammar and semantics, the semiotics behind the word, and the imagery (if appropriate). What changes is the authors' focus on what the nuances of language production *refer to* in the broader context; respectively power-relations, historical context, and psychology. All share a commitment to critiquing and problematising the construction of power in society. A further thing that all have in common is a welcome *lack* of consistency in sampling, indeed as Wodak and Meyer (2016) point out, 'some authors do not even mention data sampling methods', and inductive approaches that gather more data as time goes on, or draw from other schools of thought, are welcome (ibid: 21). CDA can be performed on a sample of any size, depending on the author's preferences and the limits of their time and resources. This thesis sampled tweets across two four-year terms, and had a sample of 1300, but influential work has been done on much smaller samples. For example, Kurt Sengul, a relatively recent breakout scholar in the field, published two insightful papers on Australian right-wing populism that analysed only a single source each; the maiden Senate speech of Pauline Hanson (Sengul, 2019), and her infamous 'burqa stunt' in 2017 (Sengul, 2022). Sengul has also published other papers comparing her speech to a handful of others, again demonstrating meaningful work, that satisfies peer review, from a small sample (Sengul, 2020, 2021). In essence, CDA is adaptable to suit any text (even acts of political theatre, like the 'burqa stunt' (Sengul, 2022)), and meaningful work can be extrapolated from any number of sources.

Fairclough’s dialectical-relational model brings *power-relations* directly into play. It directly studies the interplay of different ideas into communication (what Fairclough calls ‘semiosis’ (Fairclough, 2016: 87), through context and modality, including ‘relational modality’ (how my communicative acts towards you are affected by my relationship to you), and ‘expressive modality’ (how my communicative acts towards you are affected by our respective understandings of ‘the truth’) (Fairclough, 1989 [2015]: 142-145)⁴. Fairclough’s ‘three dimensions’ model stresses the ways that an individual communicative act relates to the broader context of power relations. This includes the biases it contains that legitimise the status quo, or problematise it (Fairclough, 1992). In particular, attention is played to institutions and how communication serves as a legitimising tool for the ideas those institutions propagate, and how our behaviour, speech, and communication changes depending on the wider context. It is further interested in how the institutionalised praxis of one field ‘colonises’ another (Fairclough, 2016: 89).

By contrast, the *discourse-historical* model was created by Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak (2016) to study the continuation of antisemitism in postwar Austria. It centres historical context as its key focus, identifying how language production links to historical uses, evokes old tropes, recontextualises them, and so on. A good example of DHA in action is studying the way journalistic sources recontextualise scientific commentary and studies; these often exaggerate, or downplay, them to create a new narrative, with focuses on claims to authority, conventional wisdom, and alarmist language, at the forefront. Thereby, this model focuses on the relationship between one discourse, and other, established discourses (ibid: 2016).

The *socio-cognitive* approach focuses on the way that language production is filtered through the mind of the speaker/writer and listener/reader. It focuses on the ways that texts rely on shared socio-cultural knowledge and norms between speaker and listener, so that meaning can be communicated through implication. The personal experiences of those involved in communication have profound effects on the outcome. Language that seeks to evoke particular emotions, plays to unconscious biases, presents certain norms or ideals as *true* because they are shared between speaker and listener, or which preys on the ignorance of the listener (or reveals that of the speaker), is of particular relevance to the socio-cognitive approach to CDA (Van Dijk, 2016).

In addition to the key fields highlighted above, this thesis was also influenced by Social Media Critical Discourse Studies (SM-CDS) (KhosraviNik and Unger, 2016) (KhosraviNik, 2017), which further emphasises the way that communication is changed by the nature of the ‘participatory web’. It argues that the internet breaks down the relationship between producer and consumer, and/or the powerful and powerless, more associated with traditional media, creating what Ritzer and Jurgenson (2010) call ‘prosumers’; simultaneous producers and consumers of content. SM-CDS asserts that there is no tangible difference between online and offline discourse in how they relate to ideology and hegemony, a concept Jurgenson (2012) terms ‘digital dualism’, but there are issues specific to the online format that need to be addressed. These include justifying the selection of a specific sample from the near-endless repository of online communication, defining context, accounting for genre-specific communicative forms and their changes over time, and how to respect

⁴Whilst the ‘text’ in CDA can be written, spoken or otherwise communicated in any medium, this thesis has exclusively focussed on written forms of communication that do not have a single defined ‘listener’ relative to the speaker. Twitter/X predominantly focuses on communication to a generalised audience, even if one tags someone in the tweet, it is still publicly viewable and not a private communicative act, there is always a wider audience involved. Nevertheless much of the attention paid to modality in the literature is still relevant here, particularly a tweet’s relationship to the truth.

privacy and ethics in public online spaces (KhosraviNik and Unger, 2016: 215)⁵. SM-CDS studies of Twitter are increasing in popularity in recent years. The effectiveness of platforms like Twitter in disseminating information makes it an effective organising ground for the imposition of ideology, and narratives of resistance, thanks to its ‘immediacy, hybridity and interactivity’ (Callison and Hermida, 2015, as cited in Prendergast and Quinn, 2021: 61). Further, the platform is a useful source of authentic or ‘naturally occurring’ language deployed by real language users, instead of abstract or invented examples (Wodak, 2011: 36, as cited in Alijarallah, 2017:12)⁶.

2.3 Key Concepts

This thesis explores LCR’s engagement in *Homo-Authoritarianism*, which is centred on right-wing authoritarian follower behaviour (RWA). However, in studying LCR’s rhetoric, I identify two other key concepts that mutually reinforce RWA; these being ‘doublethink’ and populism, which collectively allowed LCR to legitimise Trump and his actions by selectively reinterpreting them, and fearmongering about elite enemies that Trump was considered to be fighting against. Literature on each of these concepts is explored below, in the order in which they appear in Chapters 4 through 6, beginning with the Orwellian concept of ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]).

2.3.1 Doublethink and Epistemologies of Ignorance: Why Discrimination Doesn’t Exist Until It Does (and Doesn’t Again).

Perhaps strangely for an academic literature review in the study of politics, this thesis must, first, turn to fiction, and draw attention to George Orwell’s seminal novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). Orwell, possessed of an abiding hatred of totalitarianism, following his experiences in the Spanish civil war, created a fictionalised dystopia ruled over by a regime that maintains its control through the psychological manipulation of the people. Its control is exercised by the dual programs of ‘doublethink’ and ‘newspeak’, collectively forcing the people to accept their overlords’ version of ‘truth’ in defiance of logic and reason, and then by denying them access to the language necessary to form complex and critical thoughts, thereby undercutting their ability to be dissatisfied with the state (‘thoughtcrime’). The idea of ‘doublethink’ is deeply relevant to this thesis, as it manifests in the rhetoric of Log Cabin in multifarious ways, usually in a subliminal form, for the purpose of defending and legitimising Donald Trump.

Orwell’s definition of doublethink reads as follows: ‘to forget whatever it [is] necessary to forget, then to draw it back into memory again at the moment when it [is] needed, and then promptly to forget it again.’ (ibid: 41). It manifests in the holding of simultaneous, contradictory opinions and the acceptance of things known logically to be lies, whilst acting upon them as though they were true. In Orwell’s world, this manifests in the state’s slogans ‘War is Peace’, ‘Freedom is Slavery’ and ‘Ignorance is Strength.’ Existing within Oceania

⁵That said, it is important to note that SM-CDS does not foreground technology as its focal point, rather the text and the context of its creation. It is still principally concerned with the ideologies constructed and constructing discourse, rather than the specific nuances in communicative forms between, say, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram (KhosraviNik and Unger, 2016).

⁶Recent studies have conducted CDA Twitter analyses on a variety of topics, ranging from the perspectives of women drivers in Saudi Arabia and the masculinist backlash they endure (Alijarallah, 2017), to the influence exerted by Russian Twitter accounts and bots surrounding the election of Donald Trump (D’Elena, 2018), to the meanings ascribed to cardiovascular disease by the Canadian public (Gonsalves, McGannon and Pegoraro, 2018), to Donald Trump’s tweets in general (Kreis, 2017), and those surrounding the California wildfires specifically (Kerbleski, 2019), to campaigns surrounding sexual assault cases in Spain and Ireland (Prendergast and Quinn, 2021).

requires constant exercises in doublethink, until the people assume that any issues that they have with the state's actions are the result of their own mental deficiencies, instead of actual oppression, and supplicate themselves to the state's narrative (Zuraikat and al-Nawasreh, 2021).

Doublethink has seen scattered use in academic writings, almost exclusively amongst psychologists, to refer to the practice whereby a human holds two contradictory opinions at once. A stated example in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the legitimisation of the party because it 'defends democracy', whilst simultaneously accepting its autocratic control because 'democracy is impossible' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]: 41). Psychologists find it a fascinating counter-narrative to the previously prevalent idea that human minds are biased towards conformity; keeping all their thoughts and opinions internally coherent with each other so as to prevent cognitive dissonance.

A few different suggestions as to why a given person might engage in doublethink have been put forward. Firstly, it has proven fascinating for scholars researching the proliferation of conspiracy theories. Goertzel (1994) and Swami et al (2011) found that one conspiracy theory is often used to legitimise another, unrelated, conspiracy theory, and Wood et al (2012) and Lewandowsky et al (2018) found this extends to incompatible conspiracy theories about the same event, a feat referred to as 'collective polyphasia'. Wood et al's (2012) study *Dead and Alive* is the most famous, finding a significant positive correlation between believing the conspiracy theory that Princess Diana was still alive, and believing another, mutually exclusive, one, in which she was murdered (Wood, 2012). The theory goes that the willingness to endorse a conspiracy theory can lead one to irrationally embrace multiple, branching theories, that are collectively opposed to each other, based on their individual coherence to the higher order idea that 'the official version of events is untrue'. Petrović and Žeželj (2022, 2023) developed a barometer with which to measure doublethink as a personality trait independent from a conspiratorial mindset, or what Pennycook et al. (2015) refer to as 'pseudo-profound bullshit receptivity', (ibid, 2022) and then tested it against a series of mutually exclusive Covid-19 conspiracy theories, such as the simultaneous belief that the virus was the common cold *and* a deadly Chinese bioweapon. Sadly for these theorists, the belief in mutually contradictory conspiracy theories has been thoroughly debunked by van Prooijen et al. (2023), who conclusively found that the evidence for correlating belief in conspiracy theories stemmed from sampled people who actually believed the official version of events, and thus equally *disbelieved* the contradictory conspiracy theories; being equally unconvinced that Diana was both murdered and still alive, because they accepted that she had died in a car accident. That said, the previous body of work on conspiracy theories is still discussed in this review, as even van Prooijen et al's debunking paper showed some interesting anomalies; those who reported that they were 'unsure' about the official narrative on a variety of topics (as opposed to a binary 'for' or 'against') would often endorse contradictory conspiracies. This suggests that doublethink may still have some use in explaining the holding of contradictory conspiratorial beliefs, assuming there is a coherent higher order belief linking them, and that they are not so diametrically opposed as the idea that a person is both alive *and* dead.

Beyond conspiracy theories, other ideas have been put forward as to why people hold seemingly contradictory simultaneous beliefs. El-Sawad, Arnold and Cohen (2004) analysed doublethink in the workplace. They drew on Anthony Giddens' (1991) conception of 'bracketing', in which a person may have different terminology for their daily experiences versus their wider political beliefs, and thus appear to hold contradictory opinions due to the different contexts in which they think about them. The authors suggested that doublethink may be an essential coping mechanism for survival in certain roles. Interviewing workers at an anonymised 'large blue-chip corporation' they found self reports that

markedly contradicted themselves, without the employees even noticing. As a representative example, one employee proudly spoke of the company as an equal opportunities employer, but then reported that she had been passed over for promotion after becoming pregnant (El-Sawad, Arnold and Cohen, 2004). Doublethink may, thus, be seen as higher-order beliefs existing alongside contradictory personal experiences, but *not* cancelling each other out due to being ‘bracketed’.

Doldor and Atewologun (2020) suggest doublethink may be a form of coping mechanism for underprivileged or oppressed minorities, who have recourse to other, more privileged aspects of their identity. They researched highly-skilled Romanian professionals and found a common thread of several respondents simultaneously acknowledging stigma against them, then denying it by appealing to other aspects of their identity. In terms of this thesis, this has implications for explaining the *existence* of LGBT+ Republicans, who may simultaneously acknowledge that they are discriminated against, but then deny it by claiming that people predominantly care about their status as upstanding patriots; this links doublethink to *Homonationalism* (Puar, 2007) and *Homonormativity* (Duggan, 2003), discussed later. Though discrimination and acceptance of LCR is not necessarily coming from the same source, as is elaborated on later, suggesting they have a more nuanced take on discrimination, rather than a simultaneous holding of opposed beliefs on it.

Andrew Alan Johnson (2022) by contrast, examines doublethink in the form of one knowing a statement to be a lie and acting upon that anyway as though it were true; discussing ‘lies of solidarity’ in the context of Thai tourism and military anti-insurgency policy. He constructs lies and doublethink as an invitation by the speaker for the listener to an ‘affective community’, united by a shared idea. Johnson draws upon McGranahan’s (2017) assessment of Donald Trump’s use of lies (‘alternative facts’) as a way of inviting his followers to believe in the prospect of ‘making America great again’ by encouraging them to believe various untruths about the present, ones that he can liberate them from. This can also have implications for this thesis, where doublethink is deployed as a sort of political litmus test; LCR may be embracing the Trumpian ‘alternative fact’ on a given topic in order to become part of his ‘affective community’.

These assessments of doublethink link us to literature on ‘epistemologies of ignorance’, the psychological and political understanding of why certain people possess and reproduce ignorance about inequality. The term ‘epistemologies of ignorance’ originates with Charles W. Mills’ *The Racial Contract* (1997); Mills identifies that society is ordered unequally with whites at the top, but opines that the maintenance of differential outcomes for black and white people stems from the lack of knowledge that many white people have *about* persistent inequality. This is sustained by fantasised histories, and the ascribing of subliminally negative character traits to non-whites. These works do not use the term ‘doublethink’ explicitly, but they draw upon related concepts. Linda Martin Alcoff (2007) identifies three such epistemes. The first of which, drawing on the work of Lorraine Code (1995) states that ignorance comes from positionality; our ‘situatedness as knowers’ relates to our worldview and lived experience, thereby two people who have led different lives may interpret the same data differently⁷. The second, articulated by Sandra Harding (1991) comes from the lack of investment by privileged groups in increasing their awareness of issues pertaining to an underprivileged one. Thereby, underprivileged groups share the same understanding of material reality as their privileged peers (Harding’s example is of women vs men), but more understanding of matters related to their oppression. The third, drawing on Horkheimer’s

⁷For example, as Bowleg et al (2017) argue, white medical and psychological practitioners may assume that their data related to white people’s health and experiences are universal, and thus not realise the specific needs of nonwhites

(1947, 1975) critique of positivism, suggests ignorance comes from the way knowledge is produced in western, white, circles, including in universities; privileging knowledge about ‘facts’ about the way the world ‘is’, and thus obscuring the deeply pervasive role played by capitalism, and imperialism, in shaping it. Thereby, privileged groups build the methods of knowledge production so as to intentionally sustain ignorance.

To explain this thesis’ interpretation of the relevance of these ideas we must return to Orwell. *Nineteen Eighty-Four’s* doublethink is deployed for the legitimisation of authoritarianism; endorsing two contradictory opinions simultaneously, or switching between them at will, so as to *avoid* holding an authority figure to account. As such, it is unlikely to simply be an extension of the psychological comfort blanket (Doldor and Atelowogun, 2022) needed to navigate in a party that appears to simultaneously value LCR as patriots and discriminate against them as gays, since this would suggest that LCR were *always* opposed to holding their party accountable, which is manifestly untrue. Furthermore, as later chapters will elaborate, they only play their experiences of discrimination within the party in contradictory ways when they want to exonerate Trump, and/or attack Democrats, making this an exercise in doublethink for a partisan purpose, not a coping mechanism. Likewise the epistemologies of ignorance articulated by Alcoff (2007) are very useful in understanding the *existence* of groups like Log Cabin within a party that otherwise does so much to hinder the rights of minorities; namely that they do so because they are privileged in other ways that affect their view of reality and nudge them towards Conservatism. This may be a deliberate and possessive effort to maintain white and middle class privilege by strategic ignorance of discrimination (Horkheimer, 1947, 1975), or the accidental result of benefitting from others’ attempts at the same (Harding, 1991). But, as stated in Chapter 1, this thesis’ purpose is *not* to explain their existence, such theories have already been articulated, instead we are concerned with the warping of their views over time, and epistemologies of ignorance do not adequately explain sudden, seemingly whiplash-inducing, changes in belief, for a partisan purpose. They only explain wider ignorance of certain issues in a way that sustains privilege. Nevertheless, this literature should be borne in mind when readers come to this chapter’s later section on LGBT+ Conservative beliefs.

This thesis’ introduced theory of *Homo-Authoritarianism* is based upon the existing ideas of *Homonormativity* (Duggan, 2003) and *Homonationalism* (Puar, 2007), which involve the intentional reproduction of assimilationist, nationalist and Islamophobic rhetoric in exchange for acceptance. An intentional bargain is made when such rhetoric is engaged in. Following from this, Homo-Authoritarianism is the intentional act of buying acceptance and support through accountability sabotage (Glasius, 2018). It manifests firstly in the alignment of LGBT+ groups’ with the authority’s (in this case, Donald Trump’s) rhetoric, and secondly through the undermining of Democratic procedures and institutions by which their power can be curtailed. This eventually morphs over time into taking said actions for their own sake, even when they appear manifestly contrary to one’s self-interest or previous goals. Because of the importance of intentionality to all of this, this thesis argues that LCR’s doublethink begins as a way of joining Trump’s ‘affective community’ of liars and ‘alternative-fact’ endorsers (Johnson, 2022), until eventually they are so enmeshed in it that they take up the higher order belief in Trump always being right, or otherwise being impossible to criticise. They then build contradictory beliefs off of that, and thus switch between contradictory takes on his actions in order to continually cast him in a good light, paralleling the literature on conspiracy theories without endorsing the ‘dead and alive’ cognitive whiplash that van Prooijen et al. (2023) debunked.

2.3.2 Populism: The One That [Gets] Away.

Populism is a notoriously contested concept in academic writing, and one in which the ramifications of misusing the term can be dire. Populism is, broadly, centred on the concept of mobilising the ‘people’ against the ‘elite’, but there are profound epistemological divisions in literature beyond that bare-bones framework. Each paper on it contributes to ongoing ‘populist hype’ that inspires more works, some of which are deeply problematic (De Cleen, Glynos and Mondon, 2018)(Brown and Mondon, 2021)(De Cleen and Glynos, 2021) (Mondon, 2022c).

Complicating this minefield of a topic further is the US’ strong populist political tradition. Indeed, the term ‘populist’ historically originates in America, with the US People’s Party, sometimes called ‘the Populist Party’, who ran on a pro-agrarian platform (Fuentes, 2020). US politics has an especially strong tradition of anti-elite rhetoric on all sides; whether that is state governments being anti-federal, conservatives being anti-state, or liberals being anti-theocratic. Likewise, both Democrats and Republicans deploy populist rhetoric at different times against the political establishment in Washington D.C: The left see it as a corporate-controlled military-industrial complex, the right see it as being manipulated by a liberal intelligentsia, and both see it’s members as power-hungry and self-serving (Foley, 2007: 342-343). A populist tradition is, certainly, fitting for a country that traces its origin to an independence war against the world’s then-most powerful state, and one which cemented expansive provisions for individual rights into its constitution, whilst constraining the power of its own government. Since 1789, rhetoric that one might, retroactively, term ‘populist’ has never been far from the lips of US politicians; well before academic definitions of the term were developed. In many ways, by utilising populism, LCR and Trump are merely continuing a pattern of political praxis that goes back to America’s foundation. But, in more important ways, concerning the openly far right nature of *this* instance of populism, they are treading a newer, and darker, road. Not all anti-elite rhetoric is the same, and lazy analyses of ‘populism’ give way to legitimising substantial harms.

It is incumbent upon me, therefore, to lay out, and briefly defend, my use of this term, upon which there is not yet full academic consensus, without either losing many pages to a meta-narrative about the debate, or euphamising reactionary ideas by being too parsimonious. I hold close to the definition of populism as a discursive act, "something political actors do, not something they are" (Bonikowski et al, 2019), in which ‘the people’, an empty signifier, are juxtaposed against ‘the elite’ (often an empty signifier themselves). This discourse is used to mobilise the people based on unresolved demands aimed at the elite. This definition is most closely associated with Ernesto Laclau (2005: 67-77), though I am likewise inspired by the ‘ideational’ theory of populism, associated with Cas Mudde. In the latter, populism is a ‘thin-centred’ ideology, which is filled out by ‘thick’ ones, like socialism or fascism. Regardless of which ‘thick’ ideology fills in the blanks, ‘the people’ are always pure and associated with ‘heartland’, ‘the elite’ are corrupt, and political legitimacy is constructed as stemming from the ‘general will of the people’ (Mudde, 2004) (Taggart, 2004) (Kriesi, 2014) (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, 2017, 2018) (Kriesi, 2014) (Oliver and Rahn, 2016) (Engesser et al. 2017). The struggle between these groups is constructed as leading to a mythologised outcome, a utopia or ‘retrotopia’ that may be deeply unrealistic, incredibly vague⁸, and which obscures systemic harms (Wodak, 2021). The ideational theory is totalising in its’ approach, whereas the Laclausian ‘discourse’ theory, importantly, captures that a political actor can be more, or less, populist at different times, rather than simply

⁸The vagueness is intentional, so that listeners can ascribe the struggle with a variety of qualities, not all of which may be grounded in reality; ‘Make America Great Again’, can mean whatever Trump supporters want it to (Morgan, 2019) (Haynes, 2020).

being a populist, or not (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2022). Likewise, ideational theory is often too literal in defining its ‘elite enemy’⁹, ignoring that *percieved* elite enemies (such as the so-called ‘woke left’) play a key role in the populist far right, potentially more so than material elites. As a result, whilst I take inspiration from the Mudden school, I am more convinced by the Laclausian one, though I am more agnostic than a full adherent.

In short then, I define populism as empty-signifying discourse, in which part of the demos are made to believe that another part, one with perceived elite status, is their *enemy*, with whom there cannot be compromise (Webber, 2023), and in which political legitimacy is derived solely from the ‘general will’ of *the mobilised part* of the demos. ‘Thick’ ideologies, like socialism, centrism, or fascism, are then conveyed through this medium of ‘the people’ fighting the ‘elite’.

Before discussing the specific brand of populism deployed by LCR, it is worth making a couple of observations about the concept as a whole. Firstly, as alluded to before, populism can be engaged with to different degrees; what Michael Foley (2007)¹⁰ calls ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ populism, respectively. The former signifies the tendency of political actors to court current popularity by any means, and to present themselves as distanced from the political establishment, and receptive to ‘the people’s’ needs; a tactic Foley identifies as having become a necessity for U.S. Presidential campaigning (ibid: 342-345). The latter, by contrast, involves more radical ideas, and the laying of explicit blame against elite targets (ibid: 346-349). In essence, populism identifies ‘the elite’ as the people’s enemy, but it’s softer variety tones this down, leaves the enemy-signifying implied, and may incorporate ‘thick’ ideologies that are less radical. Even so, it still has damaging effects, since even the distancing of an executive from the political establishment (‘outsider’ campaigning) discredits, and ferments dissatisfaction against, democratic institutions (ibid: 345); though explicit, ‘hard populist’ enemy-identification is more harmful. In this case, LCR are generally ‘hard’ populists, stirring up active opposition against the identified foes of ‘the people’.

Secondly, populism is *never* universal; when a populist talks about ‘the people’, there is always a specific, bounded, segment of the demos, that they are actually referring to. Some populist movements claim to mobilise ‘the people’ (sic) as a whole, such as Latin American populists (Linden, 2022), Castroists and Maoists (Fuentes, 2020), though this often comes at the cost of de-legitimising the subjective needs of minorities when they are subsumed into ‘the people’ (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2018), thereby inadvertently coding ‘the people’ as a specific identity. Typically though, as Daphne Halikiopoulou argues (in Bonikowski et al, 2019), whatever claims of universality are made, the specific ‘thick’ ideology being conveyed by a given populist will provide a narrow, and explicitly anti-pluralist, idea of who counts as ‘the people’ (ibid) (Webber, 2023). For example, Castroism and Maoism define ‘the people’ as per socialism, trying to mobilise the working and peasant classes.¹¹

⁹See for example Dai and Kustov (2023), who found that ideational populism had little effect on voters’ preferences in the US; but had defined populism in terms of totalising and highly moralistic statements specifically discrediting Congress and the Washington establishment.

¹⁰Foley hand-waves the definitions and debates around populism with a single footnote reference to Canovan (1981, 1999) and Mudde (2004), and is more concerned with populism as a pattern of political behaviour, rather than rhetoric. Once again, this complicates the subject further, as Foley’s descriptions of populism do not line up with academic discourse. Nevertheless, his work is compatible with the commentary of Katsambekis (2016, 2017, 2022) on the varying degrees of populism.

¹¹That being said, sometimes the anti-elite nature of populism brings wildly different ideologies under one banner; pulling mainstream parties to different positions on the GAL-TAN spectrum (Beyerlin, 2021); uniting greens and anti-migrant conservatives to fight urbanisation (Audikana and Kaufmann, 2022); and uniting LGBT+ socialists and conservatives to fight abortion (Ashby, 2024).

LCR’s populism is informed by the *far-right*. Broadly, this involves mixing populist anti-elitism with discrimination (frequently racism) to amplify both; creating a narrative of ethnic natives and/or normative people experiencing ‘reverse discrimination’ that is perpetrated by the elite (Rebechi and Rhode, 2023)¹². Populism and discrimination *are* distinct concepts¹³, but they often mutually reinforce into what Erin Jenne (2018) calls ‘ethnopolitism’. For example, attacking ‘the Left elite’ because they are inclusive to trans people and support affirmative action, or associating one’s domestic elites with an enemy state (Mair, 1994) (Brubaker, 2020) (Singh, 2021) (Jenne, 2018, 2021).

In LCR’s case, specifically, the empty signifiers are filled out as follows; ‘the people’ are patriotic, common-sense Americans, many of whom happen to be LGBT+¹⁴, and ‘the elite enemy’ is the political left, which is constructed as a powerful, institutionalised, brainwashing force that leeches off the LGBT+ community. Another elite enemy are party-based homophobes on the left and the right, who retain elite status as the old guard of established political organisations. Donald Trump is not an ‘elite enemy’ in this construction, as he was not a member of the political establishment, and distanced himself from it as President (practicing both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ populism, Foley (2007)). Another reason is that he was not, ostensibly, homophobic¹⁵.

It is important to remember three things about the populist far right. The first of which is that far right ideologies are always *pro-elite*; they seek to establish in-group control of their states (Mudde, 2019). As a result, their populism is a smokescreen; they may mobilise ‘the people’ against the *current* political or economic elite (‘drain the swamp’), but will invariably replace it with their own. The far right contains both an *extreme right*, which seek autocracy and totalitarianism, and a ‘populist radical right’, who welcome democracy, but *not* liberal democracy (Mudde, 2007, 2019). The latter uses populism in order to present itself as adjacent to ‘the people’, and retains the use of elections as a way of winning legitimacy. But both sides of the far right are reactionary, exclusionary and seek to empower their in-group, and make themselves part of the elite. Their populism is a way of packaging this into a digestible form for voters; constructing an ‘elite’ that is an intolerant threat to democracy, and thus hiding that the far right is, itself, is a threat to the same (Sengul, 2019, 2020, 2022).

The second thing is that populism, especially the populist far right, *rarely* spontaneously emerges, even though populist, and anti-populist, political actors will claim that such risings are always spontaneous and organic; a concept Aurelien Mondon (2022a) refers to as the ‘construction of a reactionary people’¹⁶. Populism is discourse, and therefore has to be *communicated* by someone. That being said, because the discourse is based on unresolved demands, the feeling that society has ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ gives populists ammunition (Rodrik, 2021). Economic shocks, often aided by globalism, are a key example (Autor et al, 2020). Similarly, the great depression provided fertile ground for the growth of the Nazi Party (Doerr, Gissler and Peydró, 2020), as did the 2008 financial crisis on

¹²Haynes (2017), Beiner (2019) and Mollan and Geisin (2020) identify Steve Bannon as the source of this rhetoric in the Trump administration. His rhetoric (found on *Breitbart* and other sites) borrows from Christian fundamentalism, laissez-faire capitalism, clash of civilisations rhetoric and neo-fascism, all loosely united by an anti-establishment underpinning (Beiner, 2019: 301-303).

¹³After all, discrimination is an institutionalised problem in a way that anti-elitism is not.

¹⁴The use of ‘happen to be’ is intentional, as LCR view their sexuality as secondary to the rest of their identity.

¹⁵He was, and is, *transphobic* however; though in his defence, he has made occasional inclusive comments to that end as well, such as telling the media that Caitlyn Jenner was welcome to use the women’s restroom in Trump Tower.

¹⁶Anti-populists then weaponise this idea that ‘the people’ are volatile, and prone to populism, as justification for a purely elitist democracy (Goyvaerts, 2021).

the far right in eastern Europe (Gyöngyösi and Verner, 2022) (Ahlquist, Copelovitch and Walter, 2020). Rising immigration levels, likewise, often provide a populist flash point (Tabellini, 2019). Socio-economic shocks, coupled with the discrediting of representative institutions, often leaves voters alienated and looking for different solutions (Stavrakakis et al, 2017). Populist actors thrive here, but they do so because *they blame the shocks on something*, not because ‘the people’ spontaneously rose up.

The third thing is that the populist far right is *not* substantively equal to its left-wing counterpart. Whilst both are typically illiberal¹⁷, the latter bases its juxtaposition of ‘people’ and ‘elite’ on material realities; proletariat vs the bourgeoisie, aristocracy and billionaires. Contrastingly, the former appeals to nativist fantasies and exaggerations, like viewing university education as leftist indoctrination. A common tactic in media commentary is to simply refer to all such rhetoric as ‘populist’ without clarification, which unfairly equates reactionary and progressive politics. Furthermore, refusing to use the term *far right* downplays their own elite nature and discriminatory agenda, and makes them seem more popular than they are via an ‘etymological link to the people’ (Mondon and Winter, 2019, 2020) (Brown and Mondon, 2021) (Mondon, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023). Not only that, but far right parties *love* being called populist, as it is a less stigmatised term than ‘racist’ or ‘fascist’ and enables their mainstreaming (Brown and Mondon, 2021) (Newth, 2024) (Brown and Newth, 2024). To this end, there is a school of thought that rejects the term ‘populism’ as a descriptor for the far right. Conversely, I argue that the rejection of the term ‘populist’ is incorrect, as the far right legitimises itself via populist tactics, and thus the term is accurate. However, said school of thought is correct in arguing that euphamising the populist far right as just ‘populist’ is dangerous and playing into its hands. To this end, I have endeavoured to use the term ‘the populist far right’ rather than ‘far right populism’, so as to prime the words ‘far right’ by making them the verbs, in the sentence, rather than adjectives (Mudde, 2019).

These arguments are linked to more hopeful analyses of left-wing populism, associated with Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, that seek to rehabilitate the term by divorcing populism from the far right. They argue that populism is useful for mobilising people in a post-democratic liberal society (i.e, too much liberalism, not enough democracy) that requires what Matthias Rooduijn calls a ‘democratic corrective’ (Bonikowski et al, 2019). Populism is thereby considered particularly effective at mobilisation along intersectional lines (Laclau, 2005) (Mouffe, 2005 [2009]) (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2022) (Bonikowski et al, 2019) (Venizelos, 2023). In short, these authors view populism as either a neutral, or positive, concept, which only becomes problematic in a far right context (Venizelos, 2023). I am not, as yet, as optimistic about left-wing populism, nor as pessimistic about liberalism, as these authors. I argue that Populism is, by default, illiberal, as it demeans the dignity of, and deliberately disempowers, its ‘enemy’ (Glasius, 2018). Liberalism and democracy are so intimately linked that they are regularly conflated, which both Mouffe (2005 [2009]) and Glasius (2018) acknowledge. Whilst they should be considered distinct, I argue that liberal principles, like freedom of speech and publication, play such a role in maintaining the accountability necessary for a sustained democracy, that to engage in illiberalism is to risk authoritarianism. Thus populism (which is illiberal) should be critiqued and opposed by default. That being said, I do draw some inspiration from the pro-populist literature: Such sources *are* correct in asserting that liberalism *can be* too tolerant of anti-democratic rhetoric and discrimination; falsely equating the mainstreaming of such with a fair and balanced political debate (see Mondon (2024)). Thus liberalism can give authoritarian

¹⁷Unless great effort is taken to painstakingly avoid illiberalism and the discrediting of political opponents as outside the demos. Right-wing populism does not expend this effort, and few left-wing populists do either.

forces the platform they need to threaten democracy, and so a corrective may eventually be needed. In short, whilst I acknowledge that a little illiberalism may be the lesser evil, I do not believe that this automatically qualifies populism as a good thing.

Populists in power are generally viewed negatively, though there is some debate on this. Populist leaders frequently use their majorities as a weapon, maintaining democratic institutions only insofar as they can keep beating their opponents in elections; they do not actually view them as legitimate democratic alternatives. Daniel Weinstock builds on this and asserts that, for populists, once popular sovereignty is established, all criticism of the populist's viewpoint is illegitimate (Weinstock, 2023). Furthermore, they will act to undermine procedures that hold them accountable (Webber, 2023), thereby populism often serves to legitimise authoritarianism in the name of *not* constraining 'the will of the people'¹⁸. As previously mentioned, populism tends to be anti-pluralist, it constructs its supporters as 'the people' and considers actors that oppose them as *outside* the demos, and frequently as the 'enemies' of the people (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013) (Bonikowski et al, 2019) (Singh, 2021) (Webber, 2023). Likewise, a populist who loses power frequently acts as though a monstrous injustice has taken place, since they claim to be the voice of the majority, and thus cannot legitimately lose (Urbiniati, 2019)¹⁹. All that being said, Giorgos Venizelos' (2023) work on SYRIZA in Greece is a compelling counter-example; the party used populist rhetoric, but did not undermine liberal democratic institutions, built a broad intersectional coalition, and peacefully handed over power after losing the 2019 elections. Whether this is an exception that proves the rule, or an full exoneration of *left-wing* populists²⁰ remains to be seen. But the populist far right certainly falls into all of these traps.

To conclude, I am critical of the concept of populism, and view it as an illiberal exercise that can too easily legitimise authoritarianism. Certainly this is how LCR use it; creating narratives in which Trump defends 'the people' from a homophobic and/or otherwise controlling and exploitative elite, and everything he does is legitimised by reference to that. However, it must be explicitly stated that critiquing populism *must not* come at the expense of meaningful critique of the injustices of the current system (De Cleen, Glynos and Mondon, 2018). I identify Log Cabin as participating in the populist far right, but readers must not forget that just because they, and Trump supporters more broadly, do so, it does not follow that all emotive criticism of the status quo be tarred with the same brush.

Finally, I acknowledge that populism is a heavily disputed concept in academic writing. It is, by far, the most contested term operationalised by this thesis, and is one for which I am more agnostic on definitions, and schools of thought, than I am in lockstep with them.

¹⁸A representative example of all these principles in practice, would be the current Mexican President, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, often abbreviated to 'AMLO'. He has sought to undermine impartial procedures to uphold free and fair elections, regularly seeks to mobilise popular sentiment against such institutions, and once tried to establish a 'parallel Presidency', with his own inauguration ceremony, when he lost the 2006 election (Wirtschafter and Sarukhan, 2023). Likewise, his Presidency has been defined by the centralisation of executive power, because a more empowered President is supposedly better able to fulfill 'the people's wishes (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene, 2021: 59), though his autocratic tendencies have been checked by a weak state and selective popularity (ibid). 'AMLO' represents a populist who does not view opposition parties as legitimate democratic alternatives, and seeks popular support for undermining them. He is also a welcome reminder that, whilst this thesis is US-centric, the problems of populism and authoritarianism, apply to many states, including *both* sides of the politically-fraught US-Mexico border.

¹⁹For a populist far right example, see Donald Trump's refusal to concede the 2020 U.S Presidential election. For a populist left-wing example, see Nicholas Maduro's authoritarian crackdown on opposition figures, following the disputed 2024 Venezuelan Presidential election (Phillips, 2024).

²⁰Such an exoneration would have to outweigh examples of populist left-wing leaders like López Obrador (Mexico), or Maduro (Venezuela), using populism in illiberal and authoritarian ways.

This section justifies my use of the term, and the various influences I have taken in shaping it, whilst also gently outlining my epistemological disagreements with some views, which, I argue, inaccurately divorce populism from the far right. Even where I disagree partially with some sources, I take as much critical inspiration from them as I can. Working with ‘populism’ is always a tightrope walk, I have endeavoured to navigate it fairly.

2.3.3 Right-Wing Authoritarian Follower Behaviour: Adapting Psychology

Studies of authoritarianism²¹ bridge the gap between the fields of politics and psychology, however, they divide the topics of research too neatly for this paper’s purposes. This forces me to adapt, and synthesise, established research praxis. This is because *political* research on authoritarianism is focused around state and macro-level behaviours, such as dissecting political systems to note their lack of accountability. By contrast, this paper does not catalogue the authoritarian behaviours of *Trump himself*, but the ways in which his supporters (specifically LCR) legitimise and reproduce them. However, studies of authoritarian *followers* have hitherto been the sole purview of *psychological* research, which looks to explain support for authoritarian leaders by virtue of developmental issues and socialisation. The neat divide of the field creates a substantive literature gap for this thesis to enter into, whereby we find evidence of right-wing authoritarian follower behaviour in communicated political rhetoric and not responses to psychological surveys.

It is important to distinguish what authoritarianism *is* to begin with, since it is a variously used term in the social sciences. This epistemological vagueness (compounded by political and psychological work treating the subject differently) forces me to adopt Mariles Glasius’ (2018) definition: She, importantly, distinguishes *authoritarianism* from *illiberalism*, where other authors use the terms interchangeably. Glasius defines *authoritarian* acts as those revolving around ‘accountability sabotage’ whereas *illiberal* acts ‘infringe the autonomy and dignity of a person’, and these definitions are not mutually exclusive. (Glasius, 2018: 529-530). For an example, consider the scapegoating of political rivals, and other branches of government (illiberal act), being used to motivate the centralising of executive power, and undermining of electoral oversight; thereby maximising the chances of one’s own election success and the power one wields as a result (authoritarian act). This example is representative of Mexico under the López Obrador administration (Sánchez-Talanquer and Greene, 2021)(Wirtschafter and Sarukhan, 2021). Whilst that example is a welcome reminder that authoritarianism²² is not US-exclusive, or limited to the far right, this thesis’ focus *is*; between engaging in ‘fake news’ rhetoric, and repeated attempts to deny the validity of any means of restraining his power (including the 2020 election), Trump’s commitment to ‘accountability sabotage’ is inarguable, and Log Cabin’s commitment to upholding this sabotage will become clear as this thesis progresses.

As previously mentioned, this thesis is not in the realm of psychology, and so we are forced to adapt our methodology to see how elements of authoritarian follower behaviour identified by Psychological research, manifest themselves in Twitter/X rhetoric. This was operationalised in this thesis through four variables: **Calls to Violence, Veneration of the Authority, Dismissal of Accountability**, and **Media Scepticism** (see Chapters 3 and 6). These draw from Glasius (2018), as well as political research into Trump’s

²¹Most influential literature on authoritarianism focuses on the far right, inspired by Theodor Adorno and his first-hand experiences as a Jewish man fleeing the Nazis. But it is important to remember that authoritarian attitudes exist on the left also, and have been demonstrated to parallel their right-wing counterparts in support for an enlarged and powerful state, punitive action against transgressions and large scale surveillance (Manson, 2020).

²²In that case, authoritarianism enacted by a populist, see the previous section.

relationship to the media, specifically Flisfeder (2018), and from consistently applied concepts in psychological research on authoritarian follower behaviour, going back as far as *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, 1950 [2019]). Whilst analytically distinct, these variables are not mutually exclusive and frequently appear together. It is hoped that by drawing on both political and psychological disciplines, a model for politically measuring authoritarian follower behaviour will be constructed that future research can draw upon.

Glasius (2018) directly informed the conception of the variable **Dismissal of Accountability**, which directly catalogues her identification of ‘accountability sabotage’. It refers to the times in which LCR undermine criticisms of Trump, or otherwise celebrate his unaccountable use of power. Likewise Flisfeder’s work (2018: 10-13), which identifies Trump (and the wider alt-right) as engaged in ‘post-truth’ rhetoric, directly informed the variable **Media Scepticism**, signifying efforts to strictly control public narratives about Trump by undercutting media criticism of him²³. Attacking the media is not the sole purview of authoritarians and can *prima facie* seem unrelated. However, I argue that whilst it is not *restricted to* authoritarian behaviours, it is nevertheless an essential part of them.

In a capitalist media environment that requires constant stimulation of the public’s attention in order to generate revenue, Trump’s ability to hold the public eye by outright lying (‘alternative facts’) has become a staple of his political style, which I alluded to earlier in the section on *Doublethink* (McGranahan, 2017) (Johnson, 2022). Control of narrative is essential to authoritarianism, and should always be operationalised as a key feature of such ideologies. In an autocratic system, the leader will exert state control and censorship over the media so that it can only publish approved propaganda, with examples ranging from Joseph Goebbels to RT. But in a democratic system, the state may not have the power to do so, and it would likely cost them legitimacy to try. But if one can convince the population that certain media outlets and narratives are false and should not be read, one effectively censors the media without risking constitutional over-reach. Trump’s ‘Fake News’ rhetoric should thus be seen as an effort to control media narratives and keep his supporter base in an echo chamber. Likewise LCR’s efforts at engaging in **Media Scepticism** must be seen as the legitimisation and reproduction of this echo chamber around themselves, and the invitation of others into the ‘affective community’ (McGranahan, 2017) (Johnson, 2022) inside it.

Psychological studies of authoritarian follower behaviour informed **Calls to Violence** and **Veneration of the Leader**. These draw from Theodor Adorno et al’s *The Authoritarian Personality* ([1950] 2019), which identified the F-scale (F for fascist); a series of behavioural qualities that made one susceptible to fascist propaganda²⁴. Altemeyer (1981) reconceptualised the F-scale into the RWA (Right-Wing Authoritarian) and SDO (Social Dominance) scales; measuring both authoritarian tendencies, but also separate desire for social hierarchy, with lower classes necessarily dominated. Key to this reconceptualization were the variables of *Submission*, *Aggression* and *Conventionalism*; uncritical acceptance of idealised authority, aggression toward enemies, and insistence upon traditional social values. These scales have been further expanded by Duckitt et al (2010) and Ho et al (2015), both of whom found Altemeyer’s scales too unidimensional. Duckitt et al (2010) separately conceptualised the RWA scale into Authoritarianism (ACT-A), Conservatism (ACT-C) and Traditionalism (ACT-T). ACT-A measured willingness to support harsh, coercive, even violent, societal control. ACT-C measured uncritical following of leaders

²³See also Brown and Newth (2024), who explore similar themes of public-narrative control in the Italian far-right’s use of ‘post-facist’ rhetoric.

²⁴Conventionalism, Submission, Aggression, Anti-Intracception, Supersitition and Stereotypy, Power and Toughness, Destructiveness and Cynicism, Projectivity, Concerns with Sex (Adorno et al, 1950).

and acceptance of the status quo. ACT-T measured favouritism toward old fashioned social norms, and referring back to an idealised past (ibid: 690-691). The Social Dominance (SDO) scale has been re-worked by Ho et al (2015) to likewise make it more multidimensional; with Dominance (SDO-D) and Anti-Egalitarianism (SDO-E) replacing the original scale. SDO-D models support for ‘the active, even violent, maintenance of oppressive hierarchies...’ (ibid: 1005) whilst SDO-E modelled ‘an affinity for ideologies and policies that maintain inequality, especially those that have ostensibly different purposes (such as economic efficiency and meritocracy)’ (ibid).

Of particular relevance to the development of authoritarian psychological factors in a person is conservatism and orthodoxy; a firm belief that there is a proper way of doing things that must be enforced. This has been explored extensively by Lockhart, Sibley and Osbourne (2020, 2023a, 2023b) concerning religion. *Prima facie* it seems obvious that religious belief (particularly Christian belief) would correlate to authoritarianism; owing to the strong influence of the religious right on many authoritarian right-wing parties worldwide. Religion has also been used repeatedly as a club with which to beat back efforts at LGBT+ inclusion, so it is especially relevant here. However, the role of faith is more complicated than it first appears. As the authors note, many religious doctrines preach egalitarianism *as well as* conformity (ibid, 2023b). Their research found that ‘spirituality’, defined as ‘a search for meaning and connection with nature and humanity’ actually correlated negatively with the RWA and SDO scales, whereas ‘religiosity’, the belief in a set religion and the insistence upon upholding its traditions, correlated positively to RWA, but not SDO (ibid, 2020). This was substantially exacerbated by the conversion process to Christianity; people demonstrated higher levels of RWA after converting, and lower after deconverting (ibid, 2023a). The authors’ later work further explored this as regards sexism, and found that ‘religious narcissism’, defined as the belief that one’s religion makes one superior, (as opposed to ‘religious identification’) was a strong predictor for sexist attitudes, and that when controlling for narcissism, religious identity negatively correlated to sexism (ibid, 2023a). Collectively these suggest that attitudes associated with the authoritarian right, including RWA and sexism, stem from a strict set of orthodox beliefs that the holder insists on enforcing, and which gives the holder a sense of superiority over others.

To summarise this research, we expect authoritarian followers to willingly and enthusiastically submit themselves to the influence of a charismatic leader²⁵ (or orthodox belief system), become increasingly hostile to other, competing, ideas and power structures, and feel that their belief in such makes them socially superior. Therefore both **Veneration of the Authority** and **Calls to Violence** draw on all the influential literature on RWA. (Adorno, et al. 1950)(Altemeyer, 1981)(Duckitt et al, 2010)(Ho et al, 2015). **Veneration** was identified in the sample via positive language that emphasised the larger than life qualities of a given figure, rather than simple praise; thereby rhetorically positioning said figure as *properly* above the speaker, and thus cementing a form of social dominance by implication. This was informed by the emphasis on *Conventionalism* and *Submission* in Adorno et al (1950), Altemeyer’s (1981) SDO scale, and *Conservatism* and *Traditionalism* in Duckitt et al (2010). By contrast **Calls to Violence** represented rhetoric that singled out an enemy as deserving physical reprisal, drawing on the emphasis on *Aggression* and violence in all the aforementioned literature. (Adorno et al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015).

Interestingly, prior research has identified a mixed relationship between Trump supporters and the normal measures of right-wing authoritarianism. Crowson and Brandes (2017)

²⁵Marsden (2019) identifies Trump veneration as partially stemming from the desire for a ‘strict father’ figure, especially among alt-right and religious conservative circles. This narrative is inseparable from masculinism.

found that only some of the multidimensional scales above were useful predictors for someone voting for Donald Trump in 2016; conservatism (ACT-C), and Dominance (SDO-D) did not make for useful predictors. The authors do not hypothesise on the failings of SDO-D, but they suggest that Trump’s unconventional candidacy, and, thus, his *not* presenting himself as a traditional political authority figure (‘soft populism’ (Foley, 2007)), may have limited the effects of ACT-C. By contrast, Authoritarianism (ACT-A), Anti-Egalitarianism (SDO-E) and Traditionalism (ACT-T) did prove significant predictors (Crowson and Brandes, 2017). The main work on the departure of Trumpism from these models comes from John Hibbing (2020). He argues that that Trump’s loyalists do not entirely follow the uncritical acceptance of tradition and *any* authority. Instead, Hibbing makes the case that they only uncritically follow *Trump*. Some of the best examples of Hibbing’s arguments have come in the years *since* he published his book *The Securitarian Personality* (2020): Case in point, the January 6th 2021 insurrection, in which Trump allegedly incited an abortive coup against the democratic process. Congress constitutes a traditional, legitimate, authority, but when Trump told his followers to ‘show strength’ and intimidate them, they did (WBNS 10TV, 2021) (Leatherby et al., 2021). A further case is the anti-lockdown protests many Trump-followers engaged in throughout 2020, refusing to surrender their perceived liberty in the face of State Government demands to enter lockdown, even on a matter of public safety (Beckett, 2020) (Maqbool, 2020) (Zurcher, 2020). Hibbing’s argument is that Trumpists are *not* traditional authoritarians, they are better described as ‘Securitarian’; they seek a strongman to protect them from perceived threats but they do not submit themselves to authority *wholesale*, only to the strongman²⁶. This further supports our more limited selection of RWA variables for this study, as opposed to extensive psychological tests; many of the traditionalist aspects of right-wing authoritarianism don’t apply to Trump’s followers.

Psychological research, by its nature, is concerned with personality. Implied in this is a degree of permanence. Authoritarianism is seen as a developmental issue, created in response to incidents that occurred at an impressionable age. Examples include disciplinarian parenting, and early religious instruction. It is argued that authoritarians support the ideologies that they do because *they have always done so*, or at least they have always been vulnerable to it. We would not normally expect, therefore, a person or group with a staunch libertarian history to fall under authoritarian influence; had they been vulnerable to such, they would have never committed to anti-authoritarianism in the past. That being said, it is also possible that Log Cabin were always authoritarian at heart, it just took a run-in with Trump to bring that to the surface; he targeted normative gays much less than his GOP predecessors did, therefore LCR may have been happy to submit to him, and, thereby, let out suppressed authoritarian tendencies. Then again, it is also possible that the broad conception of authoritarianism as a *personality* is a symptom of the dominance of psychological writing in the field, rather than a description of reality. In either case, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to investigate hypotheses about any psychological predispositions on LCR’s part, though the researchers who specialise in such would do well to take note of this community in the future, as there may be fruitful work to be had on their mentality.

²⁶Mollan and Geesin (2020) add to this point, they identify a significant part of Trump’s legitimisation in his status as an outsider. Specifically his strongman status is legitimated through his business history; forcing wall street banks to relieve his debt or ‘they would all suffer together’ translates succinctly into a zero-sum foreign policy based on ‘America first’.

2.4 Related Concepts

2.4.1 Islamophobia: Structural Discrimination

Islamophobia, defined as anti-Muslim racism (Ali and Whitham, 2021)²⁷, exists as both structural phenomenon and articulated belief. It mostly relates to this thesis' topic in the form of *Homonationalism*, as articulated by Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013); the use of nationalistic rhetoric, and Islamophobia, in order to advantage the LGBT+ community. In essence, this represents a marginalised group taking advantage of the public malus moving away from homosexuality, and onto society's homogenised, and extreme, construction of Islam (Szulc and Smets, 2015)²⁸. Just as Mills (1997) articulated the concept of a 'racial contract' to explain the divergent outcomes of whites and non-whites, the same very much applies to Muslims in the post-9/11 West. Structural racism of all kinds was considered an essential part of capitalist society by the Frankfurt school, since, in Marxist theory, capitalism requires continual repression in order to sustain itself (Busk, 2021). Structural racism thereby provides a scapegoat onto which the economically repressed can project their anger, rather than direct it at the elite (ibid). For a concrete example of this in the case of Islamophobia, the concept of 'undeserving poor' Muslim benefits claimants was a spectre invoked to legitimise UK austerity policy in the 2010s (Ali and Whitham, 2021). Though white proletarians were disadvantaged under austerity, the Muslim scapegoat provided an outlet for anger and a 'justification' of the policy taking place, enabling people to accept their oppression, by reconstructing it as a racial issue.

Unal et al (2021) identify a 'tripartite' model of Islamophobia based on the following axes:

1. Anti-Muslim Prejudice: Discriminatory beliefs, fears and rhetoric targeted at Muslims.
2. Anti-Islamic Sentiment: Negative views about Islam as a religion or culture.
3. Conspiracy Beliefs: Believing that the western world is being 'Islamised' and other, equivalent, conspiracies²⁹.

The third item is self-explanatory, but the first two require some differentiation for inexperienced readers. Someone guilty of *Anti-Islamic Sentiment* might articulate a viewpoint about structural sexism under Sharia, and deride countries that practice it, yet take no issue with the Muslims that they meet. Their discrimination is abstract, what Mondon and Winter (2017, 2020) call 'liberal Islamophobia'; the implicit belief that western liberal culture is superior, "anchored in a pseudo-progressive narrative in the defence of the rule of law based on liberal equality, freedom and rights" (Mondon and Winter, 2017: 2162). Anti-Islamic Sentiment typically homogenises Islam as a uniformly backwards, hyper-conservative and

²⁷ As Eijofor (2023) notes, 'racism' may not always be the correct terminology for Islamophobia, since its use normally demonises Islam by its relation to whiteness. Instead, Eijofor argues that in countries without empowered whites, such as Nigeria, Islamophobia behaves more like tribalism; acting to homogenise and universalise all Muslims as an out-group. It is, however, the correct term for LCR's use of it.

²⁸ Whilst Islam is usually the target of homonationalists, Russian-aligned nations and/or Eastern Europe are constructed similarly in European homonationalism, with the same tropes of homogeneity and uniform homophobia in play (Dhoest, 2020), a trend that goes back to homophile literature of the 50's and early 60's, in which Soviet homophobia was portrayed as a way of aggrandising the US and demonstrating loyalty to the state and its capitalist system (Serykh, 2017).

²⁹ Obaidi et al (2022) argue that whilst conspiratorial beliefs about the 'replacement' of white natives by Muslims can have both symbolic (loss of cultural standing) and economic (loss of jobs and livelihood) factors, it is the former that is a stronger predictor for out-group hostility. This is fostered by right-wing elites who mainstream themselves and gain electoral success based on promoting the idea that Islam and Muslims are a threat to white native culture. (ibid, 1688).

alien religion, and is no less discriminatory than hurling abuse in the street, just less individually malicious. By contrast, someone who engages in *Anti-Muslim Prejudice* is taking it out on Muslims that they see; for example, calling women ‘letterboxes’ for wearing a niqaab. Within the sample, it is only *Anti-Islamic Sentiment* that rears its head explicitly, though it is possible to infer *Anti-Muslim Prejudice*. As yet, LCR do not engage in conspiratorial beliefs; although they do view the Washington elite as untrustworthy for their ‘softness’ towards Iranian ‘barbarism’ (sic), they do not go so far as to claim an ‘Islamisation’ of the US.

Structural Islamophobia, and epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997) (Alcoff, 2007) (Mondon, 2022b) derived thereby, are of limited use to this particular thesis since they better explain the *permanence* of viewpoints, not their change. As discussed later in this chapter, privilege and epistemologies of ignorance have substantial explanatory power on why LCR are right-wing in the first instance (Rogers and Lott, 1997) (Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor, 2016) (Cravens, 2019). However, as previously stated, it is outside the scope of this thesis to explain the *existence* of LGBT+ Republicans; the crux of this work is the demonstration that LCR’s beliefs have *changed* substantially for the worse. Islamophobia in the form of *Anti-Islamic Sentiment* and *Homonationalism* are part of that, but only in a secondary capacity; they factor into *Homo-Authoritarianism* by supplementing the populist far right arguments with which LCR legitimise Trump, and deride the left. As a result, Islamophobia plays a *secondary* role in this thesis.³⁰

Homonationalism and *Homo-Authoritarianism* are inspired by the theory of *Homonormativity* articulated by Lisa Duggan (2003), in which society may simultaneously welcome *and* ostracise different parts of the LGBT+ community. It assimilates LGBT+ people that do not threaten the primacy of the nuclear family, i.e monogamous, cohabiting, cisgender couples, whilst continuing the stigmatisation of non-normative gender and sexuality, such as transgender identities. This can lead homonormative LGBT+ people to see disruptive and queer identity as a hindrance, and allows society to appear inclusive whilst still stigmatising people. Where Homonormativity focuses on turning the LGBT+ community on itself, Homonationalism focusses on turning the LGBT+ community against nationalist out-groups to break down intersectionality and create social hierarchies even within the LGBT+ community (Mole, 2017). Puar notes that, in the post-911 world, a key tactic of American LGBT+ organisations, left and right, was to stress their patriotism and loyalty to the state and support of the war on terror (ibid). Again, this represents a marginalised group taking advantage of the public malus moving to a new target (Szulc and Smets, 2015). By contrast the American nationalist in-group are constructed as uniformly pro-LGBT+, which itself can obscure many layers of institutional homophobia (ibid), creating a false dichotomy between the homophilic in-group and homophobic ‘other’ (Llewellyn, 2016). According to Puar, nowhere is homonationalism more obvious than in the rhetoric of LGBT+ conservatives (Puar, 2007: 46), though it is worth noting that the LGBT+ left have been complicit in homonationalist Islamophobia as well (Meyer, 2020).

More recent academic focus on homonationalism has also noted that the far right in Europe and the USA has become less outwardly sexist and homophobic, or gives the appearance of such. Instead it will often make appeals to women and the LGBT+ community; promising to protect them from Islam. This has been explicitly observed in the rhetoric of Donald Trump³¹ (Moreau, 2018) and Marine Le Pen (Wildman, 2017) amongst others. It has

³⁰Wider uses of ‘liberal Islamophobia’ (Mondon and Winter, 2018, 2020) by LCR are discussed in Appendix B, since it is not directly relevant to the thesis’ conclusions but may be of interest to readers.

³¹Julie Moreau (2018) accused Trump of fermenting homonationalism on the campaign trail via his rhetoric surrounding the Pulse nightclub shooting; including LGBT+ people into the nation by juxtaposing

also been a recognised branding tactic of the State of Israel, touting its positive LGBT+ record³² as a way to pinkwash³³ its occupation of a ‘homophobic’ Palestine (Puar, 2007) (Milani and Levon, 2016). As of the final draft of this thesis, written in 2024, LCR have been reproducing this rhetoric in the context of the Israeli invasion of Gaza. Increasingly, ‘how do you treat your homosexuals?’ is becoming a litmus test for whether countries and regions are considered ‘civilised’ and acceptable in right-wing rhetoric (Puar, 2007) (Jungar and Peltonen, 2017) (Kehl, 2020)³⁴. What is more, some research has demonstrated that homonationalist Islamophobia works the other way as well; people in western countries have been observed to react more viciously to Islamic homophobia than to similar discrimination by natives, ignoring the latter whilst opposing the former (Lopez-Ortega, 2022). LCR frequently utilise such narratives when discussing Iran as a way of supporting Trump’s foreign policy in the region.

Much like populism, there is debate in the academic community over how to conceptualise homonationalism. Puar herself claimed that homonationalism was a facet of modernity, an assemblage of social and economic forces that had come to a head since 9/11 and ‘could not be opted out of’ (Puar, 2013: 336-337). Critical scholars have evolved the concept into a diagnosis of society; Islamophobia and Homonationalism are structural issues, embedded in institutions, just like the ‘racial contract’ (Mills, 1997). Other scholars have argued that this conception is not useful as a method of analysis (see Schotten (2016)), since if homonationalism is a diagnosis of modernity, then *everything* is homonationalist, and one has nothing to measure it against³⁵ (Canton and Bolzendahl, 2021). For the purposes of this thesis, we are concerned only with overt cases of homonationalist rhetoric in the form of anti-Islamic sentiment; the use of LGBT+ friendliness as a way of creating national hierarchies with the (coded non-Islamic) US on top, and the Islamic world underneath.

2.4.2 The Alt-Right: Masculinism and Memes

Literature on the alt-right, an online movement within the modern far right, helped inform the coding of the populist far right variables in this thesis. The wider alt-right movement is an extreme form of reactionary politics, born in online chatrooms and the dark web. It has been contended that this is the result of the hegemony of neoliberal and centrist politics, combined with mass popular dissatisfaction following the 2008 financial crisis. As socialists like Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders were forced back to the margins by the centre, public dissatisfaction went in search of different outlets, thus creating a power vacuum filled by an equally radical, but more reactionary and dangerous, alternative on the other side (Flisfeder, 2018: 13-15). The alt-right is openly racist, and sees non-whites, women,

them against an Islamic ‘other’ and promising to protect the gay community from ‘radical Islamic terrorism’ in explicit terms.

³²An example might be found in the appointment of Amir Ohana as Speaker of the Knesset (Knesset, 2022). Ohana is openly gay and a long-time loyalist to Benjamin Netanyahu.

³³Similar ‘pinkwashing’ narratives have been observed at major sporting events, in which a host country will brand itself as pro-LGBT+ in order to increase its prestige, usually marketing certain spaces and events to an LGBT+ audience. This usually involves homonormativity (Duggan, 2003) in which queer and disruptive sexuality is policed in favour of promoting monogamous homosexuality mirroring the nuclear family (Hubbard and Wilkinson, 2015) (Mitchell, 2016).

³⁴Cheryl Llewellyn (2016) notes how these ‘othering’ narratives of ‘uncivilised’ countries are increasingly institutionalised in the immigration process of Western countries. LGBT+ Asylum seekers gain more success when they can describe their sexuality in ways understandable to a western heterosexual, and explicitly vilify their country of origin for the harm they will receive there if deported. David Murray (2020) has observed very similar behaviours in the Canadian asylum process.

³⁵There is also the argument that the domination of epistemological discussions about the nature of homonationalism in scholarly debate is drawing attention away from the continued existence of traditional homophobia, and how bitterly the inclusion of LGBT+ people into the nation can be contested (Smith, 2020).

‘social justice’ and ‘weak’ forms of masculinity as parasites (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020).

Alt-right rhetoric prioritises combative statements designed to antagonise liberals, and generate sadistic ‘lulz’³⁶, over any form of truth and verification (Flisfeder, 2018: 10-13). Humour is a key weapon here, perverting the techniques of satirists who use racism as an ironic critique of power relations, the alt-right generates ‘non-ironic Nazism masquerading as ironic Nazism’ (Greene, 2019: 68). This transgressive and reactionary ‘lulz’ mentality is why the movement has coalesced around Trump into a form of symbiosis; his combative style and penchant for openly insulting his political opponents, sometimes in racially coded terms (such as calling Elizabeth Warren ‘Pocohontas’), appeals to them.

The Alt-Right predominantly organises across social media, including the dark-web, as well as through more ‘legitimate’ outlets like Breitbart. Memes are a recognised communicative strategy of the alt-right, glorifying and legitimising their cause via pop culture references and in-jokes (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020) (Dickerson and Hodler, 2021). This social media use allows the alt-right to mobilise across borders, and operate rhizomatically and anonymously, without structure or leadership (Vandiver, 2020). Rather than being an extension of 20th century fascism, it is its own beast, with no foundational principles beyond a broad commitment to racism, and influence from Neo-Nazism (Beiner, 2019) (Vandiver, 2020). It developed a unique lexicon that it disseminated across social media to normalise far right ideas. Use of the lexicon, which involves emasculating language (‘cuck’ and ‘snowflake’), certain film references (‘red-pill’³⁷) trolling, and certain memes (e.g. Pepe the Frog)³⁸, allows their racist, sexist, and homophobic messages to be more universally digestible. Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir (2020) further note that dark humour is deployed in alt-right social media as a litmus test; seeing someone respond humorously to alt-right memes identifies them a potential recruit, someone responding with criticism is brushed off as a ‘snowflake’. Furthermore, this lexicon is deployed as a coercive mechanism to keep members in line and break their ties to society; those who do not consistently reiterate the rhetoric, or who move in other social circles, are themselves targeted (Bleakly, 2020).

Key to understanding the alt-right is the idea of white identity politics. Academic literature identifies whiteness as a power-dynamic, *not* an ethnicity. The very concept only entered popular consciousness to compare people favourably to other races and justify their oppression (Roediger, 1994 and Bonnett, 1997, as cited in Gallaher, 2021). By contrast, other ethnicities and cultures began to define themselves against whiteness. White identity politics is based on normalising the idea that white people suffer racial oppression in the same manner as other races, and that society is trying to repress white identity. This casts economic dispossession, such as deindustrialisation, as a race-oriented issue. White identity politics blends traditional racism (in the form of white supremacism) with claims of white oppression. (Gallaher, 2021) (Lorenzo-Dus and Nouri, 2021). Boehme and Iscom Scott (2020) identify that this perception of reverse discrimination invariably leads to narratives of white supremacy; crediting white men with building America³⁹. US white

³⁶As colloquial as this appears, ‘lulz’ is the term Flisfeder (2018) uses. It is alt-right shorthand for *schadenfreude*.

³⁷The term ‘red pill’ is borrowed from *The Matrix*. In the film, the red pill is the method by which the protagonist escapes the virtual reality of his robot overlords. Bringley-Thompson (2018) links this to the use of ‘cuck’ in alt-right lexicon; to use the red pill is to become ‘uncucked’, to break free of liberal social conditioning, and thus regain one’s masculinity.

³⁸Dickerson and Hodler (2021) identify another example in alt-right Colin Kaepernick memes, which regularly cite his personal wealth to deny that he is racially oppressed, amongst other discriminatory rhetoric.

³⁹Kusz (2020) identifies sports media as a key vehicle for normalising aggressive portrayals of white

nationalists latched onto Trump’s racist rhetoric, leading to a rise in antisemitic and anti-black hate crimes that coincided with his 2016 election win (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016). Unsurprisingly, Swastikas and other Nazi imagery are a common sight in alt-right memes (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020). This seemingly sincere belief that white men *are* oppressed for their identities acts as a shield against criticism; alt-right members are resistant to claims that they are racist or sexist because they see themselves as calling out oppression (Boehme and Isom Scott, 2020).

Similar ‘reverse discrimination’ (Boehme and Isom Scott, 2020) rhetoric applies to alt-right sexism as well; with feminism recontextualised as a war on men, and affirmative action as unjustly stealing men’s jobs (ibid). Other sexist narratives common to the alt-right include the idea that rape victims are lying, that women control men via their reproductive cycle, and that supposedly weak men will be ‘cucked’ by women abandoning them for more masculine partners⁴⁰ (Bringley-Thompson, 2018).

In this sense of perceived victimhood, the alt-right finds a parallel in those religious conservatives who support Trump. As Holder and Josephson (2020) argue, Trump is not cut in the mould of a religious traditionalist like some of his GOP predecessors. Instead, the authors argue that Trump’s evangelical support stems again from misplaced victimhood; traditional Judeo-Christian values are viewed as persecuted by the forces of liberal secularism, as well as through ‘clashes of civilisations’ with other cultures (Haynes 2017) (Beiner, 2019). Forscher and Kteily (2020) differentiated alt-right voters from regular Trump supporters based on an increased sense of ‘social dominance, authoritarianism, the dehumanization of religious and national out-groups, and value-based motivation to express bias’ (ibid: 111). In short, the alt-right represents some of the furthest right members of Trump’s supporter base.

Misplaced, or perhaps ‘selective’, victimhood is a key part of LCR’s rhetoric. At times, they deny the existence of anti-LGBT+ discrimination in the US altogether. At other times they will claim to be repressed for their sexuality, when they can subsequently credit a Republican with their deliverance. LCR, thus, generally *deny* their victimisation as LGBT+ people in favour of promoting the narrative of oppression by liberal/left politics that parallels the alt-right. This is discussed at length in Chapter 4, when I unpack the concept of doublethink (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). Likewise, LCR emphasise how Richard Grenell and Patrick Bumatay were ‘qualified’ gay candidates, which can be seen as them anticipating, and attempting to reconstruct, alt-right narratives about affirmative action, so as to reassure people that Grenell and Bumatay were not ‘unjustly’ benefiting from their sexuality. Likewise, whenever they wanted to attack Pete Buttigieg, they would describe him as a ‘diversity hire’, playing the alt-right trope the other way.

Whilst the alt-right ultimately serves white patriarchy, it is by no means solely perpetuated by white men. For instance, the ‘Tradwife’ movement articulates an anti-feminist message based on the ‘need’ to reclaim their traditional feminine role as wives and mothers, which feminism has ‘devalued’ (Leidig, 2023). They simultaneously promote racist arguments about the propagation of the white race and the great replacement, and they are increasingly effective at social media promotion (ibid). Likewise, Marcus Brooks (2024) identifies a uniquely Black brand of paranoid reactionary pseudo-conservatism. Drawing on Parker (2018) and Hofstadter (1964, 1965), Brooks identifies an organised black reactionary

masculinity, thus arguing that there is wider cultural complicity in fuelling the alt-right imagination. He specifically refers to the alt-right latching onto Tom Brady during, and after, Superbowl LI, for his ties to Trump (ibid: 114-117).

⁴⁰This reintroduces racism, reiterating the cuckold porn genre in which men are forced to watch as their wives are pleased by other, often black, men (Bringley-Thompson, 2018).

influencer movement, that propagates the idea that Black people are being force-fed victimhood to make them controllable by the Democratic Party. As well as reiterating sexist, homophobic, and transphobic talking points common to white reactionaries, this movement argues that Black people *are* advantaged over whites. Brooks identifies that Black reactionaries claim that they are themselves losing status as upstanding patriotic Christians, as the ‘woke left’ is undermining moral values (ibid). Whilst such views represent minority opinions among non-white, non-male populations⁴¹, the fact that they exist at all demonstrates a worrying power for the alt-right to attract those whose rights it would ultimately undermine.

Before ending this section, I would like to draw attention to Shelby Statham’s thesis on the relationship between homosexuality and the alt-right, since it is the most detailed analysis relevant to this paper’s own research. Statham’s *Keep It in the Closet and Welcome to the Movement* (2019) gathered a wealth of data on discussions of homosexuality in the now-banned r/altright sub-reddit, and argued that homosexuals are constructed in one of two, partially contradictory, ways; ‘Degenerates’ or ‘Substandard Allies’. The former signifies the construction of the homosexual as a race-traitor since he does not procreate the white race. He is also constructed as being a gender-traitor for allowing himself to be penetrated, thus supposedly being feminised (ibid: 22). The use of ‘he’ is deliberate, since alt-right fears of homosexuality seem to be exclusively related to homosexual men. Jewish identities are actively constructed as feminised by the alt-right, and their rhetoric often constructs male homosexuals as part of a ‘Jewish conspiracy’ to destroy the white race (ibid: 23-24). Furthermore, homosexuals are constructed as plagued paedophilic perverts infecting the white race, a belief that was furthered by the AIDS crisis, and taking away opportunities from ‘real white families’ (ibid: 36). Christian-inspired homophobia (e.g. Leviticus 18-22⁴²), is unsurprisingly common in alt-right discourse about ‘degenerates’ as well.

By contrast to the vilified degenerate, a ‘substandard ally’ is identified by the alt-right as being a *victim* of a sexuality he did not choose. Provided that he denounces LGBT+ *culture*, he can be a passable ally to the alt-right; the acceptable white homosexual as not only culturally assimilated, but also racist and sexist. In such rhetoric, the white homosexual man is an ally in the defence of the white race, pitiable for his sexuality, not made into an enemy for it. Statham even identifies discourse in which homosexual behaviour is considered *respectable* amongst the alt-right, with a redditor in Statham’s sample commenting that ‘a relationship with two alpha males is twice as manly as one with a beta bitch.’ (ibid: 48), and those white male homosexuals who penetrate black men are constructed as maintaining white dominance (ibid: 22). The most high-profile example of a gay ‘substandard ally’ in the alt-right is Milo Yiannopolous; a former Breitbart commentator who actively promotes transphobic discourse, and criticises non-normative sexual relations (ibid: 25). He has even questioned whether his own homosexuality is morally wrong and claimed he is unlikely to ever be a parent because ‘its wrong to expose an innocent child to the possibility of gay influence’ (Yiannopolous, 2011).

Many of these tropes surrounding ‘substandard allies’ infiltrate LCR’s rhetoric at points in this thesis. They do not always construct their sexuality in recognisably alt-right terms (for example, they show no direct evidence of racializing it) but they do skirt the fringes. LCR never used terms like ‘alpha’ and ‘beta male’ in the sample (they have done so

⁴¹Brooks in particular makes a point to note that mainstream Black communities view Black conservatives as sellouts (Brooks, 2024)

⁴²The 21st Century King James Bible translates Leviticus 18:22 as ‘Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind: it is abomination’. (Bible Gateway, n.d).

since on *OUTSpoken*), but they regularly retweeted accounts who do, and hosted them on their websites; *OUTSpoken* contributor David Leatherwood⁴³ (who goes by the handle ‘Brokeback Patriot’) is one such individual. They do actively downplay their sexuality and distance themselves from LGBT+ culture⁴⁴. This suggests that the ‘substandard ally’ mentality may be being internalised by LCR, though they are less open about it than their more alt-right peers.

2.5 LGBT+ Political Identity

2.5.1 Terminology and Acronym

The LGBT+ acronym has been represented in a multitude of different ways across the years, to include (or exclude) a variety of different identities. It is prudent, therefore, to take a moment to comment on this thesis’ use of it, since the topic is deeply loaded, and it is possible to, inadvertently, be exclusionary by careless uses. As a rule, the acronym always includes *Lesbian*, *Gay* and *Bisexual* (LGB). Particularly exclusionary varieties of this acronym will leave it there, explicitly removing the ‘T’ for *Transgender*. It is important, for accuracy’s sake, to represent the acronym in a manner reflective of how my research subjects would use it (not how I would use it), lest my analysis fall into the trap of putting words in LCR’s mouths.

At time of writing, LCR have become an transphobic organisation. It might, therefore, be accurate to describe them as ‘pro-LGB’ currently. However, the version of the acronym they most commonly use is still ‘LGBT’, and, when pressed, they will still claim to be a pro-trans organisation. In reflection of this, I have included the ‘T’ as they do, or, at least, as they do *for now*.

It is common for commentators to represent the acronym as ‘LGBTQIA’, adding *Queer*, *Intersex* and *Asexual* (alternatively *Agender* or *Allies*). Or to shorten the acronym with a ‘+’ for brevity’s sake, and to include many identities by implication. LCR’s stance on Intersex, Ace, and Non-Binary people has not been determined by this study. However, we must omit the ‘Q’ from the acronym to represent their viewpoint. ‘Queer’ is a reclaimed term once used to insult the LGBT+ community, but one which many LGBT+ people have come to identify with. LCR argue that it remains an insult, and do not use it. Furthermore, the use of ‘Queer’ has always carried with it an implication of embracing *being different*, hence its use in the term ‘Queer Theory’. Whether ‘Queer’ is insulting is for LGBT+ people to decide on an individual basis; many embrace the term, many do not. LCR, and many other LGBT+ conservatives are assimilationist, and reject the notion that they are ‘different’ from straight people. As a result, it would be inappropriate to describe them as ‘pro-LGBTQ’.

For the sake of grammar and easy reading, keeping one version of the acronym used consistently throughout is prudent. As such, this thesis uses the term ‘**LGBT+**’ to describe the community, since this is the most accurate reflection of LCR’s own conceptualisation of it. The ‘T’ is included since LCR have not fully abandoned the pretext that they support trans people. Many identities on which they do not comment can be implied in the ‘+’, and the ‘Q’ that they would reject is omitted. This should not be taken as a reflection of my own views, or any commentary on reality, only LCR’s version of it.

⁴³Leatherwood’s account @BrokebackUSA was not part of the sample for this research. His account does appear when LCR tag him in certain tweets however.

⁴⁴In the Biden era, LCR have begun to engage in rhetoric paralleling discourse about sexual degeneracy. This was beyond the scope of this thesis due to the time frame, but interested readers are directed to Appendix D if they would like an overview.

2.5.2 LGBT+ Distinctiveness in General

Studies have shown that LGBT+ Americans, despite comprising only 5-10 percent of the US Electorate, are significantly more politically active than the national average (Pew Research Centre, 2013, as cited in Perez, 2014)⁴⁵ (Sherrill and Flores, 2014, as cited in Perez, 2014)⁴⁶. They have, also, been argued to have the power to swing U.S elections; 5-10 percent of the population swinging one way or the other in certain states can have a dramatic effect (Gates, 2012)⁴⁷. In terms of electoral politics, most of the LGBT+ community exhibits staunch liberal loyalty; a consistent 70-80 percent turnout for the Democratic candidate in every Presidential election since 1992, when sexual identity was first recorded at exit polls (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, n.d, a-e) (The New York Times, 2012) (CNN News 2016b, 2020). This puts LGBT+ Americans on par with African Americans as a loyal Democratic voting bloc (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). Furthermore, this Democratic loyalty appears to stem from a deep socio-political commitment to the rights of LGBT+ people as a group (e.g. adoption rights, anti-discrimination protections, and recognition of LGBT+ relationships). In analysing the 2000 Presidential Election, Lewis, Rogers and Sherrill (2011) noted that LGB people were more likely to vote for Al Gore over George W. Bush, even when controlling for ideology and party affiliation; Lesbians and Bisexuals by 20 percent, and gay men by 33 percent, with 66-75 percent of this support explained by ‘interest in LGB rights’. (ibid: 673).

Patrick Egan’s body of work on ‘political distinctiveness’ (Egan, 2012) has provided extremely useful insights on the unique political stances taken by the LGBT+ community (Egan, 2008, 2012, 2020) (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). His work sought to examine how LGBT+ people could have such strong group support for liberal causes, persisting even in spite of other demographic factors, like ethnic identity and familial partisan alignment (Lewis, Rogers and Sherrill, 2011). Egan departed from previous literature on politically distinct minorities, which he traces back to Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954, as cited in Egan, 2008: 4). Such works had stressed the need for a politically relevant minority to require inter-generational transmission, and inter-group contact, to cumulatively build a political consciousness over time. LGBT+ people are clearly an exception to these rules, as they possess a statistically significant commitment to liberal attitudes despite having comparatively little means of inter-generational transmission (Egan, 2008) (Lewis, Rogers and Sherrill, 2011). Egan goes further and debunks the application of ‘inter-group contact’ in the case of LGBT+ people⁴⁸, since his research repeatedly shows that they do not appear to be any more liberal after a long time being ‘out’ than they were when they

⁴⁵The Pew Research Centre (2013, as cited in Perez, 2014) found that LGBT+ Americans were more likely to be certain they were registered to vote. When asked how often they voted, LGBT+ Americans were 1 percent less likely than the general population to respond ‘always’ (49 vs 50 percent), but more likely to vote ‘Nearly Always’ (26 vs 21 percent). Likewise they were substantially less likely to follow government and public affairs ‘Most of the time’ (31 vs 51 percent) but more likely to do so ‘Some of the time’ (40 vs 27 percent) and ‘Only now and then’ (19 vs 13 percent); suggesting that where the general population is either fully committed to political activity or disinterested, LGBT+ people are more likely to have at least some interest, usually full commitment.

⁴⁶Sherrill and Flores (2014, as cited in Perez, 2014) found that LGBT+ Americans in the 2012 election, by comparison to the general population, were more likely to write/call a politician, attend a rally or protest, write to a newspaper or magazine editor, write to a political party or candidate, serve as an active member of a lobbying group, read local and national news publications, regularly consume other news media, write blogs, and communicate on social media on political topics.

⁴⁷Because LGBT exit poll data is not available on a state-by-state basis, Gates tested the impact of 5 percent of the electorate in key battleground states, assuming for the sake of argument that those states’ LGBT populations reflected the national average. He modelled how different the electoral college would have looked in 2012 if Mitt Romney had won over the LGBT population - according to Gates, Romney would still have lost, but would have massively reduced Obama’s majority. (Gates, 2012).

⁴⁸There is some evidence that social interaction with LGBT+ people has a liberalising effect on heterosexuals, however. Kordsmeier, Tumlinson and Song (2019) observe that conservatives with LGBT+

left the closet, nor are they any more likely to hold liberal views if they live in areas of higher LGBT+ population. They start off very liberal and remain consistent in their views, despite age and location. (Egan, 2008) (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). This suggests that, even in places where inter-generational transmission of beliefs does take place in the LGBT+ community, substantial exposure to this transmission doesn't make their recipients any more liberal; they turn firmly to the left once out, and stay consistently in place rather than liberalising further as time goes on.

Egan's theory revolves around 'selection' and 'conversion'; identifying the distinctiveness of LGBT+ people through a combination of selection bias, and conscious shifts in ideology once out. Both rely on a distinction drawn between possessing same-sex attraction (a randomly distributed trait) and conscious identification as LGBT+; it is the latter to whom theories of political distinctiveness apply (Egan, 2008: 4-14). As will be made clearer shortly, LGBT+ conservative writings do not make this distinction, focussing their rhetoric on the *randomly* ascribed element of sexual identity.

'Selection' implies that the LGBT+/liberal link is spurious. It attributes LGBT+ political consciousness to other related factors. Being LGBT+ statistically makes one likely to fall into other liberal-predicting demographics, compared with the general population; such as urban living, not being married⁴⁹⁵⁰, being part of an ethnic minority, and/or possessing a college education (Fahs, 2007) (Coffee and Bolzendahl, 2010) (Puckett et al., 2011) (Perez, 2014) (Mollborn and Everett, 2015) (Grollman, 2017) (Butler, 2017) (Stout, Kretschmer and Ruppaner, 2017). LGBT+ urban living is particularly commented on; studies have shown that LGBT+ living in rural areas are more likely to experience stigma (Puckett et al, 2011) (Butler, 2017), and LGBT+ urban enclaves have been shown to have high institutional completeness (Murray, 1979). Returning to Egan's theory, 'selection' implies that LGBT+ people are *not* likely to be liberal; liberals are likely to be LGBT+.

'Conversion' is a much more personal experience. Egan contends that many LGBT+ people experience a political awakening when they come out, linked to their first experiences of homophobia. The stigma that they receive leads them to sympathise, and ally, with other stigmatised groups, even if they had previously been conservative. The act of having publicly accepted a role within a stigmatized group forces one to confront the structures of inequality that they had previously defended, or ignored (Egan, 2008: 14).

Egan contends that 'conversion' better explains his observed phenomenon that LGBT+ people are no less liberal in their beliefs when controlling for time and familial alignment (Egan, 2008) (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). More recently, this has led Egan to build on Mason's (2016) idea of a 'social sorting process', by which the two main U.S political coalitions have formed distinct demographics around them. Egan theorises that

friends were significantly more likely to support pro-LGBT policies in employment, equal marriage and adoption, than those without. That said, conservatives with a mix of LGBT+ 'friends and 'acquaintances' did not significantly increase in support. The authors attribute this to conservatives seeing LGBT+ friends whom they have gotten to know intimately as 'exceptions' to any anti-LGBT+ biases they previously held, whereas an 'acquaintance' is not.

⁴⁹Breanne Fahs' 2007 study identified that, by contrast to married women, divorced women were more liberal and more aware of sensitive issues surrounding gender and race, suggesting that the deeply personal experience of marital breakdown and divorce can serve as a socio-political awakening for women. (Fahs, 2007).

⁵⁰Stout, Kretschmer and Ruppaner (2017) note that this 'marriage gap' does not behave uniformly across ethnic lines. For instance, single and married black women were not observed to have significant differences in beliefs; unlike white married women who were more conservative than their single counterparts. Supporting the hypotheses of Fahs (2007) divorced white and black women were significantly different in their beliefs compared to their married counterparts.

partisanship influences individuals to consciously shift the demographics they identify with to better fit their politics. For example, one might experiment with one's sexuality to better fit the Democrats, or convert to Christianity to integrate with Republicans (Egan, 2020: 700).

According to this theory, the link between LGBT+ people and liberalism is partly self-fulfilling; those who operate in liberal circles may feel compelled to question their sexuality and/or gender, as part of a wider ideological commitment to oppose conservative, traditional models of gendered and sexual behaviour. Likewise, a person who experiences same-sex attraction, but who operates in Republican circles, may feel equally compelled to not adopt a public LGBT+ identity, keeping their sexual preference to themselves or suppressing it entirely. A 2020 paper by the Williams Institute found that LGBT+ Republicans were significantly more likely than LGBT+ Democrats to consider their sexuality an insignificant part of their identity, desire complete heterosexuality, and consider their sexuality a personal shortcoming (Meyer and Choi, 2020). This suggests the existence of a desire amongst LGBT+ conservatives to change their sexuality to fit their beliefs. This may explain the 'downplaying' and 'substandard ally' tropes discussed earlier.

As for the *specific* liberal beliefs that LGBT+ people generally possess, when compared with the general population, LGBT+ people possess increased support for racial and gender equality (Grollman, 2017), abolishing the death penalty, and legalising marijuana. They also generally supported ending the Iraq war (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008) (Lewis Rodgers and Sherrill, 2011) (Worthen, Sharp and Rodgers, 2012). Identity gaps do exist within this however, Bisexuals have been observed to be less likely to come out, commit to a sexual identity community, and be actively involved therein (Herek et al., 2010), as well as being less liberal (Worthen, 2020). Increased liberalism is observed among LGBT+ women, transgender people and those identifying as Queer (ibid). Decreased conservatism (not necessarily the same as increased liberalism) has been observed among LGBT+ people with strong non-white political consciousness (Cravens, 2021). In essence, the more underprivileged demographics that a person belongs to, the more liberal they tend to be. Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor (2017) found evidence of this phenomenon when disaggregating the 2016 Presidential vote; the largest percentages of Trump voters in the LGBT+ community had a stake in what the authors term 'white heteropatriarchy'; the largest percentages of Trump supporters came from groups that were variously male, white and/or bisexual (ibid: 355-356).

- White gay men (19 percent)
- Bisexual white women (20 percent)
- Transgender white women (32 percent)
- Bisexual white men (35 percent)
- Bisexual Black men (37 percent)
- Transgender white men (41 percent)

Whilst we will turn to the beliefs expressed by LGBT+ conservatives momentarily, it is worth commenting on how ideas of distinctiveness and political identity formation can apply to them. Kenneth Cimini's *Gay Conservatives* (2007) reached a conclusion that parallels Egan's 'selection' theory⁵¹: Interviewing both LGBT+ Democrats and Republicans, he found that the latter were less likely to;

⁵¹Neither one references the other, they were both publishing simultaneously.

- Attribute a common fate to all LGBT+ people.
- Consider how the movement would affect them personally.
- See their sexual identity as equally important to their national identity.
- See LGBT+ people as having insufficient social status.
- Blame social disadvantages for LGBT+ people on discrimination.

They had also come out more recently, on average, than their Democrat counterparts (5-10 years for Republicans, over 20 years for Democrats). Overall, this creates the image of a demographic less open about their sexuality, and less engaged with those who share it. Compared to the Republicans, who saw no inherent conflict in the political and sexual parts of their identity, the Democrats in Cimino's sample accused the interviewed conservatives of being varying degrees self-loathing, voting their pocketbook over their conscience, and stated that being a gay conservative was 'an oxymoron in every way'. (ibid: 67-87).

Supplementing his interviews with data from a Harris Interactive study, Cimino found that being white, male, older, married, Christian, full-time employed, and possessing a higher household income, served as predictors for conservatism in the LGBT+ community. (ibid: 87-121). Cimino's conclusions were that conservative LGBT+ people identified with 'some other variable' ahead of their sexual community, and didn't desire group-identification with the latter (ibid: 85). In terms of 'selection', this suggests that LGBT+ conservative beliefs may stem from some other form of demographic privilege with which they principally identify, in much the same way that under-privileged demographics predicted liberal beliefs.

Egan's 'conversion' hypothesis hinges on the experiences of stigma by freshly-out LGBT+ people, which leads them to re-evaluate their role in systems of oppression. This suggests that a person who comes out, and mostly experiences acceptance and support for their identity, is not forced to undergo the conversion. Supporting this idea, Cravens (2021) finds that, among white LGBT+ people, a sense of social acceptance for LGBT+ people served as a predictor for conservatism⁵². There are allusions to this in gay conservative literature, such as Andrew Sullivan's article *The End of Gay Culture* (2005) in which he argues that each generation of LGBT+ people grow up in a progressively tolerant world, and adapt their political priorities accordingly; if there is less need to fight for their rights as gay people, they can cast their votes for other causes, even ones markedly different to the previous generation.

It is possible that Egan's conversion theory applies to conservatism as well as sexuality: If an LGBT+ conservative is made to feel unwelcome in LGBT+ circles, that experience of stigma may force them to reconceptualise, and reject, their sexuality, and seek to live a heterosexual life as far as possible. This would support the conclusions of Meyer and Choi (2020), who found that LGBT+ Republicans were significantly less likely to feel welcome in, be proud of, seek, or prioritise engagement in, the LGBT+ community, compared with Democrats.

⁵²In an international example, Duyvendak (1997) found that the comparatively inclusive and accepting approach that the Dutch government took to combating AIDS, compared with the United States, had a direct impact on the de-radicalisation, both socially and politically, of the Dutch LGBT+ community. This led him to comment that 'Dutch gays aren't queer'.

2.5.3 LGBT+ Conservative Beliefs, and Epistemologies of Ignorance (again).

In Chapter 1, we introduced readers to Log Cabin, and LGBT+ Conservative literature (Bawer, [1993] 1994) (Sullivan, [1995] 1996). We also briefly discussed the possibility that, provided that their limited agenda is not threatened, any leader can command their support. Ergo, since Donald Trump, generally, did not change the status quo, LCR supported him. This argument forms the basis of this thesis' Null Hypothesis, rather than its conclusions. That being said, this narrow agenda and 'civil liberties' approach has important implications. Namely, the way that epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997), brought on by various forms of societal privilege, may have motivated the existence of LCR as a *Republican* group in the first place. As discussed earlier, epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997) are a good explanation of belief *permanence*. Thus they may play a crucial role in why an LGBT+ group pursues a limited 'civil liberties' agenda, even if it cannot explain why they suddenly lurch to the populist far right.

Core Elements of LGBT+ Conservative Belief

Steven Epstein (1987, 1999) identified three debates within the LGBT+ movement that set its various strands apart (Epstein, 1999: 32-33):

- **Identity and Difference:** 'Identity' signifies whether one believes that sexuality is fixed. 'Difference' signifies whether one believes sexual minorities are essentially the same as heterosexuals, or distinct.
- **Desire:** How one should express desire as part of one's sexual identity; should one mirror sober heteronormative behaviour, or challenge it?
- **Public vs Private:** Is sexuality a private matter, or is one obligated to be public about one's attractions and identity? Likewise, is the personal political?

In terms of the 'Identity and Difference' debate, LGBT+ conservatives identify as having a fixed identity, and an essential sameness with heterosexuals; Borrowing language from Patrick Egan (2008), they make little distinction between randomly distributed same-sex attraction, and an active LGBT+ identity, and this randomness in distribution is key to their ideology. They advocate that mistreatment over such a randomly distributed element of their identity is unjust, especially as they pursue a normative lifestyle. Their take on 'Desire' is heteronormative; having made loud overtures for LGBT+ marriage, and monogamy, as far back as the AIDS crisis (Sullivan, 1998). Their stance on the 'Public vs Private' debate is that sexuality should be a public matter; in this they mirror LGBT+ liberal activists. LGBT+ conservative authors have lent their voices to the call for all gay people to publicly come out, thus ending the stigma that being gay is private, and unfit for public discourse. (Bawer, [1993] 1994) (Sullivan, [1995] 1996, 1996, 1998).

The LGBT+ movement as a whole is not as radical as it once was. The reactions from the right, and the experiences of AIDS, helped foster a more moderate, less socially transgressive, 'mainstream', civil rights approach to LGBT+ rights; one that lobbies for judicial, and legislative, victories rather than destroying capitalism (Vaid, 1995) (Epstein, 1999) (Robinson, 2005). This metamorphosis has drawn criticism from within the movement; high-profile LGBT+ activists such as Urvashi Vaid⁵³ have argued that by fighting against homophobic laws alone, LGBT+ people can only ever achieve virtual equality (Vaid, 1995), since many of them will continue to be systemically disadvantaged. The wider LGBT+

⁵³Former head of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

community's shift to a moderate agenda hasn't stopped certain LGBT+ conservatives continuing to characterise the community as being dominated by the far left, who supposedly damage the 'respectable' image of normal gay people trying to earn 'a place at the table' (Bawer, [1993] 1994).

LGBT+ conservatism typifies liberal and left-wing gay activism as being trapped in a Stonewall-era siege mentality. Bruce Bawer spends the entirety of *A Place at the Table* (1993 [1994]) calling on gay people everywhere to come out, for the explicit purpose of demonstrating their *ordinariness*. He, likewise, constantly alludes to the existence of a silent majority of such assimilated LGBT+ people. He advocates an extremely limited series of goals; the achievement of open LGBT+ military service, and equal marriage. Andrew Sullivan once claimed that with the achievement of these, all anti-gay inequality would be vanquished, and those who continued to discriminate in private should be allowed to (Sullivan, [1995] 1996). His edited volume *Same-Sex Marriage, Pro and Con – A Reader* ([1997] 2004) was marketed to those opposed to gay marriage on both sides of the aisle, giving their views a fair shake in an effort to slowly bring them around. It deployed left-wing, right-wing, historical, and even theological, arguments for both sides⁵⁴.

He would later take a more direct, and dubious, stand; claiming that the *lack* of legal equal marriage created the promiscuous subculture prior to the AIDS crisis, which he calls a 'libidinal pathology.' He argued that gay people had no legitimate outlet for their sexuality, so they engaged in it in de-legitimised ways (Sullivan, 1998). In LGBT+ conservative literature, marriage is the solution to stigmatised sexuality, and a means of normalising homosexuals by appealing to heteronormative values, even buttressing the idea of traditional marriage by showing how those excluded from it still model themselves on it (Sullivan, 1996: 112)⁵⁵. When delivering a speech to the Duke University School of Law in 2005, then-LCR head Patrick Guerrio claimed that conservative hard liners who feared radical liberalism had nothing to fear from LGBT+ people, who were engaged in 'stable, loving, conservative, relationships.' (Duke University School of Law, 2016)⁵⁶.

In summary, LGBT+ conservative ideology is heteronormative and has little patience with other expressions of sexuality and gender. This extends to transgender people, considering Bawer identifies their struggle as being too different to the rest of the community to constitute allyship (Bawer, 1993 [1994]). Though LCR were initially pro-trans, as the Trump administration wore on, they came to reproduce many anti-trans narratives, as will be demonstrated repeatedly through this thesis. Neil Young (2024) centers Log Cabin's transphobia in his assessment of their ideological change under Trump. Unlike this thesis, he does not dissect their authoritarianism, but he does comment on their parroting of

⁵⁴His book cites evidence of lesbians in nineteenth century America (The Editors at Finchers, 1863), China during the Industrial Revolution (McGough, 1981), 'woman marriage' in West Africa (Herskovitz, 1937) and breakaway churches in Rome and Greece performing homosexual marriages as well as historical discourse straightwashing these as friendship or brotherhood ceremonies (Shaw, 1994) (Hexter, 1994). He includes arguments for and against marriage from left-wing activists, claiming either that equal marriage is a necessary step to the erosion of prejudice toward other forms of love (Graff, 1997 [2004]), or that marriage is heteronormative and contributes to the oppression of women (Ettelbrick, 1989) and would de-legitimise other familial bonds, such as support networks of lovers and ex-lovers that were not uncommon in LGBT+ circles, especially during the AIDS crisis (Browning, 1996) He includes Christian conservative arguments against homosexuality (Prager, 1990) as well as those pointing out the hypocrisy in the church not blessing a homosexual union, when it will bless other things, like pets and weapons (Shelby Spong, 1990). He adds reproduced work of his own, criticising the anti-LGBT+ 'it's not who you are, its what you do' debate, and arguing that gay life should not be reducible to sex (Sullivan, 1996).

⁵⁵When reviewing Sullivan's work, Richard Mohr called this '... as good as arguing that blacks who try but fail to pass nevertheless reveal in their very failure the natural splendour, glory and "primacy" of the white race' (Mohr, 1997: 100).

⁵⁶This lecture was not uploaded to YouTube until 2016, it was filmed in 2005.

Trump’s rhetoric, and their increased willingness to excuse transphobia. In reality, their turn towards Trump is deeper than this, but it must be acknowledged that LCR have taken heteronormativity and run with it; leaving any parts of their community who do not easily assimilate behind them, so as to appear as ‘normal’ as possible.

Critiques

Having established the core tenets of LGBT+ Conservative belief, we turn now to their implications. As previously stated, these beliefs can be typified as ‘civil liberties’, rather than ‘civil rights’. LGBT+ conservatives generally want the state to afford them the same legal protections as anyone else, and the same legal access to social spaces and institutions. Once the state has done that, they want it to leave everyone alone, homosexuals and homophobes alike. Redistributive justice, or the affordance of specific protections for LGBT+ people, are not part of the traditional LGBT+ Conservative agenda. The flaw in such arguments, as with all ‘civil liberties’ approaches, is the assumption that, if left alone by the state, one has the means to thrive alone. This ends up marginalising those who have been the victims of persistent discrimination, particularly in institutionalised forms, and often infers a neglect on the speaker’s part towards their own privilege. Epistemologies of ignorance are once again in play; LGBT+ Conservatives may hold many of the beliefs that they do, because they are systemically unaware of (or willfully blind to) discrimination beyond illiberal homophobia, and believe even that to be dying out (Mills, 1997) (Alcoff, 2007) (Mondon, 2022b).

It is worth noting that LGBT+ activism on both sides of the political aisle has been historically white-dominated. Pastrana Jr (2010) noted the increased difficulties that Black LGBT+ people reported in operating in LGBT+ spaces, where they were often misconstrued as aggressive, and sidelined (Altman, 1971 [1993]) (Pastrana Jr, 2010). Particularly amongst older Black LGBT+ people, implicit prejudices have been observed to go both ways; with older Black LGBT+ people typically downplaying their sexuality in order to not diminish the primacy of their Blackness (Moore, 2010: 7). Balsam et al (2011) report that nonwhite people frequently report experiencing tokenism and neglect in LGBT+ activism, and Hinkson (2021) finds that they reported lower levels of feeling a ‘linked fate’⁵⁷ with other LGBT+ people compared with whites. Swank and Fahs (2013) found that engagement in gay and lesbian rights activism was particularly low for non-white women in the LGBT+ community, suggesting that experiences of sexism have a similar effect to racism on engagement in LGBT+ politics. Meanwhile Proctor (2022b) found that whilst minority groups were generally more egalitarian, ethnocentric people of colour tended to have less support for LGBT+ policies, than similarly ethnocentric straight whites. Collectively, these suggest that your average LGBT+ activist is likely white, due to implicit racism and tokenism⁵⁸ on one side, and a strong pull towards non-affiliation with LGBT+ identity amongst non-whites on the other, and that this is particularly true of non-white women. Thus your average LGBT+ activist likely experiences both white, and male, privilege.

It should be noted that there is no current demographic data on Log Cabin’s makeup, only what can be inferred from past literature, but said literature paints a consistent pic-

⁵⁷The effect of ‘linked fate’ beliefs on engagement with activism is mediated by other factors, such as positive campaign messaging, and so it does not automatically follow that a black gay person’s perception of ‘linked fate’ will motivate them either way. See Raychaudhuri and Proctor (2022) for this discussed in depth in the context of Puerto Ricans in the mainland US.

⁵⁸Hinkson (2021) describes this as ‘colourblindness’ rather than overt racism, not making race part of one’s worldview, but in doing so inadvertently privileging white interests. For a more in-depth discussion on the inability of ‘colourblind’ approaches to fix structural racism, and the role they may play in discouraging the critique of such, see Magali Bessone’s (2020) piece on the removal of the word ‘race’ from French governmental discourse.

ture. Rogers and Lott identified LCR as ‘overwhelmingly’ white and male (1997: 501-502), albeit that was over two decades ago and may have changed with more recent membership. Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor (2017) identified the most common LGBT+ demographics amongst Trump voters were variously white, male and/or bisexual; and therefore possessed white privilege, male privilege, or the ability to pass as straight when with an opposite-sex partner, in some combination. The largest percentage of an individual LGBT+ demographic to vote for Trump was that of Transgender white men (41 percent) (ibid: 355). Royal G. Cravens (2021) found that strong non-white group consciousness was negatively associated with conservatism amongst LGBT+ respondents, suggesting that BAME LGBT+ people find themselves pulled away from the right-wing in ways that their white contemporaries don’t. Finally, Hinkson (2021) found that white LGBT+ people were more likely to exhibit conservatively-aligned views concerning small government, and to believe that only low levels of racism exist in society. Again, these are no substitute for a more substantive demographic breakdown of LCR’s current membership, data for which is not accessible. But, taken together, they infer that the average LCR member is a white man, who may pass as straight.

As a result, said ‘average’ member may be honestly ignorant of structural racism and sexism, and does not factor the need to oppose them into their politics. Thus they advocate a ‘civil liberties’ approach that leaves said issues unfixed, but allows those who have the privilege to thrive without the aid of the state to do so. The extrapolation of Patrick Egan’s theories, discussed earlier, suggest that the less discrimination one faces, the less likely one is to be converted to liberalism (Egan, 2008, 2020) (Egan, Edelman and Sherrill, 2008). White people benefit from the various ways society shields them from, and inures them to, racism (Mills, 1997) (Alcoff, 2007) (Mondon, 2022b), with the same true of sexism for men. Bisexuality and pansexuality enable one to ‘pass’ as straight, and can thus limit the discrimination one receives. It could also be conjectured that transgender men undergo something similar, having, perhaps, an easier time passing as cis than trans women, and thus experiencing less discrimination again⁵⁹. Finally it is also possible that an LGBT+ person who has none of these advantages (for example, a Black Lesbian), but who has had the blessing of a loving, and supportive, upbringing, a pleasant life, and who does not *consciously* believe that they have ever been discriminated against, is similarly inured to *conversion*, and may thus turn out conservative.

When discussing epistemologies of ignorance, one must be extremely careful to not be reductionist. The ‘racial contract’ theory assumes that most white people *do not* endorse racism; Mills describes this as being a *beneficiary* of the contract, but not a *signatory* to it. It is sustained by structural ignorance and brainwashing, to prevent people striving to eradicate it (Mills, 1997) (Alcoff, 2007). When dealing with a topic as morally repugnant as racism, this theory makes perfect sense, but applying it to *party-identification*, and wider ideological formation is risky. Doing so contains the implicit assumption is that being a liberal, or a leftist, is the *correct* standpoint for an LGBT+ person. Ergo, LCR and their ilk are erring from it by virtue of their other demographic characteristics. The argument thus becomes a reductionist one in which LCR members *would* be Democrats, but they’re white/male/bisexual/wealthy so they don’t ‘get it’. This robs LGBT+ conservatives of their agency in defining their self-interest, and treats the idea of basing one’s politics on one’s sexuality alone (i.e, voting for the pro-gay party because you’re gay) as correct. Thereby an LGBT+ person who supports the political right, because they want to pay less income tax and keep their firearm, is doing something *wrong*. As previously stated, this is a tired criticism that LCR spend too much of their time having to defend themselves from,

⁵⁹This may explain their relatively high support for Trump in 2016 (Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor, 2016)

and one which collapses their entire existence into a single demographic; putting them in a box. We must be careful, therefore, that when we discuss epistemologies of ignorance that we do not dismiss their beliefs as simply the *result* of their privilege, even if such things likely do *influence* them.

LGBT+ Conservative beliefs typically revolve around two key issues. The first of which neatly continues the discussion of privilege and epistemologies of ignorance; the rejection of alliance politics. LGBT+ conservatives criticise ‘the left’ or ‘gay inc’ for supposedly instituting a ‘correct’ way to be gay that leaves right-wingers excluded. Bawer spent much of *A Place at the Table* ([1993] 1994) remonstrating about whether his ‘silent majority’ should be subscribed to ‘the laundry-list of leftwing politics’ (Bawer, [1993] 1994), and, when reviewing Urvashi Vaid’s *Virtual Equality*, he questioned whether issues of class, race, ideology and gender (all allied issues that Vaid spent the book arguing that LGBT+ people should fight for) actually constituted legitimate ‘gay issues’ (Bawer, 1995). He also described transgender people as being too unrelated to the struggle for LGB rights to be allies (Bawer [1993] 1994). By calling this into question, LGBT+ conservative authors are not necessarily *denying* the existence of other discriminations, but they are denying that such things are interwoven. As a result, they implicitly ignore the realities facing multiply-discriminated LGBT+ people, as opposed to the white men believed to dominate LGBT+ conservative circles (Rogers and Lott, 1997) (Cimino, 2007) (Strolovitch, Wong and Proctor, 2017) (Cravens, 2021). Some LGBT+ conservative literature has taken a more explicit stand against alliance politics, such as Stephen H. Miller’s *Gay White Males*, which lambasts the leadership of LGBT+ advocacy groups for supposedly trying to exclude gay white men from leadership, and label them as oppressors (Miller, 1994); a paper that reads as a clear example of misplaced victimhood. At several points in this thesis, LCR similarly criticise left/liberal gay organisations for getting involved in issues of alliance politics. Academic assessment of intersectional LGBT+ issues is discussed below to add context, as readers should be aware that denying the relevance of intersectionality is dangerous.

Stanton, Rozas and Ascencio (2018) found that citizenship status significantly correlated to LGBT+ openness; LGBT+ people with full citizenship were significantly more likely to be open about their sexuality than those without, even when controlling for religion, age, income level, gender, and education level. Furthermore, POC in the sample were significantly less likely to be out, regardless of citizenship. Ryan et al. (2010) found that familial rejection of LGBT+ rights was a statistical predictor of substance abuse, suicidal ideation, and suicide, and that LGBT+ people from an immigrant, Latino or low-income background were more likely to have experienced this familial rejection. According to the Williams Institute, transgender adults are twelve times more likely to experience past-year suicidal ideation, and eighteen times more likely to have past-year suicide attempts, than the general U.S population, with those experiencing other forms of discrimination, mistreatment or rejection at an increased risk (Herman, Brown and Haas, 2019). Finally, LGBT+ people are statistically more likely to live in poverty than the general population, with African American same-sex couples experiencing *twice* the poverty rate of different-sex African American couples (Perez, 2014). The Pew Research Center (2013, as cited in Perez, 2014) found that LGBT+ Americans were 9 percent more likely than the general population to have an annual household income of 10,000 dollars or less.

There is evidence in media accounts to suggest that, at least concerning transgender people, LCR once possessed a more mollified and supportive view than gay conservative literature would suggest. For instance, they criticised the transgender military ban implemented by President Trump at first (Log Cabin Republicans, 2017b). They also objected to the president’s nomination of the transphobic Mark Green for Secretary of the Army (Log Cabin

Republicans, 2017a) (Cooper, 2017) (Jenkins, 2017). LCR have also claimed that their transgender members have worked with the Department of Education on creating trans-inclusive policies (Log Cabin Republicans, 2017). That being said, when LCR endorsed Trump for re-election, several high-ranking members resigned in protest. One of them was Jordan Evans; the town constable of Carlton, Massachusetts and the only elected transgender Republican in the US. Evans wrote an op-ed for *The Advocate* in which she criticised the policy rollbacks of LGBT+ rights under Donald Trump, argued that LCR should have endorsed Bill Weld, and claimed that Trump's supposed allyship to the community was little more than 'hollow words' amid 'a seemingly endless number of cuts for us to endure' (Evans, 2019).

LCR subsequently dropped all pretense of being pro-trans, and willingly subscribed to mainstream Republican rhetoric about supposed 'leftist gender ideologies' and the infiltration of 'biological males' into women's spaces. They have come to support the transgender military ban; splitting hairs to justify it, by claiming that only those transgender people suffering from gender dysphoria were unfit for deployment, in line with existing military medical praxis (OUTspoken, 2020). This reads like the LCR leaning into technicalities to justify a U-turn, a theme that will come up several times in this thesis.

Marriage is the vehicle by which assimilationist narratives are driven, and has thus received substantial academic critique in and of itself. Bernstein and Taylor (2013) identified that marriage discourse was fraught with multiple fears. The first was 'homonormativity', the assimilation of LGBT+ identities into a heteronormative mould, thus de-legitimising alternative forms of love (Ettelbrick, 1989) (Browning, 1996) (Warner, 1999) (Duggan, 2003) (Stein, 2013). The second was 'de-centring LGBT+ identity', by which assimilated LGBT+ people lose a concrete sense of their sexual identity, and thus their mobilising power. The third was 'misguided energy', the fear that once equal marriage was achieved, activists would retire and not fight other forms of oppression (Vaid, 1995), which links us back to epistemologies of ignorance again (Mills, 1997). This discourse has been supplemented by Jess Lee (2018), who argued that, historically, Black Americans had been discursively juxtaposed with images of heteronormative whites, adding to a stigmatisation of Black sexuality that even saw them derided by LGBT+ activists. Discourses of sexual acceptability (including marriage) are thus inseparable from racialised undertones. DeGagne (2018) furthers the arguments of homonormativity, noting that such discourses played a strong role in the defeating of California Proposition 8, a referendum on banning same-sex marriage. Proponents of the ban had co-opted queer discourse to claim that being gay was *not* a fixed element of identity (claims to which often underpin civil rights causes) but a *choice*. LGBT+ activists had to argue in heteronormative terms to win their case, claiming sexuality was immutable in the process⁶⁰. Again, the fight for marriage comes at the expense of queer sexualities. LGBT+ marriage has its defenders in academia, who argue that *Obergefell v Hodges* was a necessary step toward winning acceptance and legal recognition for other forms of love (Bernstein, 2018) (Baumle, 2018). Nevertheless, the question is begged as to why other LGBT+ political agendas, such as campaigning for LGBT+ people of colour or the LGBT+ poor, should wait in line (Ashley, 2015: 28-31)?

2.6 Conclusions on Literature

This review has summarised the relevant literature to this thesis' method, the key and supplemental concepts explored herein, and the beliefs and attitudes we typically expect when researching the LGBT+ community and LGBT+ conservatives in particular.

⁶⁰DeGagne based her analysis on the court cases that challenged Proposition 8 after it was passed, which were ultimately resolved with Hollingsworth et al. v Perry (2013) (DeGagne, 2018: 1957).

Critical Discourse Analysis suits this thesis' work as it links the production of individual texts with the context in which they are created and the intended audience. It further provides a series of tools for uncovering explicit, and subliminal, meanings within each text (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016). It allows this thesis to extrapolate the ideology behind each individual tweet, and helps provide a clear, and adaptable, framework for assessing the different media contained therein.

Doublethink is a concept first opined by George Orwell in dystopian fiction. It concerns the holding of simultaneous, contradictory, viewpoints, or the jumping between such viewpoints (and, crucially, back again), so as to *not* question authority. It is understood to be a mechanism by which authoritarian followers normalise accountability sabotage (Glasius, 2018) and join 'affective communities'.

Populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) is discourse that constructs a righteous 'people' fighting a vilified 'elite enemy', and can be adapted to any ideology. For the populist far right we expect narratives built around traditional social hierarchies and values, and a leftwing 'elite' who threaten them. Populism is a highly contested concept, and misuse of the term can euphemise the far right (see, for example, Mondon and Winter (2020)), ergo this thesis deals with it sensitively and critically. In this context, populism is used to legitimise an authority figure by juxtaposing them *against* the 'left elite' as a champion of 'the people'.

Right-wing authoritarian follower behaviour concerns efforts to uphold a right-wing authority figure, by wilfully sabotaging efforts at holding them accountable (Glasius, 2018). In extreme cases this constitutes dictatorship, but many authoritarian actions can still be undertaken in an ostensibly democratic context. It is understood to involve an insistence upon hierarchy, control of narrative, and may extend to violence. Literature on authoritarian followers is predominantly psychological (see (Adorno, 1950 [2019]) or (Altemeyer, 1981)), and, thus, I have had to adapt it to suit a political methodology.

Islamophobia is structural anti-Muslim racism (Ali and Whitham, 2021), which has become increasingly prevalent in post-911 society. This includes efforts at weaponising Islamophobia in order to win LGBT+ acceptance, in the form of Homonationalism (Puar, 2007). It forms a secondary part of this thesis' work, as LCR use it to reinforce populist narratives against the US left, who are supposedly 'soft' towards it (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

The alt-right represent a rhizomatic social movement of hard-right reactionaries, who embrace sadism, white nationalism, and masculinism, and who purport to be the victims of feminism and 'reverse-discrimination'. Typically the gay community are vilified by the alt-right, but may be included in their ranks by virtue of 'alpha-male' or 'substandard ally' rhetoric. Understanding the alt-right is also a secondary aspect of this thesis, as identifying alt-right lexicon informs the coding of populist (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), and authoritarian, (Glasius, 2018) variables throughout.

LGBT+ people are a well-researched demographic, but their conservative members far less so. As a rule, the LGBT+ community is liberal and politically active, and this does not change when controlling for various factors. Furthermore, it is strongly suggested that, aside from some self-selecting influences, LGBT+ people *convert* to liberalism as a reaction to oppression (Egan, 2008, 2012, 2020) (Egan, Edelman and Sherril, 2008). As a result, LGBT+ conservatism is associated with a *lack* of experienced discrimination. From LGBT+ conservatives we expect a rejection of alliance politics, an assimilationist identity, and a limited political agenda that misunderstands multiple discrimination. Furthermore, LGBT+ conservatives are expected to be less socially active within the community, and

may even resent their own sexuality and downplay it (Meyer and Choi, 2020). They are considered walking contradictions or ‘self-hating’ by LGBT+ liberals (Cimino, 2007). Whilst it would be wrong to make a reductionist argument that attributes *all* LGBT+ conservative beliefs to privilege and epistemologies of ignorance (Mills, 1997), it nevertheless plays an explanatory role in their ‘civil liberties’ position.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Inductive Mixed-Methods

This thesis uses a mixed-methods, inductive, approach to detail the *Homo-Authoritarianism* of the Log Cabin Republicans on Twitter/X in three key areas; doublethink, populism, and right-wing authoritarianism. These concepts are explained in detail in the previous chapter, but I will recap here for accessibility's sake. 'Doublethink' signifies one seemingly holding two contradictory beliefs at the same time, or continuously jumping between contradictory beliefs, so as to never question one's preferred authority figure (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). 'Populism' is discourse that packages ideologies (in this case, the far right) as a struggle between a righteous 'people' against a vilified 'elite' (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). 'Right-Wing Authoritarianism' (RWA) concerns efforts to enshrine a single figure in a position of absolute power; or in the case of authoritarian followers, efforts to normalise, and legitimise, such practices (Adorno et al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020) (Lockhart, Sibley and Osbourne, 2020, 2023a, 2023b).

A Twitter discourse analysis was selected for this study, ahead of interviews or ethnography, for two reasons. The first is that, per my theory of *Homo-Authoritarianism*, LCR wish to demonstrate their loyalty to Trump in a public setting, where their support can be seen and rewarded. Face-to-face methods, like interviews, are unfit for this work, as they must always position the researcher as adjacent, and known, to the subject, or be ethically compromised. Log Cabin are, as noted at length earlier, used to accusations that they are traitorous or self-hating (see Cimino, 2007: 67-87), and seek to mobilise their supporters against a supposed liberal elite (see Chapter 5). An academic researcher studying authoritarianism would be met with a raised portcullis, since I would be seen as a member of that elite. I would get guarded answers at best, open hostility at worst, neither of which is of any value to this study and might compromise my safety. By contrast, social media is where LCR turn to promote themselves, engage with their base and the public, and a visible platform upon which to demonstrate authoritarian loyalty to Trump, who similarly used it to promote an authoritarian Presidency. This is, simply, the best research method for the job.

This work was broad and open-minded in its approach. The very topic of LGBT+ Conservatism is chronically under-researched, and thus an *inductive*, rather than *deductive* methodology was demanded, lest important contributions be missed by pointedly looking for something *else*. The concepts of 'populism' and 'authoritarianism' were defined beforehand, but only loosely so; for example, there were no specific parameters devised for the kinds of populist rhetoric that would be found; which *people* vs which *elite*. Their manifestations were *discovered*, not *determined*. 'Doublethink', by contrast, was entirely

discovered: Very late in the research process, upon reflection of the data, parallels between LCR's rhetoric in certain tweets, and Orwell's fictionalised propaganda tools in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949 [2000]) were observed, and a chapter was then devoted to cover them. The ability to observe such a trend, and rapidly re-dedicate a chapter to it, stands in testament to the usefulness of inductive methods to this process.

Likewise, the under-researched nature of this topic led me to pursue a mixed-methods approach. The work is overwhelmingly qualitative, rooted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), but takes a multi-disciplinary approach to it. The thesis simultaneously uses the methods of the dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016), discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) and socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) schools; thereby allowing me to demonstrate many nuanced rhetorical forms of doublethink, populism and authoritarianism. But it also contains a supplementary quantitative element. Lest the findings be accused of cherry-picking, care was taken to demonstrate broader trends where possible. To this end, basic, but effective, bivariate crosstabulations were implemented, which would chart any overall changes in the frequency of rhetoric over time.

It must be stated that the quantitative element of this work was entirely *supplemental* to the qualitative. Far right beliefs are *reactionary* by nature, meaning that they, often, only materialise in text when the speaker is *reacting to* a recent development. For an example, if one is a proponent of criminalising abortion, one might not have cause everyday, or even most days, to publicly bemoan access to abortion, as it is not necessarily part of one's regular experience (especially if one is a cisgender man). But when the subject is in the news, as a state implements sweeping bans on it, or constitutionally protects access to it, one may tweet about the topic for a day or two. Likewise, someone who believes that Donald Trump should never be held accountable for his actions would not have had cause to rail against his detractors every day; he wasn't always butting heads with Congress, or undergoing impeachment investigations, or in contrarian meetings with foreign heads of government. As a result, most of the time, the issue becomes invisibilised. Due to the reactionary nature of such beliefs, it is not always possible to observe an overall upward or downward trend; the particular variable in question may only pop up in small, isolated, cases. But bivariate analysis allows this thesis to capture the moments where such beliefs *do* consistently rise or fall, and to strengthen conclusions thereby.

The last thing to note in this section is the nature of this thesis' conclusions. Stemming from the stated desire to approach this topic with an open mind, this thesis has observed trends in its dataset that are deeply compelling, and others for whom there is only modest evidence. Rather than ignore or downplay the latter in favour of only serving up the most absolute of null hypothesis rejections; this thesis has taken a more nuanced approach and kept them in, so that readers may learn from them, and they may serve as inspiration for further avenues of research. A colour-coding system has been adopted, to clearly signpost to readers where I am absolutely convinced of my conclusions, and where I am modestly so. For example, where trends appear compelling, but the qualitative data can be interpreted differently, and where the statistical analysis reached a standard of practical significance, but not statistical significance. These are coded as **Amber** conclusions, whereas those of maximum significance are **Green**, and those where the null hypothesis cannot be rejected are **Red**. Thereby, nothing of use to readers is omitted from the work, but intellectual honesty, and rigour, are maintained. These more modest conclusions are a minority in this thesis, with the majority being confident rejections of null hypotheses. The **Amber** conclusions are intended as the first, inspirational, nuggets of future research. Readers may consider this an open invitation for other academics to build on the gaps in my methodology, that we may collectively breathe new life into this field.

3.2 Ethics

The key ethical dilemma for this thesis is its sample, since social media posts can be copyrighted, and there are issues surrounding the privacy of their authors. In terms of copyright, I have followed guidelines on the fair use of tweets without their authors' permission, since obtaining that consent would be impossible; LCR demonstrate hostility to the supposed liberal elite (see Chapter 5) of which I am part by virtue of being an academic researcher. Furthermore, an argument can be made that the *very public* commentary of a far-right group presents a vested public interest in its dissection. In light of this, I have pursued a policy of the 'fair use' of the sample. The use of media for educational purposes is generally protected against copyright claims. In the case of Twitter/X, it has a documented fair use policy that protects the use of tweets for 'transformative' 'non-commercial' and 'educational' use, with 'transformative' signifying the addition of things like 'commentary' and 'criticism' (X, n.d); this thesis' work complies with this definition of fair use.

The next issue, however, is anonymisation, which Twitter/X struggles with, and for which there is no academic consensus. Twitter is a public social media platform, and, as is discussed in the next section, one of the great strengths of this thesis' sampling is that every tweet was kept public. Even if one hides the author of a given tweet, it is not possible to withhold enough information to prevent the tweet being de-anonymised by a brief mining of Twitter's advanced search function (which can narrow tweets by content, date, and source), whilst *retaining* enough information to demonstrate the tweet's validity, and thus the validity of the work derived from it. In short, if a reader has a mind to uncover the sources of all my tweets, there is nothing that I could do that modest effort couldn't unpick.

The issue of anonymisation is also one that has an epistemological, as well as practical element. Research on social media is divided on whether or not to anonymise sources, with different publications taking different stances. I cited several papers in Chapter 2 to demonstrate the usefulness of Twitter datasets to various research purposes, and I revisit them here, as they differed in their approach to anonymisation. D'Elena's (2018) thesis on Russian interference in the 2016 election cited many tweets, but anonymised them all, though he did not ever use screencaps of the tweets to demonstrate their validity. Both Ramona Kreis' (2017) paper on 'Tweet Politics', and Kerbleski's (2019) thesis on the Twitter commentary of the California wildfires, were focussed on Donald Trump's twitter account (@realDonaldTrump) alone, and thus didn't anonymise him. Gallaher's (2021) paper on alt-right influencers on Twitter did not anonymise the five accounts it studied either, these being the personal accounts of Richard Spencer, Nathan Damigo, Lana Lokteff, Jared Taylor, and Kevin MacDonald. Datasets that were based on hashtags, and thus might sample tweets from a vast number of accounts, tended to keep their content anonymised however: Aljarallah's (2017) thesis on hashtags surrounding female drivers in Saudi Arabia; Prendergast and Quinn's (2021) paper on hashtags related to high profile sexual assault cases in Ireland and Spain; and Gonsalves, McGannon and Pegoro's (2021) paper on hashtags related to cardiovascular disease, all kept their sources wholly anonymous. It seems therefore, that if consensus exists in research on Twitter, including CDA research (all the sources above, except Gallaher (2021) employed CDA methods (Aljarallah, 2017) (D'Elena, 2018) (Kerbleski, 2021) (Prendergast and Quinn, 2021)) it appears to be that the smaller the sample, and the higher profile the account holders, the safer it is to de-anonymise.

Similar work to my own has taken a nuanced stance however, and I take my chief inspiration from that. I refer to the paper *#GaysForTrump, "Coming Out" as a Conservative on Twitter* by Marina Bergozza, Francesca Coco and Scott Burnett (2024). This paper, which

was published during this thesis' final revisions, similarly looks at LGBT+ GOP Twitter accounts, but does not include LCR; instead focusing on independent self-identified gay Republicans. They made the decision to anonymise their sources (profile pics and account names) where they would clearly identify the sender, but de-anonymised any that did not, such as organisational accounts and blogs. For example, the account '@RepublicanGay', whose profile picture was of Trump holding a pride flag.

In this vein, I have de-anonymised one of my sampled accounts, albeit a source that does not identify the name of the sender; it is an organisational account affiliated with LCR with a generic profile picture. This is, naturally, @LogCabinGOP, the organisation's main Twitter account. I have kept the rest anonymous, so as to maximise the privacy of the remaining senders, these being 3 state-level chapters and the personal accounts of 3 LCR leaders. This already represents a further degree of anonymisation than is standard for peer reviewed work in this field, as the 3 chapter accounts do not identify the person actually typing their content. Even then, I have gone further than Bergozza, Coco and Burnett (2024) and taken the precaution of anonymising every tweet that appears in this work; when a given tweet is highlighted in the following chapters, the account that sent it, and its profile picture, has been cropped out. The process by which this is achieved adds a further level of security: First the image was cropped to remove the account information, then a screenshot was taken *of the cropped tweet*, and that screenshot was included in the thesis as the figure representing the tweet. This means that readers cannot use imaging software to undo my anonymisation; they cannot unscramble a blurred image as there is nothing *to* unscramble, and the account information was never on the screenshot to begin with, so it cannot be un-cropped to reveal it.

I reveal the use of @LogCabinGOP so as to demonstrate that I'm not simply pulling extreme examples from the fringe of the organisation; my work represents an analysis of social media use reflective of LCR on a national scale. But anything more open than that risks ethical compromise. Again, I hasten to remind readers that there is no way to anonymise these tweets in a way that both proves that they are real, and effectively hides their authors' identity permanently. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to at least make my readers go to that effort, rather than simply dispensing with it altogether; I have put in as much work as I can to keep the content private without undermining the credibility of my findings. This is as fair a balance as I can strike between evidence and ethics.

As a further ethical note, care was taken to select a sample whose content could be viewed publicly, so that no disingenuous work was undertaken in its cultivation. No account whose tweets were private were used. Indeed Brandon Straka, a right-wing gay conservative influencer, and ally of LCR, whose account I had planned to include, was eliminated from the sample when he privatised his social media accounts in early 2021. Had I a mind to access these tweets, doing so is relatively simple; one simply needs to follow the account. However, this would risk presenting me, disingenuously, as a supporter of the account in question, and thus create an ethical quandary. To use a simile, my work would be analogous to undertaking covert participant observation in a public square, listening to gay Republican activists talk through megaphones, and taking detailed notes. Following a private account would be like infiltrating a private gathering, and masquerading as a gay Republican myself, so as to lurk at the edge of their conversations. To be sure, it is certainly possible to follow the account of someone that one politically opposes, if their rhetoric is valuable to one's work, and one wishes to stay abreast of their communication. But the risk of presenting oneself as an inauthentic supporter is still present, and its ethical implications are best avoided.

To conclude this section on ethics, I firstly restate that this thesis makes use of social media posts within the boundaries of fair use, being transformative, non-commercial and

educational, following the guidelines of Twitter/X (X, n.d). Secondly, it deals with the issue of anonymising the accounts in question very carefully, taking existing peer-reviewed work as inspiration and then going *further* to carefully anonymise the sources as much as possible, whilst making sure to retain enough information that said sources are demonstrably real. Finally, it *only* makes use of sources that were public at the time the work was undertaken, so as to not disingenuously *follow* accounts, and present myself as an inauthentic supporter.

3.3 Sample

My research sample comprised 1300 Tweets, sent from 7 accounts affiliated with the Log Cabin Republicans. The accounts in question were as follows: @LogCabinGOP, the main account of the organisation, as well as 3 municipal chapters of the organisation based in major US cities, and the personal accounts of 3 individuals who held leadership roles over the studied period. The chapter and personal accounts have been anonymised, as discussed above. All of their tweets were visible to the public at the time this research was undertaken, for reasons discussed in the *Ethics* section, but also because a key facet of this research is to demonstrate an authoritarian ideological turn by LCR under Trump. Homo-Authoritarianism is, I argue, the trading of loyalty for acceptance; LCR want their loyalty to be *seen* and unmistakable, so publicly visible tweets are a very practical way to demonstrate that.

The accounts for the sample were curated so as to allow this thesis to demonstrate that ideological beliefs communicated therein are indicative of the official ‘party line’ of Log Cabin, as well as sincerely held by its leadership, and thus most likely communicated behind the scenes as well as on Twitter. Authoritarianism, by its nature, is a top-down ideology that then becomes hegemonic as it is reproduced from the bottom-up (Adorno et al, 1950 [2019]) (Altmeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Glasius, 2018) (Hibbing, 2020) (Lockhart, Sibley and Osbourne, 2020, 2023a, 2023b). LCR are situated at both ends of this spectrum at different times; to Trump, they act as follower, but to their own supporters, they are the leader. One could study any main Log Cabin Twitter account to find evidence of authoritarian follower behaviour towards Trump, but by studying LCR’s leadership specifically, we can be confident that LCR use their own positions of influence to further spread authoritarianism to their own base. This makes this selection of tweets a compelling sample.

The sample was gathered using Twitter advanced search, from the above accounts, with the following parameters:

1. Tweets sent on, or *after*, January 20th 2013: The first full calendar day of Barack Obama’s 2nd term in office.
2. Tweets sent on, or *before*, January 19th 2021: The last full calendar day of Donald Trump’s presidency (i.e the day before Joe Biden’s inauguration).
3. Tweets that recieved at least 10 ‘likes’.

Some manual pruning of the sample was done, when it was discovered part-way through the research that the search filter had, for reasons unknown, *not* included several tweets that fit the criteria, and had included others that didn’t. This left the sample size at 1300.

The time frame parameters were included so that four years’ worth of Tweets could be neatly compared to another four years’ worth. As Twitter was only released to the public in 2009, it was not possible to compare LCR’s activity across the *entire* Obama Presidency

to the Trump Presidency, so a single term each was the next most appropriate timeframe. The requirement for 10 ‘likes’ ensured the sample was limited to tweets that were actually being engaged with, and thus the ideological content within them was successfully being communicated. I remind readers that these tweets were *publically viewable* meaning that readers did not have to follow the accounts in question; so not only are these tweets being engaged with, their content is being functionally shouted to the world *and* is being rewarded with engagement for doing so.

The ‘likes’ parameter also served a practical purpose; inductive hand coding was essential to this research design, since it would allow for the maximised ability to capture nuance, implication and anaphoric-cataphoric shared meanings (Fillmore, 1985) (Fowler, 1985) in individual tweets. The ‘likes’ parameter reduced a sample of several thousand tweets down to a manageable size for one person using such methods. They were hand-coded, using the CDA methods laid out further into this chapter (Fillmore, 1985) (Fowler, 1985) (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016), over a full calendar year; March 2021 to February 2022¹.

This left a skewed sample however, since LCR grew exponentially more popular on Twitter following the rise of Donald Trump. The ‘Obama Sample’ (Tweets from January 20th 2013-January 19th 2017) comprised only 192 tweets, with the remaining 1108 coming after Trump took the oath of office. Comparisons of the quantity of given variables appearing in tweets on either side of Trump’s inauguration is hereafter referred to as the *Presidency Test*, or being ‘compared with *Presidency*’. This difference in size presented a complication for the quantitative side of the analysis, which was compensated for by an additional level of bivariate coding. This involved sampling 100 randomised tweets from the *Obama Presidency* (Tweets 0001-0192) and comparing them against five groups of 100 randomised tweets from the *Trump Presidency* (Tweets 0193-1300). A visible increase in a variable appearing in the ‘Random Sample’ tests, as they are hereafter referred to, was used as a robustness check to confirm the accuracy of the ‘Presidency Test’. The first batch of 100 randomised tweets is hereafter called ‘the *Obama Sample*’, and the five subsequent batches as ‘the *Trump Samples*’.

3.4 Variable Breakdown

As discussed in the ‘Sample’ section, I was interested in comparing the change in rhetoric across the two Presidential administrations in the sample (the ‘Presidency Test’). This determined the first independent variable; *Presidency*. This was a categorical variable with results of either *Barack H. Obama* (1) or *Donald J. Trump* (2). The second independent variable, *Random Samples*, stems for the need for a robustness check on the skewed *Presidency* variable, as described earlier. 100 tweets from the Obama era were randomly selected, as well as five, separate, randomised groups of 100 tweets sent during the Trump era. These were coded as *Obama Sample* (1), and *Trump Samples 1-5* (2-6).

The chief dependent variables were measures of *Populism* and *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*, all sourced from the literature examined at length in Chapter 2. In addition, the subject matter of every tweet, such as the specific *enemy* invoked (more on that momentarily) was also coded into its own dependent variable. ‘Doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000])

¹Sustained coding only took 9 months of that time, as I was on a teaching sabbatical at London Metropolitan University between October and December 2021. Likewise, since the funding for this PhD only covered the cost of tuition, and stable income was preferential over competing for monetary awards, this was completed around several part-time jobs, which likewise slowed the coding process, as it slowed the whole PhD.

being solely an anaphoric *theme* in the sample, and observed very late in the coding process, was not made into a dependent variable. Rather, doublethink has been observed when the actual dependent variables were portrayed in self-contradictory ways in order to demonstrate alignment with Trump. Because doublethink was not, in itself, a variable in the study, Chapter 4, devoted to it, is entirely qualitative; whereas Chapters 5 and 6, dealing with populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) and right-wing authoritarianism (Adorno et Al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981) (Glasius, 2018) respectively, are mixed-methods.

Qualitative CDA methods were used to code each tweet, using the software program NVivo. A full breakdown of how this was achieved in a single figure is given in the next section. When all of the dependent variables in a tweet were identified, they were each represented as a binary categorical variable (*Present*, 1 or *Not Present*, 0) and transposed into SPSS. In most cases, sub-variables were created to demonstrate the specific nuances of each communicative act: populism, for example, requires separate rhetorical acts (or separate points within a single act) to mobilise ‘the people’ against ‘the elite’ (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). This was achieved through the creation of child-nodes in NVivo. When the variables were transposed into SPSS, each child-node was given its own data line, with new variables computed to combine each child node back into a single variable; allowing both specific, and generalised, trends to be measured. A breakdown of the principle child-nodes has been tabulated below with invented examples:

Dependent Variable	Abv.	Explanation	Invented Example
Invocation of the People	IVP	Identification of an in-group	‘We, the LGBT+ Community’
Identification of an Enemy	IoE	Singling out a person, system, or group as oppressing ‘the people’	‘The Woke Left’.

Table 3.1: Variables used to measure **Populism** in Chapters 5.

Populism was represented by two key sub-variables, *Invocation of the People* (IVP) and *Identification of an Enemy* (IoE). Readers already familiar with literature on Populism will note that this is a broader take than the specific anti-elite narratives generally understood to be populist (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). This was done so that the same methods could be used to capture a broader field of ‘us vs them’ narratives, including racism, transphobia, and Islamophobia, whilst retaining a focus on how these are used in a populist context. Taking a broad view at the methodological stage allowed these nuances to be captured, without losing the focus that the elite enemy (in practice, this was most commonly the ‘left-wing establishment’) is the key feature. Chapter 5, which deals directly with populism, focuses solely on anti-elite narratives, as these are the ones that most directly legitimise, and exonerate, Trump. However, some of the fruits of this broader work can be found in Appendix B on ‘Liberal Islamophobia.’ Such work is entirely supplemental to this thesis’ conclusions, but may prove fruitful inspiration for authors seeking to explore the topic further, particularly those working on the related field of *Homonationalism* (see Puar (2007, 2013)).

Tweets containing an IVP *and* IoE variable were the key focus; where a people are directly placed against a specific foe, by explicit linkage or implied foregrounding. I hereafter refer to these instances as ‘juxtapositions’.

Dependent Variable	Abv.	Explanation	Invented Example
Calls to Violence	CV	Expressing the need/desire for violent methods as a political tool	‘Destroy the Traitors’
Veneration of the Authority	VoA	Glorifying a political or social leader	‘The Greatest President of my Life!’
Dismissal of Accountability	DoA	Expressing scepticism of, or seeking the overturning of, democratic systems of political accountability.	‘This impeachment is a witch-hunt!’
Media Scepticism	MS	Assuming certain media outlets are false or spreading conspiracies.	‘Fake News’

Table 3.2: Variables used to measure **Right-Wing Authoritarianism** in Chapter 6

IVP was itself sub-coded into several smaller categories depending on which ‘people’ LCR were trying to invoke at a given time. Of these, three ‘peoples’ dominated discussion, and they are the focus of Chapter 5: *LGBT+ Republicans*, the *Republican Party*, and the *LGBT+ Community*². These are the identity categories most relevant to LCR; their politically and sexually bounded demographic, as well as their party, and their sexual community more generally. Homonationalist (Puar, 2007, 2013) narratives were common, and *Americans* was a studied IVP variable in this thesis, though the results gained there were too iterative of Puar and added little that she did not already contribute to academia; as a result they were left on the cutting room floor. Nevertheless, where overt patriotism plays a role in the analysis of both *Populism* and *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*, it has been noted in all subsequent chapters.

IoE was similarly divided into many sub-variables. In order to structure the research on populism, each sub variable’s frequency was recorded, and then cross-tabulated against the three principle IVP variables (*LGBT+ Republicans*, *LGBT+ Community* and *Republican Party*). Only those that held a statistically, or practically, significant relationship to them were included in the analysis. The results are thus limited, sensibly, to populist variable relationships that actually played a substantive role in LCR’s rhetoric.

Two IoE variables stood out in large quantities, and thus form the spine of Chapter 5’s analysis: *Partisan Homophobia* and *The Left* which I have taken to referring to in Chapter 5 as the ‘big two’. Each of them had their own sub-variable child nodes, such as *Left-Wing Homophobia* (Partisan Homophobia), or *Identity Politics* (The Left). The ‘elite’ nature of these enemies stems from being established political parties, or long-powerful wings of said parties, with connections to activism and the media. Chapter 5 is structured around

²There were many smaller categories, referenced in handfults of tweets, that could not make it into this publication for reasons of space and sparse evidence. These include *Gun Owners* and *Christians*. They remain part of the dataset, stored with the University of Reading, and I encourage other authors to make use of them. I lacked the time, and word limit, to do so here.

each IoE variable in turn, since the narratives by which they are juxtaposed against each ‘people’ were so similar that it made practical sense to foreground IoE, to avoid repetition. Nevertheless, at times the juxtaposition of specific ‘peoples’ against specific ‘enemies’ was unique, and this is observed when relevant. As with IVP, smaller IoE variables were observed in frequencies too few to justify inclusion in the study, but in some cases they helped to inform the coding of the ‘big two’. This is clearly signposted in Chapter 5.

Right-Wing Authoritarianism was represented by four key sub-variables, *Calls to Violence*, *Veneration of the Authority*, *Dismissal of Accountability* and *Media Scepticism*. These signified calls for physical reprisal against perceived enemies, claims that Donald Trump and his inner circle were somehow larger than life in their positive qualities, verbal attacks on institutions and actors that constrained Donald Trump’s power, and warped media narratives designed to undermine criticism of him³.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 demonstrate explicit ways in which each variable might be observed, but *Populist* and *Right-Wing Authoritarian* rhetoric can be communicated in a variety of linguistic and semiotic ways, including those not explicitly seen in the text; passive tone, selective deletion (Fillmore, 1985) and certain images/memes (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020) could also signify one or more of the variables. Explicit language such as ‘the woke left’s war on women’, would certainly signify *Identity Politics* (an IoE child node of *The Left*), but so would a more generic sentence like ‘opportunities are being taken away from women,’ which heavily implies the perpetrator to be left-wing pro-trans activism. An explicit ‘you are fake news’ would code for *Media Scepticism*, but so would a subtler ‘this is what the media won’t tell you’, accompanying a link to a story on *Breitbart*, or LCR’s own outlet *OUTSpoken*. This presents the issue as one of fair debate, the other side of the proverbial story. In fact, it constructs a reality in which other media outlets are delegitimised, because what they ‘won’t tell you’ is implied to be both true, and important, and must thus have been omitted to paint an unfair picture. Implication is every bit as important to understanding far right rhetoric, as explicit language.

3.5 Qualitative Analysis

Having assembled my sample, I screen-captured each tweet and saved them to separate word documents with full transcriptions of their contents, including appended articles and transcriptions of appended videos. Furthermore, when a tweet referenced an event such as a speech, but did not include a link, I sought such sources out independently, and used them to inform my coding of the tweet in question. Examples included tweets praising the content of Donald Trump’s speech at the 2016 RNC, which required me to watch the speech for context. Where these tweets are cited in inset figures in this thesis, I have provided references to the videos used for the coding process. Each tweet was then uploaded to NVivo and coded manually.

When an article or video was appended, I coded those parts of the source that were foregrounded in the tweet itself, such as when quotes from the article were copied into the tweet. For example, if a tweet praised or dismissed the contents of an article in their entirety, then the whole article was coded. If the tweet instead focused on a single section or quote, then only that immediate part of the article was coded, since that is the *only* content that LCR intended to be a part of their communicative act. My reasoning for this was to query what impression I would get of a given article were I *not* to read it, but

³Related to *Media Scepticism*, this research also noted a pattern of LCR misrepresenting media sources in order to reinforce their various narratives, including outright falsehoods about the content of certain articles. This supplemental work is covered in Appendix C.

instead simply accept LCR’s tweeted summary, or quote, as a face-value representation (the ‘text-internal world’ (Filmore, 1985)). That impression is the intended communicative act.

As elaborated extensively by Norman Fairclough (1989 [2015], 1992 [2006]), CDA comprises a three-tiered approach. At the top level is awareness and understanding of social phenomena and context into which a text is produced. At the middle level is the means of textual production, asking how was it put together, by whom, and for which target audience? And at the bottom level is the textual analysis itself, what words are on the page, what implications hide between the lines, what is co-produced between author and reader in the process? For the purpose of this study, the three tiers are as follows:

1. **Top Level Context:** An authoritarian (Glasius, 2018) American presidency. Texts produced in support of Donald Trump are being enmeshed in an overlapping public discourse legitimising his actions, and providing the means for them to be spread and enhanced.
2. **Mid-Level Textual Production:** Social media, in this case Twitter. The texts are being produced by LCR with no visible external input; no third-party editor who may influence their content for good or ill. Furthermore the target market is the general public. Twitter does not require its users to follow each other in order to view each other’s produced content, only to get notifications for it, and see it without specifically searching for it. As noted before, though privacy settings may be deployed, LCR have not done so. This forces us to conclude that these texts represent LCR’s unfiltered voice, and that they intend their texts for mass public consumption, which makes sense considering that the top-level context is the legitimisation of an authoritarian ideology, which, as with all ideologies, needs mass engagement and reproduction to become hegemonic (Gramsci, 1971).
3. **Bottom Level Texts:** Tweets. These vary wildly in form, but are traditionally short messages of only a few hundred words. Links to external articles and sources may be appended, as might videos and images, which bring their own unique nuances of communication, implication, tone, framing and reference. As a result, textual analysis needs to be adaptive to these nuances.

3.5.1 Discourse Analysis Tools

The three key schools of CDA that I made use of, socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016), discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016), and dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016), all refer to the *contexts* of texts: *what* is being communicated? But to understand *how* this communication takes place, I had to look elsewhere. Most literature on CDA focuses on abstract references to the ways we communicate, making note of the existence of imagery and wordplay, but not providing a concrete breakdown of the forms in practice. However, Charles Fillmore’s *Linguistics as a Tool of Discourse Analysis* (1985), and Robert Fowler’s *Power* (1985), were a welcome exception. Though almost forty years old, they were both exhaustive in their treatment of communicative nuance, and very accessible. Both works are chapters within Teun Van Dijk’s multi-volume edited work *Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (1985a, 1985b)⁴. These works introduce ‘seven forms of linguistic knowledge’ (Fillmore 1985: 12-16), and a ‘linguistic checklist’ (Fowler, 1985: 68-74), respectively. Between them they present a straightforward list of different communicative nuances, and do so in plain language, meaning they functioned as a checklist that I could easily measure

⁴Fillmore (1985) appears in Volume 1 (Van Dijk, 1985a) and Fowler (1985) in Volume 4 (Van Dijk, 1985b).

each tweet against. I have provided abridged versions of those lists below, with invented examples relevant to this thesis, to make this process transparent to my readers.

- **Fillmore’s (1985) ‘Seven Forms of Linguistic Knowledge’.**

1. **Mutually Substitutable Units:** What other words have similar or coeval meanings to the one used? Examples include pointedly avoiding the term ‘Queer’ to avoid connotations of societal difference.
2. **Linguistic Domains:** From which lexical background is a unit sourced?. For instance, ‘Cuck’, ‘Red-Pill’ (Bringley Thompson, 2018), ‘Snowflake’ (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020: 568) and ‘Tradwife’ (Leidig, 2023) suggest the lexicon of the Alt-Right.
3. **Larger Text Unit:** Why use a given word as part of a larger phrase concerning the topic in question? Why, for example, do LCR spend so often writing about ‘Gender Ideology’ rather than just ‘Gender?’
4. **Companion Units:** What other units are combined with unit X to alter its interpretation? For example, ‘Gay’ is constructed as an identity. ‘Gay Inc’ is instead constructed as an insidious left-wing political monolith, at various points in the sample.
5. **Obligatory or Potential Co-Interpretation:** What ‘anaphoric’ or ‘cataphoric’ (earlier or later) units are intended to affect the interpretation of unit X, and what units are the reader meant to interpret as coeval to unit X? This is a common theme in the sample, where LCR build up negative slang describing a given subject, and then refer back to it in shorthand in later tweets.
6. **Text-External World:** What is the material reality of the subject denoted by the unit? For example, how unequal was society prior to *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015) when gay marriage could be made illegal by state law?
7. **Text-Internal World:** What is the reality within the text of the subject denoted by the unit? Continuing the previous example; how is the pre-*Obergefell* reality constructed in a Republican platform, which emphasises the ‘New Federalism’ (Katz, 2014) mentality of returning issues to state control?

- **Fowler’s (1985) ‘Linguistic Checklist’.**

1. **Lexical Process:** Is a particular phenomenon given a concise name amongst a social group? Further, is it over-lexicalised (does it possess an abundance of names) or under-lexicalised (does it possess none)⁵. For example, why do certain identities possess a variety of descriptors, and others few, if any? Halliday introduces these terms when discussing ‘antilanguages’; language forms developed in opposition to those of wider society, for a variety of reasons (Halliday, [1978] 1993: 164-182).
2. **Transitivity:** How are the processes and participants in a text’s clauses constructed to modify its interpretation? Do the clauses emphasise *action*, *mental processes* and/or *relation*? (Halliday, 1976a: 159-173). To invent three examples; *Trump is tweeting* (action), *can you understand Trump’s tweets?* (mental process), and *Fox News gives most of its airtime to Trump’s tweets* (relation).

⁵Fowler also notes that abstract (vs concrete) generalised (vs specific), foreign in origin (vs native), and complex (vs simple) lexical praxis is more associated with formality, learning and institutional power. (Fowler, 1985: 69).

3. **Syntax:** How does sentence structure more generally affect the interpretation? Fowler gives the example of the sentence ‘Circumstances dictate the raising of taxes?’ Which tells one nothing about who is being dictated to, whose taxes are being raised and by how much, and gives pseudo-agency to undefined ‘circumstances.’ (ibid: 70-71).
4. **Deletion:** Have certain parts of communication been removed on purpose? This can include use of ellipses (Halliday and Hasan, 1976); by which they are removed from the explicit text, to leave the meaning to the readers interpretation, or to steer that interpretation a different way?⁶. Deletion can also occur via nominalization, giving a verb the properties of a noun, thus obscuring the agency of the speaker and obligations of the listener. Finally, deletion can be implemented via passivity; the use of passive language to remove agency from a sentence (Fowler and Kress, 1979).
5. **Sequencing:** Has the order of nouns in a passive sentence affected the interpretation? Often the noun closest to the start of the sentence is interpreted with greater emphasis, and may limit the agency given to a later noun. Sykes (1985: 86) gives the following example; Black youths stoned the police, white youths were also involved in the trouble, this restructures the sentence to shift blame and emphasis onto the roles of the Black participants⁷.
6. **Complexity:** Has the text been constructed in as complex a manner as possible, to convey supposed intelligence or authority?⁸ Likewise, has the text been constructed to be short, blunt, and perhaps politically incorrect, to appear as anti-elite, or anti-intellectual? Such deliberately anti-intellectual language might be a populist tool to make the speaker appear more as a ‘man of the people’ (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).
7. **Modality:** How have the devices in the text been altered relative to the propositions uttered? This relates to the speaker’s degree of certainty, as well as their relationship to the listener, and to the truth; examples include *may, shall, must, require, probably, certainly, permit, obligate* and *likelihood* (Halliday, 1976b:189-213). This came up time and again in this research, particularly when LCR would try to construct a particular Republican as definitively non-homophobic in spite of evidence to the contrary.
8. **Speech Acts:** Are the devices used only interpreted as legitimate or appropriate in certain contexts, and are those contexts present (Searle, 1969)?. For example, ending a letter with ‘yours faithfully’, ‘yours sincerely’ or ‘your loving husband’; has the appropriate act been selected, or has it ‘backfired’ (Fowler, 1985: 73), thus causing the listener to react negatively?
9. **Implicature:** Are there ‘unstated propositions “between the lines” of discourse?’ (Grice, 1975:43-50) (Fowler, 1985: 73). Has the writer omitted something from the explicit text, that the reader is meant to infer?

⁶An example might be ‘The Respect for Marriage Act passed the house thanks to bipartisan support’. The actual vote share is removed from the text, implicitly giving both parties equal credit.

⁷This is also an example of deletion by passivity; the white youths are simply ‘involved’ somehow.

⁸There have been controversial attempts in academia to directly equate complex linguistic ability with class, based on popular perceptions associating intelligence and education with linguistic complexity. Most famous of these was Basil Bernstein, who suggested that the middle class have an ability to theorise inventive language use, where the working class do not (Bernstein, [1971] 2003:46), Fowler claims that Bernstein’s study is ‘so loosely and tendentiously formulated that it provides no useful basis for further work’, but he did admit that ‘there is no doubt that complex syntax is a property of the discourse of knowledge and authority.’ (Fowler, 1985: 72).

10. **Turn Taking:** Are the speaker and listeners communicating in an established order? The presence of an established turn taking praxis can communicate authority, such as in teacher-student classroom conversation (Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975). This was rarely relevant to this study as Twitter is characterised less by back-and-forth conversation, and more by a series of unconnected public statements; though in the cases where LCR are replying to a specific account, it may be relevant to note whom they defer to, and whom they take a more assertive role against.
11. **Address, Naming and Personal Reference:** How does the speaker refer to the listener and to third parties? This often has direct implications for the power structures at play. An example would be calling Donald Trump ‘the greatest President of my life’, as one Tweet did, see Chapter 6.
12. **Phonology:** Social value may be attached to sounds as well as to text or images. An example would be the perceived implications of regional accents relative to economic class and education (Trudgill, 1974). In the case of this study, where the ‘texts’ are written and not spoken, phonology largely relates to imagery; including how LCR members present themselves in videos.

The inductive approach taken to this work, combined with the exhaustive lists provided by Fowler (1985) and Fillmore (1985), allowed me to pick up more ideological nuances in each tweet than a deductive approach would have. More deductive methods, like corpus analysis, whilst undeniably useful in studying populist far-right rhetoric (see, for example, Brown and Newth (2024)) are limited to *explicit* terminology; word-associations, prefixes, and suffixes. My approach is not so limited, and has a greater capacity to pick up *implied* meanings, such as ‘doublespeak’; the act of saying something ostensibly moderate, but with far-right undertones that a listening fascist would understand (see, for example, Sengul 2021), achieved through implicature, modality, deletion, and syntax (Fowler, 1985). This, again, reaffirms the need for hand-coding over other methods that use machine learning tools. Whilst AI can allow one to code much larger datasets, ultimately tools like scraping, or keyword searches, are limited by their nature to purely deductive work on explicit language; you have to know precisely what you are looking for, so that you can program a computer to search for it. By contrast, I found a great deal *without looking for it* by subjecting LCR’s language to the checklists above, and following up on their meanings.

3.5.2 CDA Demonstration

Having laid out our analytical tools, it is prudent to return to the three CDA schools in order to demonstrate them in context, and thus illustrate to readers the level of scrutiny that each tweet was given. In Figure 3.1, we see a screenshot of an article thumbnail from *OUTSpoken*, LCR’s alt-right news platform, launched in mid-2020 in support of Donald Trump’s re-election campaign. The article in question focuses on FINA’s ban against trans competition in 2022 (Lloyd, 2022a). The article itself was not part of any tweet in the sample (as the sample stopped in January 2021), but was analysed as part of the supporting work in Appendix D, where it is discussed more fully in the context of how LCR have continued their Homo-Authoritarian slide into the Biden era. For illustrative purposes here, I draw attention to the headline and subtitle, and demonstrate how each of the three CDA approaches that informed this thesis would tackle the text, which is an illustrative example of ‘trolling’. This is a common tactic of the alt-right (see Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir (2020) and Dickerson and Hodler (2021)), in which offensive language is deployed intentionally to provoke a reaction, and to gain enjoyment from having caused offence. In this case, the instance of trolling has a strong populist theme; it is designed to

offend *The Left*, who in LCR's broader Twitter communication, are a powerful, controlling, elite force (see Chapter 5) (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).



Figure 3.1: A screenshot of an *OUTspoken* thumbnail linking to an article about FINA's ban on trans women competing against cisgender women (Lloyd, 2022a).

The socio-cognitive approach deals with shared meanings between speaker and listener (Van Dijk, 2016). Of the three, it has the most straightforward job here, noting the intention of the text to offend, but also to affirm shared beliefs *by* causing offense. The words 'leftist tears' are based on the notion that left-aligned readers will cry over the outcome, but the jovial language suggests this eventuality is actually funny; thereby using transitivity and syntax to position trans issues adjacent to falsehood, and leftists to overreaction, in modality by implication (Fowler, 1985). The intention is to affirm to right-aligned readers that they have won a victory. Likewise the reference to 'staying in their lanes' and explicit reference to the 'centre' is designed to cast this as a politically moderate move against an overreaching trans community, paralleling broader attempts by far right actors to rhetorically position themselves in the centre, whilst retaining substantively far right politics (see Brown and Newth (2024) on the role of the term 'centre right' in 'post-fascism'). The socio-cognitive approach thus reveals that the communication in the text is based on the shared understandings between the speaker and the (presumably right-wing) reader, that the left is wrong, that offending them is good, that pro-trans policies are extreme, and that one is not a radical for opposing them, but is, in fact a moderate. Whereas, the left crying about it is proof of how out-of-touch they are.

The dialectical-relational approach looks at how this text relates to the broader context of macro-level power relations and institutional praxis (Fairclough, 1992, 2016). Firstly, it notes the punchy, informal style of writing, and points to the context of tabloid journalism as an influence, designed to sell itself by sensationalism; analysing the complexity (Fowler, 1985) to demonstrate that this is being portrayed as a non-intellectual, 'common-sense' argument. It then assesses this text in the context of Donald Trump's campaigning, which *OUTspoken* was designed to support. It casts the tweet as an attempt to echo the Presidents' strident transphobia so as to demonstrate alignment to it, thereby using modality to position LCR close to Trump, and both to the 'truth' (Fowler, 1985). It too draws attention to the deliberate use of the centre; suggesting to readers that the President's position on the matter is a winning strategy for the median voter, thereby implicitly legitimising it. It reproduces the rhetoric of electoral primacy as legitimate; In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) that which wins elections is good, with other democratic concerns secondary, or ignored. Dialectical-relational approaches thus reveal that the article intends to catch readers via sensationalism, and then to push pro-trans policies to the extreme fringe in the reader's mind.

The discourse-historical approach then relates these tweets to other discourses to demonstrate how it recontextualises events (Wodak and Reisigl, 2015) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016).

It is conscious of LCR’s status as both an LGBT+ activist organisation (a community that is mostly very liberal) *and* a Republican one, and how it frames issues to bridge that gap. It notes the *avoidance* of explicitly misgendering vocabulary (i.e, referring to trans women as ‘men’), whilst it nevertheless makes an anti-trans point; thereby underlexicalising transphobia in order to consign it to implicature (Fowler, 1985). It relates this back to LCR’s previous position as a pro-trans organisation, and highlights how the language here represents an effort to retain some semblance of inclusivity. LCR are not trying to frame themselves as anti-trans, but as *balancing* between the supposedly extreme position of the left/Democrats, and an explicitly transphobic one. DHA helps us to see how LCR, thus, make an implicitly transphobic point via doublespeak (Sengul 2021). A transphobic Republican would register this discourse as acceptable, whilst a face-value reading may be misinterpreted as moderate.

As stated before, this figure represents an effort at populist mobilisation against *The Left* (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) as well as a generally transphobic one. Had this figure been attached to a tweet in the sample, *Identity Politics* would have been straightforwardly coded as an IoE variable; signifying LCR’s attempts to mobilise their readers against progressive measures. By contrast, *LGBT+ Republicans* would have been coded as the corresponding IVP variable, as would *Women*⁹, as they are being subtly positioned against trans swimmers as, both, the ‘people’ who will lose opportunities to trans athletes (and can thus celebrate the ‘victory’ here), and the purveyors of the supposedly centrist LGBT+ position that rejects the ‘trans narrative’.

This demonstration represents the coding of a single figure; the initial stage of the analysis. After quantitative calculations of variable frequencies, which demonstrate the significance of particular variable relationships (such as the statistically significant relationship between the IVP variable *LGBT+ Republicans* and the IoE variable *Democratic Party*, a child-node sub-variable of *The Left*), the tweets that contain such juxtaposed variables are once again qualitatively re-examined, looking for running themes. Such themes are explained in the body of the text in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The same is true for variable relationships to *Presidency*; analysing if a qualitative change in rhetoric is observable later in the sample, once Trump is in office, or surrounding certain specific events, like the withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal?

The discursive analysis methods laid out by Fillmore (1985) and Fowler (1985), set in the context of the three schools of CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) (Wodak and Reisgl, 2015) (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016), are thereby deployed to assess both the content of the individual tweets, and running themes between them. The latter of which is how ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) was discovered in the thesis, when it became apparent that certain variables, or variable relationships, were warping back and forth in their portrayal by LCR.

3.6 Quantitative Analysis

Whilst the nature of this work was overwhelmingly qualitative, I did not want to risk accusations that I had cherry-picked certain bits of evidence to support my argument. To that end, a quantitative element was introduced, to measure the overall prevalence of each facet of studied rhetoric. Conspicuous increases in certain narratives, such as an increasing commitment to *Dismissal of Accountability*, and conspicuous decreases in others, such as a

⁹ *Women* were another IVP variable that appeared in the study but not in significant enough numbers to be included in the final thesis. They remain in the dataset for future use, if possible.

decreasing commitment to calling out *Right-Wing Homophobia*, would strongly supplement our conclusions about an ideological change.

The quantitative method was basic, but effective. A pair of simple bivariate crosstabs for each *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* variable, comparing them to the independent variables *Presidency* and *Random Samples*. The same was also done for each populist ‘juxtaposition’ (a tweet where IVP and IoE variables appear together, as though one is combatting the other, such as *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Right-Wing Homophobia*). A purely qualitative study would certainly have sufficed for this work, as isolated instances of a *Populist* or *Right-Wing Authoritarian* variable might still suggest that LCR have internalised it, but repeated use suggests this all the more strongly, and for that, quantitative measures are needed. To be clear to readers, there are times in this thesis when quantitative evidence has been sparse, but the qualitative evidence appears so overwhelming when considered in context, that the null hypothesis has been rejected anyway. But quantitative methods allow us to demonstrate which specific *Populist* and *Right-Wing Authoritarian* narratives are most common, and most normalised.

In order to prevent the supplementary quantitative analysis from crowding out the qualitative work in Chapters 5 and 6, most of the tables have been relegated to Appendix A. I have, however, elaborated on the process below for transparency’s sake.

As the *Right-Wing Authoritarian* variables appeared alone, they could be compared against *Presidency* and *Random Samples* directly. Each juxtaposition was given its own variable in SPSS, computed from combinations of an IVP and IoE variable, and recoded into a form with two possible answers; ‘Not Both Present’ (1) and ‘Both Present’ (2). For example, for the variable *Right-Wing Homophobia and LGBT+ Republicans*, ‘Both Present’ signifies that both *Right-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* were present in a given tweet, and ‘Not Both Present’ represents neither of them being present, or one in isolation. These newly computed ‘juxtapositions’ could then be compared against *Presidency* and *Random Samples* to show how specific narratives changed over time. I demonstrate this below, using the above example of *Right-Wing Homophobia and LGBT+ Republicans*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	171	1055	1226
		% within Presidency	89.1%	95.2%	94.3%
	Both Present	Count	21	53	74
		% within Presidency	10.9%	4.8%	5.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V		0.094**** (p=0.001)			
Pearson's R		-0.094**** (p=0.001)			

Figure 3.2: Crosstab of *Right Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Presidency*. This table is referred to in Chapter 5 and appears as Figure A.1 in Appendix A.

In Figure 3.2, 21 instances of *Right-Wing Homophobia and LGBT+ Republicans* are identified under the Obama *Presidency*, and Figure 3.3 demonstrates that 11 such instances were present in the Obama-Era *Random Sample*. By contrast, 53 instances appeared under the Trump *Presidency* with only 18 appearing across the five Trump-Era *Random Samples*; 2, 0, 7, 6 and 3 respectively. For the sake of robustness, the regression of the variables has been demonstrated with two measures of association, Pearson’s R, the most recognisable measure, and Cramer’s V, which is specifically designed for bivariate nominal variables. Chi-Square tests were used to measure the statistical significance of these results.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	89	98	100	93	94	97	571
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	15.6%	17.2%	17.5%	16.3%	16.5%	17.0%	100.0%
	Both Present	Count	11	2	0	7	6	3	29
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	37.9%	6.9%	0.0%	24.1%	20.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.169**** (p=0.004)						
Pearson's R			-0.048 (p=0.243)						

Figure 3.3: Crosstab of *Right-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Random Samples*. This table is referred to in Chapter 5 and appears as Figure A.2 in Appendix A.

The quantitative analysis looks for, firstly, a significant relationship between the DV (in this case *Right-Wing Homophobia and LGBT+ Republicans*) and *Presidency*, which in this particular case, is very strongly observed; a negative regression of $R=-0.094$, significant to over 99 percent confidence. To ensure that this is not just the result of a skewed sample, the *Random Samples* test is then introduced for robustness; a visible decrease in *Right-Wing Homophobia and LGBT+ Republicans* in a majority of the Trump-Era samples, compared to the Obama one, will be accepted as confirmation of the results. In this case, we clearly observe a substantial drop off; the Obama-Era *Random Sample* contains 11 Tweets that contained the juxtaposition in question, and no Trump-Era Sample got higher than 7. Even though the overall number of instances of the juxtaposition was higher under Trump (53 over 21), it represents a much lower percentage of the tweets in the *Trump Presidency* (10.9 percent vs 4.8 percent), and can thus be quantitatively observed to take a back seat in LCR's communication.

As discussed earlier, a colour-coding system was used to clearly differentiate the strength of each alternative hypothesis adopted by this body of work. A similar desire for transparency has guided my quantitative element. The regression and significance information in each table has been colour coded, so that the results can be easily observed by those inexperienced at interpreting quantitative tables: Green for statistical significance, Amber for practical significance, and Red for no significance.

In this same vein, and because the quantitative analysis is entirely supplemental to the qualitative work here, I adopted a standard of *practical significance*, defined as 80 percent confidence in results, upon which I am willing to accept quantitative data that backs up a qualitative conclusion. If a change in rhetorical tone could clearly be demonstrated via CDA, but I am only, for example, 86 percent sure that they actually talk about it more or less, I accept that evidence. Furthermore, the *Random Samples* test, by virtue of narrowing down the instances of each variable to very few cases most of the time, rarely produced results that reached any kind of significance, but as it was a robustness check only, a visible change in quantity across the *Random Samples* was accepted. It goes without saying that the very strongest conclusions in this thesis stem from the alignment of overwhelming qualitative evidence, *and* statistical significance (95 percent confidence or above) against both quantitative tests.

As with the 'Amber' and 'Green' hypotheses, all such instances of visible changes, and

practical significance being accepted, is very clearly signposted to readers. Intellectual honesty has guided every step of this process.

3.7 Summary of Research Process

For transparency's sake, I here include a shorthand breakdown of my approach to the research process, to make it clear where my qualitative and quantitative methods supplement each other.

1. Qualitatively examine every tweet in the sample using CDA in Nvivo. Code each tweet for the IVP, IoE, and RWA variables that this process reveals.
2. Transpose results into SPSS, and calculate quantitative frequencies for the number of tweets that contain given variables.
3. Crosstabulate IVP and IoE variables and record which ones significantly correlate to each other. Thereby establish which 'peoples' are juxtaposed against which 'enemies' (referred to hereafter as 'populist juxtapositions').
4. Qualitatively re-examine tweets containing RWA variables as well as populist juxtapositions, look for running themes in their discussion that illuminate ideological changes. For example, is transphobic rhetoric increasingly seen as acceptable?
5. Qualitatively re-visit certain variables when 'doublethink' has been made apparent. For example, is a certain event spun multiple, contradictory, ways in order to defend Trump from multiple angles of criticism?
6. Quantitatively examine these, and compare the frequency of RWA variables and populist juxtapositions to *Presidency* and *Random Samples*. Determine, thereby, which variables increase (or conspicuously decrease) over time.
7. Draw conclusions on whether the weight of evidence; either qualitatively demonstrable rhetorical change, and/or quantitatively significant frequency changes, is sufficient to reject the null hypothesis on the variable in question.
8. Depending on the number of individual null hypotheses rejected, determine whether to reject the overall null hypothesis for the research question.

3.8 Hypotheses and Comments on Conclusion

The collective sum of my research has been operationalised into the following hypotheses:

- **Chief Research Question:** Have LCR significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter in a manner that reflects *Homo-Authoritarianism*; defined as the trading of loyalty towards an authority figure (in this case Donald Trump), in exchange for mainstream status and acceptance?
- **Measures:** Homo-Authoritarianism may be observed as behaviours that engage in right-wing 'accountability sabotage' (Glasius, 2018). They may be legitimised and reinforced through narratives of populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) and 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]); in which LCR cast Trump as a defender of 'the people' against an elite enemy, and thereby justify his praxis, and in which LCR frequently jump between contradictory viewpoints to justify their support of him. All such features are done in a public sphere, where their loyalty may be clearly observed, such as social media. In this case, I measure it on Twitter/X.

- **Null Hypothesis:** LCR have not changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning any of these factors since Donald Trump came to power; either as a contextual, qualitative change, or in a significant quantitative increase.

The Null Hypothesis, outlined above, would signify that the onset of the Trump years did not materially change LCR’s rhetoric in any way; there were no visible signs of ideological shift towards *Homo-Authoritarianism*, with no populist or doublethink legitimisation of Trump and his agenda either. The Null Hypothesis could be rejected in favour of any of the following plausible alternative hypotheses, with sufficient evidence.

- **Hypothesis 1:** LCR have changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning all of these factors since Donald Trump came to power; either as contextual, qualitative changes, or in significant quantitative increases.
 - To be sure of this, we would expect to see a significant change in the prevalence of every Right-Wing Authoritarian variable over time.
 - We would also expect to see a significant rise in Populist narratives, legitimising support for Trump and his agenda (and thereby reinforcing LCR’s loyalty to him).
 - We would also expect to see several topics demonstrating evidence of ‘doublethink’, in which LCR engage in self-contradiction in order to continually re-align with Trump.
- **Hypothesis 2:** LCR have changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning all of these factors since Donald Trump came to power; either as contextual, qualitative changes, or in significant quantitative increases. However, this authoritarian turn is not, as of yet, total.
 - To accept this hypothesis, the same categories as Hypothesis 1 also apply, with the caveat that *not every* sub-variable of *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* is observed to increase, though RWA certainly increases overall.
- **Hypothesis 3:** LCR have not changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning Right-Wing Authoritarianism since Donald Trump came to power, but they do engage in increased populism, and/or doublethink; either as contextual, qualitative changes, or in significant quantitative increases.
 - This hypothesis would disprove this thesis’ assertions of *Homo-Authoritarianism*, and demonstrate LCR’s continued libertarian ethos. It would, however, be a chilling sign of the normalisation of far right rhetoric by LCR; even if they were not committing themselves to ideas that undermined liberal democracy (which Mudde defines as the definitional tenet of the populist radical right, as opposed to the ‘extreme right’ which is against Democracy altogether (Mudde, 2007)). Populism is effective as a legitimiser for far-right rhetoric, and ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) is an inherently authoritarian act, so increases in these would be worrying signs that might herald a future shift away from libertarianism, even if LCR were not engaging in election subversion *yet*.

Each chapter contains several smaller hypotheses about each individual variable relationship, which collectively add up to fulfilling the hypotheses above.

Finally, as noted previously, each hypothesis has been subject to two standards of acceptance. This has been operationalised as a colour-coding system with **Red**, **Amber** and

Green conclusions. **Red** conclusions signify a non-rejection of the above Null Hypothesis (or the variations on it pertaining to individual variable relationships over time), whilst **Amber** signifies a tentative rejection, albeit one that would require further research, and **Green** a fully confident one.

Ultimately this research did reject the Null Hypothesis in favour of Hypothesis 2. As is elaborated fully in Chapter 6, we ultimately found no evidence of *Calls to Violence*, and thus could not categorise LCR as having fully committed to authoritarianism as it is generally understood. There was, however, not only plenty of evidence for the other RWA variables, but also plenty of legitimising populist and doublethink narratives backing them up. This thesis demonstrates a profound ideological change towards *Homo-Authoritarianism* on LCR's part, justified by a compelling need to fight the 'woke' left-wing elite, and which engages in several bouts of self-contradiction in order to maintain ideological alignment to Trump. They may not be a violent organisation at this stage, and one hopes they never will be, but that only disqualifies them from the far right's worst excesses, not from membership in the authoritarian club.

Chapter 4

Doublethink

4.1 Introduction to Doublethink

George Orwell coined the term ‘doublethink’ in his famous novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949 [2000]). Within its pages, he imagined a dystopian future Britain, whose populace was controlled by an endless stream of propaganda. Doublethink was the official ideology of the fictional totalitarian state in the novel; in which all citizens are required to simultaneously believe contradictory statements about the state, so as to maintain their loyalty to it. An offshoot of cognitive dissonance, doublethink required its practitioners to jump between contrasting opinions, and back again, on command, rather than explore their contradictory nature, which would lead them to question the state. A representative example Orwell introduced was the simultaneous belief that the state’s power was legitimate because it was the guardian of democracy, *and* that the state’s authoritarianism was legitimate because democracy was impossible (ibid, 41) (Zuraikat and al-Nawasreh, 2021).

As elucidated in Chapter 2, doublethink is a rarely explored phenomenon in academic writings. It has proven of modest interest to psychologists, predominantly in the study of conspiratorial beliefs (Goertzel, 1994) (Swami et al, 2011) (Wood et al, 2012) (Lewandowsky et al, 2018) (Petrović and Žeželj, 2022, 2023) (van Prooijen et al, 2023). Likewise, it relates to the more researched phenomenon of ‘epistemologies of ignorance’, the ways that knowledge is actively suppressed for political purposes in society, chiefly to maintain systemic inequalities (Mills, 1997) (Alcoff, 2007). But rare is the study that explicitly explores the use of doublethink in Orwell’s original context; changing beliefs so as to maintain authoritarian loyalty. The closest that I could uncover was the study by Johnson (2022) on doublethink as a means of building ‘affective communities’ through lies; groups who agree to reproduce an untruth for a political purpose, benign or malign. It is this concept of ‘affective community’ that this thesis argues to be at the heart of LCR’s engagement in doublethink; LCR wish to join the community of Trumpists, who are uncritically loyal to the President, and do so by demonstrating their willingness to always paint him in a good light, regardless of their prior opinions, or objective reality.

The phenomenon of doublethink will appear repeatedly throughout this thesis; it helps to inform the analysis in Chapters 5 and 6. It was prudent then to make the first analytical chapter of this thesis a discussion of the concept. It was *not* a phenomenon that this thesis operationalised explicitly, indeed, it was not even noticed for what it was until well after the tweets had been coded, and the first draft was being written. Rather it is an emergent theme (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) that permeates multiple operationalised variables throughout the study. As doublethink was not measured explicitly, this Chapter’s work is purely qualitative, with no statistical element.

This chapter introduces three such *IoE* variables that were not explored again later, as they did not match up sufficiently to our populist *IVP* variables (see Chapter 5) or reflect the *RWA* ones (see Chapter 6). These variables, instead, point to a background doublethink mentality on LCR's part that indirectly helps them with *both* populist and authoritarian messaging. These are LCR's constructions of *Victimhood*, *The Closet*, and *Activist Judges*. The former variable does overlap in theme with the discussions of *Homophobia* in Chapter 5, so it is discussed only briefly here, so as to prevent repetition. However *The Closet* and *Activist Judges* are discussed much more actively, as they are standalone phenomena.

Most literature describes doublethink simply as holding contradictory opinions; but integral to Orwell's own conception of the idea was that these ideas are deployed differently at different times and *alternated between* by the holder. Orwell describes the act of forgetting one's old beliefs on command, and then remembering them again; a form of mental gymnastics rather than mere cognitive dissonance. In the novel, this is because the state was changeable, breaking alliances and going to war with recent partners, but required its citizens to treat any sudden changes as non-existent. The public would forget on command that Oceania had ever been at war with Eurasia when it becomes their ally against Eastasia (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), even though they had previously been incubated in propaganda to promote hate against Eurasia. This jumping between viewpoints on command is central to doublethink's authoritarian implications. It is not that the two beliefs are *simultaneously* held per se, it is that whichever version of the narrative is currently most convenient to the authority is accepted as true. The opposite view may become more convenient later, at which point it is instantly adopted. As readers will see over this chapter, this jumping between beliefs on command is much in evidence within LCR's social media.

4.2 Schrödinger's Victimhood is Alive and Dead.

As an LGBT+ activist group, Log Cabin are aware of the existence of discrimination levelled against the LGBT+ Community and mobilise themselves against it from a variety of sources (see Chapter 5). What is jarring, then, is that they spend so much of their rhetoric simultaneously trying to convince LGBT+ readers to *reject* the idea that their minority status, and experience of discrimination, makes them victimised. This is an idea that harkens back to the popular Bawer/Sullivan-esque rhetoric of the 1990s (Bawer, 1993 [1994]) (Sullivan, 1995 [1996]); these publications advocated that LGBT+ rights needed only limited victories to be achieved, these being equal marriage and an end to 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell', both of which have since been secured. LCR take this view to its logical conclusion; that American LGBT+ people *are* equal now, and, thus, claims to the contrary are false. 22 Tweets in the sample discussed *Victimhood* as a phenomenon, of which we discuss four herein. The first three have been selected as they are especially illustrative of LCR's dismissive attitude towards *Victimhood*, with the fourth demonstrating their ability to make a whiplash-inducing change of tone, when acknowledging the existence of LGBT+ victimisation helps them to make a partisan argument.

In Figure 4.1, we see LCR's Tweet about the Nikki Joly trial in 2019, in which a trans activist was accused of having burned down his own home, allegedly faking a hate crime in order to reinvigorate the LGBT+ rights movement in his home area. Particular attention should be paid to the use of the term 'hoax' and 'need for *some* to be perpetual victims' (emphasis added). A discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) take on this source would narrow in on the term 'perpetual', suggesting that claims to victimhood were once authentic, but are no longer so. A dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2016) suggests that this represents LCR attempting to minoritise the trans community



Figure 4.1: **Tweet 0742**, which links to a *Detroit News* article (Donnelly, n.d) about Nikky Joly, a transgender activist who was eventually charged with burning down his own house.

by subliminally emphasising their low numbers ('some'), and to rhetorically locate them away from LCR, and by implied extension, the rest of the (coded moderate) LGBT+ community. Likewise the combination of 'hoax' and 'perpetual victims' gives readers the impression that overblown and extreme cases of perceived prejudice is a regular occurrence for the trans community. Finally, a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) approach could also extrapolate from the deliberate use of the term 'hoax' and the foregrounding of Joly's ideological motives, to speak to conspiratorial mindsets; suggesting, implicitly, to those who might view left-wing ideologies as a maliciously controlling societal influence, that they are right to oppose and fear the trans community. Collectively, Figure 4.1 presents an open-and-shut case of LCR firmly denying the validity of LGBT+ victimhood, locating it as an illegitimate act of self-delusion perpetuated solely by obsessed leftists.

Figure 4.2 centres on a *Lone Conservative* article, authored by Brad Polumbo (2018), which attempts to argue that LGBT+ people are not the victims of oppression, by reference to economics and workplace experience. He particularly attacks the left for supposedly portraying Christians as bigoted, claims that a lack of workplace discrimination felt by poll recipients is evidence that victimisation cannot exist, and the average higher wages given to lesbians and gay men are further evidence of this. He rounds out by saying 'if that's oppression, sign me up.' A discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) take has little to tell us for this source, as its text refers solely to the present time, but we have fruitful data from other analyses. A socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) reading of this tweet highlights his selective emphasis on poll data about lesbians and gay men, suggesting, perhaps, that Polumbo/LCR believe that they are representative of the *whole* community, or the only ones that count. This may be a way to present an image of LGBT+ affluence to inexpert readers. Likewise, the emphasis on economics and the workplace may serve to invisibilise discrimination elsewhere. The emphasis on 90 percent of respondents not experiencing *workplace* discrimination, without further context, may prime readers to treat this as the *only* arena where discrimination can take place, especially considering

As it turns out, gay people hold a wide range of views on things like religion, politics, and even sex. According to the poll, more than half of LGBT Americans are Christian. The left frequently derides devout Christians as homophobic bigots — especially if they dare decline to bake a cake — but clearly, something about that logic doesn't add up. If Christianity was such a hateful ideology, it wouldn't have half the gay community on board.

The results of this poll also unravel another left-wing talking point, the idea that LGBT people are somehow an oppressed class in the U.S. today. Almost 90 percent of respondents said that they had *never* faced workplace discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. Obviously it's concerning that 10 percent of LGBT Americans are still being treated unfairly, but the 90 percent clearly contradicts the left's narrative of victimization.

If anything, LGBT people are *doing better than most straight people*. On average, lesbians make more money than straight women, and gay men now officially outearn straight men too. In both cases, gays and lesbians made about 10 percent more than their straight peers.

If that's oppression, sign me up!

Figure 4.2: An excerpt from a *Lone Conservative* article by Brad Polumbo (2018) linked in **Tweet 0555**. It blasts the left for creating an apparent false dichotomy between Christian faith and sexuality, and denies any claim of victimisation for the latter.

Polumbo's positive affirmation about being 'oppressed' at the end. Finally, a dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2016) focuses in particular on that last paragraph and the concluding comment; the intention of the tone is to portray the LGBT+ community as being socio-political *insiders*, so much so, in fact, that Polumbo (and by extension LCR, who are boosting his views) actively want *in* to a greater extent. This undermines claims to victimhood by aligning the LGBT+ community closer to the empowered portion of society.



Figure 4.3: A video compiled by *OUTSpoken* for LCR, linked in **Tweet 1130**. The tweet accuses the political left and mainstream LGBT+ organisations of trying to erase LGBT+ conservatism, and the video contains several testimonies by LGBT+ conservatives.

Figure 4.3 centers on a video of compiled testimonies by LCR members in the months leading up to the 2020 election. The tweet accuses the media, LGBT+ organisations, and the Democratic Party, of trying to systematically erase the existence of LGBT+ Republicans, or portray them as a self-flagellating minority. Amongst the testimonies are those claiming that LGBT+ people can be whoever they want to be, but the left isn't letting them.

Others claim that coming out as LGBT+ to their Christian families was much easier than coming out as pro-Trump to their LGBT+ friends. Some other arguments are much more on the nose, claiming that ‘political correctness is a cancer to the western world’, or that their existence ‘makes the libtards cry.’ The video was screencapped at the point in which one speaker, a pro-Trump drag actor, claimed that their community *wasn’t* the LGBT+ Community at all, but instead was ‘America’, with ‘LGBT’ pronounced in a sarcastic sotto voce. The main takeaways from this tweet come from a dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016). Firstly, the emphasis placed on American identity and patriotism (with the star-spangled-banner prominently displayed for emphasis) positions LCR as upstanding and loyal citizens, in a manner dripping in homonationalism (Puar, 2007, 2013). The idea is to rhetorically situate themselves inside the nation’s heartland (Taggart, 2004) (Wodak, 2021) by painting their sexuality in nationalist terms. Secondly, the media, Democrats, and LGBT+ organisations (HRC and GLAAD are named explicitly) are modally portrayed as liars. Thirdly, the LGBT+ community are, once again, positioned rhetorically close to success and inclusion, thereby deliberately undercutting the idea that the LGBT+ community are victimised. When combined with the previous point, victimisation is recontextualised as a lie, perpetuated by the left for partisan reasons. A socio-cognitive analysis (Van Dijk, 2016) zeroes in on the uses of provocative terms like comparing ‘political correctness’ to cancer, and using the term ‘libtard’ (a portmanteau of ‘liberal’ and ‘retard’). This is clearly an attempt to ape the communicative tactics of the alt-right, who use deliberately offensive rhetoric in order to provoke a response, and derive humour from doing so. By utilising such terminology, LCR present themselves as an ally to the alt-right, who are themselves deeply allied to Trump, and thus subliminally cultivate alt-right support for their cause (Bingley-Thompson, 2018) (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020) (Dickerson and Hodler, 2021). As the alt-right movement is typically hyper-masculinist and treats LGBT+ people as ‘substandard allies’ at best (Statham, 2019), this is likely LCR seeking to overcome this obstacle via cognitive recognition, particularly when combined with the explicit rejection of the ‘LGBT+ Community’ in favour of ‘America’. LCR are explicitly communicating that their right-wing nationalism is more important to them than their sexuality. Collectively Figure 4.3 represents not only a *denial* of *Victimhood*, but an alt-right attack on the very idea itself; a call for patriotic LGBT+ people to reject the control of the left, and to break with the community that reproduces their ideas.



Figure 4.4: **Tweet 0682**, which contains a link to a *Washington Examiner* article authored by the sender (not referenced, to protect their identity). The article makes the case that gay people should oppose abortion because when the biological determinant of sexuality is eventually discovered – homophobes will screen for it and abort gay babies, in the same way as sex-selective abortions are performed in other parts of the world, causing an in-vitro gay genocide.

Set in the context of a consistent denial of victimhood before *and after*, Figure 4.4’s entreaty for LGBT+ support for anti-abortion measures represents the sort of ideological handbrake turn that Orwell envisioned when he coined the term doublethink. The tweet in question celebrates the author ‘coming out as pro life’, and contains a link to a *Washington Examiner* op-ed they have authored, that makes the case as to why LGBT+

people should join them. Interestingly, the author's argument rests on the logic of LGBT+ people being an oppressed minority who need pro-life measures in order to be protected. LCR's previous (and future) denial of their own oppression is abandoned in the context of attacking abortion rights.

The article argues that access to abortion will eventually lead to sexuality-selective abortions, as scientific advancements will eventually discover the 'gay gene'; the supposed chemical setup of a particular brain that leads one to be born homosexual. Supposedly, the result of such advancements will be homophobic parents screening for the 'gay gene', and aborting homosexual fetuses, thus committing a quiet genocide upon the gay population. This argument, whilst certainly emotive and heart-wrenching at first glance, when presented as a concrete critique of abortion, rests on three extremely loose foundations.

1. The assumption that abortion cannot be legalised without legalising sex- and sexuality-specific abortions. Whilst sex-selective abortions are currently legal in the US, efforts have been made to ban them at the state level. LCR's argument assumes this to be an impossibility
2. The assumption that homosexuality is caused by a 'gay gene', something for which medical science is still searching, and may not exist, or, if so, may not exist in all places. A strong argument can be made that sexual behaviour is dictated as much by culture as by biology. Ergo it may be scientifically impossible to screen a foetus for sexuality.
3. Most importantly for this thesis, LCR are conveniently acknowledging the widespread existence of homophobia in the US, and constructing it on a scale large enough to cause a gay genocide, despite otherwise strenuously denying that such victimisation (or the potential for it) exists at all.

In order to make a partisan statement against abortion rights, something that stands to grant them political capital within the GOP by aping a longstanding party goal, LCR temporarily abandon their insistence that homophobia persists only on the fringes of society, and that victimhood is fake. Instead, they conjure the spectre of a vast and genocidal community of homophobes, who are only waiting for the (possibly pseudoscientific) 'gay gene' to be discovered, in order to wipe LGBT+ people out in the womb. Victimisation is suddenly a relevant, pervasive and oppressive force in American society again.

What should be very clear to readers is that LCR's views on *Victimhood* are entirely dependent on how they are choosing to align themselves to Republican talking points in a given context. When Log Cabin want to attack the left, they deny the existence of *Victimhood* and portray it as a bogus act of false-consciousness, perpetuated by the Democratic elite so as to control LGBT+ people. When they want to emphasise a rhetorical distancing dynamic (Wodak, 2021) between readers and elements of the LGBT+ community, they speak to 'perpetual victimhood' and consign the concept to the past. When they want to really hammer the point home, and curry favour with the alt-right, they permeate the narrative of victimisation as a lie by denouncing anyone who reproduces such rhetoric as a 'libtard', whose suffering is to be enjoyed.

But when it serves Log Cabin's purposes and demonstrates alignment with other GOP social policies, Log Cabin turn about-face and paint themselves as the potential victims of widespread discrimination; victims of a progressive abortion agenda that only conservative ideas can save them from. The goal is, once again, to demonstrate support for the Republican Party. LCR will construct their status as victims in whatever way best serves the conservative point they need to make on a given day.

4.3 The Closet: Cowardly and Necessary? Vulnerable and Watertight?

The Closet is a slang term referring to the outward appearance of heterosexuality, maintained by an LGBT+ person who has not yet gone public with their identity. Beliefs on the morality of *The Closet* have been varied throughout LGBT+ history. Whilst it is typically seen as a form of defence mechanism for LGBT+ people in hostile environments, being within it means that the homophobic beliefs of those surrounding the closeted individual are not being challenged, and every closeted LGBT+ person is invisibilised. This is a deeply fraught issue, since being ‘outed’, by oneself or others, may bring harm to the individual involved; yet remaining in it may contribute to ongoing harm around oneself. Many LGBT+ activists, including the conservative Bawer and Sullivan so regularly cited in this thesis, have made the case that closeted LGBT+ people should ‘come out’ *en masse*, to fully demonstrate to heterosexuals the size, and, thus, the political power, of their community (Bawer, 1993 [1994]) (Sullivan, 1995 [1996]). Some, like Michelangelo Signorile, made themselves household names in activism by ‘outing’ public figures to this end; usually closeted politicians or lawyers who enacted discriminatory praxis as a way of shielding their own identities (Robinson, 2005).

Closeting is discussed as a concept in three tweets in the sample, two of which were part of the same thread. They each take wildly different tones on the issue; presenting *The Closet* as a site of vulnerability, necessary defence, and abject cowardice, depending on the subject in question, and the point being made. The malleable status of *The Closet* further emphasises LCR’s commitment to doublethink. The first two, **Tweets 0244** and **0245**, were part of the same thread concerning the Trump administration’s removal of LGBT+ identifying questions from the 2020 census. The third, **Tweet 1150**, represents an attack on Andrew Gillum, who had been running for Governor of Florida, but abandoned his campaign amidst an indictment on issues ranging from wire fraud to corruption. Amidst one particular scandal, he was found with a male escort and a large amount of cocaine in his room, and Gillum came out as bisexual in response (Darcy, 2020) (Cole, 2020). In the former case, LCR actively defend the concept of closeting, in the latter, they attack it.

Tweets 0244 and **0245** are both very short, minimising the information that can be extracted, but contain meaningful nuances when subjected to dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016). Firstly, in **Tweet 0244**, emphasis is placed on ‘West Texas’, a means of geographically othering the region, in an already infamously red state, as being particularly hostile. The intention is to remind readers that the federal government has forgotten that some parts of America are not as accepting of homosexuals as others, and thus a blanket approach to census data will expose them. Likewise it subliminally positions the federal government as being ignorant and faraway from people’s real concerns; West Texas is half a continent away from Washington DC, after all. The tweet, thus, justifies Trump’s removal of the LGBT+ questions from the census, as a necessary defence against being ‘[required] to confess one’s sexual orientation’ by an uncaring and distant government; an act that it made out to be the forced, and only, outcome of this act. Analysing this tweet mutually reinforces our previous conclusions about LCR’s doublethink portrayal of *Victimhood*; they have acknowledged its existence here by making rural America appear hostile to them, because it serves the purpose of praising the Trump administration.

Turning to **Tweet 0245**, sent a single minute later, we see a slightly different story, in which closeted people will simply continue to lie about their sexuality. Dialectical-relational (ibid) discussion of the power relations portrayed in this tweet once again reveals that federal



Figure 4.5: **Tweets 0244** and **0245**, sent within a minute of each other by the same account in response to Trump's removal of the proposed sexual orientation questions from the 2020 Census. LGBT+ identifying questions in the census are first constructed as an act in federal outing that would unavoidably leave closeted gay kids exposed and at the mercy of their homophobic families, and then an exercise in pointlessness because LGBT+ people can just stay in the closet. These two positions are entirely contradictory, but both are conjured in rapid succession to defend Trump from multiple angles when criticised. Trump (and the GOP by implication) are juxtaposed against the idea of homophobia, by constructing their actions as protecting vulnerable closeted people.



Figure 4.6: **Tweet 1150**, containing a video testimony by LCR member Rob Smith, attacking Andrew Gillum. This is the only instance of *The Closet* being invoked as an enemy in the sample and is described in the body of this text.

government is positioned as an incompetent wielder of power, since it will try and collect census data in a way that cannot work. Thus Trump's actions are, once again, rendered good, since they are cutting out needless bureaucracy. *The Closet* is similarly discussed as a site of refuge from victimisation, particularly from the scourge of federal outing. Readers should be aware that, when compared anaphorically (Fillmore, 1985), the tweets construct *The Closet* in mutually exclusive ways. In **Tweet 0244** the Federal Government is the forced intruder into *The Closet*, whose actions will inevitably harm rural gay people, but in **Tweet 0245** they are beauracritic, incompetant, and do not realise that the closet can be simply hidden in. Federal outing via census is thus presented as a scourge, and an impossibility, both of which exonerate Trump as either the defender of the LGBT+

community or the bane of bureaucracy.

By contrast, **Tweet 1150**, sent three years later, contains a video testimony from LCR activist Rob Smith, who attacks Andrew Gillum for not having identified himself as bisexual much sooner. Smith further castigates those who have praised his bravery for doing so. A discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) reading of the tweet emphasises the idea that coming out *now* is meaningless, and that proper LGBT+ people should have come out much sooner. Meanwhile the dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) approach reveals a construction of *The Closet* as a negative space; a site of cowardice where LGBT+ people hide rather than proudly stand up for who they are, and wait until society is willing to pat them on the back.

The meaningful point of distinction between these two is that the earlier tweets were sent in the context of defending the actions of the Trump administration, and the latter in the context of attacking a prominent Democrat. *The Closet* becomes a site of refuge and cowardice at different times; being effectively forced out of the closet by a scandal is a source of shame and derision, but the mere *potential* for being forced to out oneself by a government census makes one a victim that must be protected. Likewise, it is both a site of easy refuge, and a structurally unsound shelter, at different times (even those separated by a timestamp of a single minute) in order to defend Trump's actions from being attacked from different angles. LCR's construction of being closeted is steeped in doublethink; a census cannot logically force you out of *The Closet*, *and* be pointless because you can hide in it, at the same time, nor can it be a necessary defence *and* an act of cowardice. However, when LCR are seeking to defend the actions of the Trump administration, it can be whatever they like, just as it can change when they desire to flip the tables on a Democrat. Liberal politicians are cowards if they don't come out, but a Republican President is a hero for preventing west-Texan gays from having to do so. In all cases, Log Cabin once again demonstrate their loyalty to the Trump administration at the expense of continuity or logic.

4.4 Activist Judges: *Bostock* Played Both Ways.

The final representative example of doublethink centres on LCR's view of so-called 'judicial activism'. For the uninitiated, 'judicial activism' is a controversial term that signifies a court attempting to change the law in order to fulfill a political agenda; something typically reserved for the legislature and executive. By contrast, in theory, the courts are supposed to be apolitical observers and adjudicators of the law; changing the status quo only when laws violate the constitution, or contradict each other. It is well beyond the scope of this thesis to argue about whether accusations of 'judicial activism' have merit; the Supreme Court has been argued to be a political institution in the past, whose members are appointed for political reasons (see any textbook on US politics; McKay (2017) is a good example). Instead, what matters to me is not whether accusations of impropriety are merited, but that LCR play the issue two different ways.

The issue revolves around the *Bostock v Clayton County, Georgia* (2020) case, in which a series of defendants¹ collectively argued that their employers had discriminated against them for their LGBT+ identities, violating Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. The explicit

¹The case was an amalgam of several cases that had been heard in other levels of federal court: *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia* (2018), *Zarda v Altitude Express Inc* (2018) and *Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Homes* (2018); these were combined into a single decision by SCOTUS since the precedent set by one would apply to all. The citations above all refer to their hearings in Circuit Courts; the Eleventh, Second and Sixth, respectively.

wording of Title VII protects workers from discrimination based on ‘race, color, religion, sex and national origin’ (U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d). It was argued that the definition of ‘sex’ implies protections for sexual orientation and trans identity; since, for example, firing a woman for having a wife, but not firing a man for having a wife, is technically treating sexes by unequal standards. The Trump administration filed *amicus curiae* briefs, supporting the defendants’ arguments that sexual orientation was *not* protected. Ultimately, however, the Supreme Court sided with the plaintiffs. SCOTUS protected LGBT+ employment rights, based on the logic described above, in a 6-3 decision authored by Neil Gorsuch:

‘An employer who fires an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions it would not have questioned in members of a different sex. Sex plays a necessary and undisguisable role in the decision, exactly what Title VII forbids.’ (*Bostock v Clayton County*, Georgia, 2020).

LCR’s attitude to this case morphed to fit the role played by Trump in the proceedings. Whilst the case was ongoing, LCR authored several tweets defending Trump’s decision to file the briefs; claiming that it was clearly obvious that Title VII did not protect sexual orientation, and that liberal critiques to the contrary were nonsensical. They were helped along in this by opinion pieces by Brad Polumbo in the *Washington Examiner* (2019b, 2019d), which they retweeted. This stance by LCR does not reflect their arguments made before, or since, on LGBT+ rights won in the Supreme Court.



Figure 4.7: **Tweet 0014**, sent on the day that the *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) ruling was decided.



Figure 4.8: **Tweet 0054** Commemorating the one-year anniversary of *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015).

One cannot accurately explain LCR’s attitude to *Activist Judges* in *Bostock* without first noting their approach to the *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015) case, which struck down state-level bans on equal marriage, and of which LCR were celebratory. Figure 4.8, which displays **Tweet 0054**, contains no hint of argument, implied or otherwise, that the ruling represented anything improper. A brief discourse-historical (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016) look at it emphasises it as a historical date to be commemorated; LCR are looking back at a

victorious year for the LGBT+ community. More interesting is **Tweet 0014**, contained in Figure 4.7, in which LCR center the role of Anthony Kennedy as the ‘most pro-gay SCOTUS Justice in the history of the United States’. Kennedy, the author of the *Obergefell* decision, had regularly defended LGBT+ rights on SCOTUS prior to this; authoring the *Romer v Evans* (1996), *Lawrence v Texas* (2003) and *United States v Windsor* (2013) decisions². A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading of that tweet zooms in on the words ‘Reagan appointee’, which unsubtly credits Kennedy’s accomplishments to the Republican who appointed him; thus making *Obergefell* a fundamentally GOP victory. This obscures the fact that all the other justices in the majority (Ruth Bader Ginsberg, Stephen Breyer, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor) were appointed by Democrats, and the dissenters (John Roberts, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas) by Republicans. The intention is to whitewash the role of the GOP in order to canvass support.

A pivot to discourse-historical (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016) analysis reminds readers that all the above cases occurred *after* Reagan had left office, and *Windsor* and *Obergefell* were after he had *died*. Furthermore, Reagan had a complicated legacy as regards LGBT+ politics, due to his mishandling of the AIDS pandemic³. As a result, this account of Kennedy’s role can be seen as a way to whitewash the image of Reagan posthumously. Readers should note that *Obergefell*’s loudest dissenter, Antonin Scalia, was a Reagan-appointee too, which this framing of the Reagan-Kennedy axis obscures; Reagan’s historical role in fighting LGBT+ rights via Scalia is recontextualised as inconsequential next to his role in advancing them via Kennedy (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016). Taken together, Figures 4.7 and 4.8 represent an LCR that have no issue with the idea of LGBT+ rights being won in the Supreme Court. Instead, they are happy to celebrate such cases as victories, and are invested in using them to whitewash the role of the GOP and its Presidents. During *Bostock*, LCR temporarily abandoned this position, so as to better defend Trump’s efforts to obstruct proceedings, only to turn about-face once again.

Tweets 0875-77 are where the *Bostock* case enters LCR’s rhetoric. Two of their accounts reposted Brad Polumbo’s (2019b) first article on the matter, stating their agreement with it. In it, Polumbo argues that it is inconceivable that the authors of the Civil Rights Act could have intended for it to extend to ‘transgenderism’, and that by the Left’s own argument that sex and gender are separate, the *Bostock* plaintiffs are making no sense. Polumbo/LCR argue that an entirely new law is needed to make their case (see Figure 4.9). Firstly, a socio-cognitive analysis (Van Dijk, 2016) focuses on the term ‘the Left’ as well as ‘transgender theory’ and ‘transgender ideology’. In doing so, the intention is to rhetorically separate the *Bostock* plaintiffs from the reader; they are not representing the LGBT+ community, but instead a politically bounded, and othered, wing that the reader is not meant to associate with. Furthermore, the notion of transgender identity is delegitimised to a ‘theory’ that the Left is trying to push; a theory implied to be, as yet, unproven and potentially untrue. The even more derogatory ‘transgender ideology’ further destabilises the legitimacy of the plaintiff’s identity, by rendering it into only a partisan belief. The goal is to other the plaintiffs as being illegitimate and/or politically extreme, and thus portray Trump’s opposition as acceptable. A discourse-historical reading (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016) focuses on the framing of the legislators’ intentions, thereby subtly recontextualising the judicial philosophy of originalism as the only correct and legitimate one; something that is, likely, also an attempt to socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) make

²He also joined Ruth Bader Ginsberg’s opinion for *Christian Legal Society v Martinez* (2010).

³Dr Everett Koop, Reagan’s Surgeon General between 1982-89 later attested that the unofficial line of the Reagan administration was to be silent on AIDS for political reasons; i.e that it would offend Republican voters to do anything about it (US National Library of Medicine, n.d).

For one thing, Title VII was passed in 1964. Are we really supposed to believe that lawmakers in the 1960s intended "sex" to encompass transgenderism? That strains credulity and reveals activist claims as a blatant attempt to twist the law in their favor.

Besides, the very basis of transgender theory originally pushed by the Left relies on the fact that they define "sex" and "gender" as two distinct, separate things. The theory says that sex (male and female) is tied to biology, whereas gender is a social-construct associated with pronouns, wardrobe, and the like — a social construct we're told can change and is subject to self-identification.

Whatever you think of this argument, it is undeniable that it declares sex and gender to be two different things. This is how the Left has convinced many to go along with transgender theory. If they'd had to convince Americans that people can truly change biological sexes, it would be a much harder sell.

On the very terms of transgender ideology, then, Title VII has nothing to do with gender. Yet liberals now want judges to declare sex and gender one and the same in activist interpretations of anti-discrimination law. They are trying to have it both ways. Their approach is intellectually dishonest and misguided.

If we want anti-discrimination law to ban discrimination based on gender identity, you need to pass a new law. It's improper judicial activism to attempt to re-write law in the courts as you *wish* it had been written and agreed to according to our democratic processes.

Figure 4.9: An excerpt from a *Washington Examiner* article by Brad Polumbo (2019b), which was linked in **Tweets 0875** and **0876**. It argues for a strictly textual interpretation of Title VII, accuses the left of being selective in its definitions of sex and gender and explicitly calls legal interpretation 'improper judicial activism'.



Figure 4.10: **Tweet 0877**, rhetorically locating proper and morally correct law-making with Congress, and accusing SCOTUS of ruling by decree.

the argument amenable to judicial conservatives. Finally, a dialectical-relational approach centers on 'the Left' as well as Polumbo's call for a new law. The intention is to portray the plaintiffs as part of an illegitimate political ideology, as previously stated, but also gently convey their grievances as legitimate; thereby shielding Polumbo (and LCR) from criticism. Looking at the context of the whole piece, the intention is to defend Trump's *amicus curiae* brief by presenting it as a moderate, and proper, interpretation of the law, and the plaintiffs as well-meant, albeit, too much in the service of 'transgender ideology' to be taken seriously.

Tweet 0877 is less subtle, claiming straightforwardly that to grant LGBT+ protections under the Civil Rights Act is an improper act of 'judicial fiat' (See Figure 4.10). Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates LCR's attempt to position LGBT+ rights enactment as properly the job of Congress and the President. This colours Trump's actions as legitimate; he is only reminding the Supreme Court of the exact wording of the law. Socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) analysis centers on the role of 'fiat', another word for 'coup', doubly emphasising that the *Bostock* case is illegitimate. Again, this communicates to judicial conservatives that LCR are amenable to their concerns and do not want to step on any toes in their pursuit of rights. Readers will not have missed the act of doublethink enacted here; by the same logic, *Obergefell* represented judicial fiat,

resting on an interpretation of the constitution's amendments, and *Roe v Wade*, rather than any law. Indeed several of *Obergefell*'s dissenters claimed it was such a 'fiat' (Obergefell v Hodges, 2015). But when the context shifts to defending Trump from accusations of homophobia, LCR borrow the arguments of homophobic judges, from court cases they had previously celebrated.



Figure 4.11: **Tweets 0924** and **0925**, both of which are from the same thread. They argue, by implication, that it is wrong to interpret law beyond the original intent of its creators, and that the left is selectively abusing the judicial process to make laws.

In **Tweets 0924** and **0925**, both part of the same thread, LCR reproduce very similar arguments, claiming that the plaintiffs' logic is deeply flawed (see Figure 4.11). **Tweet 0925** directly reproduces the arguments about improper judicial behaviour already discussed. But a discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) analysis of both tweets also reveals an interesting thread; LCR are essentially accusing liberal LGBT+ activists of doublethink, by claiming the need for LGBT+ activism in a fight already won. Thereby, they recontextualise the behaviour of the plaintiffs as actively ignorant of their own history, and thus socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) prime the reader to not take them seriously, and see LCR as much more moderate and acceptable.



Figure 4.12: **Tweet 0921**, containing another Brad Polumbo piece for the *Washington Examiner*, with much the same argument as that cited in Figure 3.46, with more emphasis placed on attacking the left (Polumbo, 2019d).

Rounding out LCR’s negative commentary on *Bostock* is **Tweet 0921**, containing the second Brad Polumbo *Washington Examiner* piece (Polumbo, 2019d). The article, essentially, reproduced the previous argument, but placed much greater emphasis on attacking the Left. It steadfastly denies any conflation of the terms ‘sex’⁴ and ‘sexual orientation’, explicitly defends Trump’s actions, and attacks the Left for misrepresenting the legal status of LGBT+ people, and for calling conservatives ‘bigots’ for ‘wanting to see the law enforced as it was written and passed’ (ibid). Once again, this represents a dialectical-relational, and socio-cognitive, priming of judicial originalism as the only valid form of legal behaviour (Fairclough, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016), and reproduces the arguments about illegitimate judicial fiat to defend Trump. The article paints a scary picture of the Left to the reader, who are seen as weaponising the legitimate grievances of the plaintiffs, in order to warp America’s constitutional order. Again, emphasis is placed on the fact that Polumbo, and LCR, believe that the victims *should* be protected, whilst reiterating that they *aren’t*, and are wrong to claim so. The goal is to legitimise Trump’s actions.

If it was true that Trump was not attempting to deprive LGBT+ people of their rights, there were certainly easier ways for him to go about it. If it was the opinion of his Justice Department that LGBT+ people had no Title VII protections, an executive order could have been drafted that ordered the department to behave as though there were; similar actions were taken by the Obama administration. More securely, if Trump believed that a lack of congressional laws meant that LGBT+ people had no workplace protections, he would have found bipartisan support for writing a bill to that effect. Therefore, by issuing an *amicus curiae* brief to the court denying the existence of Title VII protections for trans identity and sexual orientation, without any visible backup, Trump’s actions must be seen as an effort to influence the court to deprive them of those perceived rights, and to signal to employers around the country that they could continue to fire LGBT+ people. If this was not his intention, he had easy means to rectify it.

LCR’s possessive investment in defending Donald Trump from criticism prompted them to invent the demon of *Activist Judges*, with which they had never previously taken issue. And, indeed, after the *Bostock* ruling was handed down, they never did so again in the sample. Their previous celebrations of court victories, and the praise that they heaped on Kennedy, were forgotten in the name of defending their chosen leader from accusations of discrimination. Instead, they recontextualised his actions as simply a needed defence of the law as-written, and attacked liberal critics for saying otherwise. They invoked the spectre of a left-wing that has no respect for U.S law or institutions.

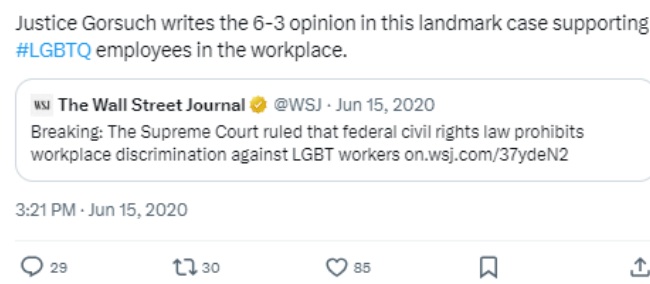


Figure 4.13: **Tweet 1075**, LCR commemorate the ending of *Bostock* by noting that Trump-appointee Gorsuch authored the decision. It links to a *Wall Street Journal* piece on the decision (Bravin and Kendall, 2020).

⁴Polumbo makes a point to describe sex as a ‘binary’ distinction between male and female, which may be coded language to delegitimise intersex and non-binary identities (Polumbo, 2019d).

Compounding the doublethink, LCR turned about-face once again when the case was finally ruled on six months later. In **Tweet 1075**, they retweeted the *Wall Street Journal's* piece on the ruling (Bravin and Kendall, 2020), calling it a 'landmark case' and crediting Neil Gorsuch with the victory. Firstly, a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) reading centers on the term 'landmark', signifying to readers that this is not just *any* victory, but one of great consequence. Meanwhile, a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading notes that the emphasis on Gorsuch's role as author directly parallels the way LCR used prime Anthony Kennedy, which, indirectly, credits the victory to Donald Trump. Much like Scalia in the *Obergefell* example, there is a conspicuous *lack* of commentary on fellow Trump-appointee Brett Kavanaugh, who dissented to the ruling.

What should be clear to readers is that LCR's commitment to defending the Trump administration from criticism is so entrenched that not only do they abandon, and then reproduce, their old arguments on command, depending on which way Trump's wind is blowing, but they invent entirely new villains for the drama. The spectre of *Activist Judges* and judicial fiat are conjured only so long as doing so ensures that Trump's actions can be safely recontextualised, and are swiftly abandoned again. LCR have long sought to credit the GOP for LGBT+ victories in the Supreme Court, but their defence of Trump demonstrates a willingness to continually recontextualise the behaviour of a Republican President as *always* legitimate, and *always* good. If they object, they are right to do so; if they appoint the judges that rule for the LGBT+ community, they are credited with the victory; if they appointed the judges who dissented, LCR just ignore it and carry on. The GOP always wins, even when, in this case, its *amicus curiae* brief loses.

4.5 Conclusions on Doublethink

When Orwell first penned the idea of 'doublethink', he envisioned a form of authoritarian self-hypnosis, in which the authoritarian follower takes it as gospel that the authority must always be right (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). Contradiction is ignored, and beliefs are abandoned, and taken back up again, depending on whatever best contextualises the authority's current behaviour. In doing so, the follower demonstrates their loyalty and joins what Johnson (2022) calls an 'affective community' of believers; joined by lies and changeability, and conferring legitimacy upon each other through doing so. Over this short chapter, Log Cabin have demonstrated a commitment to engaging in 'doublethink' that entirely fits this bill. Whatever the Trump administration, and GOP, do is rendered acceptable, necessary, and in no way discriminatory, in their eyes. By joining this 'affective community' of doublethinkers, Log Cabin help to legitimise their own oppression, by selectively forgetting that it exists.

In a broader sense, LCR hop back and forth on whether or not the LGBT+ community are victimised at all. When they want to delegitimise liberal/left LGBT+ activism they construct the notion of 'perpetual victims', make wild claims to LGBT+ affluence, recontextualise the issue around Christianity, and outright deny involvement in the LGBT+ community altogether in favour of patriotic nationalism. They continually reproduce the idea that the political left wants LGBT+ people to *feel* like victims so that the Democratic Party can continue to mine their vote, but that true victimhood is a thing of the past. But when LCR want to bolster other conservative talking points, like abortion rights, suddenly they are victims again; vulnerable to a quiet genocide just waiting to be committed. The US is both fully accepting of gay people, *and* intensely homophobic to the point of enabling the eradication of the LGBT+ community, depending on whatever best supplements Republican arguments.

The idea of closeting oneself is similarly recontextualised to fit the actions of Republicans and Democrats. When a Republican President removes LGBT+ identification from the national census, *The Closet* simultaneously becomes a site of intense vulnerability, that can be forcibly blown open by the inescapable outing represented by the census, *and* a watertight redoubt from which to safely hide from meaningless census questions that cannot confer useful information. Trump's actions were both a necessary effort to prevent harm coming to rural LGBT+ Americans (whose victimhood is suddenly remembered again), and a useful streamlining of entirely pointless bureaucracy. Contrasting sharply with this, when a Democrat comes out as bisexual amidst a scandal, *The Closet* becomes a site of abject cowardice; something that he should have been ashamed to ever have been in. Hiding one's sexuality is both an acceptable defence mechanism, and evidence of spinelessness, depending on whether the context is about a Republican or a Democrat.

Finally, the very act of securing LGBT+ legal rights, can be similarly changeable. When a Republican-appointed judge authors a landmark verdict to secure such rights, then the decision is celebrated. Indeed, long dead Republicans get credited indirectly for the victories of their appointees, and current Republicans get credited for the victories that they themselves opposed. But simultaneously, LCR give full support to that opposition at the time. When Trump filed the brief to influence the court to enable employers to fire LGBT+ people, LCR bent over backwards to recontextualise his actions as a necessary defence of the law as written, the *only* legitimate judicial philosophy in their minds. When Gorsuch handed down a ruling that couldn't have been described as originalist by any means, Log Cabin didn't care; the LGBT+ community had won, and it had been Trump's man that did it. That Kavanaugh had dissented, citing the exact same argument that Log Cabin was pushing (that LGBT+ rights were necessary, but that they were Congress' job) was ignored completely, what mattered was that Trump could be credited with the win.

This short chapter illustrates the theme of doublethink, which will continue to weave its way through the chapters that follow. Log Cabin go to great lengths to continually recontextualise all of their beliefs in a way that suits the agenda of Trump, and to some extent the wider GOP⁵. As discussed in Chapter 5, Log Cabin *did* at one point side against Trump, during the initial period following his announcement of the transgender military ban, but their eventual defence of it brought them back into character. Log Cabin simply cannot sustain the notion of Trump having done something discriminatory, if they even engage with the concept to begin with. Instead, they always recontextualise it as acceptable, even if it directly contradicts their prior arguments, whether they were five years, or one minute, earlier. By doing so, they rob themselves of the ability to recognise and critique discrimination when it does appear, because doing so would force them to criticise Trump, potentially costing them their acceptance into his inner circle, and the legitimacy that affords them. Mariles Glasius (2018) defined authoritarianism as the act of 'accountability sabotage'; engaging in doublethink, to ensure that you always come out on Trump's side, is not just sabotaging accountability, it is *abandoning* it.

⁵Except where Trump is in conflict with the Republican establishment, see Chapter 5, in which case they are only on the side of Trump

Chapter 5

Populism

5.1 Introduction to Populism

As outlined in Chapter 2, I favour a discursive view of Populism. It is understood as a method for the packaging of diverse beliefs into the form of a struggle between ‘the people’ and an ‘elite enemy’ (Laclau, 2005) (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2022). Furthermore, drawing from the ‘ideational’ tradition, populism is understood as an anti-pluralist method of constructing beliefs, juxtaposing ‘the people’ against a definitional and oppressive enemy that they cannot coexist with (Mudde, 2004) (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, 2017, 2018) (Kriesi, 2014) (Bonikowski et al, 2019) (Singh, 2021) (Webber, 2023) (Weinstock, 2023). Populism, as all the key literature agrees, can be attached to any ideological belief, and manifest in left-wing, right-wing, or centrist forms; and indeed, the US has a strong populist tradition, in all such contexts. In this case, we are concerned solely with the populist far right. For parsimony’s sake, when identifying a key aspect of LCR’s narratives as explicitly populist, I will reference both Cas Mudde’s *The Populist Zeitgeist* (2004), and Ernesto Laclau’s *On Populist Reason* (2005), as a shorthand for the wider ideational, and discourse schools, respectively.

Log Cabin focus on three mutually-reinforcing definitions of ‘the people’, each centred on their own community. These are *LGBT+ Republicans* (N=720), *The Republican Party* (N=585), and *The LGBT+ Community* (N=152) (see Figure 5.1 for N data). The first concerns their specific ideological *and* sexual group, the second refers to the GOP broadly, regardless of sexuality, and the third refers to LGBT+ people, regardless of affiliation. *Republican Party* has also been used as a variable to refer to US Conservatism more broadly, for the sake of parsimony. Homonationalist (Puar, 2007, 2013) narratives about America as a whole often run in the background of these narratives, as Log Cabin cast their struggle in patriotic terms.

Over the course of the study, the inductive coding of each tweet unveiled a wealth of specific enemies that LCR construct in turn; some in single tweets, some repeated across hundreds. As demonstrated in Figure 5.1, *LGBT+ Community* ($R=0.0152$, $p=0.001$) and *Republican Party* ($R=0.072$, $p=0.009$) were juxtaposed so often against one or more enemies, that when all *IoE* variables were aggregated into a single variable, it correlated significantly, and positively, though weakly, against them. However, *LGBT+ Republicans*, whose invocations made up more than half the sample, were discussed in non-populist terms often enough not to correlate ($R=-0.031$, $p=0.267$). This suggests that when discussing their wider party, or wider sexual grouping, LCR increasingly see such aspects of ‘the people’ in actively combative terms. They are more likely to discuss them and an *enemy* in the same breath; but their politically-bounded sexual community is seen less combatively. This is not a

	Identification of an Enemy				
	Present	Not Present	Total	Pearson's R	Cramer's V
LGBT+ Republicans	410	310	720	-0.031 (p=0.267)	0.031 (p=0.267)
LGBT+ Community	120	32	152	0.0152**** (p=0.001)	0.0152**** (p=0.001)
Republican Party	318	267	585	0.072**** (p=0.009)	0.072**** (p=0.009)

Figure 5.1: Crosstabs of the three principle *IVP* variables with *IoE*. This also contains quantity data for the three *IVP* variables.

		IVP - LGBT+ Republicans (Composite)	IVP - LGBT+ Community at Large	IVP - Republican Party and US Conservatives
IVP - LGBT+ Republicans	Pearson Correlation		-.001	.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.974	<.001
	N		1300	1300
IVP - LGBT+ Community at Large	Pearson Correlation	-.001		-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.974		.808
	N	1300		1300
IVP - Republican Party and US Conservatives	Pearson Correlation	.659**	-.007	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.808	
	N	1300	1300	

Figure 5.2: Correlations between the three *IVP* variables.

perfect measure, but it does suggest the close level with which LCR associate certain ‘peoples’ and ‘enemies’. It also further reinforces this thesis’ alignment with the discursive theory of populism, since LCR’s rhetoric is evidently not populist all of the time, and varies in severity (Laclau, 2005) (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2022).

Readers will have observed the similarities between the three *IVP* variables; namely that *LGBT+ Republicans* straddle the other two camps. But, interestingly, as demonstrated in Figure 5.2, whilst *LGBT+ Republicans* strongly correlated to *Republican Party*, meaning that both were very likely to appear together in any given tweet, there was no correlation at all between *LGBT+ Republicans* and *LGBT+ Community*, nor between *Republican Party* and *LGBT+ Community*. This suggests that LCR see themselves as being more closely aligned to their party than to their sexual community, at least insofar as, when they appeal to one, they are likely to touch on both. When they invoke the wider LGBT+ community, they are less likely to involve themselves in the narrative, suggesting a sense of standing apart. Similar themes appeared in Chapter 4, when LCR made a point to align themselves with ‘America’ rather than with the ‘LGBT Community.’ This is not a perfect measure, but interesting nonetheless, and, as we will see, it parallels much of the qualitative evidence borne out across this chapter.

This thesis lacks the space to deal properly with each of the multifarious *enemies* inductively uncovered. However, most *IoE* variables in the sample can be broadly grouped

together into two key themes: *Partisan Homophobia* and *The Left*. These were coded explicitly in a variety of forms; for example, *Partisan Homophobia* contains *Left-Wing-* and *Right-Wing Homophobia*. But there are also other variables that appear in a much smaller quantity that can be argued to be deeply related to these key topics, albeit by background implication; these include *Christian Conservatism* and *Violent Activism*, amongst others. As such, these were not coded as being part of *Homophobia* and *The Left* (hereafter referred to as the ‘principle two’ or ‘big two’) except in cases where references to them *explicitly appeared* alongside a more oblique reference to the ‘principle two’ in the same tweet. Readers should think of them as mutually-reinforcing points with such, rather than subsidiary parts of them.

What *has* been directly incorporated, however, is LCR’s use of Islamophobia (Ali and Whitham, 2021). This directly informs the coding of *The Left*, as LCR construct the Democratic Party as complicit in the targeting of LGBT+ people by Islamic extremists, or by states that uphold Sharia law. Islamophobia plays a secondary role to LCR’s populism here, since, ultimately, it is *The Left* (elite enemy) that LCR are trying to mobilise ‘the people’ against. LCR *are* complicit in broader Islamophobic rhetoric, but this is not used in a way that contributes to their *Homo-Authoritarian* defence of Trump. I have thus dedicated Appendix B to the generalised ‘liberal Islamophobia’ (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) that LCR practice, as it supplements my argument but is not directly relevant to it.

At first glance, homophobic and Islamic ‘enemies’ do not appear to be ‘populist’ per se, referring as they do to structural forms of discrimination, rather than popular opposition to the elite. As discussed in Chapter 2, much ink has been spent on how misusing ‘populism’ acts to enable the far right, rather than critique it (Glynos and Mondon, 2016) (De Cleen, Glynos and Mondon, 2018) (Mondon and Winter, 2019, 2020) (Brown and Mondon, 2021) (Mondon, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023). But LCR very much see these issues in populist terms. They are heavily invested in rhetorically constructing an American elite that is radically left-wing to a dangerous degree, and overtly favourable to Islam at the expense of both US interests, and the LGBT+ Community. They further identify established party elites as homophobic, and juxtapose Trump against them (though their strongest ire is reserved for *Democratic* homophobes). Log Cabin use ostensibly non-populist rhetoric to code a *very* populist argument, which serves to lionise Donald Trump as a champion of ‘the people’.

I turn first to *Partisan Homophobia*; that being anti-LGBT+ discrimination that LCR associate with the Republican (*Right-Wing Homophobia*), and Democratic (*Left-Wing Homophobia*), parties, respectively. I then turn to the wider coding of *The Left*, which includes the concept of *Identity Politics*, and LCR’s broader criticisms of the *Democratic Party* without reference to discrimination. As part of the discussion of *The Left*, I incorporate *Islam*, which LCR view as endemically homophobic, and upon which left-wing elites are ‘soft’. The chapter will conclude with an assessment of LCR’s overall view on Populism and how it mutually-reinforces with the conclusions of Chapters 4 and 6 on ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) and authoritarianism (Glasius, 2018).

5.2 Partisan Homophobia: It’s Fine When We Do It.

Homophobia entered the sampled tweets in one of five ways. These each stemmed from a different source and each had implicit and explicit changes in tone and framing to match. These were *Left-Wing Homophobia*, as well as *Right-Wing*, *Foreign*, *Islamic*, and *Generalised* Homophobia. Of the five, the former two are explicitly populist in themselves, and the rest inform the coding of variables at various points in the thesis.

As demonstrated below in Figure 5.3, *Right-Wing Homophobia* correlated to all three principle IVP variables. It did so significantly with *LGBT+ Republicans* ($R=0.161$, $p<0.001$), and *Republican Party* ($R=0.073$, $p=0.008$); and practically with *LGBT+ Community* ($R=0.037$, $p=0.186$). By contrast, *Left-Wing Homophobia* only correlated to *LGBT+ Republicans* ($R=0.063$, $p=0.023$) and *LGBT+ Community* ($R=0.088$, $p=0.001$). This suggests that LCR's communication is more readily geared towards discussing *Right-Wing Homophobia* as a whole, and that they view their own job as being the rooting out of Homophobia within the GOP's ranks. Interestingly though, they appear to believe that discriminatory beliefs on the Left are a more relevant threat for their sexual community broadly. This is consistent with the knowledge that LCR are a *Republican* organisation, who wish to clean their own house and attract LGBT+ voters to it.

		IoE Right-Wing Homophobia	IoE Left-Wing Homophobia
IVP LGBT+ Republicans	Pearson Correlation	.161****	.063***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.023
	N	1300	1300
IVP - LGBT+ Community at Large	Pearson Correlation	.037*	.088****
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.186	.001
	N	1300	1300
IVP - Republican Party and Conservatives	Pearson Correlation	.073***	-.008
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008	.763
	N	1300	1300

Figure 5.3: Correlations of the three principle IVP variables with *Right-Wing Homophobia* and *Left-Wing Homophobia*.

5.2.1 Right-Wing Homophobia

Concomitant with the findings of Chapter 4 on the pervasive 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) in LCR's writings, they construct discriminatory attitudes on the right as an enemy, and as perfectly acceptable, at different times. This variety of Homophobia is constructed in populist terms by virtue of its connection to the Republican Party, specifically what might be termed the 'old guard'; its platform committee, and adherents to its traditional ideology. As such it is an elite-sponsored form of discrimination that LCR seek to mobilise people against. The populist struggle against *Right-Wing Homophobia* interweaves with all three of the principle IVP variables (see Figure 5.3 as previously discussed), with subtle rhetorical differences between the three. LCR see *LGBT+ Republicans* as being the vanguard of a charge against the pervasive discriminators of the GOP, a charge commanded by Donald Trump. They construct the *Republican Party* as being engaged in an internal struggle for its own soul, and they seek to advertise the party to the wider *LGBT+ Community* by claiming that they are winning that struggle, and that LGBT+ people are welcome in the 'Big Tent'.

The key theme to *Right-Wing Homophobia* is endless re-qualification of what counts as it. It's not that LCR necessarily *deny* the existence of discrimination within the GOP,

but they increasingly qualify that Donald Trump *cannot* be party to it. They do this chiefly by centring *malice* as the key driving force behind their construction of *Right-Wing Homophobia*. In their view, a homophobe is someone who *hates* the LGBT+ community; who could not tolerate being in their presence, and who seeks to actively cause them harm. *Intentionality* is key here. The Homophobe in question must be motivated by a deliberate desire to *hurt* gay people. The fact that they endorse policies that disadvantage LGBT+ people is not qualification enough. To utilise a concept from related literature, this represents a way of recontextualising ‘liberal’ forms of discrimination out of existence, and morphing ‘illiberal’ discrimination into the only one that counts (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020).

Seen through the socio-cognitive lens of CDA (Van Dijk, 2016), the insistence on intentionality plays into wider libertarian attitudes about respecting each other’s viewpoint, and letting each person live according to their own beliefs; a key talking point of classical liberals and libertarians alike. Thus, the narrative may be seen as a way to demonstrate to GOP readers that LCR’s struggle for LGBT+ rights is one that will respect the liberty of others to peacefully disagree, thereby rendering it compatible with the GOP mainstream, and only antagonistic to the fringe. The socio-cognitive (ibid) undercurrent is also one that can attract wavering LGBT+ people to the right, by contextualising the GOP as more tolerant than they believed, since only a small fringe of the party actually ‘hate’ them.

This approach to discrimination is not new; similar themes of toleration towards quietly-expressed discrimination can be found in the likes of *A Place at the Table* (Bawer, 1993 [1994]), and *Virtually Normal* (Sullivan, 1995 [1996]). A distinction must be made here between the act of toleration, and *prescribing it for others*. Discrimination is subjectively felt, and, thus, to argue that one responds *incorrectly* to the discrimination that they receive, is short-sighted; such an argument will, invariably, miss crucial context. To invent an example; an LGBT+ person might brush off inadvertent discrimination by family, to avoid an argument, if they do not interpret such actions as intentional harm. But to, then, insist to *another* LGBT+ person that they follow the same example, and turn the other cheek, might end up exposing that other person to more hurt than they can tolerate, or insisting that they live a lie. One size *does not* fit all. Unfortunately, prescribing a tolerant response for everyone, irrespective of context, is insisted upon by LCR. Furthermore, the levels of acceptability that they give to different discriminatory views, and to the same views expressed by different people, serve a partisan, and authoritarian (Glasius, 2018), purpose.

Looking at LCR’s tweets through a dialectical-relational lens (Fairclough, 1992, 2016), we can see that this is an effort to create a distancing dynamic (Wodak, 2021) between the pervasive homophobes within the party, and the current leadership. It further centres LCR as being *close* to the halls of power, by priming their emphasis on Trump’s role. This analysis is helped by simultaneously looking through a discourse-historical (Wodak and Reisigl, 2015) (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) lens: LCR recontextualise illiberal homophobia, the loud, overt, and malicious kind, as being the *only* valid form of it. This implicitly legitimises differential outcomes that *don’t* stem from malice, or which can be conveniently disguised to avoid such accusations, as acceptable.

As was discussed in Chapter 1, we must give credit where it is due; Trump was a sea change for the GOP in terms of his acceptance of LGB¹ people. After the GOP had

¹The ‘T’ is omitted here intentionally, as Trump was very much a transphobe. This is discussed further herein.



Figure 5.4: An example of *LGBT+ Republicans* juxtaposed against *Right-Wing Homophobia*. The malice from the protesters is clearly evident in the placards they carry; in the foreground is one that has used ‘GAY’ as an acronym for ‘Got AIDS Yet?’. That Trump-aligned delegates counter-protested this rally is testament to the inclusive attitude held by a growing number of Republicans. LCR utilise the existence of these Republicans as part of a distancing dynamic (Wodak, 2021) that whitewashes Trump from any accusations of *Right-Wing Homophobia*.



Figure 5.5: **Tweet 0088**, concerning the 2016 RNC. It is part of a series of tweets praising the ‘affirmative mentions’ of the community by speakers at the event. Related tweets also mention the invitation of the Log Cabin Republicans (who were previously denied a stall), and the speech by openly gay PayPal founder, Peter Thiel, in which he claimed he was ‘proud to be gay, proud to be a Republican, but most of all [he was] proud to be an American’, which received a standing ovation. It juxtaposes this ‘Pro-LGBT’ stance against the aggressively homophobic party platform, which (amongst other things) called for the overturning of *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015). The dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) CDA approach reveals the overt populism in this particular Tweet, with the GOP platform committee constructed by implication as an aloof ‘other’. Their elite status is implied by them having written the party’s manifesto, but direct emphasis is then placed on locating them away from the party as a whole (whose more universal nature is implied in the ‘convention’, where both party bosses and grassroots members will gather). Fairclough (ibid) reminds us that modality relates not just to the difference between speaker and subject, but also between the narrative and truth; in this case, LCR’s rhetoric recontextualises a series of offhand remarks by various speakers as ‘affirmative mentions’. The text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of this tweet makes the remarks seem much more substantial than they were.

sent a long string of evangelically-inspired homophobes to the White House, he at least represented a step in the right direction. In Figure 5.4, a crowd of his delegates to the 2016 GOP convention are shown joining a counter-protest against homophobes, the same convention where he pledged to support the ‘LGBTQ’ community, making him the first ever Presidential nominee, of *either* party, to use the acronym in a convention speech. The 2016 convention begins to shape LCR’s conception of Trump going forward, and several tweets make a point to rhetorically isolate the GOP platform committee as homophobic bigots (see Figure 5.5), out of step with the wider party, and with Trump himself. This makes the populism woven into this conception of *Right-Wing Homophobia* apparent; the

platform committee, representing the ‘old guard’ of the GOP, who wrote a manifesto full of traditional Republican anti-gay talking points, are an insidious elite force oppressing the righteous people (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), who Trump will protect.

As mentioned at the start of the chapter, some of the smaller variables interweave with the overall narratives that LCR use about the ‘big two’ even though they weren’t coded for such. In this case, the variable *Christian Conservatism*, which correlated against *LGBT+ Republicans* and *Republican Party*, is worth mentioning. It overlaps with LCR’s construction of the GOP’s traditional elites as being oppressive, and of Trump leading the way to fixing the issue and protecting ‘the people’ (in this case, gay people). Though only appearing in a handful of tweets, and not quantitatively changing with the passage of time, unlike the *Homophobia* variables did, *Christian Conservatism* plays an important dual role as both the extreme example of *Right-Wing Homophobia*, that justifies LCR’s insistence on priming ‘malice’ and ‘hatred’; and a defensible ally against leftist critiques (more on that later). Readers are directed to Figures 5.5 and 5.6 for representative examples of how LCR use *Christian Conservatism* as a populist enemy, in support of their wider views on *Right-Wing Homophobia*.



Figure 5.6: **Tweet 0557**, which portrays the Texas chapter of LCR as winning a victory against pervasive theocratic homophobia. This is a very selective reading of the linked *Dallas News* article which notes that the effort was largely unsuccessful; only ‘softening’ a full condemnation of homosexuality as an ‘unacceptable lifestyle’, to a staunch and lengthy commitment to oppose equal marriage. Whilst technically not misrepresenting the article’s content, it is arguably putting far too positive a spin on a case of persistent and entrenched discrimination. The article notes that *Christian Conservatives* pressured the Texas GOP not to ‘embarrass’ the party by listening to gay people, and insisted that keeping an anti-gay position was all that separated the party from Democrats (McGaughy, 2018). This can be seen, through a dialectical-relational lens (Fairclough, 1992, 2016), as LCR isolating evangelical homophobia on the fringe as an out-of-touch extreme, one that does not understand modern conservatism.

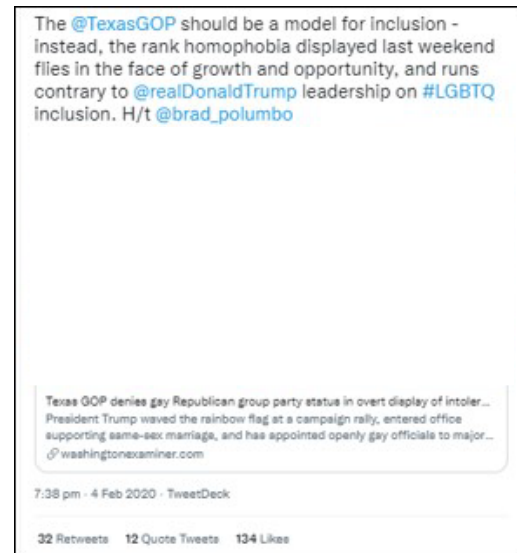


Figure 5.7: **Tweet 1016**, An effort to mobilise support against the theocratic decision-making in the Texas GOP, after LCR were barred from the state’s Republican convention. The *IoE* against *Christian Conservatism* is implied in the *Washington Examiner* article; it notes that critics of LCR describe their sexual practices as ‘immoral’ and ‘unnatural’. This parallels longstanding religious moralisation against homosexuality (Polumbo, 2020). Readers should note the effort to exonerate the wider party, in particular the ‘leadership’ of Donald Trump; the Texas GOP are cast as backwards, stubbornly refusing to follow Trump’s march of progress. This invisibilises continued discrimination by the party mainstream, by externalising it to a Texan fringe.

LCR’s construction of Trump as an anti-homophobe has its grounding in truth. However, he was also the President who eroded LGBT+ legal protections; whose administration

weighed into a judicial battle over them on the side of discriminators (*Bostock v Clayton County, Georgia*, 2020); and who banned trans people from military service, as part of a wider commitment by the GOP towards institutionalised transphobia. A sea change for the better doesn't automatically qualify Trump as being a *beneficial* President for the LGBT+ community, but that's exactly how LCR construct the matter. But by the time he is *in* office, the narrative begins to change to one of pushing *Right-Wing Homophobia* to the fringe by any means; endlessly qualifying Trump, and his inner circle, as being located away from it.

The lynchpins of this reconceptualisation are LCR's tweets about Mike Pence, and their rising acceptance of transphobia. The former is where 'hate' and 'malice' play a centre-stage role. Mike Pence was Trump's Vice President, and had a prior history of supporting differential outcomes for LGBT+ people as a Congressman, and later as Governor of Indiana. Pence's record, and those of others in Trump's inner circle, were worrisome for LCR, enough that they narrowly *denied* Donald Trump their endorsement for President in 2016 over his having 'surrounded himself with senior advisors with a record of opposing LGBT equality' (Moreau, 2016) (Young, 2024). That said, Pence is not, or at least is not currently, a vocal discriminator, insofar as his rhetoric does not call for the explicit mistreatment of LGBT+ people, but rather the free exercise of faith. His article, published in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2015, defending his signing of Indiana's Religious Freedom Reformation Act (Pence, 2015), is cited by LCR as evidence of his *lack* of malice, and, therefore, his lack of homophobia. Furthermore, his welcoming attitude to LGBT+ appointees of Trump, most famously Richard Grenell, and his meeting with Leo Varadkar, are similarly cited (see Figure 5.8). Pence represents a get-out clause for LCR, in that he, probably, has no ill-will towards LGBT+ people, but is firm in his belief in things like traditional marriage, and the exercise of faith in business transactions. As such, LCR can code Pence's behaviours, which can still create differential legal outcomes for LGBT+ people, in a veneer of liberal acceptability.

Chapter 4's work on 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) needs revisiting here: The free exercise of faith, and policies that enable Christians to practice it to discriminatory ends, is constructed by LCR as *bad* when the Christian Conservatives in question are *not* part of the Trump administration. But such attitudes are rendered perfectly acceptable when the holder is *within* Trump's West Wing. Granted, it is easier to see malice from the GOP platform committee, or the Texas Republican Party (see Figures 6.6 and 5.7) than from Pence, but the principle is the same. LCR recontextualise *Right-Wing Homophobia* in a specific manner, so as to make a populist argument about an elite and out of touch evangelical party wing, that Trump can then be credited with fighting. They simultaneously excuse any beliefs, or policies, from within the Trump camp on the same issues. Seen from a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) and discourse-historical (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) lens, LCR's juxtaposition of *Right-Wing Homophobia* against *LGBT+ Republicans*, the *Republican Party* and the *LGBT+ Community* is a populist, and subliminally authoritarian, narrative. One that sabotages efforts to hold the Trump administration accountable (Glasius, 2018) for their actions, by redefining *Right-Wing Homophobia* into something that can only exist in the old guard and extremists.

The growing acceptance of transphobia by LCR is even more poignant evidence of this. When Trump was elected, LCR identified themselves as a pro-trans organisation. They had prominent trans spokespersons who constructed the prevalent Republican concern with 'bathroom bills' as a manufactured panic (see Figure 5.9), and were especially praising of

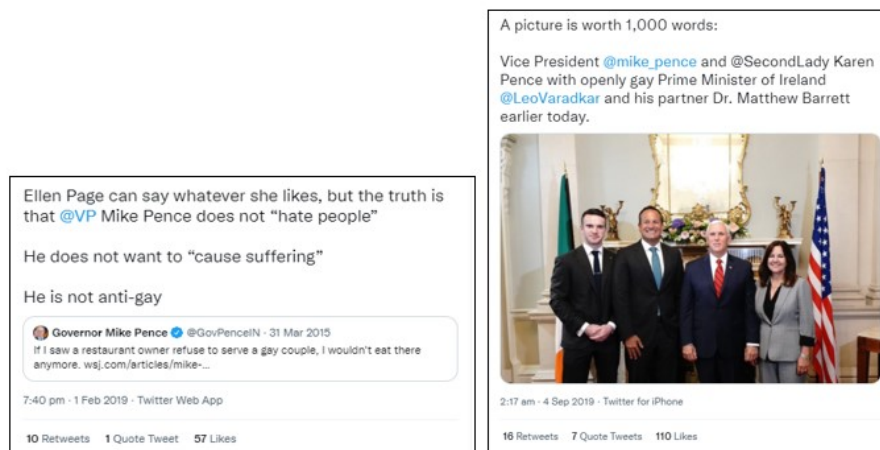


Figure 5.8: Two illustrative examples of LCR’s definition of *Right-Wing Homophobia*. These tweets juxtapose *Right-Wing Homophobia* against *LGBT+ Republicans* by defending Mike Pence on the grounds that he does not *hate* gay people, and, indeed, consciously opposes discrimination. Left, in **Tweet 0710**, the author has responded to Elliot Page’s criticisms of Pence (Page had not come out as trans at the time and was still publicly known by his birth name). The author has found Pence’s *Wall Street Journal* piece from 2015, in which he defends the Indiana RFRA on the grounds that it was about free exercise of faith, and not discrimination. In the same article, Pence claimed that he would refuse to patronise any establishment where gay people weren’t welcome (Pence, 2015). His actions are thusly defended because his intention wasn’t hateful. Right, in **Tweet 0884**, Pence is defended against implied accusations of Homophobia because he had dinner with the Taoiseach of Ireland, Leo Varadkar, and his husband. In this narrative, a true homophobe would have refused to treat Varadkar with dignity. The bar for homophobia is so low in this case that anything short of causing a diplomatic incident can hurdle it.

Donald Trump when he publically allowed Caitlyn Jenner to use the women’s restroom in Trump Tower (see Figure 5.10). This lasted until the middle of the Trump Presidency, as the fallout over the transgender military ban developed. Whilst LCR initially opposed the ban, by its implementation they had come to defend it, and to buy into the wider reactionary narrative of trans women supposedly being predators and a danger to women’s spaces (see Figure 5.11). When coding the sample, transphobic narratives were increasingly *not* coded as *Right-Wing Homophobia*, because the act of discriminating against them was not being made out to be a bad thing by LCR, but rather as a necessary defence for cis women. Another smaller variable that helps inform this coding was *Predatory Sexuality* (N=5) which was not limited to depictions of trans women, but did include them. Towards the end of the Trump Presidency, tweets that commented on the trans community would increasingly use othering language like ‘biological males’ to undermine trans women’s identities, and would imply, or outright state, that cis women were not safe in the same spaces as them.

A discourse-historical (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) approach to CDA is most useful here; LCR’s increasing *disassociation* of transphobia from *Right-Wing Homophobia* is an effort to seek acceptance within the GOP by a process of enforced assimilation. As Chapter 2 elucidates, a key tactic of LGBT+ Conservatives has always been to appear normative and inoffensive, to play into what society (and the political right) views as ‘normal’. As such, they recontextualise narratives about sexual predation that were once commonly attributed to the wider LGBT+ community, and recode them as acceptable for those parts of the community that have not demonstrated their assimilated nature. Once again, this serves an authoritarian purpose of ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018), since, if transphobia doesn’t count as discrimination, Trump’s efforts to make anti-trans policy can’t be legitimately criticised on those grounds.

If someone does assault another person in a restroom or locker room, he or she should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Better yet, the Texas Legislature and Abbott should pass a bill that increases penalties for such assaults. Our suggestion: If someone is convicted of any level of felony for sexually assaulting another person in a restroom or locker room, they should receive a guaranteed minimum sentence of, let's say, 15 years in prison. If a child is assaulted, make it 30 years. The guilty parties must be held accountable for their heinous actions. That should be lawmakers' focus, rather than vilifying transgender people like us who've done nothing wrong. Our punishment suggestions are arbitrary, sure. But so is the plan to push the bathroom legislation.

Figure 5.9: An excerpt from the *Houston Chronicle* article linked in **Tweet 0331** (Williams and Evans, 2017). This constructed *Predatory Sexuality* as a universal foe, but orientated itself around *Right-Wing Homophobia* foremost. It acknowledges the possibility that a predator might pretend to be trans in order to assault women in bathrooms, but argues that this is no reason to arbitrarily punish the trans community by denying them access to women's spaces. This article was written prior to LCR's move to embrace GOP trans panic. The authors, Jennifer Williams and Jordan Evans, were both transgender women active within the GOP. Evans would later leave LCR over their endorsement of Donald Trump ahead of the 2020 election, claiming that they had 'lost all credibility' by doing so (Evans, 2019).



Figure 5.10: **Tweet 0031**: It contains a video of Caitlyn Jenner, who had recently come out as a trans Republican, emerging from the female restroom in Trump Tower. Jenner, then, calls out Senator Ted Cruz for his public transphobic remarks, that had insinuated that trans women were sexual predators. Cruz was campaigning against Trump for the Republican Presidential nomination at the time, and criticised Trump's opposition to North Carolina's bathroom bill, claiming Trump had turned 'politically correct' and that overturning the bill was a threat to the safety of young girls (Livingstone, 2016).

In conclusion, LCR's populist narratives about *Right-Wing Homophobia* are an effort to mobilise LGBT+ people, Republicans, and those in both camps, into a crusade against the remains of a controlling, evangelical elite within the GOP; an elite who have not accepted Trump's willingness to move into the future on LGBT+ rights. Looking at the supplementary quantitative data, the relationship between a juxtaposed *Right-Wing Homophobia* with the principle *IVP* variables on one hand, and the *Presidency* variable on the other, decreases significantly as regards *LGBT+ Republicans* ($R=-0.094$, $p=0.001$) and *Republican Party* ($R=-0.098$, $p=0.001$) and decreases, albeit without significance, against *LGBT+ Community* ($R=0.020$, $p=0.480$), all supported by the *Random Samples* robustness test². This evidences the tonal change in how LCR view *Right-Wing Homophobia*. During the early period of the sample, LCR are up in arms about it, but as the Trump Presidency wears on, and they come to make excuses for it, the qualitative decrease in their attitude is

²See Figures A.1 to A.6 in Appendix A

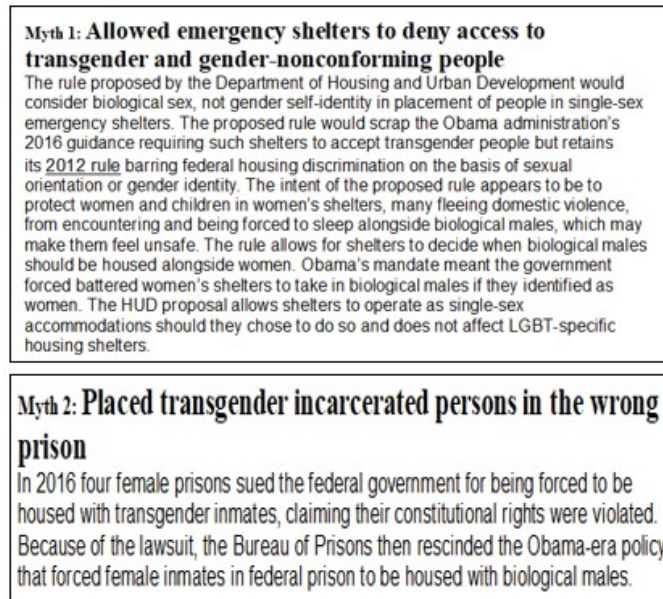


Figure 5.11: Excerpts from the *OUTSpoken* article cited in **Tweet 1175** and retweeted in **Tweet 1209** (OUTSpoken Editors, 2020a). Readers should, firstly, pick up on the idea of Trans people being forced into the wrong prison as being a 'myth'; implying subtly that they belong in their birth-assigned space, not the one corresponding to their gender. The whole article contains several descriptors of trans women as 'biological males', implicitly undermining their female identity and equating them to men, and thus to predators by implication. LCR also base their defence of these policies on their *not* discriminating against *sexuality*; further emphasising the distance LCR are trying to put between the LGB and T communities, in place of previous solidarity, so as to ensure their loyalty to Trump's agenda.

accompanied by a quantitative change in their willingness to talk about it. When they do, it is to defend Trump, and his inner circle, from accusations of it. The variables appear in the same tweet, but the implied context is that *Right-Wing Homophobia* still exists, but *somewhere else*.

By qualitatively constructing *Right-Wing Homophobia* as something that requires malice towards the target, whilst also disqualifying transphobia from counting, LCR create a populist narrative that serves to excuse Donald Trump from blame, and indeed, cast him as a hero of the people against the evangelical GOP elite (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

- LCR have significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning *Right-Wing Homophobia* in relation to the *IVP variables* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

5.2.2 Left-Wing Homophobia

Correlating to *LGBT+ Republicans* and *LGBT+ Community*, *Left-Wing Homophobia* is characterised by LCR as being a deeply endemic problem within the Democratic Party. This directly relates to the *raison d'être* of LCR as an organisation; to provide a home for LGBT+ people on the right. Working as the natural inverse to their rhetoric about *Right-Wing Homophobia*, and in a consistent enough manner that it requires far less space to explain, LCR construct the Democratic Party as an elite enemy that takes LGBT+ votes for granted. In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of LCR's Tweets, the Democratic Party *needs* minority votes in order to survive as an elite power, and, thus, it perpetuates a



Figure 5.12: **Tweet 0863**, containing a link to the *Washington Post* op-ed in which LCR formally endorsed Trump for re-election, over a year before the 2020 election took place. The appended article is a representative example of LCR’s overall attitude to *Right-Wing Homophobia* and their excuses for Trump’s participation in it. The endorsement quoted Ronald Reagan’s claim that someone who was ‘80 percent my friend is not 20 percent my enemy’. The article noted that LCR did not *wholly* agree with Trump, but that his leadership; his policies on AIDS; his combatting overseas Homophobia; and his not following the evangelical moralising that has typified Republican leadership in the past (Pat Buchanan is given as the example), had earned the group’s endorsement (Kabel and Homan, 2019). Again, *Right-Wing Homophobia* (in the form of evangelicals like Buchanan) is othered, and isolated from the mainstream party and its leaders. A socio-cognitive reading (Van Dijk, 2016) would highlight the term ‘under the law’ in particular. This is a way of subtly stating that the group does not seek to oppose *private* discrimination, communicating their inoffensiveness to ‘liberal’ discriminators in the GOP (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020). Several people in leadership roles in LCR left in the wake of this endorsement, including Jerri-Ann Henry, the group’s executive director, and Jordan Evans, the US’ only elected trans Republican (Aviles, 2019a) (Evans, 2019).

cycle of perceived victimhood, by making LGBT+ people so scared of the GOP that they will never exercise independent thought. Furthermore, in LCR’s construction of events, there is a strong corps of discriminatory beliefs in the Democratic Party which is excused by the media and public. The Democrats thus represent a powerful elite enemy with a robust supporter base in the media, and LGBT+ activist groups (so-called ‘Gay Inc’), who oppress LGBT+ people (particularly *LGBT+ Republicans*) through a campaign of victimisation (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). We will turn to wider critiques of *The Left* in their own section, but, for now, we look at the differences between LCR’s construction of *Left-Wing Homophobia*, where intentionality and malice are *assumed*, contra our previous discussions of *Right-Wing Homophobia*, where more excuses are made.

It is worth stating up front that no qualitative or quantitative change was observed concerning *Left-Wing Homophobia* as regards the *LGBT+ Community* or *LGBT+ Republicans*. The narratives about both remain consistent throughout; no tonal shifts, or marked changes in the frequency of the juxtaposition³. But whilst this means we will not be rejecting the Null Hypothesis on *Left-Wing Homophobia*, this only throws our conclusions on *Right-Wing Homophobia* into starker relief. Log Cabin have a consistent understanding of what homophobic discrimination *is*, they have just learned to be selectively deaf and blind about it for partisan purposes.

³See Figures A.7-A.10 in Appendix A

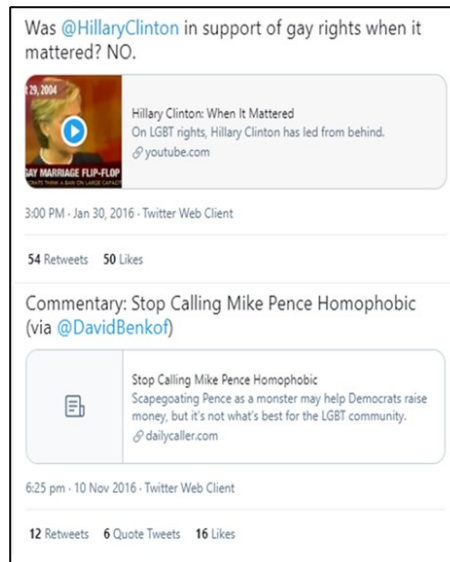


Figure 5.13: Both of the above tweets were sent in 2016, in January and November respectively, and demonstrate between them the double-standard with which LCR view *Right-Wing Homophobia* and *Left-Wing Homophobia*. The first, **Tweet 0021**, contains a link to a video on LCR's YouTube channel, which shows several clips of anti-gay marriage statements by Hillary Clinton in 2001-2004, which code for *Left-Wing Homophobia*. The explicit message of the tweet is that Clinton cannot be trusted *now* because she was homophobic *then*. Looking at this with a discourse-historical (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) lens, this rhetoric recontextualises her subsequent turn to the light as a politically safe exercise in lip service. This is evidenced by the phrase 'when it mattered', which constructs true allyship as involving risk (Log Cabin Republicans, 2016a). In itself, this is a perfectly defensible statement, which may be true of Clinton, and other converted Democratic notables, like Obama and Biden. However, the meaning is directly undercut by the second tweet. That one, **Tweet 0138**, sent just after the 2016 election, links to a *Daily Caller* article by David Benkof, arguing that Mike Pence deserves a second chance, and that his prior homophobic record is not reflective of his current views (Benkof, 2016). Again, *prima facie* a defensible statement that may be true. But comparing the anaphoric-cataphoric meanings (Fillmore, 1985), we see that LCR are willing to extend a forgiving hand to a supposedly converted Republican, whilst remaining critical of equivalent Democrats. *Right-Wing Homophobia* is forgivable, *Left-Wing Homophobia* isn't.

Homophobia was once a bipartisan issue in the US, with the Democratic Party very much complicit in it. Examples range from Truman's purge of LGBT+ staff during the so-called 'lavender scare' (D'Emilio, 1983 [1998]) (Faderman, 2015) to the abandonment of LGBT+ commitments by the Democrats in the 1980s (Proctor, 2022a). LCR are not incorrect to point out that the likes of Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, and Joe Biden, have not always been friends towards the LGBT+ community; with Biden, in particular, having once compared them to 'security risks' as a Senator in the 1970s, language that parallels the logic of McCarthyism and the lavender scare, if not its ferocity (see Figure 5.14). Biden also voted for the *Defence of Marriage Act* (H.R.3396 – 104th Congress) which Clinton, as First Lady, oversaw her husband Bill signing into law. Indeed, as recently as the 2008 Presidential election, both Obama and Biden claimed that they did not seek to 'redefine' marriage, though they had both come around by 2012 (Nagourney and Kaplan, 2020). There is also something to be said for the idea that coming out in support of the LGBT+ community in recent years is politically 'safe', if not a necessity, for Democrats, and that the strength of a politicians commitment towards the cause should be judged by whether or not they were on side much earlier; arguments to this end have been used by Bernie Sanders when campaigning against Biden for the 2020 Presidential nomination (ibid)⁴.

⁴Sanders, who is historically much more left-wing than Biden, Obama, or Clinton, voted against DOMA (H.R.3396 – 104th Congress).

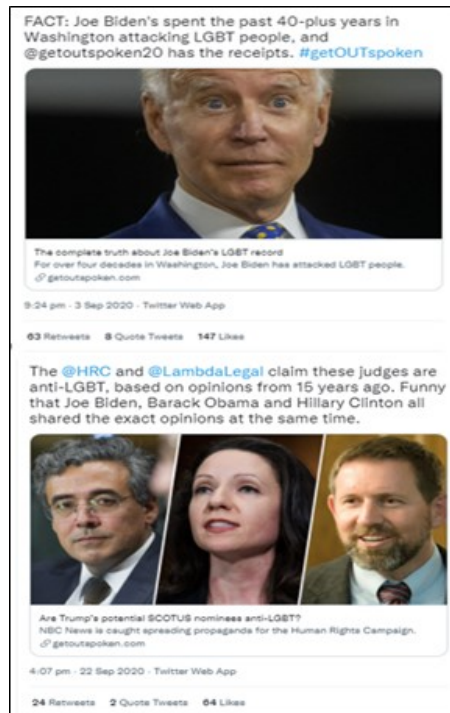


Figure 5.14: Continuing the theme from Figure 5.13 into the 2020 Election. These tweets, numbered **1139** and **1155**, were sent 19 days apart in September 2020, and both link to *OUTSpoken* articles. The first links to an article attacking Joe Biden for his homophobic record, including comments made in the 1970s where he stated he believed homosexuals were ‘security risks,’ and his support for DOMA in the 1990s (OUTSpoken Editors, 2020b). The second links to an article defending several of Trump’s potential SCOTUS nominees from criticisms of homophobia, in particular Lawrence Van Dyke, who had described gay marriage as a threat to families in 2004. Van Dyke’s words, since recanted, are defended on the grounds that they were ‘a mainstream position in 2004’ (OUTSpoken Editors, 2020c). Biden’s views are themselves reflective of mainstream positions at the time, but this logic is only used to excuse Van Dyke, and by extension, excuse Trump for considering him. By contrast, Biden remains vilified.

The point is that LCR are not *wrong* to identify past homophobia in prominent Democrats, and a very coherent argument *can* be made that one should mistrust the commitment of those who only supported LGBT+ rights when it was safe to do so. What readers will have gathered from this setup, in contrast to the previous section, is that LCR have it both ways. Figures 5.13 and 5.14 demonstrate that during both the 2016 and 2020 election seasons, LCR displayed a willingness to judge the prior homophobic records of Democratic and Republican politicians *very* differently, finding ways to recontextualise the history of the latter into a forgivable form, whilst holding the former accountable. Homophobia can be forgivable, or it can be a black mark forever, but it can’t be *both*, unless one has a political agenda in mind that necessitates it.

In the last section, it was noted that Mike Pence sits at the centre of LCR’s narratives about *Right-Wing Homophobia*. He was involved once again in Figure 5.13, where LCR expressed a favourable attitude to him, despite castigating Clinton’s LGBT+ record earlier in the year. Though she made several anti-equal marriage statements publically, Clinton’s *actions* against the LGBT+ community are limited to those she indirectly holds blame for during *her husband’s* Presidency; the aforementioned signing of DOMA, and the *Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell* policy. But after Bill’s Presidency ended, both Clinton *and* Pence entered Congress; they served simultaneously⁵ from 2001 to 2009, when Clinton became Obama’s Secretary of State. Their concomitant congressional careers provide key examples of how

⁵Clinton as a Senator from New York, Pence as a House Representative from Indiana’s 2nd, and later 6th, districts

Pence's record was objectively worse than Clinton's: for example, he co-sponsored the 2004, and 2006, *Federal Marriage Amendments*, whilst Clinton *voted against* both bills when they came before the Senate (H.J.Res.88 – 109th Congress) (H.J.Res.106 – 108th Congress)(S.J.Res.40 – 108th Congress) (S.J.Res 1 – 109th Congress). Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Pence was part of the reason LCR refused to endorse Trump in 2016 (Moreau, 2016). Yet, in the wake of the election, LCR portrayed Pence's *actions* as ultimately forgivable, after treating Clinton's *words* as an immortal stain on her record.

Figure 5.14 demonstrates that LCR were still having it both ways in 2020. The notion of having once held homophobic views is recontextualised in **Tweet 1155** as acceptable, since such viewpoints (socially and legally speaking) were widely held at the time (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). But in **Tweet 1139**, just under three weeks earlier, this contextualising was *not* applied to Joe Biden, whose early remarks and actions against the LGBT+ Community were likewise reflective of wider societal views on sexuality. Instead, his current trustworthiness is called into question for them. The difference was that in **Tweet 1155**, the issue was LCR trying to exonerate the prospective judges that then-President Trump sought to nominate to SCOTUS to succeed the late Ruth Bader-Ginsburg (Lawrence Van Dyke in particular). Once again, the discourse-historical (ibid) approach demonstrates that LCR are seeking a selective form of historical recontextualisation, conditioning readers to write off the pasts of Republicans, but to 'have the receipts' for Democrats.

Crucial to LCR's selective approach to partisan Homophobia is that the discussion of 'malice' is nowhere to be found in the qualification of *Left-Wing Homophobia*. There is no debate over what does, and doesn't, count. If a prominent liberal expresses a view that creates a differential outcome for LGBT+ people, they are castigated. Furthermore, whilst malice and anger are never explicitly discussed, angry treatment of LCR by liberals is commonplace, and LCR reconstruct this as evidence of pervasive discrimination on the left.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, Log Cabin have endured a genuinely concerning amount of abuse from liberal LGBT+ activists for their being Republicans. Accusations that they are 'self-hating' (Cimino, 2007), or 'traitors' to their sexuality (see Figure 5.15), are nothing new, and they have my profound sympathy for that, in spite of my deep criticisms of them. Once again though, how they are treated is portrayed as an endemic problem. A dialectical-relational approach to CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 1996) reveals LCR carefully using rhetoric to legitimise their views via modality; here there is a subtle shift in how they position this 'enemy' relative to the two different 'peoples'. They position *LGBT+ Republicans* as victims of an external speaker, and evoke sympathy, which can confer subtle legitimacy; thus warning the *LGBT+ Community* of the likelihood that leftists are willing to come after the whole community too. Furthermore, just as LCR's rhetoric around *Right-Wing Homophobia* can be seen as a way to socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) attract LGBT+ voters to the GOP, by subtly communicating a tolerance that they didn't expect; their recontextualisation of *Left-Wing Homophobia* not only aggrandises it as a threat, but presents the attitude of the average liberal as incompatible with *their own liberalism*. It is a way of positioning *Left-Wing Homophobia* as, not only endemic, but hypocritical and *more* hateful than its conservative counterpart.

Bringing in another smaller *IoE* variable that helps inform this analysis; LCR spend a substantial number of tweets denouncing various forms of *Violent Activism*, where they make little distinction between BLM and Unite the Right. When discussing *Antifa* (N=8) specifically, they extrapolate several tweets of commentary from the attack on Andy Ngo.

Ngo is a gay conservative journalist who was assaulted, and badly hurt, by Antifa activists in July 2019 (see Figure 5.16). Concomitant with *Left-Wing Homophobia*, LCR blame the Democratic elite (in the form of Governors and Mayors) for supposedly mobilising a group that they construct as being very willing to attack gay people who do not conform to the left. Thus, they make their criticisms of a grassroots activist movement, into an anti-elite populist statement (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Whilst not strictly coded together, *Antifa* serves as an implied proof of *Left-Wing Homophobia*'s endemic nature, in the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of the tweet sample.



Figure 5.15: **Tweet 0953**, partially censored to protect the identity and location of the author. Responding to a tweet that defends the left from accusations of being controlling, LCR reference a protest against one of their recent events, in which they were, apparently, attacked. A dialectical-relational reading of this tweet demonstrates LCR's desire to legitimise their actions via modality, by leveraging their status as victims. Accusations from anti-Republican LGBT+ activists that LCR are traitors and don't count as gay people, are sadly common, and code for *Left-Wing Homophobia* in the sample. I have been unable to corroborate whether molotov cocktails were actually involved.

As stated at the beginning of this section, there was no quantitative change in the frequency of the juxtapositions of *Left-Wing Homophobia* against either *LGBT+ Republicans* ($R=0.045$, $p=0.109$)⁶ or *LGBT+ Community* ($R=-0.031$, $p=0.246$); they were not significantly more, or less, likely to discuss this particular populist theme before, or after Trump entered the White House⁷. More relevantly however, they remain *tonally* consistent. LCR construct a consistent image of the left-wing as being homophobic, especially if the target is a Republican. The juxtaposition of *Left-Wing Homophobia* against the *LGBT+ Community* can be seen as a rhetorical warning, an effort to demonstrate to the wider sexual community that the left is not their friend, whilst *LGBT+ Republicans* are constructed as a target. Furthermore, LCR keep a consistent tone when discussing the prior homophobic beliefs of Democratic elites, particularly prominent politicians like Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden; that they were opposed to LGBT+ rights once, and should be held accountable for that forever.

- LCR have significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning *Left-Wing Homophobia* in relation to the *IVP variables* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Red - Null Hypothesis Not Rejected.**

⁶The *Presidency* test for *Left-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* did have a practically significant result, but it failed the *Random Samples* robustness test: See Figures A.7-A.8 in Appendix A.

⁷See Figures A.7-A.10 in Appendix A



Figure 5.16: **Tweet 1233**, containing a video testimony by Andy Ngo about his being attacked by *Antifa* members during the Portland riots. This video was part of a series of pro-Trump campaign videos created by LCR's media outlet *OUTSpoken* in the weeks leading up to the 2020 election. The source calls *Antifa* a 'worldwide terrorist organisation' and Ngo accuses them of 'hijacking racial justice.' A socio-cognitive reading of this tweet (Van Dijk, 2016) first picks up on the mention of the 'mainstream media', playing into recognisable 'fake news' tropes to score points with Trumpist readers. The same approach, focusses attention on the phrase 'worldwide terrorist organisation'; terrorism is an especially primed word in today's America, and in LGBT+ discourse (see Puar, 2007), evoking images of a fearful 'other' in readers' minds. Likewise, it is also intended to give readers a sense of the group's supposed international reach, and internal organisation. *Antifa* is recontextualised; not as a rhizomatic, grassroots, movement, but something as organised, motivated, and malicious, as ISIS; an organisation capable of being wielded by the Democratic elite (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) against *LGBT+ Republicans*, as well as ordinary people. A discourse-historical reading (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) may view this as LCR recontextualising this event as evidence of sympathy by Democrats for global terrorism. This link is more tenuous in this particular tweet, but makes sense in the broader context of LCR's beliefs that the Democrats are dangerously pro-Islamic.



Figure 5.17: **Tweet 0128**, juxtaposing *LGBT+ Republicans* against *Left-Wing Homophobia*. In this case, Dan Savage's ill-advised use of the word 'slap' is interpreted literally as a threat of physical violence. A discourse-historical reading of this tweet demonstrates LCR's effort to recontextualise Savage's historical activism against LGBT+ bullying, as a partisan endeavour that he only extends to liberals, whilst legitimising the violent reprisal of LGBT+ conservatives (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015)(Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

5.2.3 Conclusions on Partisan Homophobia

What can be clearly seen across this subsection, is that, whilst LCR kept a consistent tone and frequency in their discussions of *Left-Wing Homophobia*, they very much wavered



Figure 5.18: **Tweet 0667**, in which the media is accused of fermenting *Left-Wing Homophobia* against *LGBT+ Republicans*. A socio-cognitive reading (Van Dijk, 2016) of this tweet suggests a deliberate deployment of Trump-inspired anti-media tropes, evoking the idea of 'Fake News' by constructing the media as unaccountable, vicious partisans. This anti-media rhetoric is examined again (in more detail) in Chapter 6. A dialectical-relational analysis of this tweet (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) demonstrates LCR positioning themselves as victims, to legitimise their message to readers via sympathy. The first instance concerns a *Deadspin* article by Lauren Theisen entitled 'Conservative Gays Need to Shut the Fuck Up', which attacked Chad Felix Greene and other prominent Gay conservative writers for supporting Trump (Theisen, 2018). The second involved Mika Brezinski calling Mike Pompeo a 'wannabe dictator's butt-boy' on air. Brezinski publicly apologised a day after this tweet was sent (O'Neil, 2018).

on that of *Right-Wing Homophobia*. A discourse-historical reading (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) of LCR's discussion of *Left-Wing Homophobia* overall, reveals to readers that LCR retain a consistent concept of homophobia, based on differential outcomes for LGBT+ people. Despite the malice often thrown their way, it would be hard to equate the commentary of a 1970's Joe Biden, or early 2000's Hillary Clinton, with calls to actively beat up gay conservatives in the street. Rather, it can be seen that LCR do not insist on malice when discussing discriminatory attitudes from the left, though they are acutely aware that active hatred *can* be involved.

But as Donald Trump enters the picture in mid-2016, LCR's construction of *Right-Wing Homophobia* shifts. Finding an initial populist talking point in the elite GOP platform committee (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), against whom Trump could be favourably compared, LCR went on to acclaim the many 'affirmative mentions' (read: offhand remarks, sometimes *seconds* long in half-hour speeches) of their community and hailed the convention, and the nomination of Trump, as a watershed moment. After all, in some ways, it was; LCR could construct a useful version of *Right-Wing Homophobia* in their rhetoric as a fringe that was dying out, against whom Trump would prevail. So, firstly, whilst *Left-Wing Homophobia* was being constructed as endemic, *Right-Wing Homophobia* was dying.

Secondly, LCR began to change the *definition* of *Right-Wing Homophobia*, with Mike Pence as their first vehicle. Only in the context of whether or not a Republican is a homophobe does prevarication on 'hatred' enter the rhetoric. Dialectical-relational CDA (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) reveals this as a way of positioning said Republicans as friends, whilst discourse-historical CDA (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates this as a recontextualisation of 'illiberal' discrimination (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) as the only one that counts. Granted, illiberal anti-LGBT+ discrimination, like overt slurs and physical assault, is, thankfully, less common now; but such descriptions weren't reflective of Hillary Clinton either, yet LCR had no qualms about holding her accountable for her 'liberal' discrimination, that supported keeping marriage out of the community's reach.

Log Cabin’s willingness to play ‘hatred’ and ‘malice’ both ways serves a distinctly partisan purpose; it pushes accusations of discrimination away from the Trump White House. Set against a backdrop of inclusive, if rare, moves by the Trump administration to hire gay judges and ambassadors (LCR-member Richard Grenell most famously), his comments on the campaign trail, and his commitment to diplomatic efforts to decriminalise homosexuality overseas; LCR pinkwash the Trump White House as being a bastion of LGBT+ equality. By priming ‘hatred’ selectively, coupled with the number of tweets highlighting hateful *Left-Wing Homophobia* aimed at LCR, the group recontextualise discrimination into something that only exists in Trump’s opponents, be they the ‘old guard’ of the GOP, or the Left.

Thirdly, LCR increasingly come to view transphobia as acceptable; LCR tweets that identify transphobic language, eventually, no longer coded for *Right-Wing Homophobia*, since they were not discussing them in order to identify an enemy. Despite their initial opposition to measures such as the transgender military ban (Log Cabin Republicans, 2017), as the Trump Presidency wore on, they began to reproduce rhetoric from the administration, and wider GOP, about single-sex spaces, women’s sports, and described anti-trans policies as ‘myths’. A socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) approach suggests that this was a deliberate attempt to mimic GOP talking points to present a lockstep message with the party. Furthermore, a dialectical-relational approach (Fairclough, 2016) suggests an effort to present LCR as modally close to the reader, and to the idea of liberal fairness; LCR, at least during the Trump era, do not become *maliciously* transphobic⁸, but instead present a form of ‘liberal’ discrimination (Mondon and Winter, 2019) that ‘balances’ trans inclusion with the needs of cis women. This can be read as both a legitimisation of Trump, and a deliberate avoidance of holding him accountable (Glasius, 2018). Furthermore, a discourse-historical reading (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) suggests that LCR’s framing of transphobia is an implied, but unsubtle, dig at his opponents, who are implicitly made sexist by attacking him for his transphobia, which LCR have recontextualised as a defence of women.

In short, LCR have weaponised populist narratives about elite-sponsored *Homophobia* in such a way as to carefully excuse the Trump administration from blame, whilst not wavering in the standards they apply to discrimination more broadly. In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of the tweet sample, *The Left* discriminates against *LGBT+ Republicans* in a brutally visceral manner. Meanwhile, comments made by Democrats decades ago are regurgitated as evidence of their untrustworthiness today, whilst both are excused by the silent media elites who are in the left’s pocket. Meanwhile, worse actions by Republicans are recontextualised as acceptable; either as acts of religious liberty, or simply an old mentality that is no longer held. All three key schools of CDA, used collectively, suggest that LCR’s rhetoric seeks to prime the image of *hate* in their readers’ minds when they think of all of Trump’s opponents, left and right; whilst Trump himself, and his inner circle, are inclusive, welcoming and moderate (Fairclough, 1992, 2016) (Wodak and Reisgil, 2015) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016). This playing of discrimination both ways, once again invokes the theme of ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) discussed in Chapter 4, and further serves as a form of ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018) that mutually reinforces with all of our conclusions on authoritarianism in Chapter 6.

Bringing this entire argument to a head with a final example; we have some evidence to suggest that LCR’s recontextualisation of partisan *Homophobia* has become so ingrained, that it may even have run to a form of psychological self-deception. Either that, or it demonstrates a willingness to engage in barefaced lying, which, whilst not out of the

⁸This changes visibly during the Biden era, see Appendix D.

question, is unusual for a group that tends to recontextualise the truth rather than purport outright falsehoods. The example in question relates to statements Trump made early in his term about keeping Obama-era executive orders that protected LGBT+ staff in federal employment. He then rescinded those orders anyway a matter of weeks later, evidence of which is public record (Trump, 2017a). Yet an LCR member authored an article in *The Federalist* over two years later, claiming that Trump’s rescinding of the order was a ‘myth’ that the left was actively lying about (see Figure 5.19). To be clear, there *is* an abnormality in how he did this, as Trump did not rescind Obama’s EO 13672, which amended LBJ’s EO 11246 to include inclusive language towards sexual orientation (Obama, 2014a); but he *did* rescind EO 13673, signed by Obama ten days later, which had required federal contractors to comply with it (Obama, 2014b). In practice, this meant that those protections offered to federal contractors *were gone*. It is possible that this abnormality caused LCR to have been genuinely ignorant of this event, but, if so, it purports to a willful blindness on their part towards Trump; a very small amount of digging would have substantiated the criticisms of him having done so. Yet LCR confidently had an article authored that denied the existence of *Right-Wing Homophobia* on his part. Considering LCR’s stated commitment to ‘keeping the receipts’ for Joe Biden back as far as the 1970s (see Figure 5.14), that they so easily lost Trump’s receipts is very telling about LCR’s attitude to partisan homophobia.

A week after Trump’s inauguration, however, the White House released a [statement](#) reading, “President Donald J. Trump is determined to protect the rights of all Americans, including the LGBTQ community... The executive order signed in 2014, which protects employees from anti-LGBTQ workplace discrimination while working for federal contractors, will remain intact.”

Most of the media outlets that predicted doom and gloom never corrected the record. Unfortunately, many still believe the order protecting LGBTQ federal employees was rescinded.

Figure 5.19: A screncap from a *Federalist* article linked in **Tweet 0861**, authored by an LCR member. It has not been referenced, to protect the author’s identity. It purports to list the ‘myths’ spread by the media about Trump’s LGBT+ record. The very first of which claims that Trump’s rescinding of the Obama-era executive orders protecting LGBT+ federal employees is false; citing Trump’s pledge to keep the orders. It is discussed in the main body of the text.

5.3 The Left: Identity Politics as Enforced Victimhood

The Left was divided into four component sub-variables: The first was *Left-Wing Homophobia*, which constructs the Democratic Party as frequently complicit in discrimination, and has already been discussed. The second was *Left-Wing in General*, which represented broad-strokes attacks on liberal and leftist thinking, and is not meaningfully populist; it is not discussed further herein for that reason. The last two, by contrast, have much to teach us. These being *The Democratic Party* and *Identity Politics*; America’s liberal party itself, and the method it, supposedly, uses to control LGBT+ people, respectively.

Whilst distinct enough that they were coded as separate variables quantitatively, qualitatively speaking these latter two mutually-reinforce so much that they are best discussed together. This is due to the phenomenon in LCR’s rhetoric of ‘Gay Inc’; a partly mythologised, institutionalised, wealthy, media savvy, and attention hungry LGBT+ activist establishment. Mentions of ‘Gay Inc’ were coded as *Identity Politics*, since examples of railing against it were seen in the sample much earlier than the explicit use of the ‘Gay Inc’ term. Therefore, ‘Gay Inc’ became an anaphoric coding (Fillmore, 1985) of *Identity*

Politics, rather than it's own variable. That being said, LCR view it as having so many links to the Democratic Party that they stop being meaningfully separate elite enemies in LCR's imagining. As a result, whilst we will note the different quantities of each variable, they will be discussed as one.

In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of an LCR Tweet, 'Gay Inc' has become a conglomerate that no longer represents the needs of LGBT+ people. Instead, it is a power-maximising entity that seeks to retain its elite status. This much can be plainly seen from a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) analysis of the term itself; 'Inc' being short for 'Incorporated' and conjuring imagery of big business, and the wealth and power that comes with it. It also suggests a *singular* activist-corporate elite, rather than a multifaceted network of different organisations. This is key to LCR's construction of them; as a singular, unified, elite enemy of the people; particularly LGBT+ people, Republicans and those who fit both criteria, like LCR. When they do single out specific organisations, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) is the most common explicit target, with The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) also mentioned.

Their presence in the narrative makes LCR's ideological opposition to *The Left* very much an exercise in populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Aside from insisting on a form of enforced victimhood for LGBT+ people to maintain its power, it also turns a blind eye to *Left-Wing Homophobia* as long as the target is a conservative.

LCR's populist rhetoric identifies the *Democratic Party* as the fairweather friends of the LGBT+ community; lying to them, exploiting their votes, and insisting on forcing liberal politics upon them. Even the most cursory discourse-historical reading of the sample (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that LCR regularly reproduce the Sullivan/Bawer-esque argument that marriage and military service have already been secured, so victory for LGBT+ rights has been won (Bawer, 1993 [1994]) (Sullivan, 1995 [1996]). This recontextualises the need for LGBT+-specific politics as a thing of the past. LCR construct the Democrats insistence otherwise, as a lie. We saw some of this rhetoric played out in Chapter 4, as 'victimhood' discussions are a common site for LCR to engage in 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]); whereby they deny the existence of discrimination, until acknowledging it serves to legitimise Republican policies, after which they forget it again.

With the Democrats having put out the lie, their allies in 'Gay Inc' reproduce this narrative and feed it via *Identity Politics*; making LGBT+ people feel victimised by ensuring culture wars are regularly fought in the halls of US politics. In the process they vilify Republicans and conservative Christians as bigots; add more (coded false) letters to the LGBT+ acronym (leading LCR to sometimes denounce their wider community as the 'alphabet soup people'); and insist upon supposedly illegitimate intersectionality. By contrast, to LCR, the Republican Party is the true home of LGBT+ people, because they 'won't care' that one is gay, but the Democrats will care too much; the left will keep the community in a box labelled 'homosexual', and derive all their legitimate politics from the boundaries of that box.

LCR's rhetoric about *Identity Politics* is not always explicit, and usually comes via implication when discussing the idea of 'culture war'. This catch-all term is becoming ubiquitous in politics, and an argument can be made that 'cultural battles' are the key difference between mainstream parties in modern democracies, like the US and UK. Large parties have otherwise converged on most socioeconomic issues, to create a liberal/neoconservative hegemony. In the typical construction of 'culture war' in the US context, the Democrats are striving for liberation for the marginalised, whereas the Republicans fight for traditionalism and the status quo. But, in LCR's rhetoric, this good vs evil struggle is, unsurprisingly,

flipped the other way. The struggle for LGBT+ liberation becomes coded as wrong and backwards because it would ‘force’ a belief system upon the American people, particularly Christians. The entrenched traditionalists on the right are also constructed as complicit (I remind readers that *Right-Wing Homophobia* is something LCR are acutely aware of, even as they downplay it), but they are rarely the focus. Instead, an emphasis is placed on fighting the left by seeking common ground with homophobes. If readers are uncomfortably reminded about the weaponisation of ‘free speech’ rhetoric by the far right, that is intentional, the same undercurrent of meaning is present.



Figure 5.20: **Tweet 1160**, demonstrating the indirect crediting of LGBT+ SCOTUS victories to Ronald Reagan (via Anthony Kennedy) that we saw in Chapter 4. These are thus constructed as fundamentally *Republican* victories, and therefore the left has no right to object to the idea of Trump’s appointments. ‘Gay Inc’ is constructed as going into ‘total meltdown’, a framing that aggrandises the left’s anger, implying it to be illegitimate, and out of proportion. ‘Gay Inc readying their attacks’ also implicitly constructs them as an organised, and aggressive, campaign, language designed to socio-cognitively instill fear (Van Dijk, 2016).

		IoE Left-Wing Identity Politics	IoE Left-Wing in General	IoE Democratic Party
IVP - LGBT+ Republicans (Composite)	Pearson Correlation	.127**	.078**	-.106**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.005	<.001
	N	1300	1300	1300
IVP - LGBT+ Community at Large	Pearson Correlation	.059*	.033	.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.034	.232	.803
	N	1300	1300	1300
IVP - Republican Party and US Conservatives	Pearson Correlation	.049	-.034	-.055*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.080	.226	.046
	N	1300	1300	1300

Figure 5.21: Correlations of the three principle IVP variables with *Left-Wing in General*, *Left-Wing Identity Politics* and *Democratic Party*.

As demonstrated in Figure 5.21, *LGBT+ Republicans* and *Republican Party* correlated to both of the sub-variables of *The Left*. However the *LGBT+ Community* only correlated to *Identity Politics*. This is likely explainable by the close correlation between *LGBT+ Republicans* and *Republican Party* as variables (see Figure 5.2). It is interesting, however, that LCR choose to only juxtapose the *LGBT+ Community* against *Identity Politics*, rather than explicitly against the partisan forces that they blame for it. This suggests that LCR believe they will have more luck if they try to push LGBT+ people against the Democrats, and broader left, by *implication*, rather than explicitly.

As previously mentioned, there was not as substantive a qualitative difference between the themes of *The Left*, as there was for the varieties of *Partisan Homophobia*, so they are best covered here in a single section to avoid repetition. Examples from each of the correlations demonstrated in Figure 5.21 will be provided in inset figures and discussed. When looked at broadly, even though *Identity Politics* only directly correlated to two of the three IVP variables, its presence is implied throughout the whole narrative, and informs everything about it.

Whoop-dee-friggin'-doo, Seth Maney says. About his sexual orientation, that is.

A council member's sexual orientation is irrelevant to doing the job, the first-time candidate says, and Maney is taking clear aim in his campaign at a City Hall incumbent who he believes makes a big deal out of being gay – Democrat Chris Seelbach.

Figure 5.22: An excerpt from the *Cincinnati.com* article linked in **Tweet 0323**. It concerns the candidacy of Seth Maney, a gay man, for the Cincinnati city council. The title of the article quotes Maney as describing *Identity Politics* as a 'joke', and notes how he repeatedly downplays his identity, and even attacks his gay Democrat rivals for using their sexuality as a campaigning tool. The article also quotes Maney as claiming the local Republican Party believed his sexuality to have no political impact, and did not stop them endorsing him (Williams, n.d). A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading of this tweet directly juxtaposes the *LGBT+ Community* and *LGBT+ Republicans* against both the *Democratic Party* and *Identity Politics*, by colouring Maney's approach to sexuality as making him closer to his electorate, and thus able to engage in more legitimate politics. By contrast, Democrats put up walls and campaign on their specific minority identities, rather than trying to work for everyone. This is a subtly populist way of positioning the Democratic Party as further away from the average voter than the Republicans.

What I would say is this, what I see in Donald Trump is someone who is, at times in a clumsy fashion, but none the less in an admirable fashion trying to strike a balance between two polar opposites in politics today. Those fighting for LGBT equality and those fighting to maintain religious liberty. I think that we have to fight to strive for that balance because if we don't we're going to be stuck in eternal culture wars in the United States and I don't think most of Americans, let alone me, have an appetite for that.

Figure 5.23: A transcribed excerpt from an interview, whose video is appended to **Tweet 0278**. It juxtaposes the *LGBT+ Community* against *Identity Politics* by reframing Trump's actions as a needed balancing act, and not oppressive. Re-stating the arguments about 'proper' equality coming from balancing religious rights against the LGBT+ community, this tweet rhetorically constructs 'culture wars' as the natural opposite to that balance. The phrase 'strike a balance' socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) primes the reader to view this as a fair debate between two equal sides, not one where one side wields more institutionalised power (particularly on the right). A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading of this tweet positions 'LGBT equality' and 'religious liberty' as morally and politically equal. By extension, a discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) reading recontextualises the religious arguments against LGBT+ people as partially legitimate and worthy of respect. The idea of taking a single side in this debate, even though one of those sides is empowered, and the other is at the sharp end, is recontextualised as an illegitimate culture war. Furthermore, attention should be drawn to the term 'stuck'; a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading suggests that LCR see the arguments between both sides as something that holds US politics back, as though spending time on protecting LGBT+ people *isn't* something the state is meant to be doing. Finally, the term 'in a clumsy way' can also be seen as a socio-cognitive effort to prime the reader to forgive Trump's offensive political style. Trump is constructed as simply accident-prone; someone who means well, but doesn't always stick the landing, as opposed to him trying to hurt anyone. This can be seen as a form of mild accountability-sabotage (Glasius, 2018); trying to construct Trump's mistakes into something that the reader should, ultimately, be hopeful about, not criticise.

A common LCR tactic is to present *Identity Politics*, and the *Democratic Party*, as being too hysterical and partisan to be taken seriously, and thus the needed criticisms of Trump could not legitimately come from them. This is a careful balancing act, whereby LCR

retain legitimacy by being seen to not *uncritically* support Trump, but they still undermine criticism of him by attacking the critic themselves for their hysteria. An example of this can be seen in Figure 5.24, where, at the end of his article denouncing the HRC as partisan shills, Brad Polumbo makes a point to criticise the Trump administration's ban on trans military service. This critique is thrown in at the end, giving the impression of an afterthought, included to give the appearance of balance. Related to this is the regular denunciation of *Identity Politics* as a form of political backwardness, fighting culture wars to 'distract' the US state from achieving anything of actual relevance. Figure 5.25 demonstrates this as early as the 2016 RNC, in which LCR reproduced Peter Thiel's rhetoric about 'fake culture wars'. In this framing, LCR prime their readers to view LGBT+ politics as a largely irrelevant distraction, as opposed to their usual line about discrimination being false. This change of tone attempts to position LCR as moderates, who will compromise with homophobes in order to continue the business of state. By contrast, they construct the *Democratic Party's* approach as divisive and determined to obsess on these irrelevances.

We can double back to the work on 'doublethink' explored in Chapter 4 here, as this point about Democratic 'hysteria' represents LCR, once again, selectively recognising discrimination. They acknowledge that Trump's record is flawed, and that LGBT+ people face victimisation, but they do so only in service to a partisan cause. By framing the matter in this way, Log Cabin can make the *Democrats* into the problem: LGBT+ victimisation *does* exist, but the inability to solve it is the fault of the left for stepping on too many toes! Simultaneously, LCR reproduce problematic constructions of society as 'polarised', implying it to be a two-sided problem, because two views seem irreconcilable, despite the fact that only one side is trying to hurt anyone. This is a common media euphamisation in the context of far-right mainstreaming (for an analysis of euphamisation, see Brown and Mondon (2021) and Mondon (2022a)). By doing so, LCR play into the 'reverse victimhood' narratives common to Alt-Right actors (Boehme and Isom Scott, 2020), in this case moving from their own selective, 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) conception of sexual victimisation, to the supposed attacks on religion and culture by the left. This reproduces the idea that the values and institutions cherished by traditional conservatives are being as harmed as the LGBT+ community are. Thus, the proposed solution is 'balance' (Haynes, 2017) (Beiner, 2019). By shifting the blame for the issue onto the Democrats, and reproducing the misplaced victimhood of the alt-right, LCR acknowledge their discrimination in a way that allows them to cultivate political capital within the GOP. As always, they will forget it again when *that* is more practical.

The appointment of Richard Grenell, first as ambassador to Germany, and, later, as acting Director of National Intelligence, also provided a flashpoint for LCR's populist juxtaposition of 'the people' against their constructed 'Gay Inc'/Democratic elite enemy (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). LCR presented the left-wing establishment as being unwilling to accept the advancement of LGBT+ rights by anybody other than themselves. In Figure 5.32, Chuck Schumer is accused of enabling 'spiteful Senate Democrats who recoil at the idea of an openly gay ambassador in the service of President Donald Trump.' LCR present *The Democratic Party* as the users and abusers of the *LGBT+ Community*, giving when it benefits them, taking away when it does not. The historic nature of Grenell's appointment, especially his later tenure in the cabinet, were seized on by LCR repeatedly, as evidence that LGBT+ victimisation was not real (because it had become politically expedient to forget it again). This is particularly seen in Figure 5.26, where Grenell's appointment is taken as evidence that the Democrats *need* LGBT+ people to feel victimised to maintain their relevance; so they block a gay man's advancement, to maintain the ruse. This leans



Figure 5.24: **Tweet 0960**, which links to one of the many *Washington Examiner* articles penned by Brad Polumbo (2019f) that were appended to tweets in the sample. The article itself calls the HRC ‘left-wing and hyper partisan’, and attacks them for their ‘freakout’ over Trump’s support for faith-based adoption agencies that do not serve same-sex couples. It accuses the ‘Democratic activist class’ of ‘spreading lies’, to keep donation money coming in. The article ends by claiming that Trump’s ban on trans military service should be criticised, but that HRC’s inability to be a ‘sober and sane voice’ robs them of the requisite credibility to do so. (ibid). The analysis is open-and shut, positioning HRC (*Identity Politics*) and the *Democratic Party* close to each other to the point of being *extensions* of each other, with the former funnelling the *LGBT+ Community* to the latter in order to remain relevant and wealthy. Socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) analysis pays close attention to the abbreviation ‘TDS’, short for ‘Trump Derangement Syndrome’, a pejorative term that reframes media, and activist, criticism of Trump as hysterical, akin to a psychological condition. Likewise, it also notes the explicit use of ‘Gay Inc’, in conjunction with Polumbo’s invocation of a ‘Democrat Activist Class’, co-opting left-wing popular rhetoric about oppressive classes leeching off those below, to construct the image of a well-organised, established, powerful and exploitative cadre of leftist activists, juxtaposed against the wider *LGBT+ Community*.



Figure 5.25: **Tweet 0084**, quoting Peter Thiel’s speech to the 2016 RNC. Thiel, the founder of PayPal, was the first openly LGBT+ person to address the convention since 2000 (CNN, 2016). At this time, LCR were deeply critical of the GOP platform committee (see, for example, Figures 5.4 and 5.5 on *Right-Wing Homophobia*), and reproducing Thiel’s argument about ‘not agreeing with every plank’ can be seen through a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) lens as a gentle way of positioning *LGBT+ Republicans* away from the platform committee. Simultaneously, they are kept close to the Republican heartland (Taggart, 2004) by denouncing ‘fake culture wars’, if anything this is a way of positioning *LGBT+ Republicans* closer to the GOP’s mainstream than the platform was. A discourse-historical reading (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) focuses on the supposed ‘[distraction] from our economic decline’; again, assigning LGBT+ politics to the bin of things the state shouldn’t be worrying about. This, combined with the socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) denunciation of the topic, implied in the word ‘fake’, juxtaposes *LGBT+ Republicans* against *Identity Politics* by denouncing even the criticism of anti-LGBT+ discrimination inside the GOP (which LCR *acknowledge exists*) as illegitimate. The gay Republican abnegation of their own interests is, thus, made out as a patriotic devotion to the common good. This neatly parallels the ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) in Chapter 4, like so much else. Discrimination is wrong, but calling discrimination wrong is a distraction, and by performing these mental gymnastics, LCR are invited to the ‘affective community’ of the GOP mainstream (Johnson, 2022).

into alt-right rhetoric once again, paralleling the ‘red-pill’ narrative common to alt-right converts (Bringley-Thompson, 2018); that they have been awoken to the truth and broken

their conditioning. In several tweets, LCR make a point to refer to themselves as ‘free thinking’ (see Figure 5.31) to this end, equating their conservative beliefs to being the natural result of free rational thought, and thereby recontextualising leftism as a form of mind-control.

Interestingly, LCR often made the case that Grenell, and the other LGBT+ appointees to various offices under the Trump administration (such as Patrick Bumatay to the 9th circuit courts) were ‘qualified’, a phrase that serves a twofold purpose. Firstly, it is an attempt to undercut to the common accusation that the likes of Grenell were appointed predominantly for their loyalty to Trump. More relevantly, it is an effort to subtly juxtapose the *LGBT+ Community* against the *Democratic Party* and *Identity Politics* by implication; by emphasising that Grenell’s appointment is meritorious, LCR are making an unsubtle socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) point about affirmative action and inclusivity; that the Republicans will give a gay person what they fairly earn, but the Democrats will just give them special treatment.



Figure 5.26: **Tweet 1035**, which is itself a ‘quote tweet’ of **Tweet 1034**, hence the censorship to protect the identity of the sender. It juxtaposes *The Democratic Party* explicitly against the *LGBT+ Community*, by claiming that the former is undermining a victory for the latter, in the form of Richard Grenell’s addition to the cabinet. Firstly, and most obviously, the language is unsubtle to say the least. A socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) reading does not need to dig too hard into the phrase ‘nail in the coffin of identity politics and fake victimization’ to see the point LCR are trying to make; that such claims of discrimination are no longer relevant. The term ‘peddle’ backs this up, conjuring images of scam artists and flea markets. Readers should note how the *Democratic Party* are explicitly positioned as the source of this lie; a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis easily identifies the credit this gives to the Republicans, who are made out to be more truthful by implied comparison. Readers should note the emphasis on ‘eminently qualified’, a response to the pervasive criticism at the time that Grenell’s promotion was the result of his loyalty to Trump. This is, also, an attack on *Identity Politics*, by framing LGBT+ advancement as something that needs to be *earned*, not simply handed out, and positions the GOP in closer relation to the *LGBT+ Community* by handing them the opportunities that they earn (ibid). It, likewise, positions the Democrats as further away because they care more about partisan point scoring than actually doing anything beneficial for LGBT+ people; hence the emphasis on ‘denying [Trump] this win.’

The last thing to note about the way LCR frame *The Left* is it’s supposedly extreme nature. We have already explored LCR’s arguments that leftists fight for LGBT+ rights illegitimately; and earlier we noted the parallels to *Violent Activism*, which also informs this narrative. But this extends further than LGBT+ politics. LCR believe that the US left-wing is subscribed to a series of extreme positions, to the point of actually *harming* the *LGBT+ Community*. This conception of a supposedly extreme left-wing is not new; Trump continues to equate the Democratic Party with Marxism, in the context of the 2024 election cycle. In reality, most elected Democrats are neoliberals, with a few prominent socialists, and social democrats, like Bernie Sanders, and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, bucking the trend. This conception is used to mobilise *LGBT+ Community* members against



Figure 5.27: **Tweet 0137.** This juxtaposes the *LGBT+ Community* against *The Democratic Party* by implication; ‘love Trumps hate’ was a popular slogan in 2016, amongst those who feared a Trump-Pence administration would harm LGBT+ rights. A discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading of the tweet demonstrates LCR’s reframing of past events as *not* being pro-LGBT+, but strictly partisan activism, by those happy to break their own rules. This positions the Republican Party closer in relation (Fairclough, 2016) to the LGBT+ Community once again.

the Democratic elite only rarely in the sample, but two representative figures have been provided herein. The first, in Figure 5.28 feeds back into the discussions of *Violent Activism* discussed in the previous sections; Lori Lightfoot, the Mayor of Chicago and an open lesbian, is attacked by LCR for enabling antifa protests to remain active despite Covid-19 restrictions, whilst cutting down on LGBT+ social activities. LCR frame the activism as a string of ‘murders’, and reproduced Trump’s criticism of Democrat-controlled municipal governments being a danger to the public. LCR construct Lightfoot, as a proxy for her party in general, as being in league with dangerous radicals, whilst wielding the long arm of the law against the gay community. It is possible to read into this that LCR are accusing the Democrats of having left LGBT+ rights behind in favour of more radical causes to satisfy their activist elite, though this is more of a stretch.

The second figure, 5.29, attacks the Democrats and LGBT+ activist organisations for calling for gun control. Once again acknowledging the existence of LGBT+ victimisation for a political purpose, LCR make the case for second amendment rights, in order to enable LGBT+ people to shoot back when they are targeted. In this framing, gun owners within the LGBT+ Community are forcibly othered and kept unwelcome in LGBT+ spaces by policed *Identity Politics*, and its peddlers are, in the process, keeping gay people unsafe. Combined with the earlier points, it is possible to see an implied undercurrent within all of LCR’s rhetoric, that the Democratic Party *don’t want* gay people to have secure lives. Not only do they they lie about the existence of victimisation, but at times they desire it to take place; thereby they can legitimise themselves as the community’s protectors.



Figure 5.28: **Tweet 1106**, which is itself a quote-tweet of Richard Grenell. It comes amidst the controversy surrounding Lori Lightfoot, who, in her capacity as Chicago's mayor, shut down a gay beach party during the height of COVID-19, but allowed protests to remain active. Grenell, through farce, is trying to imply that she is a hypocrite, claiming the beach party should stay open as a 'peaceful bikini protest.' Log Cabin take this up, and refer to 'all the murders in Chicago' as evidence of Lightfoot's wrongly-ordered priorities. A dialectical-relational reading (Fairclough, 2016) of the tweet reveals an effort to position the Democratic establishment as incompetent, and willing to unfairly curtail the liberties of LGBT+ people, unless they are sufficiently left-wing (i.e, engaging in a protest). This was also the height of the BLM and Antifa protests that were ongoing at the time, Lightfoot is used as a proxy to attack the Democratic establishment for unduly favouring one cause to the point of harming minorities (in this case LGBT+ people). This tweet also serves a socio-cognitive purpose, by linking the protests to 'all the murders in her city', readers are primed to associate the activism with looting and violence, a rhetorical tactic that apes the Trump administration, and thus demonstrates LCR's alignment to it.



Figure 5.29: **Tweet 0819**, featuring a *Washington Post* article by William McLaughlin (2019), the gay social media manager for the *National Rifle Association*. The article references the Orlando massacre, and other homophobic hate crimes, and makes the case that if LGBT+ people were willing to arm themselves, such shootings wouldn't happen. This constructs firearms as purely *defensive* weapons, and the solution instead of the problem. Once again, the 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) addressed in Chapter 4 is seen; the existence of LGBT+ victimisation is acknowledged, this time even noting it's fatal consequences; it will be forgotten again once it is no longer convenient. More relevantly for this chapter's work, McLaughlin argues that his sexuality has been welcome in the NRA, but that he has been made unwelcome at LGBT+ events for being pro-gun. A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) reading of this piece suggests that LCR see a strictly left-wing orthodoxy as being permeated in the wider LGBT+ community. Though it does not mention *Identity Politics* explicitly, this view of a monolithic left community, brings the variable in by implication. Once again, this positions the political right as closer to the *LGBT+ Community*, constructed as more universally welcoming. A discourse-historical (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) reading also demonstrates a recontextualisation of the pervasive leftism in the US LGBT+ community as being actively harmful, contributing to LGBT+ victimisation by rejecting armed self defence.



Figure 5.30: **Tweet 1209**, which is a quote tweet of OUTSpoken, and contains a link to their article claiming to ‘debunk’ the ‘lies’ of ‘Gay Inc’. The same article was appended to **Tweet 1175**. The article itself (OUTSpoken editors, 2020a) appeared earlier in this chapter in Figure 5.11. The tweet is given further attention here for its use of ‘Gay Inc’, whose historical criticism of Donald Trump is recontextualised (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) as a series of lies to the *LGBT+ Community* in order to keep them voting for the *Democratic Party*. The article itself is intensely transphobic and gets its facts wrong in places (see Figure 5.11).

Quantitatively speaking, the rate at which LCR invoke all these rhetorical themes increases over the course of the sample. Said changes are demonstrated in Figure 5.40. *LGBT+ Republicans* were significantly more likely to appear in tweets that juxtaposed them against both *Identity Politics*, and the *Democratic Party*, under the Trump administration ($R=0.007$, $p=0.074$, and $R=0.080$, $p=0.004$, respectively), backed up by large visible increases in the *Random Samples* tests. Indeed, the *Random Samples* test for *LGBT+ Republicans and Democratic Party* was itself statistically significant. These are extremely telling results, considering that only a visible increase was required to satisfy the robustness check ($R=0.087$, $p=0.033$)⁹. *Republican Party* and *Identity Politics* were more likely to appear together under the Trump Presidency, albeit the increase was only practically significant ($R=0.047$, $p=0.091$) and the *Random Samples* only demonstrated a gradual increase. By contrast, their increased juxtaposition against the *Democratic Party* was marked, rising significantly when measured against *Presidency* ($R=0.082$, $p=0.03$) and even achieving a significant rise in the Cramer’s V analysis of the *Random Samples* test ($V=0.162$, $p=0.008$), albeit not in the Pearson’s R analysis ($R=0.049$, $p=0.229$), though it only fell slightly short of practical significance there. In any case, the visible increase in the *Random Samples* was marked, rising from 0 in the Obama-era sample, to 3, 4, 6, 9 and 11 in the five Trump samples, respectively¹⁰. By contrast the juxtaposition of *LGBT+ Community* against *Identity Politics*¹¹, whilst rising like the others, only did so to practical significance, and a weak one at that ($R=0.038$, $p=0.173$) with slight increases in the *Random Samples*¹².

Interpreting these quantitative changes, we are forced to conclude that LCR’s general rhetoric positioning LGBT+ people as the victims of *Identity Politics* has not changed much in regularity, nor indeed has their mobilisation of their wider party against it. By contrast, they appear to view the *Democratic Party*, specifically, as an enhanced threat.

The Left and Islamophobia

As observed earlier when discussing *Antifa*, supplementary *IoE* variables have helped inform the coding of *The Left*. In this case, we must turn to LCR’s use of Islamophobic

⁹See Figures A.11-A.14 in Appendix A. A.14 specifically is the *Random Samples* test for the juxtaposition between *LGBT+ Republicans* and the *Democratic Party*.

¹⁰See Figures A.15-A.18 in Appendix A. A.18 specifically is the *Random Samples* test for the juxtaposition between *Republican Party* and *Democratic Party*.

¹¹Readers are reminded that alone of the IVP variables, *LGBT+ Community* did not correlate with both the studied *IoE* variables, only with *Identity Politics*.

¹²See figures A.19 and A.20 in Appendix A.

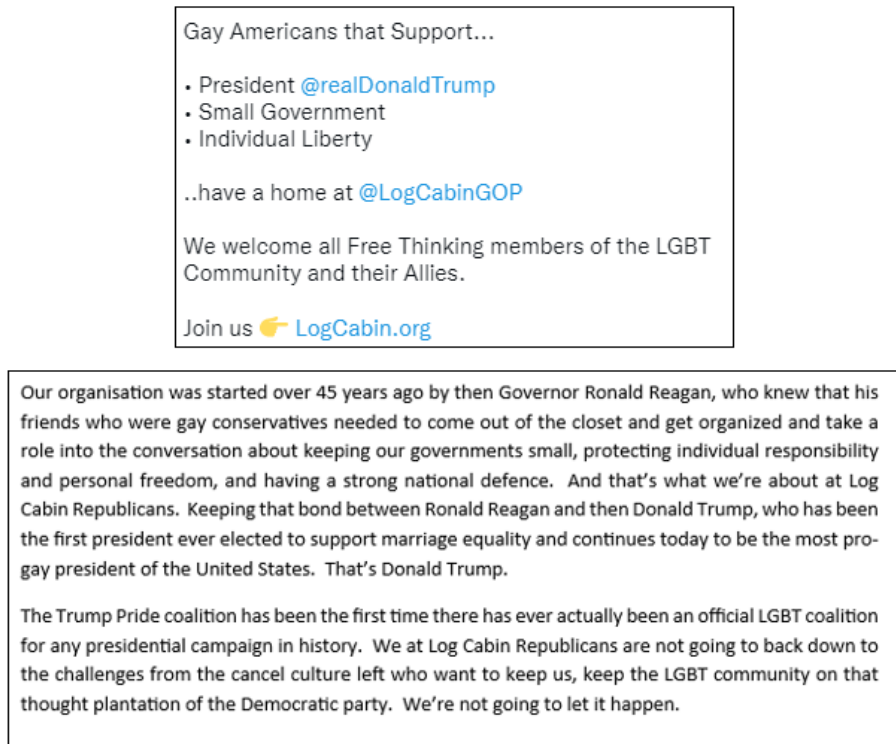


Figure 5.31: **Tweet 1239**, which has been partially censored; it contained an appended video in which the author of the tweet speaks to the camera. To protect their identity, that part has been censored. However an anonymised transcription is included: The speaker invokes the memory of Ronald Reagan and his role in LCR’s founding, and associates LCR with classic conservative values. They then re-state Trump’s belief in marriage equality and proudly affirm their status as the first ‘official LGBT coalition’ in history. Most of this speech is unproblematic, but a socio-cognitive reading (Van Dijk, 2016) seizes upon two turns of phrase as being intensely so, and which juxtapose the *LGBT+ Community* against *The Democratic Party*, rather than just stating the case for the GOP. The first is ‘free thinking’ in the tweet itself, which primes the reader to interpret gay support for the GOP as the result of them simply being able to decide for themselves; the natural result of independent thought, rather than received wisdom. The second is ‘thought plantation’, which evokes images of slavery, and primes the reader to interpret the Democratic Party’s LGBT+ supporter base as forcibly controlled. Collectively, it is an effort to associate the GOP with reason, liberty and freedom; the conclusion that any LGBT+ person *would* draw, if only their Democratic overlords would allow them to break their conditioning. The emphasis on free thought actively parallels the ‘red pill’ rhetoric of the alt-right, who compare themselves to those who have been set free from mind control. (Bringley-Thompson, 2018).

rhetoric, which they occasionally use to undermine left-wing criticism of Donald Trump, and portray the left as dangerous. LCR are broadly engaged in the sort of homonationalist (Puar, 2007, 2013) ‘liberal Islamophobia’ (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) that is common in the mainstreamed far right. Most of this is beyond the scope of this thesis as it is not directly relevant to Log Cabin’s ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’, and whilst it was readily observed in the sample, any conclusions we might draw would only be iterative of other authors, Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013) especially.¹³

However, it is worth briefly introducing some of Log Cabin’s Islamophobia, specifically their anti-Islamic sentiment; defined by Uenal et al (2021) as discriminatory beliefs about

¹³Readers looking for a fuller assessment of Log Cabin’s Islamophobic position are directed to Appendix B, where it is discussed in a manner that supplements this thesis without bogging down the research chapters.

Leader Schumer,

The nomination of Ric Grenell for the position of Ambassador to Germany currently stands before the United States Senate. His confirmation would be historic, both for his high qualifications for the position as well as the fact that he would become the highest ranking openly gay individual ever to serve in a Republican administration. Yet Mr. Grenell's nomination has languished in procedural limbo for months due to Democratic dithering. This needs to change.

In earlier times confirmations such as Mr. Grenell's were perfunctory, made swiftly with deference to our nation's commander-in-chief in a way that transcended partisanship. Sadly, time and again over the course of the past year, Democratic Senators have abused procedural courtesy to prevent votes by simple acclamation.

The longer Mr. Grenell remains unconfirmed, the more apparent it becomes that the architects of his stonewalling are spiteful Senate Democrats who recoil at the idea of an openly gay ambassador in the service of President Donald Trump.

It doesn't have to be this way.

All of this innuendo and unnecessary ill-will can be alleviated by the expeditious confirmation of Mr. Grenell as the United States Ambassador for Germany.

Log Cabin Republicans and our co-signing allies encourage you to stop these needless procedural delays and promptly allow a vote on this historic nomination.

Figure 5.32: A transcription of the open-letter sent by Log Cabin to Chuck Schumer, then the Senate Minority Leader, in January 2018. The letter appears in **Tweets 429** and **430**. A discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading recontextualises the Democratic stalling of Grenell as a partisan act of spite, rather than Congress doing its job by vetting a candidate thoroughly. It also whitewashes the history of the issue, appealing to the transcendence of partisanship as though the Democrats were the only party to be guilty of it. In reality, the GOP had blocked Barack Obama's appointment of Merrick Garland to SCOTUS two years earlier, with a Senate majority behind them. The goal of the tweet is to position the Democrats away from the *LGBT+ Community* (Fairclough, 2016) by coding them as only caring about gay advancement if it suits them; whereas the GOP is not only more accepting, but also a party that cares more about the functioning of democracy. Furthermore, a dialectical-relational reading (ibid) immediately picks up on the phrase 'deference to our nation's commander in chief', which positions Trump as Schumer's *superior*, rather than the head of a different, but equal, branch of the government. LCR's dismissive attitude towards Congressional authority is discussed in further detail in Chapter 6.

On [#SpiritDay](#), Log Cabin Republicans stands against bullying. If you're an LGBT Republican attacked by Democrats for being true to yourself, we've got your back!

3:00 pm · 18 Oct 2018 · Twitter for iPhone

15 Retweets 3 Quote Tweets 63 Likes

Figure 5.33: **Tweet 0639**, which takes very little analysis to understand the point being made. Spirit Day is an awareness day, to remember the victims of bullying-induced suicide in the LGBT+ community. LCR use the occasion to position the Democrats as the bullies, linking to their wider points about the party victimising *LGBT+ Republicans*. That they do so on spirit day is a way of priming the reader to view their treatment for their political views as morally equal to the mistreatment LGBT+ people receive for simply existing. Furthermore, they frame the issue as being deadly serious, as though LGBT+ Republicans are being forced underground.

the culture as a whole, rather than towards individual Muslims, or engagement with conspiratorial narratives. I include this because, at certain points, it is used as ammunition to make anti-Left populist arguments (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). *The Left* is vilified for being 'soft' on Islam, which is caricatured by the homophobic excesses of its most militant adherents, whereas Trump will fight it. Trump is thus rendered immune from criticism and positioned as 'the people's' defender.

Two flashpoints in particular are of great relevance here, the first of which is the Iranian Nuclear Deal. This was a multi-lateral diplomatic effort, involving Germany and the permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, UK, France, China and Russia), to

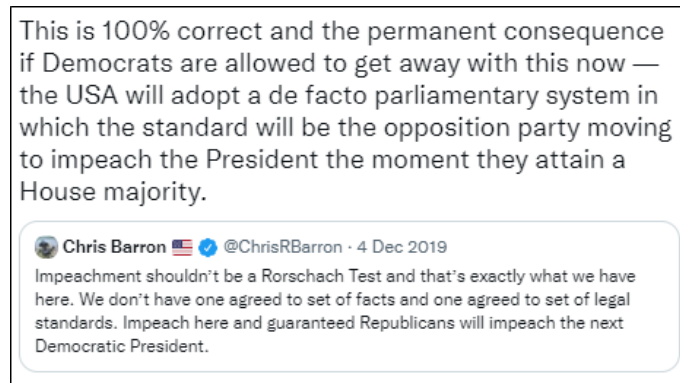


Figure 5.34: **Tweet 0978** which is itself a quote tweet from fellow LGBT+ Conservative activist Chris Barron, the former leader of the defunct *GOProud*. Keeping the theme of LCR's disregard for the US legislature (see figure 5.31 and the section on *Dismissal of Accountability* in Chapter 6), LCR accuse the Democrats seeking to impeach Trump in 2019 (over the Ukraine laptop scandal) of attempting to implement de-facto parliamentarianism, thereby establishing a, supposedly, improper form of control over US politics. By implication it juxtaposes the *Republican Party* against the Democrats, by making the latter out to be the partisan force undermining US politics, who will force the Republicans to stoop to that level. A dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates an effort by LCR to position the Democrats further away from the concept of Democracy than their GOP opponents.



Figure 5.35: **Tweet 1041**. The candidate referred to is Fred Karger, who ran for the Republican nomination in 2012. The Vice President is Dick Cheney, who made overtures about same-sex marriage in 2004 in support of his lesbian daughter, Mary. The President in question is Trump, and the official is Richard Grenell. Whilst LCR are factually correct to list all of these as Republican accomplishments, a discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) analysis demonstrates that this is an effort to aggrandise them all out of context. Karger was the first openly gay man to run for President, but he was wildly unsuccessful. Cheney's support for same-sex marriage did not extend to doing anything about it as VP, and he served in the Bush administration, which championed *Marriage Protection Amendments* (H.J.Res.56 – 108th Congress) (H.J.Res.106 – 108th Congress) (H.J.Res.88 – 109th Congress) (H.J.Res.22 – 110th Congress) (S.J.Res.40 – 108th Congress) (S.J.Res.1 – 109th Congress). Trump's qualifications as the first President to support same-sex marriage 'from day one' are correct, but it must be remembered that by the mid-point of his Presidency, Obama was staunchly pro-LGBT+ as well; emphasising 'day one' invisibilises this. Finally, whilst Grenell was the first openly LGBT+ man to climb that high in the White House, it was only on a temporary basis as *acting* DNI. LCR are not incorrect to point out these times Republicans favoured the LGBT+ community, but they are presented without crucial context, so as to aggrandise them, and rhetorically position the GOP as closer to the *LGBT+ Community* based on technicalities.

incentivise the Iranian government to not orient its nuclear development around building weapons. It involved providing Iran with relief from existing nuclear sanctions in exchange for a substantive drawdown in its stockpiles of enriched uranium, and it agreeing to stall development on heavy water facilities. In short, it was a successful diplomatic effort, and



Figure 5.36: **Tweet 1136**. The video appended to it was paused and screencapped at 3 minutes and 10 seconds, when the speaker, Christian Walker, makes a deeply Islamophobic comment. The captions within the video were edited in by LCR themselves. The full quote was ‘the Left doesn’t acknowledge that some cultures are better than others.’ Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) has an easy job in identifying that this is an effort to not only position American culture as sanctified (indicative of ‘liberal Islamophobia’, (see Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) but to associate *The Left* with such dangerous beliefs that are made out to threaten ‘the people’; BLM and Antifa are similarly implicated.



Figure 5.37: In descending order, **Tweet 0696**, an excerpt from the *Washington Examiner* article cited in **Tweet 0762** (Polumbo, 2019a) and **Tweet 0935**. A socio-cognitive reading (Van Dijk, 2016) of each focusses heavily on the accusations of ‘barbarism’, thereby priming the reader to view the basic treatment of homosexuals as a benchmark for civilisation. Dialectical-relational analysis (Van Dijk, 2016) demonstrates an invisibilisation of homophobia within the US by manipulating attention towards worse treatment of LGBT+ people overseas, and positions the *Democratic Party* as being adjacent to such homophobia, whilst Trump is positioned away.

one with which Iran was complying as of March 2018 (Amano, 2018). However, a discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading of LCR’s tweets on the matter reveals a recontextualisation of multi-lateral diplomacy, especially with Islamic-majority states, as *weakness*; an endorsement by America of the Iranian regime, and a way of providing it

funding for its brutally homophobic domestic policy, which LCR equated to ‘barbarism’ (sic). This directly reproduces Jasbir Puar’s assessment of homonationalists using the treatment of homosexuals as a benchmark for writing off cultures as ‘uncivilised’, and in need of enforced change (Puar, 2007, 2013). It does so in a way that actively stigmatises *The Left* for having been willing to engage in good faith with such states. The Democratic Party (the Obama administration specifically) is thus made into a dangerous betrayer of the *LGBT+ Community* by condoning ‘barbarism’.

The second flashpoint represents Trump’s 2019 diplomatic initiative to decriminalise homosexuality worldwide. In this, he appointed LCR member Richard Grenell to a leading role, and was roundly praised by LCR for doing so. Grenell used the opportunity to engage in the kind of zero-sum foreign policy that is discussed in Chapter 6 under *Dismissal of Accountability*. But the contrast between these two events, in which a Democratic administration sought to engage in good-faith diplomacy, vs Trump engaging in more forceful measures, allowed LCR to undercut criticism of Trump at various points. ‘Gay Inc’ was wrong to call Trump a homophobe, and hold him to account for his position on issues like transphobia, because he was busy fighting *real* homophobia overseas. Dialectical-relational analysis demonstrates this narrative as an effort to obscure systemic discrimination within the US, by positioning homophobia as something that only ‘really’ happens in states where you can be executed for being gay. It, further, positions Trump close to the *LGBT+ community*, and *The Left* as far away as possible; close to the ‘real homophobia’ that LCR discuss.



Figure 5.38: **Tweet 1185**, which invokes the spectre of Iran as a means of undermining Joe Biden, and aggrandising Trump. Socio-cognitive analysis (Van Dijk, 2016) picks up on the use of ‘cozy with’; aside from constructing a less forceful foreign policy as coddling Iran, this implies that any personal softness is a weakness. This might be read as not just an endorsement of zero-sum strongman diplomacy, but also as masculinism, a common feature of the alt-right (Bringley Thompson, 2018) (Kusz, 2019).

Conclusions on The Left

Bringing quantitative and qualitative analyses together, we see a marked change in LCR’s rhetoric towards a vicious denunciation of the *Democratic Party*. Whilst *Identity Politics* is consistently invoked as a controlling mechanism of false consciousness that shackles the *LGBT+ Community*, the party they accuse of perpetrating it is seen as increasingly threatening. Further into the sample the party becomes associated with extremism, antifa, and ‘murderers’, and is constructed as a force that is out to destroy America. The party is portrayed as particularly vicious towards *LGBT+ Republicans*, to the point where it will block *LGBT+ advancement* in government if it comes from Republican hands; doing so would emancipate *LGBT+ people* from the ‘thought plantation’. Earlier, I argued that LCR maintain a steady tone towards *Left-Wing Homophobia*, calling it out consistently



Figure 5.39: **Tweet 0736**, a clear example of LCR’s willingness to exonerate Trump by comparing him favourably to ‘real’ homophobia elsewhere. Gay journalist Michelangelo Signorile is attacked by LCR for calling Trump ‘anti-LGBTQ’. In response, LCR construct Obama as the real homophobe for having engaged in diplomatic efforts (rather than hard sanctions) with Iran. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates a positioning of the US as being without ‘real homophobia’, and thus Signorile’s argument is invalid.

whilst they bounce back and forth on what qualifies as *Right-Wing Homophobia*. When combined with these conclusions, we see that LCR view the Democratic Party as having gotten worse in its discriminatory streak against LGBT+ people that do not vote for it. These narratives also serve as a legitimisation tool for LCR themselves; who increasingly portray themselves as not only justified anti-Democrats, but as liberated free thinkers from the shackles of identity politics. They juxtapose themselves against it to cast themselves as the only parts of the LGBT+ Community that rise above ‘culture war’ to confront legitimate political issues, who go about winning their rights in the *correct* manner, and who see through the ‘lies’ of ‘Gay Inc.’ In all such cases, this clearly positions LCR to receive political capital from the Trump administration, since it naturally undermines criticism of them as ‘hysteria’, and draws ire away from them and onto the Democrats.

I conclude therefore that there has been a marked increase in LCR’s populist rhetoric against both *IoE* variables of *The Left*, however in recognition of the lower quantitative data for *Identity Politics* we adopt an **Amber** confidence level with the conclusion there, versus the **Green** for the Democratic Party. The latter is increasingly invoked as an enemy, and one that presents a rising threat level to the ‘people’ as LCR see it. The former is consistently invoked, and barely changes against two of the *IVP* variables, however it is more regularly used as a legitimisation tool for LCR themselves; one which serves the interests of Trump by undermining criticism of the right as ‘TDS’.

- LCR have significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning *Identity Politics* in relation to the *IVP variables* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Amber - Null Hypothesis Tentatively Rejected.**
- LCR have significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning *The Democratic Party* in relation to the *IVP variables* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

		Presidency	Randomly Sampled Group
LGBT+ Republicans and Left-Wing Identity Politics	Pearson Correlation	.074****	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.248
	N	1300	600
LGBT+ Republicans and The Democratic Party	Pearson Correlation	.080****	.087***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.033
	N	1300	600
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Pearson Correlation	.047**	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.091	.722
	N	1300	600
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Democratic Party IoE	Pearson Correlation	.082****	.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.229
	N	1300	600
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Pearson Correlation	.038**	.006
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.173	.874
	N	1300	600

Figure 5.40: Crosstab of the juxtapositions between *LGBT+ Republicans*, *Republican Party* and *LGBT+ Community* and the *IoE* variables they correlated to, on the X axis, and *Presidency* and *Random Samples* on the Y. This is a shorthand collection of the results demonstrated in Appendix A.

5.4 Conclusions on Populism

Over the course of this chapter, LCR's anti-elite rhetoric has been cross-examined (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), including its use of Islamophobia for the purpose of attacking a 'liberal/left elite' in the US. Via mixed-methods CDA (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016), I have charted substantive frequency changes in types of rhetoric, as well as qualitative changes in tone; whether some are more severe before or after Trump took office, and whether their context has fundamentally altered. I have also referred back to the findings of Chapter 4 on 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), at various points, as LCR's occasional whiplash changes in argument have reinforced this thesis' findings about populism.

To summarise this chapter's work overall, LCR's populist rhetoric has changed under Donald Trump according to the following themes. In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of a populist LCR tweet, the following statements are true.

- *Right-Wing Homophobia* does continue to exist in the United States. It is, however, reduced to an upopular and out-of-touch fringe of the GOP. They are a traditionally powerful elite enemy, but they are losing the fight. Donald Trump is not guilty of *Right-Wing Homophobia*, nor is any part of his administration. He is, in fact, boldly crusading against it.
- *Left-Wing Homophobia* is endemic in the US, and always has been. The Democratic Party claims the allegiance of the US' entire LGBT+ population but does not earn it, and has frequently harmed them.
- Linking back to Chapter 4, *Left-Wing* and *Right-Wing Homophobia* are judged by different standards; with similar expressions of discrimination excused or vilified depending on the speakers' proximity to Donald Trump. Any actions taken by the administration themselves are, variously, expressions of faith, protections for women, or irrelevant in light of their foreign policy.
- There exists in the US a powerful left-wing activist elite, represented by nominally pro-LGBT+ organisations like the HRC, with embedded links to the media, and to

the *Democratic Party*; aka ‘Gay Inc’. They are engaged in a sustained campaign to sell an illegitimate *Identity Politics* to the *LGBT+ Community*. This includes a rejection of Donald Trump, a rigorously enforced self-policing against Republican views, and the insistence that one is, and always must be, a victim. This elite is connected to Antifa (who are an organised terror group) and holds a particular hatred for *LGBT+ Republicans*.

- That left-wing elite is opposed by Trump and all ‘free thinking’ LGBT+ people, who recognise that the real home of the community is within the GOP. Continuing to be a Democrat is evidence that an LGBT+ person has not broken their conditioning. This language parallels the ‘red-pill’ rhetoric of the alt-right (Bringley-Thompson, 2018).
- It is irrelevant to criticise any ‘homophobia’ that supposedly exists on the American right when gay men are being executed in ‘barbaric’ (sic) Islamic-majority states like Iran.
- The left-wing elite is soft on this issue, at the expense of the *LGBT+ Community*. It would engage in weak diplomacy, rather than strong sanctions, or military force. This is unacceptable. Donald Trump is the true defender of the *LGBT+ Community*, because he will take the forceful steps against such ‘barbarism’, that the left elite will not.

What we can gather from these statements is that LCR are a vastly more populist organisation than they were before Trump took the oath of office. In many cases this is borne out in meaningful quantitative shifts, such as the decrease in *Right-Wing Homophobia*, and the increases in *The Democratic Party* and *Identity Politics* as invoked enemies. But in *all* cases there is a qualitative change. LCR have built ‘Gay Inc’ up as an elite enemy of ‘the people’, (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). They have linked it to a Democratic Party that is constructed as a fairweather friend to LGBT+ people at best, and which is soft and silent on Islamic ‘barbarism’. This unholy alliance is a controlling, elite force, hoovering money out of gay donors by selling them victimhood, and an actively dangerous one too.

As outlined in Chapter 2, this thesis is agnostic on wider literary debates about populism, but adheres closest to the ‘discursive’ theory associated with Ernesto Laclau (2005) and Giorgos Katsambekis (2016, 2017, 2022), as opposed to the ‘ideational’ theory associated with Cas Mudde (2004) (Kriesi, 2014) (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013, 2017, 2018). Because of this, it views populism as something someone *performs* for a purpose; as Bonikowski put it “[it] is something political actors do, not something they are.” (Bonikowski et al, 2018: 63). This recontextualises complex issues of nationalism, geopolitics, social issues and economics, into a simplified, and digestible, narrative of ‘people vs elite,’ where one side is good, and the other evil. Populism serves an important role as a *legitimisation tool* for the beliefs appended to it (Venizelos, 2022). For the populist far right this means speaking to listeners’ suspicions, fears, and inexperience; they amplify them, claim that said listeners are perfectly valid for holding such negative thoughts, and that they are actually in the majority, but that the controlling elite want to police them for it. That role is a key reason why this thesis gently disagrees with the strong stance taken by the likes of Aurelien Mondon, Aaron Winter and Katy Brown (Mondon and Winter, 2019, 2020) (Brown and Mondon, 2021) (Mondon, 2022a, 2022b, 2022c, 2023) on the removal of ‘populism’ from analyses of the far right. Populist narratives are a key aspect of *Homo-Authoritarianism*, that allows LCR to continually deflect criticism away from Trump, and thus sabotage his accountability (Glasius, 2018).

Donald Trump is LCR's white knight. They have constructed 'Gay Inc' in such a way, with Trump as its natural opponent, that even legitimate criticisms of Trump's behaviours are defended. This is achieved either on technicalities, like appealing to Pence's religion, or on the wholesale repositioning of LCR on the issue, seen in their steady abandonment of the trans community. All the while, they continue to hold the Democratic Party to account for its own imperfect record on LGBT+ rights, even when those imperfections are shared by mainstream Republicans. Their own poor treatment by aspects of the LGBT+ community, and activist organisations like the HRC, is taken as evidence of a leftist conspiracy to unseat Trump, and render LCR unintelligible. *The Left* is constructed as a gigantic leech, feeding off of the LGBT+ Community, who have been blinded to their status as equal members of society, via an enforced regimen of *Identity Politics*. Because *The Left* (via 'Gay Inc') are entrenched as the elite, controlling enemy, any of their own criticisms of Trump's actions are rubbished as 'Trump Derangement Syndrome' (TDS). In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of LCR, there cannot be meaningful accountability of the 45th President, because holding him accountable naturally reveals one as deranged. In this regard, the experience of LGBT+ people under Sharia law serves as a populist scapegoat; Trump *cannot* be homophobic, because he deals harshly with Iran. By contrast, the 'Gay Inc' elite and their Democratic allies, are *more* harmful to LGBT+ people, irrespective of what goes on at home, because they will not do so. Islamophobia weaves into populist narratives as an amplifier; *The Left* are the enemy because they are in league with *Islam*, Trump is the people's defender because he is not.

Combining all of these threads together, it is clear that, over the Trump Presidency, LCR became engaged in an actively populist branding exercise. One designed to continually affirm their loyalty to Donald Trump, and de-legitimise all criticism of him, by casting the Left elite as the true enemy. This allowed LCR to repeatedly demonstrate that they are on Trump's side, in exchange for political capital, and their continued mainstream status, and, like 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), they live in technicalities, bend the truth, and change the goalposts in order to do so. This Populism (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) is in the service of authoritarianism (Glasius, 2018); making the authoritarian into the 'peoples' champion' and inventing a controlling, evil, left elite for him to liberate LGBT+ people from.

Chapter 6

Right-Wing Authoritarianism

6.1 Introduction

The earlier research chapters of this thesis set up the various legitimisation tactics deployed by LCR in order to reinforce their shift towards ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’. The first of these was ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), the act of embracing contradictory opinions, or jumping between them at different times (and back again), in order to continually ideologically re-align oneself towards one’s chosen authority figure. The second of these was ‘populism’ (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005); discourse constructing one’s beliefs in the form of a struggle between ‘the people’ and an ‘elite enemy’ (Katsambekis, 2016, 2017, 2022, 2023). Populism attaches itself to belief systems, in this case, the far right, in order to legitimise them.

But these are not the *meat* of the issue of ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’; that is LCR’s efforts to rhetorically normalise ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018) towards the Trump administration. The other variables are introduced first so as to demonstrate to the reader that, irrespective of their authoritarian, or libertarian, substance, LCR are very much enmeshed in the populist radical right (Mudde, 2007), and on the road towards ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018) in mentality at least. They fearmonger about a left elite that pushes illegitimate notions of victimhood, so as to legitimise opposition to material solutions to LGBT+ inequality, and mainstream the continued oppression of minorities. Furthermore, they are so committed to Trump that they contradict themselves so as to avoid having to hold him accountable. Even if this thesis could not substantiate its claims that LCR were enmeshed in *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* (Adorno et al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020) (Lockhart, Sibley and Osbourne, 2020, 2023a, 2023b), there is enough here to demonstrate to scholars of the far right that they would have substantive cause to monitor the continued rise of the Log Cabin Republicans, and the harm they may yet do.

However, I can very much substantiate these claims, the setup over the last two chapters is not without a payoff. Over this chapter, it is demonstrated that LCR have amplified their engagement with *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* in several ways, each represented by a sub-variable in the research. As noted in Chapter 2, political literature on authoritarianism tends to focus on state behaviour; such as voter suppression. By contrast, literature on RWA *follower* behaviour stems from schools of psychology; it focuses on personality types that value strict order, violent enforcement of beliefs, extreme conservatism, lack of self-introspection, and adherence to authority. This thesis is not psychological work, but the literature has, nevertheless, been useful in deriving four different political aspects of

authoritarian behaviour, that can be differentiated from purely psychological concerns¹. They are as follows:

1. *Calls to Violence*: Any tweet that openly called for physical reprisal against an ‘enemy’ was coded for this; or I should say *wasn’t* coded for this, as this *never* appeared in the sample. There were, however, some worrying implied trends towards this in several tweets, but nothing concrete.
2. *Veneration of the Authority*: Any tweet that put LCR’s chosen leader (Trump) or his inner circle, on a pedestal and extolled their virtues as somehow superhuman, absolutely essential to the nation, or otherwise larger than life.²
3. *Dismissal of Accountability*: Any tweet that expressed a scepticism, or hostility, to the idea of legitimate authority existing elsewhere than Trump, or to the idea of his power being curtailed. Nowhere was this more apparent than in LCR’s endorsement of the 2020 ‘stolen election’ narrative.
4. *Media Scepticism*: Tweets that signify hostility to the mainstream media, and thus seek to control public narratives in a way that enables the agenda of Donald Trump and his administration.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the research process for studying *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* (RWA) took a mixed-methods approach, with qualitative work as the primary focus. This was especially relevant here, as not every aspect of RWA has an easily observable quantitative footprint; it is reactionary by nature, and, thus, is demonstrated when LCR *react* to democratising stimuli, some of which is naturally more prevalent than others. Indeed, depending on the specific aspect of authoritarian behaviour, an authoritarian that has become more severe in their beliefs might show it *less* over time, or almost *never*. When prompted, however, it rears its head.

For example, two of the variables discussed in this chapter are *Dismissal of Accountability* and *Media Scepticism*, with the latter being vastly more prevalent than the former. Whereas the media *is* continually publishing, Trump *was not* being investigated every day. A far-right authoritarian will find something to object to in public narratives as often as they read the news. But processes that actually threaten the leader’s use of absolute power are *not* always in the foreground. Trump was impeached twice, investigated repeatedly, and had his bills and appointments slowed, or blocked, by Congress, but these hardly represented daily occurrences in a four-year Presidency. Thus, LCR had less opportunity to rail against it, and the variable *Dismissal of Accountability* naturally appears less frequently, but it is no less a fundamental part of LCR’s ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’.

Where the first three of these variables are straightforwardly authoritarian, *Media Scepticism* requires some more lengthy explanation of its presence in this thesis. This is key to understanding authoritarianism, since public narratives are an essential element of holding the powerful accountable, and, thus, controlling the flow of information helps to sabotage

¹Ultimately some aspects that correlate to RWA follower behaviour will always be best left to psychologists; examples include psycho-sexual inferiority complexes, long term complications from disciplinarian child-rearing, and inability to process emotions healthily (Adorno et al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015).

²Despite being *essential* to authoritarianism, this was far and away the hardest variable to operationalise, as it requires one to separate rhetoric merely *praising* a person with that which *venerates* them, something that can only ever be imprecise. This led to mixed results in this thesis, but it is hoped that readers can lend a critical eye and future researchers can find more evidence for it in the dataset, which will be available via the University of Reading.

that accountability (Glasius, 2018). In an autocratic society, the authority achieves this by burning books. Donald Trump and his followers, mercifully, were never operating in a context where they had the unchecked power to simply erase any public narrative that opposed them. But in such circumstances, one does not necessarily *need* to do so; instead, one seeks to convince the public that certain narratives, publications, or ideas, are inherently illegitimate and should be rejected. This is the crux of Donald Trump’s (and LCR’s) attacks on the mainstream media, because some of their institutions promote narratives that run contrary to Trump’s ‘truth’, they are illegitimate, fake, and must be ignored (or even suppressed).

Taken together, these variables signify the core components of authoritarian follower behaviour; hostility to any viewpoint not sanctioned by the authority, a desire to control public narratives so as to favour the authority, placing the authority on a rhetorical pedestal, and an opposition to constraints on their power. Whilst LCR are not (yet) complicit in all of this, they are very much on the path.

6.2 Calls to Violence: No Conclusions, But Worrying Trends.

Calls to Violence was a variable in this study that would have demonstrated an explicit desire for physical resistance against one, or more, of the many enemies that LCR have invoked over the course of this thesis’ research. As noted by all major psychological sources on authoritarian behaviour, violence is inseparable from the psychology of the authoritarian follower, as they increasingly polarise themselves against, and then dehumanise, others (Adorno et al, 1950) (Altemeyer, 1981) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020). Mercifully, nowhere in the sample do LCR endorse violent methods in support of their goals³. Indeed, they define themselves *against* violent methods in many places, as part of their populist rhetoric against the left (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), which they construct as being in league with violent radicals (see the rhetoric about Antifa discussed in Chapter 5). There are, nevertheless, some worrying signs of the *normalisation* of violence in LCR’s rhetoric in isolated cases, which bear discussion even if they are not enough evidence upon which to reject a Null Hypothesis.

The most obvious example of this in our context would have been LCR’s supporting the January 6th insurrection. They appeared *not* to do this, albeit their denunciation of the rebellion appears only partially convincing. Only a single tweet in the sample referenced it explicitly *at all*, otherwise LCR appears to have deliberately gone silent. That single tweet *does*, however, explicitly denounce the violence. That being said, a further study raises more questions than it answers; but that study requires some reconsideration of the sample. In Chapter 3 I painstakingly laid out the anonymisation process for this work, and stand by it. However, to make the crucial point here, I do have to partially de-anonymise the source, but only insofar as to confirm that the tweet in question was *not* sent by the official LCR account, @LogCabinGOP, but instead by one of its chapter organisations. I will not confirm which chapter, but that small concession should demonstrate to readers that the main social media arm of LCR’s national organisation remained conspicuously silent as the Capitol was stormed. Even a robustness check of @LogCabinGOP’s full compliment of Tweets in January (with or without the ‘10 likes’ parameter I set for the sample) reveals no comment about the insurrection. This means that LCR, either, did not comment on it in the first place, or deleted their Tweets before they could be accessed. Either option suggests a refusal to oppose the riot.

³See Figure A.21 in Appendix



Figure 6.1: **Tweet 1294**, concerning the January 6th Insurrection. It is the only tweet in the sample to address the storming of the Capitol building.



Figure 6.2: Demonstrators at the January 6th insurrection display rainbow ‘LGBT for Trump’ banners, evidence that LGBT+ Trump supporters were present. This may have included LCR. This picture was sourced from an *OUT Magazine* article on the riot (Artavia, 2021), and is included for illustrative purposes only.

That single tweet was sent the day *after* the riot took place, meaning that the normally verbose Log Cabin watched the entire event unfold, and said nothing until afterwards. This could be for several reasons, the first of which is them taking time to choose the right words, though taking a full day for that appears excessive. Another explanation is that they waited to see if the riot would succeed. Analysis of the tweet itself draws from the socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016), and dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016), schools of CDA. The former centres on the word ‘egregious’, which is a very mild way of putting the topic. Consider the ways LCR describe left-wing protests in Chapter 5? Mutually-substitutable units (Fillmore, 1985) for ‘egregious’ rioters in LCR’s rhetoric include ‘terrorists’. Why simply describe ‘those who broke into our Capitol’ as behaving in an ‘egregious’ manner? This strongly suggests that LCR are, at best, *tepidly* opposed to the insurrection, instead priming readers to feel as though the rioters were morally correct, albeit excessive. By contrast, the dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) approach notes the reorientation of the topic away from the riot, and onto the police presence. This is an implied criticism of the Democratic Party, who have controlled the DC Mayor’s office uninterrupted since its inception in 1974. LCR’s only comment on January 6th was, thus, a much-delayed, carefully worded, tacit endorsement of the *spirit* of the riot, if not the methods. It was also an exercise in victim-blaming that draws attention away from Trump.

As commented on in Chapter 1, at least one high-profile LCR ally, Brandon Straka, is known to have taken part in the storming of the Capitol, and was charged as a result (Avery, 2021) (Young, 2024). It is possible that others, such as those running these accounts, were in the crowd too and got away with it. Rainbow flags *were* visible amongst the pro-Trump banners held aloft by the crowd (Artavia, 2021). This is only conjecture, but it

is conjecture that very much needs to be aired, as future evidence may bear fruit on this matter. It suffices to remind readers, for now, that, during the most violent attack on American democracy of the 21st century, LCR were *deafeningly* silent, and then *tepidly* condemning of the ‘egregious’ actions, but not the goals.

I mentioned LCR’s treatment of Antifa earlier, and that topic bears repeating. It is possible to read pro-violent messaging into many of LCR’s comments against *Black Lives Matter* and *Antifa* also, particularly their emphasis on pro-police statements. *BLM* is a movement largely sparked by institutionalised police racism and the violence resulting thereof. It is also a movement that LCR uniformly denounced as violent thuggery in service to culturally unacceptable leftism. LCR spent 2020 loudly extolling the Police, in spite of continued brutal suppression of black voices. A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) and discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) analysis of such comments would straightforwardly demonstrate that LCR seek to position left-aligned movements as a danger to society, and recontextualise their violent suppression by the Police as an exercise in public safety. Thereby, LCR might not explicitly *call* for violence, or be violent in their own methods, but they are certainly happy to see violence deployed against those they deem ‘radical’.

To clarify, this section is not rejecting the Null Hypothesis. It cannot, since there is a distinct lack of the explicit evidence I set out to find, yet the manner in which the evidence is lacking is itself conspicuous. A further study should revisit this thesis’ dataset, narrow in on LCR’s commentary on issues like January 6th, police action, culture war and *Antifa*, and investigate the implied meanings to a greater depth than this thesis was able to plumb. Whilst there is not evidence enough to state it conclusively, there appears to be a background implication that, whilst LCR shy away from openly endorsing violence, they are tacitly supportive of violent methods utilised by forces adjacent to their own cause.

- LCR have significantly changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning *Calls to Violence* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Red - Null Hypothesis Not Rejected.**

6.3 Veneration of the Authority: ‘The Greatest President of my Life.’

Veneration of the Authority (VoA) signifies an effort to put a supported authority figure on a pedestal. This is a very difficult thing to operationalise; where does the line between compliment and *veneration* lie? This thesis focused on those Tweets that make a point to signify the subject’s ‘greatness’, ‘leadership’ or otherwise imply their superhuman nature.

80 Tweets in the sample were ultimately coded for *VoA*, focusing on four figures. The most commonly cited was, unsurprisingly, Donald Trump himself, who was *venerated* in 53 tweets. In descending order following the President was Richard Grenell in 22 Tweets, Melania Trump in 9, and Nikki Haley in 1 (See Figure 6.4). But these were far from the only tweets to actually *mention* any of these figures. Each tweet in the sample was coded in NVivo based on the public figures who were referenced in it: Donald Trump was referenced in 313 Tweets, Grenell in 155 (the first, and second most, frequently mentioned public figures in the whole sample), Melania in 16, and Nikki Haley in 11. In most cases these are simply generalised compliments. Melania, alone, is *venerated* in a majority of tweets that reference her, often speaking of her fashion sense or beauty, creating an image of a gorgeous conservative goddess.

Each subject received their own *VoA* sub-variable, whose construction and variable relationships will be discussed momentarily, in increasing order of scale, beginning with Haley and ending with Trump. We will reject (or retain) four separate Null Hypotheses about whether or not LCR were more likely to *venerate* a given figure under the Trump administration, and then devote a concluding section to summarising to readers what LCR's *VoA* language says *about* the kinds of people they have come to idolise. This is just as important to understanding RWA as the giving of absolute loyalty itself. Readers can expect narratives of 'strength', 'assertiveness' and totalising zero-sum attitudes to be prevalent.

When looking at *VoA* overall, it is clear to see an increase in its prevalence over time. Of the 80 tweets, 74 of them appear during the Trump administration, creating a practically significant increase over time that is less than 1 percent short of statistical significance ($R=0.052$, $p=0.059$). This is backed up by a visible increase in a majority of the *Random Samples*, whose own relationship wasn't enormously short of practical significance either ($R=0.046$, $p=0.258$)⁴. I will have quantitative backing to reject the Null Hypothesis concerning *Veneration of the Authority*, but one must turn to the qualitative substance of such narratives before one can draw conclusions.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Present	1220	93.8	93.8	93.8
	Present	80	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	1300	100.0	100.0	

Figure 6.3: Frequency information for *Veneration of the Authority*.

			Within Veneration of the Authority
Donald Trump	Not Present	Count	27
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	33.8%
	Present	Count	53
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	66.3%
Richard Grenell	Not Present	Count	58
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	72.5%
	Present	Count	22
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	27.5%
Melania Trump	Not Present	Count	71
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	88.8%
	Present	Count	9
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	11.3%
Nikki Haley	Not Present	Count	79
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	98.8%
	Present	Count	1
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	1.3%
Total		Count	80
		% Within Veneration of the Authority	100%

Figure 6.4: Frequency information for *Veneration of the Authority*, sorted by the *venerated* figure.

⁴See Figures A.22-23 in Appendix A.

Nikki Haley: Zero-Sum Game

Only a single tweet *venerated* Nikki Haley, but it certainly made an impact. This was **Tweet 0421**, which referred to her as the future ‘First Woman President of the United States’⁵ for openly defying the UN General Assembly. Where other tweets were hard to define as *VoA*, as opposed to simply praising their subject, this was clear cut. The tweet contained a video of Haley’s speech to the UNGA in which she claimed that ‘no vote in the United Nations will make any difference’ to the US moving its Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and that any objections would force the American people to reconsider their beliefs about the UN, and countries who ‘disrespect’ America. A dialectical-relational reading (Fairclough, 2016) is most useful here, which notes this as a stirring rebuke of multi-lateral international agreements, and a slap in the face to UN authority. She effectively positioned the US as the UN’s *superior*; unaccountable to it, and uncaring of it’s opinion. For this, LCR constructed her as a future President, explicitly equating her rejection of UN authority, and unsubtle assertion of US hegemony, with the necessary qualities of leadership. An open and shut case of LCR, both, openly defying the authority of others to constrain their idolised Trump administration, and promoting its possible future inheritor.



Figure 6.5: **Tweet 0421**, which references Nikki Haley’s speech to the UN on the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem, and *venerates* her as the ‘First woman President of the United States’ to be. It is discussed in the body of the text.

Tweet 0421 was sent on the 22nd December 2017, during the first year of the Trump administration. Being a single tweet, it represents too small of a variable change to register quantitative results against *Presidency* ($R=0.012$, $p=0.677$), though the *Random Samples* test did register a result of practical significance ($R=0.060$, $p=0.143$)⁶. We are purely in the realm of qualitative work, therefore, and based on the context of this particular tweet, we can confidently reject the Null Hypothesis. Not only do LCR *venerate* Haley, they set a pattern for what they view as true American leadership; blazing a trail that the rest of the world has no choice but to follow. The *veneration* of Haley here can be read as an extension of that which LCR feel towards Trump (discussed towards the end of this section). Their putting Haley on a pedestal is the result of their view of Trump’s zero-sum foreign policy, and their beliefs in American ‘leadership’ that he cultivated. LCR have come to see Trump’s foreign policy as cementing a needed place for the United States at

⁵Writing in 2024 with the benefit of hindsight, these comments on Haley are ironic. LCR praised her as a future President here, but they treated her 2024 election campaign, in which she made a relatively clean break with Trump, as an irrelevance.

⁶See Figures A.24-25 in Appendix A.

the top of the global food chain, dictating policy to the world. Consider the commentary on Islamophobia in Chapter 5 (Ali and Whitham, 2021); with the US being praised for an uncompromising stance on ‘barbarism’ (sic), reflective of liberal and illiberal racism on LCR’s part (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020). The background implication of US superiority is clearly evident here.

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Veneration of the Authority* concerning *Nikki Haley* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

Melania Trump: ‘KWEEN’ (sic)

Melania Trump, as previously mentioned, only appears in 16 Tweets, and is *venerated* in 9 of them. Five of these revolve around her image, which is constructed as larger than life. To LCR’s collective mind, Melania is the most fashionable First Lady in history, explicitly defeating Jackie Onassis (see Figure 6.6). Of all the *veneration* tweets, these might be seen as the *least* authoritarian, in and of themselves. This is because Trump is the US Head of State, thus his role is at least partly ceremonial. The appearance, and style, of the first family is an important part of this role, since they are often delegated a substantial amount of the President’s ceremonial responsibilities. The qualities for which LCR *venerate* Melania are intrinsically tied to her role within the state. But in Melania’s case, her image is tied inextricably to that of an authoritarian President; it is his administration that Melania is buffing and legitimising. As a result, this qualifies as *VoA*, though if Trump were more democratic, or purely ceremonial in role, this would be comparatively harmless.



Figure 6.6: **Tweet 0669**, the first to *venerate* Melania Trump in the sample. ‘By far the most fashion-forward FLOTUS’, cementing her at the top of some subjective, beauty food chain, even surpassing Jackie Onassis. A dialectical-relational reading (Fairclough, 2016) notes that this positions a Republican first lady explicitly above a very famous Democrat one. This may socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) confer an implied partisan message of GOP superiority. Either way, it strongly suggests that political loyalty to the Trump administration rose-tints LCR’s image of Melania’s appearance.

The legitimacy of a Head of State is always tied to rites that promote their glory; public triumphs, ceremonies, and expressing their glory (or other subliminal political messaging) through clothing (Behnke, 2016). The fashions of a Head of State are *always* political, and many historical examples can be easily proffered. These ranging from monarchs in

grandiose attire, designed to flaunt their wealth, to subtle wardrobe choices designed to display a state's colours; King Charles III's publicly wearing a tie in the colours of the Greek flag, during a dispute over the Parthenon marbles, comes to mind (Davies and Smith, 2023).



Figure 6.7: **Tweet 0971**; A *venerating* tweet for Melania Trump, summarising her attire and the quality of her Christmas decorations with the slang term 'Kween' (Queen). Socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) analysis notes the co-opting Millennial/Gen-X slang to, again, express adoration towards the First Lady and place her rhetorically above others, whilst also legitimising that position subtly to a younger audience by casting her in such terms.

In this vein, loudly declaiming the beauty, style and 'fashion-forward nature' of Melania is, by extension, affording legitimacy to the Trump administration through spectacle. Context determines that we must interpret this as authoritarian follower behaviour because Trump was an authoritarian President, and these tweets glorify his administration by extension. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) positions the administration not only above LCR, but righteously and gloriously so, with LCR content to bask in Melania's beauty from below.

However, even within this context, some of the *venerating* tweets about Melania are expressly (rather than subtly) political, because Melania's 'glorified' image is used as a cudgel with which to attack the media and the left. In **Tweet 0800** there is a linked video of the author being interviewed by Liz Wheeler on *OAN*, concerning the refusal of several fashion designers to promote their attire with Melania Trump, and Dolce and Gabbana's sticking by her. In this narrative, Melania's fashion-consciousness is mixed with a narrative of bold resistance against the left. Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis demonstrates that LCR are positioning political fashion statements as illegitimate, and those who do such as an enemy. Once again, LCR are happy to paint an issue in contrasting ways whenever it suits them; Melania's fashion sense is a very political way of glorifying the Trump White House, and yet fashion designers that make liberal political statements are inappropriate. This represents 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]), as with so much else on LCR's social media (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, due to the fact that Dolce and Gabbana are openly gay men, Melania is positioned as an LGBT+ ally (Fairclough, 2016). Likewise in

Tweet 0972, the author responds to media criticism of Melania’s appearance by accusing *The Washington Post* of *pettiness*; a knee-jerk defence, designed to paint the linked article as illegitimate. The article is, in fact, a critique on Melania’s fashion sense and how this is often (intentionally or not) coupled with her husband’s political choices; her infamous ‘I just don’t care, do u?’ coat being one of them (Givhan, 2019). A discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading demonstrates the recontextualisation of any criticism of Melania as being illegitimate, motivated by base pettiness, rather than a genuine political concern. Such takes are an implicit form of ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018), cutting criticism of Melania off at the knees by positioning the writers as either putting politics where it doesn’t belong, or just being of poor character.

for Melania Trump. Well, number 1, she never asked a lot of these people, number 2, she’s just managed to still keep her head high and have an extreme elegance about her, and number 3, she’s actually stuck with fashion designers who do have an understanding of the potential that she brings in terms of being fashion forward and elevating fashion in the public eye, elevating fashion in politics today. Dolce and Gabbana, who I would just add, happen to be openly gay individuals, have said that they have been happy to design dresses for Melania Trump. That outfit, I believe you just showed a clip of, her homage to Princess Diana, was designed by Dolce and Gabbana, and the two of those individuals, as openly gay individuals, have faced tremendous backlash from the gay community around the world, from the fashion community, and so as a sidebar, I just say, thank you very much to Dolce and Gabbana for sticking to your guns and understanding the tremendous opportunity that Melania Trump brings to advance and elevate fashion around the globe.

Figure 6.8: A screen capped excerpt from the interview transcript, recorded as part of the coding for **Tweet 800**. It is discussed in the body of the text.

Following neatly on from the construction of Melania’s fashion sense as some pro-LGBT+ statement by the Trump administration, are the remaining four *VoA* tweets concerning her. These all focus around a public statement she gave in support of Log Cabin, recorded by LCR’s media arm, *OUTSpoken*. The video itself appears in three of these four tweets, and an article referencing it is linked in the fourth. In it, the First Lady praises her husband as someone who ‘loves the American people’, furthers his ‘outsider’ political myth, and then uses it to paint him as a true friend of the LGBT+ community. Melania argues that Donald’s status as a political outsider means that his enemies unjustly smear him whenever possible, including lying about his homophobia. As well as a soft-populist reproduction of ‘outsider’ campaigning (Foley, 2007), it is also a hard-populist message juxtaposing Trump, the defender of the LGBT+ ‘people’, against the elite left-wing media apparatus (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

Donald is a businessman who never worked in politics, the ultimate outsider, and that earned him many enemies in the political establishment. I was shocked to discover that some of these powerful people have tried to paint my husband as anti-gay, or against equality. Nothing could be further from the truth. Donald loves helping people and he loves seeing those around him and his country succeed. As the leader of the Republican party and President of the United States, Donald has been clear that gays and lesbians will be treated as he has always treated them, equally.

Figure 6.9: A screen capped excerpt from the video testimony of Melania Trump, which appears in **Tweets 1216, 1217 and 1218** and is referenced again in **1225**. It is discussed in the body of the text at length.



Figure 6.10: **Tweet 1218**, one of three tweets to link the same video of Melania Trump expressing public support for Log Cabin. This one in particular explicitly identifies her as an ally for making the statement.



Figure 6.11: **Tweet 1225**, which again references the Melania video without explicitly linking it. It decries the media establishment for ‘tearing down’ the ‘hopeful, truthful’ message of the First Lady, in an effort to ‘lie and mislead the public’ into believing that gay Republicans don’t exist. The emphasis on ‘love and hope’ reiterates the *VoA* themes of the video itself; of Melania as a larger than life ally, that the supposedly insidious media is out to destroy.

Melania follows this statement by attacking the idea of ‘cancel culture’, which she expressly identifies as threatening the existence of ‘independent voices like gay conservatives’, and praising America as a land of tolerance, explicitly invoking the ideas of freedom of speech and freedom of religion. This is, again, a populist message in which the unseen, but powerful, elite media foe wields ‘cancellation’ against the LGBT+ Conservative ‘people’ (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Thus she reproduces the ‘live and let live with discrimination’ arguments that Log Cabin are deeply fond of, with their flaws uncritically glossed over⁷. She rounds-out by identifying herself as ‘unapologetically outspoken’, thereby socio-cognitively aligning herself alongside LCR by reproducing their tagline, and taking another implied dig at ‘cancel culture’, by invoking the idea of ‘speaking out’ (Van Dijk, 2016)). Melania finishes by explicitly stating her support for LCR. To say that the group responded to this with adoration, would be an understatement. **Tweet 1216** was still pinned on its’ author’s profile during the first months of the Biden administration; a bold and unmissable declaration of *VoA*, which dialectically-relationally (Fairclough, 2016) positioned LCR as adjacent to the Trump White House, and fully welcomed into the ‘big tent’ by it. They further responded to criticism of Melania’s message, which would cite the mixed record of her husband on LGBT+ rights, as evidence of a leftist media conspiracy to end gay conservative existence and lie to America. A discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading does not have to dig far in order to demonstrate an authoritarian recontextualisation of events. Melania’s status as a ‘supporter of trailblazers and free thinkers’ was taken

⁷See the discussion of Bruce Bawer (1993 [1994]) and Andrew Sullivan (1995 [1996]) in Chapter 2

as the ultimate proof that Trump's leadership would benefit the LGBT+ community.

Quantitatively speaking, all nine of the *VoA* tweets about Melania Trump were sent during the *Trump Presidency*, but there were simply not enough of them to generate a significant result. That said, the relationship between the variable and *Presidency* was a tenth of a percent short of practical significance, as this thesis defines it ($R=0.035$, $p=0.210$). The *Random Samples* were jumbled, with three of the nine tweets making it into two of the *Trump Samples* and generating a relationship where the Cramer's V score was insignificant, but the Pearson's R score was practically significant to 87 percent confidence ($V=0.108$, $p=0.218$ and $R=0.062$, $p=0.128$)⁸. Therefore, as before, we rely on qualitative evidence alone, and it is enough to reject the Null Hypothesis. Granted, Melania is *venerated* in a style common to Heads of State and their families, which would qualify as entirely non-authoritarian if it weren't for the President in question. But LCR never miss an opportunity to make reactionary points piggybacking off of this, using their *veneration* of Melania as a weapon with which to beat the media, and accuse it of leftist conspiracy. Melania is used as the polish to the Trump administration's image, and LCR are quick to recontextualise both her statements, and any criticism of her, in a manner reflecting 'accountability sabotage' (Glasius, 2018).

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Veneration of the Authority* concerning *Melania Trump* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

Richard Grenell and Donald Trump: Master and Apprentice

Richard Grenell and Donald Trump are *venerated* by LCR on very similar grounds, with the former's idolisation by LCR coming as an extension of the latter; Grenell is constructed as the leader on the bleeding edge of Trump's, supposedly, pro-LGBT+ international agenda. As a result, most *venerating* tweets about Grenell relate to the 2019 homosexuality decriminalisation initiative, which he led. As a result of this, we will touch on Grenell only briefly before moving on to the 45th President, to avoid repetition of the same points we will discuss concerning Trump. We will, then, summarise the narratives concerning both men's *veneration* simultaneously and draw the necessary conclusions thereafter.

As has been noted at several points throughout this thesis, Grenell is the highest political climber in LCR's history. Of particular relevance here is Grenell's status as ambassador to Germany, which LCR often construct as a form of necessary American power projection; both in the enabling of overseas conservatism, and in forcibly keeping the rest of NATO in line with American agendas. All of the Tweets which *venerate* Grenell in this way either focus on the historic nature of his role as the first gay cabinet member, or reference his supposed 'leadership' on the world stage. His larger-than-life construction brands him as a trailblazer, someone who never takes no for an answer, and who is dragging the world into line with America's agenda. That this is, arguably, far in excess of the mandate of any ambassador, is overlooked by LCR, or reformulated as further evidence of his 'making a Trumpian splash' (sic, see Figure 6.12). Discourse-historical reading demonstrates this to be a way of recontextualising a temporary appointment to high office as a fundamental victory for LGBT+ rights (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016)⁹, thereby socio-cognitively conveying the idea that equality *has now been won* (Van Dijk, 2016). This

⁸See Figures A.26-27 in Appendix A.

⁹LCR make great pains to emphasise that Grenell's appointment was meritocratic, rather than related to his sexuality. This enables them to maintain their rigid stance against *Identity Politics*. When Pete Buttigieg was appointed to a *permanent* position in the cabinet by Joe Biden (remaining Transport

reinforces LCR's construction of the LGBT+ community in close relation to Trump, and of the US as above all international constraints (Fairclough, 2016); this pattern having been established in their commentary on Nikki Haley. Once again, LCR's use of *VoA* is tied to its *Dismissal of Accountability* (see the next section); LCR idolise leaders that dictate an American agenda to the world. The fact that Grenell's dictation is so explicitly anti-Iran, and pro-LGBT+, with the former justified by the latter¹⁰, means that LCR are able to put him on a pedestal; evidence of the Trump administration's, supposed, willingness to fight for gay rights. In short, the *vereneration* of Grenell is of a rising star, leading the LGBT+ community into the mainstream, and leading America in a righteous crusade.



Figure 6.12: **Tweet 0846**, linking to a *Wall Street Journal* article about Richard Grenell, making a 'very Trumpian splash in Berlin' (Pancevski and Ballhaus, 2019). LCR praise the article as a 'great profile' and claim that America and Trump need Grenell's leadership 'in the world today'. This implies that he is the solution to a needed problem, and a great, larger than life, figure (hence coding for *VoA*). The article also appears in **Tweet 0845**, but without the references to the necessity of Grenell's leadership (and thus no *VoA* coding). The 'Trumpian splash' included actively alienating many German officials, openly advocating for the political right in Europe, and strong-arming German businesses to downsize their trade with Iran. So the kind of 'leadership' that LCR advocate is, arguably, dictating to another country what its foreign policy has to be. As with Haley, this discourse represents a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) effort to position the US, and by extension the Trump administration, as not only the most powerful state in the world, but its unaccountable *leader*. Grenell is held up as larger-than-life for upholding this status.

Veneration of Donald Trump begins in the late Obama era, specifically at the 2016 RNC. Following hotly on the tails of the Pulse massacre, LCR began to coalesce their rhetoric around the need to follow Donald Trump's leadership, especially as the platform committee published a stridently anti-LGBT+ manifesto that year. The platform called for the overturning of the *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015) ruling, amongst other homophobic policies (RNC, 2016). Several other Republican notables made reference to the shootings in their convention speeches, including Ted Cruz (ABC News, 2016) and Newt Gingrich (ABC15

Secretary for Biden's entire term to-date), LCR denounced him as a useless 'diversity hire' at multiple points across the Presidential term. They also regularly reminded their Twitter audience that Grenell had gotten there first, and thus Buttigieg's achievement was meaningless. This is another discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) recontextualisation that views any LGBT+ appointment under a Democrat as unqualified tokenism. It further socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) primes readers to believe that equality has already been won, so further LGBT+ appointments aren't worth celebrating.

¹⁰Readers are directed back to the previous chapter for a fuller analysis of the ways that LCR use Islamophobic rhetoric to defend the Trump administration (and the actions of Trump and Grenell) from claims that they are anti-LGBT+.

Arizona, 2016), always in passing references, with the aim of juxtaposing the LGBT+ community against Islamic extremism. Trump, to his credit, went further, actively calling on the party to ensure the protection of the ‘LGBTQ community’ from ‘radical Islamic terrorism’, which received a standing ovation, and made him the first ever US Presidential candidate to explicitly acknowledge the community in his nomination address (PBS NewsHour, 2016a, 2016b). Trump then used the opportunity to praise the unprecedented nature of a Republican crowd taking a pro-LGBT+ stance (see Figure 6.13). LCR interpreted this as a ‘historic’ moment, and loudly praised every Republican who mentioned the community on stage. The first issue seen, when subjecting such commentary to CDA methods, is the recontextualisation of passing references to gay people (which made up mere *seconds* in speeches that could be dozens of minutes long) as historic affirmations, evidence of the GOP finally supporting the community. Indeed, Trump’s ‘historic mention’ (sic, see Figure 6.13) of the LGBT+ community amounted to three sentences in a nomination speech that took most of an hour, and those three sentences were over halfway through it. This discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reframing of events effectively casts decades of sustained GOP homophobia as having been defeated by throwaway lines in Islamophobic speeches¹¹. LCR, also, did not miss the opportunity to unsubtly dig at the Democratic Party for having not made similar statements before; dialectical-relational analysis needs to expend very little effort in demonstrating this as a positioning of the GOP as the true home of LGBT+ equality (Fairclough, 2016).



Figure 6.13: From top: **Tweet 0086**, **Tweet 0087**, and a Facebook post linked in **Tweet 0089**, all of which celebrate the ‘historic’ mention of the LGBT+ community in Trump’s speech to the 2016 GOP Convention. These are discussed in the body of the text.

The key feature of Tweets that *venerate* Trump is a ‘distancing dynamic’ (Wodak, 2021) between himself and more traditional Republicans, especially on LGBT+ issues. Donald Trump is often cited as, not just leading the party forward, but engaged in (and winning) a

¹¹For reference Trump’s comments about LGBT+ people were placed in the context of defeating ‘the barbarians of ISIS’ and the need to abandon ‘failed’ policies like ‘nation building’ in favour of increased force. The true subject of the speech was criticising Democrat policies for failing to constrain Islamic extremism (PBS NewsHour, 2016a, 2016b).

protracted dogfight with the homophobic wings of the party; a populist argument already discussed in Chapter 5. This often involves heavily over-hyping his achievements (and ignoring any broken promises) and emphasising how he ‘overrides Republican objections’ (see Figure 6.14). Similarly common are attacks against the media and/or liberal-aligned LGBT+ organisations, who are cast as giving Trump insufficient credit for his ‘historic’, ‘game-changing’, achievements. The overall theme is a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) positioning of Trump as both *above* the party’s dogma, and close to the LGBT+ community, with ‘Gay Inc’ (see Chapter 5) far away. Furthermore, it can be read as a discourse-historical (Reisgl and Wodak, 2016) recontextualisation of his *words* to the effect of LGBT+ equality, being paramount over the party’s *actions*, such as publishing a homophobic platform.



Figure 6.14: **Tweet 0659**, which *venerates* Trump by reinforcing the distancing dynamic (Wodak, 2021) between him and the wider party and casts him as a much needed, bold, loose-cannon leader who isn’t constrained by Republican dogma. The important element here is the emphasis on Trump ‘overriding’ the party; a dialectical-relational positioning of him as being firmly in the driving seat (Fairclough, 2016). ‘All Americans’ is a common code-phrase used by LCR to mean ‘LGBT+ people’, using the language of nationalistic patriotism to socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) sanitise their community in the eyes of the political right. It further provides a verbal challenge to homophobes by including the LGBT+ community in the nation, implying one cannot be a homophobe *and* a patriot. Readers should note however that the *Washington Blade* article linked therein has since been edited to reflect that the LGBT+ protections in the USMCA deal were watered down by the Trump administration from their earlier drafts. This minimises the ability of Trump or his supporters to claim some historic pro-LGBT+ victory on his part. (Johnson, 2018).

Just as with LCR’s populist Islamophobic rhetoric, these discourses *venerating* Trump come in flashpoints, where particular historical events trigger an outpouring of loyalty from LCR. As mentioned previously, the first theme is the Pulse Nightclub/2016 RNC narrative, in which Trump was *venerated* by LCR as the needed, essential leader who would shield them from the spectre of ‘radical Islamic terrorism’. The second was his 2019 initiative to decriminalise homosexuality, which helped cement LCR’s support for anti-globalism in the form of narratives about Trump (and America) necessarily leading the free world and acting unilaterally to liberate oppressed gays overseas. It is this narrative that ties *veneration* of Trump to that of Richard Grenell, as previously stated. The third was his AIDS policy, which was tepid to the point of ambivalence for his first two years. For instance, he failed to replace AIDS-related personnel from the Obama era, including those that resigned in frustration at his inaction (Schoettes, 2017). LCR conveniently ignore this ambivalence, and instead focus solely on Trump’s markedly increased commitment to fighting AIDS in America as of his 2019 budget¹², which included negotiating deals with

¹²This was paired with a quietly (but significantly) reduced commitment to the fight against HIV/AIDS

Gilead to make more HIV medication widely accessible. Whilst this was undoubtedly a good thing, LCR, predictably, aggrandised this to make Trump appear saintly.

Figure 6.15: **Tweet 0789** (above, left), and an excerpt from the *Fox News* opinion piece linked therein (above, right). The Tweet has been partially censored and the article cannot be referenced, in order to protect the identity of the Tweet's author, who also penned the article. The article aggrandises Trump's success as 'ending' AIDS in America. Discourse historical analysis notes that LCR conflate the effort to end the disease, with its eventual success, and casually write off the efforts of other Presidents subliminally, both in the past and future (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). Granted, this tweet was sent whilst Trump was still in office, but the eradication of AIDS can only ever have been an extremely long-term goal, which would need to be shepherded through multiple Presidents. Even if Trump had won a second term, his successor, and possibly several more Presidents thereafter, would have had an impact on 'ending AIDS in America'. This recontextualises the *future* as irrelevant, and makes it Trump's win. In a wider sense, the article's primary concern is attacking LGBT+ advocacy groups for supposedly not giving Trump the credit he deserves and accusing them of 'Trump derangement syndrome', making this a populist argument (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) against the gay left and the media, of the sort seen in Chapter 5.

By the time of the 2020 election, LCR were promoting Trump as the 'most pro-LGBT+ President of all time' off the back of these achievements, categorically putting them above the work of any previous administration, and casting him as a lone crusader against homophobia. Over the course of these narratives, representative examples of which are all provided in inset figures, a picture emerges that Trump is a bold leader who is unafraid to break with the precedent of his party and force it to become a pro-LGBT+ institution. Trump's leadership is constructed as essential in making America a pro-LGBT+ force in the world, where another man would leave LGBT+ people at the mercy of their true enemy; 'radical Islam'. The aggrandisement of Trump goes hand in hand with LCR's wider subliminal Islamophobia, both as a populist-racist message that simultaneously discredits the left (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) and as a broader homonationalist effort that incorporates liberal and illiberal anti-Islamic sentiment (Puar, 2007, 2013) (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) (Uenal et al, 2021). Furthermore, any contextual negatives about Trump are ignored; such as his early haphazard approach to AIDS being overlooked in favour of his renewed commitment to fixing it later in his Presidency. It is as though LCR are willing to ignore every step backwards that Trump makes in favour of celebrating his strides forward. Discourse-historical analysis demonstrates this as a broad recontextualisation of Trump's forward moves as the only ones which count, celebrating his victories even though he is ultimately *behind* the starting line (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

overseas, proposing billions in cuts to PEPFAR (this was blocked by congress (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2020)) whilst Trump was simultaneously promising that he was committed to defeating AIDS worldwide by 2030 (Cohen, 2019) (Bassett, 2020). This was counter-intuitive to say the least.



Figure 6.16: **Tweet 0979**, which *venerates* Trump as the ‘most important’ contributor to the Ready Set PrEP programme, and uses loyalty narratives to attack the HRC. Dialectical-relational analysis positions Trump as the prime mover in the fight against HIV, and the HRC as jealous partisans. This latter point is socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) implied, and relies on readers understanding LCR’s wider criticism of ‘Gay Inc’ in order to cohere itself. Whilst the thread of HRC’s tweets that this references *does* mention the Trump administration (in an article linked in an earlier Tweet (HRC, 2019), there is no direct thanks given to Trump. Considering HRC are clearly supportive of the policy, LCR are likely correct in their implied statement that this is a partisan omission. Some of LCR’s claims about being at the business end of partisan treatment within the LGBT+ community are based in truth, something that serves to harden their beliefs.

There are, of course, other, more generalised, comments. Of the 52 Tweets to *venerate* Trump, 16 make generalised statements about his greatness, whilst the other 36 reference his LGBT+ policy. These are without a unifying theme, beyond aggrandising a variety of Trump’s achievements to make him appear ground-breaking, historic and trailblazing, culminating in **Tweet 1248** that confidently called Trump ‘the greatest President of my lifetime’ (see Figure 6.19). Not simply the most pro-LGBT+ President, but wholeheartedly aggrandising Trump over decades worth of Presidential administrations from both parties. Dialectical-relational, and discourse-historical, analyses doesn’t have to do a lot of heavy lifting to demonstrate this as an effort to put Trump on a pedestal, and overly aggrandise his work (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). In order to fully demonstrate this however, some context is needed.

The bar for being a pro-LGBT+ President is admittedly *very* low. As a result it *is* possible to construct an argument in which Trump crosses that threshold. Most Presidents have, either benignly or maliciously, ignored LGBT+ people, and there has been bipartisan opposition to the advancement of their rights. For example, the persecution of the LGBT+ community from federal employment in the 1940s and 1950s began under Harry Truman (Democrat) (D’Emilio, 1983 [1998]), and the neglect of the community during the AIDS crisis occurred under Ronald Reagan (Republican), whilst the Democrats were quiet on the issue, so as to not appear to favour ‘special interests’ (Proctor, 2022a). Presidents being willing to openly support the community, or give lip service to doing so, is comparatively recent, beginning with the verbal support given to LGBT+ military service from the Clinton administration onwards. That said, Bill Clinton himself was, arguably, a net negative for the community thanks to his signing of the *Defence of Marriage Act* (H.R.3396 – 104th Congress) and the implementation of *Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell*.

Beyond the appointment of judges who went on to rule in pro-LGBT+ cases, which is, at best, a very indirect way of crediting a President as being pro-LGBT+, and at worst, a total misnomer¹³, Trump’s only true competition for being the ‘most pro-LGBT+ President’,

¹³See the commentary on Anthony Kennedy in Chapter 4.



Figure 6.17: **Tweet 1028**, confidently stating that ‘Trump is objectively the most pro-gay President in history’, and linking to a *Post-Millennial* article that aggrandises his every achievement and casually ignores all the downsides (White, 2020). It also creates the kind of loyalty narratives mentioned in the body of the thesis. It attacks the political left and media for not giving Trump proper credit; populist arguments that paint an elite media establishment as the enemy (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates this to be an open-and-shut recontextualisation of Trump’s achievements as being without fault.



Figure 6.18: **Tweet 1025**, which links to a *Politico* article (Oprysko, 2020). The tweet and article focus on Trump’s statement that he would not be opposed to voting for a gay man, and his expressed praise for Pete Buttigieg being able to run. This is a rare moment of genuine bipartisanship by LCR, who celebrate the fact that a gay man can openly run for President, even though they are opposed to him politically (their tone would sour on Buttigieg immediately after he joined the Biden administration). More importantly, they use the statement as evidence of Trump’s apparent qualities as a trailblazer who ‘leads by example’, again positioning him as superior to his party (Fairclough, 2016).

at the time, was Barack Obama. Most of the advancements in LGBT+ rights during the Obama administration occurred judicially, and (as LCR would remind people during the

2020 election) he and Joe Biden were publicly opposed to equal marriage when first running for office¹⁴. To Trump's credit, he was *not* similarly opposed to the idea when he ran for President in 2016, a fact that LCR tout repeatedly. Obama went on to support the *United States v Windsor* (2013) ruling to the point of refusing to defend it, despite the federal government being the defendant in the case¹⁵. He further gave support to *Obergefell v Hodges* (2015) as well, and signed the *Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act* (H.R.2965 - 111th Congress) into law. Where Obama has a series of positive *actions* to his name, but some early negative *comments* about marriage to his discredit; Trump's record is much more mixed. Many of his beneficial acts amounted to lip-service, or the means to an end in diplomatically isolating Iran, and his anti-trans record remains decidedly negative. Whether his positive actions, like putting the first LGBT+ person in the cabinet and increasing funding for the fight against AIDS *do* outweigh Obama's actions, or not, is an open question. Nevertheless it is safe to say that simply qualifying him as 'the most Pro-LGBT+ President' is a partisan minefield of a statement, and, indeed, a case could be made that some of his negative acts are *worse* than those of his negligent predecessors from either main party. The waters on this topic are murky indeed. Making this argument necessarily involves serious recontextualisation of history (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).



Figure 6.19: **Tweet 0625** (top) and **Tweet 1248** (bottom), both of which are clear examples of *VoA* concerning Donald Trump. The former implicitly credits Trump as a larger than life President by virtue of winning 'the most important election of our lifetimes' and then discredits all Democratic criticism of his policies as tantamount to sore loser behaviour. Discourse-historical analysis has no difficulty in demonstrating this narrative to be a recontextualisation of history (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016); all criticism of Trump is invalid, and all other elections in this generation are unimportant. For context, readers are reminded that one of these elections saw the appointment of the first Black President. This can also be read as a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) priming of the reader to believe even more in Trump's greatness; the victor of America's most important political contest. The latter says the quiet part out loud, explicitly extolling Trump as the 'greatest President of my life'. **Tweet 1248** is the final *VoA* tweet of any kind in the sample, it is fitting then that it is the most blatant of all.

What is clear when assessing the *reverence* of Donald Trump, and his proxy, Grenell, is that LCR view him uncritically as the best thing ever to happen to the White House. They have built up a steady image of him as a pro-LGBT+ crusader, hanging on his every offhand comment, sometimes rendering it devoid of context in order to present him in a grand light. Crucial to this is his apparent separation from Republican precedent, embodying him as the champion in LCR's populist crusade against *Right-Wing Homophobia* (Mudde, 2004)

¹⁴See the commentary on *Left-Wing Homophobia* in Chapter 5.

¹⁵The US Government was represented by Congress' Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group (BLAG)

(Laclau, 2005)¹⁶. This implicitly makes Trump almost *messianic* in quality; the great leader who will push the party into the future. Grenell is his agent in this, as Trump’s foreign policy is used as evidence of both men’s vision and leadership. This is tied to LCR’s zero-sum view of the world as being backwards by varying degrees, with the US rhetorically located at the top of the pile, as the un-accountable moral arbiter (Fairclough, 2016). In doing this, they position themselves as *properly* appreciative of his efforts, unlike other LGBT+ groups who refuse to credit Trump where it is deserved. This is an implicit bargain of loyalty for support that demonstrates ‘Homo-authoritarianism’.

In terms of quantitative evidence, the results are mixed once again. Richard Grenell’s increased *veneration* is clear numerically; despite his longstanding membership of LCR, the group only begin to put him on a pedestal *after* his appointment by Trump, placing all 22 VoA tweets concerning him firmly in the *Trump Presidency*, and generating a statistically significant increase ($R=0.055$, $p=0.049$). This was backed up by clear majorities in the *Random Samples*¹⁷. Furthermore, the tone in which LCR speak about Grenell clearly identifies him as a revered leader by the group. The quantitative evidence is much less clear surrounding Trump, since, alone of the VoA subjects, LCR began to idolise him during the Obama era, and the percentage of *Presidency* tweets that contained VoA coding about him only rose by 1.1 percent, falling well short of significance ($R=0.020$, $p=0.470$). Furthermore, the *Obama-era Random Sample* contained 5 tweets that *venerated* Trump, a score that only a single *Trump-era Random Sample* could equal, with the rest all lower¹⁸. That being said, the qualitative evidence suggesting that LCR have come to increasingly *venerate* Trump is overwhelming; it is best embodied by **Tweet 0625** which claimed that he had won ‘the most important election of our lifetimes’, and **Tweet 1248** which referred to him as ‘the greatest president of my life’. Prior to his Presidency, LCR *venerated* Trump for being willing to break with Republican tradition, by the end they were fawning over him as not just the most obviously pro-LGBT+ President ever (a dubious claim, as previously discussed) but putting all of his achievements on a pedestal. We may safely reject the Null Hypothesis on both counts; Trump (and through him, Grenell) is an idol in Log Cabin’s eyes.

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Veneration of the Authority* concerning *Richard Grenell* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**
- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Veneration of the Authority* concerning *Donald Trump* since he came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

Conclusions on VoA

Having looked at the specific ways that LCR *venerate* these subjects separately, we must conclude with what LCR’s use of the variable tells us overall. Returning first to the quantitative evidence discussed at the very beginning of this section, we know that LCR substantially increased their overall use of VoA after Trump became President, with 74 of the 80 VoA tweets occurring after his inauguration. This increase is less than 1 percent short of statistical significance ($R=0.052$, $p=0.059$). Likewise, a majority of the *Random Samples* from the Trump-era contained more VoA tweets than the Obama sample¹⁹. I,

¹⁶See Chapter 5 for further details

¹⁷See Figures A.28-29 in Appendix A.

¹⁸See Figures A.30-31 in Appendix A.

¹⁹See Figures A.22-23 in Appendix A.

thus, knew that we would have enough quantitative data to support the rejection of the Null Hypothesis confidently. The qualitative context, always the more important strand of this mixed-methods analysis, has more than borne this out.

The language LCR use to *venerate* each of these figures paints a deeply authoritarian picture, one that glorifies the autocrat-adjacent idea of a strong and forceful leader who projects strength, directly related to their view of America as the greatest country in the world, and the moral nightwatchman of its contemporaries. Nikki Haley's rejection of UN authority, Grenell's forceful ambassadorial style, Trump's decriminalisation work, tied explicitly to his opposition to Iran and the Islamic World; these all suggest that LCR view proper leadership in a subliminally dictatorial way. Their favourite form of leader is one who commands, and makes the world obey; one who operates from a position of unquestioned American moral superiority.

Furthermore, LCR are using their *veneration* of these figures in a way that explicitly demonstrates their loyalty to them; not just by fawning, but by using these narratives to attack others, and undermine criticism, and accountability. They attack anyone who criticises Melania, or refuses to style for her, as being improperly political, whilst buying wholesale into her fashion and beauty as the *expressly political* extension of her husband's role as Head of State; reactionary logic bordering on 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). They turn a similar hostility to the media in Trump's defence also; quick to show their appreciation for every little thing he does for them, whilst bending over backwards to identify the ingratitude of others, and subliminally qualify their own superiority by comparison. They work in populist anti-left and anti-media rhetoric into their *VoA* narratives wherever possible (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

In short, this section reveals that LCR not only engage in *more veneration* than they used to, but it has become a glorification of autocratic strength, and a way of LCR qualifying themselves as properly appreciative of Trump, whilst distancing themselves from the ungrateful 'TDS' gays, whose criticisms must surely be false, deranged or 'petty'. A clear demonstration of LCR's open willingness to *refuse* to hold Trump to account in order to keep receiving his support: *Homo-Authoritarian* behaviour, plain and simple.

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Veneration of the Authority* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests.
- Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

6.4 Dismissal of Accountability: Illegitimate Investigations, Senate Show-Trials, and Burgled Ballots.

The most explicitly authoritarian behaviour studied in this thesis is is a willing *Dismissal of Accountability* (DoA), or 'sabotage' of accountability, in Mariles Glasius' (2018) parlance. An authoritarian follower naturally seeks to keep their leader free from things that can curtail their power. In autocratic states, the authority's power is often completely unchecked, giving them maximum intrusion into people's lives, license to engage in sultanistic cronyism and to plunder the economy for their own benefit.

In democratic states, particularly the US with its system of checks and balances, the executive lack dictatorial power. As a result, an authoritarian President must seek to undermine the guardrails on their authority. For authoritarian followers, who willingly subsume themselves to the control of charismatic leaders, it is unacceptable that their preferred leader

have their power weakened, thus they celebrate their efforts to act unilaterally (Adorno et al, 1950 [2019]) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009). For a *populist* authoritarian; any force that does curtail the wishes of the authority, is an illegitimate enemy of ‘the people’ (Urbinati, 2019). Tweets that expressed such scepticism, or denial, of the various mechanisms that restrain the Trump administration, either its personas, or its policies, coded for this variable. There were 60 of them in the sample²⁰.

In LCR’s rhetoric, *DoA* has spiked beyond question and appears in several contexts. Log Cabin turn their ire on any branch of the government that investigates Trump’s actions, questions his decisions, or speaks out against him. It includes undermining the authority of congress to vet Trump’s appointments, something that is integral to the power-sharing between legislature and executive. It continues with dismissing the allegations of Russian conspiracy in the 2016 election, and undermining the legislature’s authority to investigate them. It ends by undermining the credibility of the 2020 election. There are also allusions to Trump’s foreign policy, which is, once again, celebrated for denying the authority of other countries and institutions to hold America (and, by extension, the Trump administration) accountable. In LCR’s mind, Trump cannot legitimately be checked, investigated, censored, or even voted out of office, nor can anyone exert any form of control over his administration’s policies.

Unaccountable Foreign Policy: Sticking it to ‘Mr Volkswagen’.

This section begins in the same manner as the previous one, with **Tweet 0420** (see Figure 6.20, or 6.5 in the previous section), which *venerated* Nikki Haley. This tweet also codes for *Dismissal of Accountability* because Haley was glorified for openly bragging that the Trump administration did not recognise the UN’s authority to hold it accountable for its foreign policy actions. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) is our most useful CDA resource here, as it will be throughout this section, since the positionality of authority figures relative to their critics is central to understanding *DoA* rhetoric. In this case, the tweet constructs America as superior in authority to the UN, and able to dictate what it could, and could not, do anything about. Furthermore, it positions the upholding of this superior status as being properly adjacent to the White House. So not only *is* America unaccountable to the UN, but it’s the job of the President to maintain that status, and remind the UN of it. It was one of two tweets in the sample to thus glorify an un-accountable foreign policy. The second was **Tweet 0649**, which praised the speeches given by Suzanne Somers and Richard Grenell at the 2018 Zionist Organisation of America (ZOA) gala (see Figure 6.21).

Whilst **Tweet 0649** did not contain any video or transcription of the speech itself, footage of the speech was obtained from YouTube and used in the coding of the tweet (JBS, 2018). This was because the tweet was praiseworthy of Grenell and Somers’ remarks, and thus they needed to be understood, to put LCR’s communicative acts in context. The speeches lambasted the Iranian regime for being ‘infected’ with antisemitism, praised Trump as America’s ‘most pro-Israel President’, and constructed Germany as a hotbed for neo-Nazis. Amidst this, Somers praises Grenell for telling ‘Mr Volkswagen’ (sic) ‘You’re gonna stop selling to Iran. Today. Now’. Lots of tweets in the sample have implied that Grenell’s job is to dictate to other countries what their policies must be. But this was the only one to openly celebrate it and make it explicit. Grenell, in this narrative, walked into a German business *in Germany* and told them what to do. What separates this from other pro-Grenell tweets is that this was the only one to make Grenell look

²⁰See Figure A.32 in Appendix A.



Figure 6.20: **Tweet 0421**, which references Nikki Haley’s speech to the UN on the moving of the US embassy to Jerusalem. It appeared earlier in Figure 6.5, and is included again here for illustration’s sake. It is discussed in the body of the text.



Figure 6.21: **Tweet 0649**, focussing on Suzanne Somers’ and Richard Grenell’s remarks at the *Zionist Organisation of America* gala in 2018. It is discussed in the body of the text. The full video of the gala speeches can be found in this thesis’ bibliography; Somers comes on stage 1 hour and 18 minutes in, followed by Grenell at 1 hour, 26 minutes. (JBS, 2018).

like ‘Mr Volkswagen’s’ *boss*; an authority figure that German businesses had no ability to resist. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) has an easy job of analysing the positionality here. LCR celebrate the economic dictation of other countries, and their businesses, to follow America’s, and specifically the Trump administration’s, will.

Appointments: Undermining the Legislature.

Ten further tweets in the sample utilise *Dismissal of Accountability* to attack the appointment process for Trump’s nominees. This particularly references Richard Grenell, Patrick



Figure 6.22: **Tweet 702**, which references the blocking of Patrick Bumatay’s appointment to the 9th circuit. It equates the Republican control of Congress, with the illegitimacy of Democratic objections, and subliminally affords the Congressional Republicans a back-seat role as well. Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reveals this as a recontextualisation of a GOP legislative election win, into a fundamental de-legitimisation of the loser as a valid political entity. This is behaviour reflective of many populists in power (Urbinati, 2019). Furthermore, dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates a rhetorical positioning of GOP legislators *under* Trump, rather than alongside him. In the ‘text-internal world’ (Fillmore, 1985) it is the job of Trump’s congressional allies to rubber-stamp his decisions, and certainly not to appropriately vet them, especially not if the concerns behind that vetting come from Democrats.

Bumatay²¹, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett.

I begin with Grenell and Bumatay, as the tweets referencing them are tonally similar. Grenell’s appointment is covered in four tweets, Bumatay in one. Both of them had their appointments slowed in Congress, due to repeated hearings, and questioning by Democratic congresspersons. Bumatay’s initial appointment was eventually dropped, due to sustained opposition by Senators Kamala Harris and Dianne Feinstein. In their tweets, LCR object to this loudly, questioning how the party that does not control Congress has the authority to slow down, or oppose, Trump’s appointments? This represents a discourse-historical recontextualisation of the Democratic loss of Congressional control, as an erasure of their political legitimacy (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). In the case of Grenell, Mitch McConnell was similarly drawn into the firing line, as LCR penned an open letter to him, and organised a petitioning drive, to get him to bring Grenell’s nomination up for a vote, knowing that a party-line vote could not be resisted by the Democrats. It is possible that this was a (very) veiled organising effort against GOP discrimination, since with the Republicans in control of Congress at the time, getting Grenell into his ambassadorial post should have been a formality. This begs the question as to why McConnell was slow to act? The open letter focuses the issue around a Democrat-led ‘logjam’ which the Republicans could have broken; cementing liberals as the contextual ‘enemy’ in this narrative. But it is possible that LCR were reading *Right-Wing Homophobia* into McConnell’s reluctance. In the case of Patrick Bumatay, however, there is no uncertainty; LCR openly question how Harris and Feinstein were ‘in any place to make demands’ (see Figure 6.22). In both instances, this represents an explicit refutation of Congress’ authority to question, critique or block the nominations of the President. The implied undercurrent to these tweets is that since Trump has made a decision, McConnell *must*, therefore, enact it. Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) CDA demonstrates this as a rhetorical casting of McConnell as *subordinate* to Trump, not the leader of an equal government body. Trump makes the decision, and Congress must obey.

²¹An LGBT+ judge, who Trump sought to appoint to the 9th circuit. This was initially blocked, but Bumatay was eventually appointed after a second attempt. He remains on the 9th circuit court at time of writing.



Figure 6.23: **Tweet 441**, another tweet highlighting appointments, an effort to force Mitch McConnell's hand in appointing Grenell, whose appointment was being stalled by Democratic opposition. Like the case described in Figure 6.22 it both undermines the authority of the Democrats by virtue of their minority and casts the wider Congress as little more than Trump's rubber-stamp.

Where Amy Coney Barrett is concerned, the narrative is less about flouting Congress and more flouting *Democrats* specifically. Her appointment, mere weeks ahead of the 2020 election, proved the Republican precedent of *not* letting a President confirm a justice in an election year²² to be a lie. Democrats were, understandably, angered by this. As a result, LCR's knee-jerk defences of ACB code for *DoA* by definition, since they are responses to legitimate concerns about Trump's ability to actually appoint someone to the court so close to an election. There are two such tweets about ACB in the sample; one attacking liberal ideas of female empowerment, and one openly mocking the Democratic Party, and Hillary Clinton specifically.

The former case was part of a video testimony in **Tweet 1197** by the conservative, lesbian, activist, Arielle Scarcell. The video, amongst other things, attacked the left for promoting obesity as body positivity; claimed that left-wing feminism excludes women who don't 'worship at the altar of Roe v Wade' (sic); and constructed the 'woke mob' as attacking lesbians for not being attracted to trans women (see Figure 6.24). What coded this tweet for *DoA* was her claims that appointing Amy Coney Barrett was the ultimate tribute to Ruth Bader Ginsberg's legacy, since it would appoint another strong woman to the court, but that the left refused to acknowledge this because ACB's traditionalism, and Catholicism, did not meet their liberal standards of proper womanhood. Discourse-historical CDA (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that this is not only a recontextualisation of Trump's last minute appointment as *good*, in spite of GOP precedent, it also reforms the narrative to cast those who speak out against Barrett as illegitimate sexists. Finally, the fact that Ginsberg was a staunch liberal for her whole career, and Barrett is much further to the right, is recontextualised as meaningless compared to them both being 'strong women'; Ginsberg's *gender* is her legacy, not her convictions. The second tweet was much more straightforward; a video linked in **Tweet 1219** featured Mitch McConnell's statement that appointing Barrett was his 'birthday present' to Hillary Clinton (see Figure 6.25). This is as close to openly rubbing it in Democratic faces as one gets; open trolling that was met with applause. This trolling, both, denied the authority of the Democratic Party, and the congressional precedent that McConnell himself helped to set, with the blocking of Merrick Garland in 2016. Dialectical-relational analysis demonstrates that by reproducing this rhetoric, LCR are positioning the Democratic Party as worthy of scorn and derision, and not a legitimate political opposition.

²²Supposedly set when the Republican-controlled senate blocked Barack Obama from appointing Merrick Garland to SCOTUS, to replace Antonin Scalia.



Figure 6.24: **Tweet 1197**, featuring a video testimony by Arielle Scardelle recorded for *OUTSpoken*. It, amongst other things, claims that ‘progressive policies are destroying the LGBT community’ and calls for the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett. It is discussed in the body of the text.



Figure 6.25: **Tweet 1219**, featuring a video of Mitch McConnell celebrating his ‘birthday present’ to Hillary Clinton; the confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court. It is discussed in the body of the text.

The only tweet to deal with Brett Kavanaugh’s appointment, **Tweet 0609**, moved the intended target again, away from the Democratic Party, and onto the women who testified against him. Attacks on the Democrats, and on Congress, can be read into the tweet’s implications; as with all the blockages to Trump’s appointments, LCR want to portray the issue as a witch-hunt. However, the explicit targets are Christine Blasey-Ford, Deborah Ramirez, Julie Swetnick, and Judy Munro-Leighton, who accused Kavanaugh of sexual assault. That their testimony appeared relatively late in Kavanaugh’s career, and in the appointment process, is taken by LCR as evidence that they were lying (see Figure 6.26). Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) straightforwardly demonstrates this as LCR recontextualising trauma and guilt as straightforward. In the text-internal-world (Fillmore, 1985), someone with a valid accusation against Kavanaugh would come forward *immediately*. This is a deeply masculinist construction of events, which neatly discards any fears on the part of the women coming forward to accuse a powerful man of a crime. Once again, LCR dismiss the validity of accountability measures, and construct the whole affair as being built on partisan lies; an effort to restrict Trump’s authority to

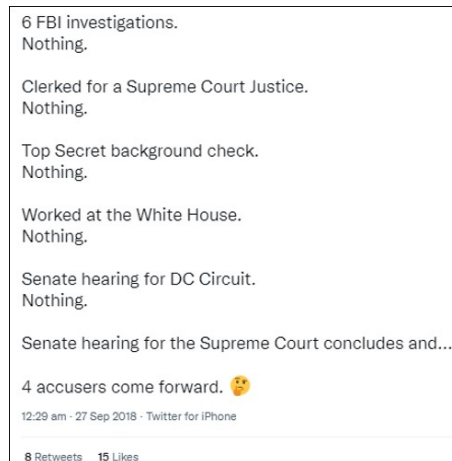


Figure 6.26: **Tweet 0609**, which references the Senate Hearings ahead of the appointment of Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court. It is a highly masculinist, offhand, dismissal of the accusations of sexual assault levelled at Kavanaugh. LCR disqualify the testimony by implication due to the lateness of its entry, implying that if it were true, the victims would have come forward sooner. In context, this caricatures the whole process as an illegitimate blockage to one of Trump’s appointments, rather than a necessary credibility check.

appoint Kavanaugh, which is illegitimate by definition.

6.4.1 Impeachments: Pointless Until Proven Guilty.

Moving on from Trump’s appointments, we turn to the next attempt to constrain Trump’s authority; his various scandals, and the 2019 impeachment process. Trump’s 2021 impeachment over the January 6th insurrection was *not* commented on by LCR in the sample, but the 2019 impeachment over the Ukraine scandal very much was. Once again, LCR clearly adopt the stance that all of this amounts to a liberal witch-hunt. The word ‘hoax’ appears more than once in the sample in reference to this, denying the validity of the process, and attacking the media for amplifying it.

LCR question the validity of the claims that Trump leant on Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to investigate the Biden family, but, interestingly, they also devote multiple tweets to mocking the very idea of impeachment itself. In **Tweet 0976**, LCR actively deny the legitimacy of the process by mocking the panellists, claiming that they are not well known, or expert, enough, to have a relevant opinion, and trying to stoke populist resentment of them (see Figure 6.27). This is a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) positioning of Trump’s critics as unintelligent and uninformed, which feeds a populist narrative of the political establishment bringing in ‘experts’ that America does not recognise in order to unseat ‘the people’s’ chosen president (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Following immediately on the back of this was **Tweet 0977**, which actively mocked the panellists, or at least the standards by which they were brought in, by claiming that the next round of testimonies would come from known left-wing celebrities. Within that mockery came the subliminal message that the Republicans were somehow being blocked from giving proper testimony (see Figure 6.28). This is manifestly untrue, considering that President Trump was invited to attend and defend himself, and chose not to. A dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016), once again, demonstrates that the populist narrative from **Tweet 0976** is being reproduced, and a discourse-historical one recontextualises the entire proceedings as an un-funny joke, played by the Democrats at Trump’s expense (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

Rounding these criticisms out was **Tweet 0978** which disparaged the very idea of im-

peaching Trump at all. The tweet itself was a retweet from Chris Barron, another gay conservative, and former head of the group *GOProud* (now defunct). Barron claimed that the legal standards for impeachment did not add up to the facts, and that this would create a standard whereby every President was impeached on political grounds (see Figure 6.29). Once again, this is a deliberate effort at *DoA*, since the impeachment process is intended as a robustness check on American democracy; a necessary investigation in the event that a President is guilty of a crime, and a chance for them to exonerate themselves. LCR recontextualised the entire endeavour as politically motivated, regardless of the evidence linking Trump to the crime (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). LCR don't engage at all with the idea that Trump *should* even be investigated, or that this presents an issue. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) presents Trump, in LCR's narrative, as ultimately above all legitimate suspicion, and a discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading demonstrates that LCR are rhetorically reformatting the entire process of impeachment; If Trump cannot absolutely be proven guilty, it is illegitimate to even *try* to question his actions.

Interestingly, **Tweet 0978** describes the process of impeachment as creating a 'de facto parliamentary system'. What the author presumably means is that this will create a system in which the legislature is more empowered than the President²³. It is possible to read a further subtext of *DoA* into this, one that has authoritarian implications; that LCR are delegitimising the very idea of legislative power, in favour of supporting a unitary executive, that is wholly unaccountable to Congress. They present the essential (and coded 'good') quality of Presidentialism as the rule *by a President*, and not a legislative chamber. It *is* subtext to be sure, and perhaps even wholly unintentional, but the fact that it can be inferred from the text is worthy of consideration.



Figure 6.27: **Tweet 0976**, which straightforwardly dismisses the validity of the 2019 impeachment hearings by claiming that the panelists weren't well known enough. It is discussed in the body of the text.



Figure 6.28: **Tweet 0977**, in which the panellists at the 2019 impeachment hearings are mocked by LCR, who implicitly accuse the Democrats of having improperly low standards as to who they bring in, and being motivated by leftism. It is discussed in the body of the text.

6.4.2 Elections: It's Only Cheating When You Lose.

The final, and most glaring, element of *DoA* comes when dealing with elections. The general election is the foremost accountability measure for a US President, whereby their

²³This is, at best, an oversimplification of Parliamentaryism, in which the executive *does* rule, but requires a legislative majority, and the confidence of its members.

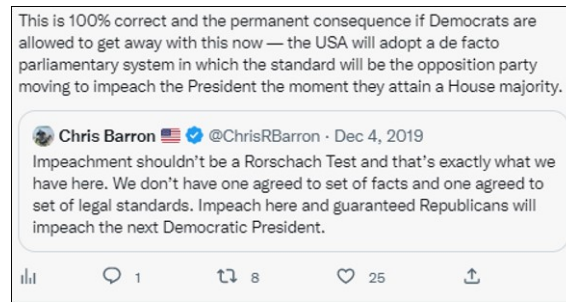


Figure 6.29: **Tweet 0978**, a retweet from former *GOProud* head, Chris Barron, which accuses the Democrats of trying to impeach Trump on solely political grounds. It is discussed in the body of the text.

continued presence in office is left to the will of the people. Whatever criticisms may be levelled at the US electoral process, be it the electoral college or its majoritarian system more generally, the principle of it being an effective measure by which to constrain the authority of a leader remains true. LCR engage in *DoA* regarding elections in two main ways, firstly concerning the Robert Mueller report into the Trump campaign's alleged collusion with the Russian government in 2016, and, secondly, surrounding the controversial 2020 election. To summarise their attitude in a nutshell, whether or not they view election controversies as legitimate entirely depends on whether or not Trump *won* said election.



Figure 6.30: **Tweet 0658**, which links to, and attacks, an *NBC* article for commenting on the House popular vote. (Smith, 2018). It is analysed in the body of the text.

A single tweet in the sample promotes a *Dismissal of Accountability* regarding the 2018 Midterms; **Tweet 0658**. Seizing on an *NBC News* article about the Democratic Party's gains in the House of Representatives in 2018 (Smith, 2018), LCR decide to attack the article's specific wording of 'House popular vote'. The article in question comments on the disparity in total vote numbers between the Democrats and Republicans, which was about 8 million votes at the time (ibid), and would eventually be recorded as just over 9.85 million²⁴. In the internal world of the tweet, the 'House popular vote' *does not exist*; the very concept is 'garbage' invented by liberals, and that the 'mainstream media' is discredited for commenting on it (see Figure 6.30). Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil

²⁴The Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives recorded the total votes cast for US House of Representatives as 60,319,623 for Democratic Candidates and 50,467,181 for Republican candidates, creating an advantage of 9,852,442 to the Democrats. Incidentally, the Democratic Party received almost double that advantage in the popular vote for the Senate, an election in which the Republican Party nevertheless remained in control of the chamber: Democratic Senatorial candidates won 50,433,508 votes to the Republicans' 33,140,380, creating a popular vote advantage of 17,293,128 (Johnson, 2019)

and Wodak, 2016) reveals this as a deeply authoritarian recontextualisation of how elections work; the popular vote isn't just something that doesn't affect the majoritarian election outcome, it *does not exist at all*, and even discussing it is illegitimate. This represents *Dismissal of Accountability*, because it openly decries the idea that the Republicans are unpopular, or that there may be questions about the validity of their election wins. The fact of the matter is that the Republicans *are* the minority supported party and have lost the popular vote in many notable elections, but are kept in power through the persistence of the US majoritarian system. But in LCR's mind, this is either untrue, or irrelevant, and it is wrong of the media to, in any way, cast aspersions on the validity of Republican power.

Continuing the theme of 'it is wrong to question Republican victories', we move to LCR's construction of their party's recent Presidential election performances. There were concerns that the 2016 election had been interfered with by the Russian government, in order to guarantee a Trump campaign victory. In multiple tweets across the sample, LCR address these concerns, which were eventually the subject of a US Government investigation, headed by Robert Mueller. In most comments, LCR do not use language that suggests a *Dismissal of Accountability*, for example they talk about the Russian 'hack' of the 2016 DNC, as a way of redirecting the accusation that the election itself was hacked. All such language is designed to buff the legitimacy of Trump's win, but only when the discussion turns to the Mueller Report itself, which was delivered in 2019, do LCR actually seek to subvert the legitimacy of the issue. In a series of tweets over late 2018, and early 2019, LCR constructed the report as a waste of taxpayer money (see Figure 6.31). LCR cite the cost of the report's investigations more than once, as a way of creating a classic populist anti-elite argument (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis allows us to unpick this further. The taxpayer, a stand-in for the American people more generally, is rhetorically positioned as a victim of the elite, who are illegitimately wasting their money in an effort to undermine the president that 'the people' elected. What separates these tweets from those that simply correct people on the Russian hack, is that the latter only argue that the nature of Russian involvement was not as initially feared; whereas, the former construct the act of investigating Russian collusion as having been illegitimate in the first place, as none of the attempted collusion could be concretely linked back to Trump. Just as with Trump's 2019 impeachment, discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that LCR contextualise guilt as something that cannot be even legitimately *considered*, unless it is already proven true. Rather than 'innocent until proven guilty', guilt must be demonstrated before it can be legitimately proven; one must *have* the proof before one can *find* the proof. The entire process of determining guilt is turned in on itself.

In this text-internal-world (Fillmore, 1985), Trump's innocence was *assumed*, and the act of investigating him was an illegitimate exercise by the Democrats, who could not cope with the reality that he had won the 2016 election. What is particularly interesting is that LCR could have *celebrated* the Mueller report as a victory; an exoneration of Trump that proved the legitimacy of his administration. But instead, LCR engage in *Dismissal of Accountability* on Trump's behalf, by painting the investigation as a sham. In this construction, one cannot question Trump's victory legitimately, one must accept it.

It is interesting then, that this logic of *not* questioning election victories didn't carry over to Trump's defeat in 2020. Whilst LCR did not explicitly scaremonger about mail-in ballots to any substantive degree *ahead* of the election, They did join in the prevalent conspiracy theories that followed polling day. This included amplifying fears that the Democrats were

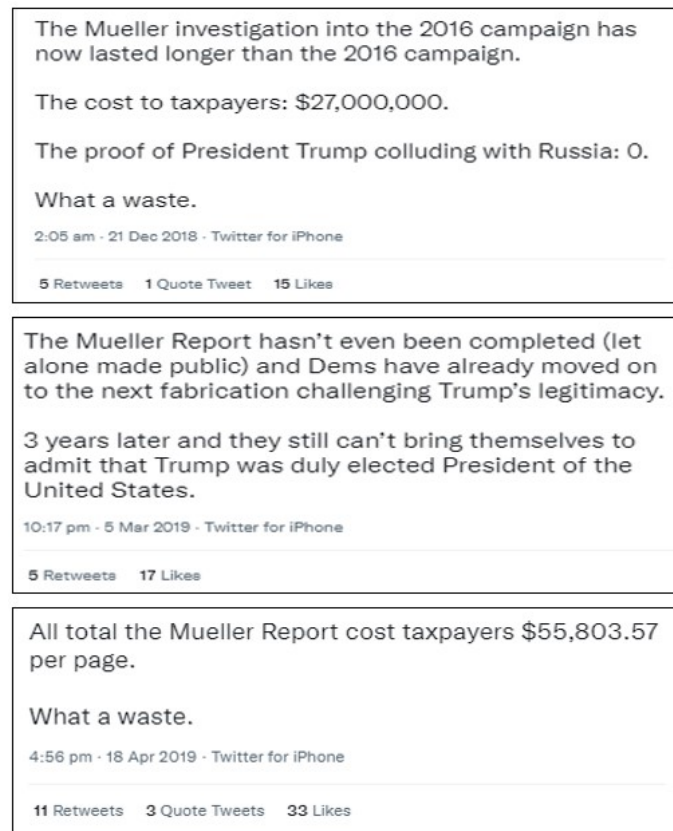


Figure 6.31: From top to bottom: **Tweets 0676, 0748 and 0774**, all of which straightforwardly dismiss the Mueller report. The conclusions of the report were that there was no concrete evidence to implicate Trump in colluding with Russia. It is discussed further in the body of the text.

barring Republicans from accessing the ballot counting process, so that they could cheat. Repeated calls for an election audit were made by LCR, who seized on rumoured flaws in the election *and* the occasional reported issue, as evidence that the whole process was fraudulent, and could not be accepted without a recount. Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that this is not only an effort at *DoA*, but also of doublethink (Orwell, 1949 [2000]): An election *victory* is defended from investigation no matter how suspicious. Meanwhile, an election *defeat* is treated as an injustice *to be investigated*, no matter how many safeguards were in place. Investigation as a necessary cap on authority is illegitimate when wielded *against Trump*, but is of the utmost necessity when wielded against a Democrat. Treating election losses as fraudulent is a behavioural trait common to populists in power (Urbinati, 2019), but what is so interesting here is how ready LCR are to play the ‘fraud’ both ways.

The tweets that directly address ballot countings leave the legitimacy of Biden’s victory open to interpretation, with one exception, which will be discussed later. Generally speaking, LCR were neither stating, nor implying that he actually *lost*; only that without an audit, the election cannot be legitimate (see Figure 6.32 for example). However, there are two tweets sent during the fallout of the election that make it all too clear that the group assumes that the only legitimate victory is a Republican one (see Figure 6.34). They do not live in an text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) where Biden could defeat Trump without cheating.

The first of these is **Tweet 1256**, sent on the 9th November, which discusses the possibility of the election going to the Supreme Court. LCR state that this would ‘put the Justice



Figure 6.32: **Tweet 1246**, which references the election of Adam Kochenderfer, who successfully won re-election as a County Commissioner in Oakland Co., Michigan in the 2020 elections. The local elections quickly self-reported a glitch that had counted a series of votes twice, which was rectified quickly (Schanz, 2020). LCR have extrapolated from this genuine voting anomaly, to circulate the argument that the entire 2020 election is likely fraudulent.



Figure 6.33: **Tweets 1241** (above) and **1242** (below), sent within 2 hours of each other from the same account. They cast aspersions on the ballot-counting process. That Democrats were controlling the ballot counting process in areas where they controlled local government, and denying the Republicans the ability to be present so that they could cheat, was a popular conspiracy theory at the time, one that was promoted by Trump. The author explicitly links the matter back to the impeachment, trying to de-legitimise the authority of the Democratic party, by presenting them as wanting to control politics from behind a curtain. LCR's accusations about 'Secret Impeachment Hearings' are false, Republicans were very much present, and Trump himself was invited to attend, though he declined. So LCR are not only circulating a conspiracy theory, they are doing so based on a factually incorrect reading of the 2019 impeachment.

in Poetic Justice’, and cite Joe Biden’s cross-examination of Clarence Thomas during his appointment to the court in 1991. Discourse-historical, and socio-cognitive analyses (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016) both highlight the use of the word ‘justice’; which implies that the Supreme Court will restore the ‘rightful’ result of the election, and hand it to Trump. Furthermore, this is portrayed as a kind of revenge on Thomas’ part, and a retroactive dismissal of the validity of Biden’s concerns in 1991. In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985), Thomas can now get vindication for his ‘illegitimate’ grilling ahead of his appointment, by throwing out Biden’s ‘illegitimate’ election. There is power in the choice of words, even in puns, and the clear meaning behind this is that LCR believe the correct outcome of the election is for the Supreme Court to dismiss Biden as a cheat.



Figure 6.34: **Tweets 1256** (top) and **1258** (bottom), which paint stark images of LCR’s commitment to *Dismissal of Accountability* regarding the 2020 election and deny the validity of Biden’s win. **Tweet 1258** is partially censored to hide the censor’s location, and protect their identity. Both are discussed in the body of the text.

The second tweet to send so clear and stark a message is **Tweet 1258**. It outright claims ‘Biden Was Not Elected’. The trend of these tweets was to shy away from openly denying that Biden had won, but I did inform readers that there was an exception to that rule, and **Tweet 1258** is it (see Figure 6.34). The tweet even *parodies* the idea of Biden accepting the title of President-elect. There is very little to dissect here, since CDA is normally best used for unpicking implied narratives, and the power-relations that inform word choices (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Fairclough, 2016) (Van Dijk, 2016). But, every so often, one’s research subjects say the quiet part out loud. This tweet is an open-and-shut dismissal of the idea that Biden could have legitimately won the 2020 election.

When taken together with the Mueller Report and LCR’s dismissive take on the 2018 election, we see a picture emerging of authoritarianism. LCR view elections as the process by which a *Republican* gains legitimacy. Any authority that might be wielded by Democrats afterwards is variously illegitimate, as is any questioning of the legitimacy of a Republican victory; whether that is pointing out voting discrepancies, checking the robustness of

the election, or claiming that the other side won. Combined, this represents a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) positioning of Trump, and the GOP, as properly *above* the election process. Such methods have been recontextualised as only being legitimate if the outcome is a Republican victory.

6.4.3 Conclusions on DoA

We can conclusively reject the Null Hypothesis regarding *Dismissal of Accountability*. LCR view any effort to constrain the authority of Trump as variously illegitimate. They celebrated Trump's administration publicly defying the authority of other countries, or of the UN; they want the Trump team to be able to go into Germany and dictate the behaviour of Germans in ways that benefit the US. Furthermore, they equate the ability to defy the UN with the necessary qualities for American leadership. Likewise, LCR seek to undermine the authority of Congress in general, and the Democratic party specifically, by portraying any cross-examination of Trump's appointees as witch-hunts, and subliminally reducing the role of a Republican majority to Trump's rubber stamp. The Democrats' minority status in Congress was taken as evidence that they had no authority whatsoever, and that any concerns on their part should be discarded. Likewise, the 2019 impeachment was similarly discredited by the group, evidence of a politically-motivated conspiracy in which the Democrats put Trump on trial without evidence.

What is most telling, however, is LCR's approach to elections; the validity of the election process being entirely dependent on whether a Republican won. The investigations into Russian collusion in 2016 were dismissed out of hand as a waste of taxpayer dollars, but when Trump started losing in 2020 LCR were clamouring for the guardrails on American democracy to be thrown back up. In doing so, they made it subliminally (and occasionally explicitly) clear that they viewed the only legitimate outcome of a US election to be a Republican victory; so much so that they do not believe in the concept of the popular vote (which would reveal the GOP's minority status) at all. If any pieces of evidence in this thesis demonstrate, without doubt, that the Log Cabin Republicans have become *Homo-Authoritarian*, it should be this. This is a group that believes so heavily in Trump's legitimacy that they want him in power without any of the robustness checks, balances, or electoral accountability that is normally afforded to Presidents; 'accountability sabotage' in blatant form (Glasius, 2018). LCR want no constraints on the authority of the President, only on his rivals.

We have focussed solely on the qualitative evidence here, and would be able to reject the Null Hypothesis squarely on that alone. However, it's worth also pointing out that, in terms of the numbers, there is a manifest, and statistically significant, increase in LCR tweets that utilise such rhetoric during the Trump administration. Indeed, all 60 of them appear during the Trump era, creating an increase significant to 99.9 percent confidence ($R=0.092$, $p=0.001$). Furthermore, this also led to a statistically significant increase observed against the *Random Samples* test as well, with 98.6 percent confidence ($R=0.101$, $p=0.014$)²⁵. We can be sure that this has gone from being language that LCR were not previously engaged in, to rhetoric that is now an active part of how LCR approach their relationship to authority figures.

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Dismissal of Accountability* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

²⁵See Figures A.33-34 in Appendix A.

6.5 Media Scepticism: From ‘Gay Inc’, to *OUTSpoken*.

Of all the variables concerning *Right-Wing Authoritarianism*, none were remotely as prevalent as *Media Scepticism*. As previously noted, these are directly concerned with LCR’s efforts to shape public narratives about them, their beliefs, and Trump. Sowing disbelief in the media is inseparable from authoritarianism. In an autocratic society, the authority simply censors the press heavy-handedly. But in a democratic society, an authoritarian leader is forced to weaponise disbelief in the press. The end result is similar, the authoritarian follower learns that some sources of news are illegitimate, some viewpoints deserve derision, and some beliefs are degenerate. They learn to consume *only* the news that reflects reality as their leader sees it.

When the Nazis raided the Berlin Institute of Sexology in 1933, and burned its library, they did more than contribute to the Holocaust. The act set Germany back decades in terms of LGBT+ acceptance, in a way that outlived Hitler by more than 20 years. Weimar Germany had been the gay capital of Europe, yet West Germany retained institutionally homophobic laws (that were written by the Nazi Party, and left unchanged) until 1969. This is, of course, an extreme example, but LCR reproducing a narrative about the illegitimacy of certain voices in popular discourse points to a willingness to see those ideas and worldviews removed. A book, or article, is only as good as its capacity to be read; remove the reader, or burn the book, the result is the same.

Media Scepticism appears in 214 tweets²⁶. The severity of such tweets varies, from mild rebukes of the media, to out-and-out attacks. Dialectical-relational analysis is most useful here, as *Media Scepticism* seeks to continually frame the positionality of media institutions as ‘enemies of the people’ (Fairclough, 2016) (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), as such, all the analyses in this section were subject to Fairclough’s (2016) methods. Reisgil and Wodak’s (2016) work on the discourse-historical method was also deeply relevant here, as many of these tweets heavily recontextualise history, in order to frame the media as liars. Interestingly, the Trump-favoured term ‘fake news’ is very rarely used by LCR, appearing in only 12 tweets. That said, the idea behind it, that all media that critiques Trump *must* be illegitimate, is very much present.

It is worth stating outright that the quantitative evidence demonstrating an increased willingness by LCR to foster scepticism of the media after Trump takes office is *overwhelming*. *Media Scepticism* tweets heavily favour the Trump Presidency, with 94.9 percent of them occurring after his inauguration. Furthermore, such tweets make up 18.3 percent of all of LCR’s Twitter rhetoric since Trump took office, up from 5.72 percent under the Obama Presidency; almost 1 in 5 tweets sent by LCR under the 45th President propagated the idea that the Media was lying, or biased, on some level, generating a statistically significant increase with 99.9 percent confidence ($R=0.120$, $p=0.001$). Compounding this evidence is the *Random Samples* test, where the increases were also statistically significant, at 97 percent confidence ($R=0.144$, $p=0.029$)²⁷.

Of the 11 Tweets to reference *Media Scepticism* during the *Obama Presidency*, only the first two actually show demonstrable evidence of a pre-Trump hostility to the media on LCR’s part. Both of them do so largely by implication. **Tweet 0001**, which instils *Media Scepticism* at the very beginning of the sample, references a generalised ‘left’ that would exaggerate Dave Bratt’s credentials into that of a ‘far right extremist’. This implicitly references the idea of a public narrative, which brings in the media by implication, and

²⁶See Figure A.35 in Appendix A.

²⁷See Figures A.36-37.

codes them as complicit in ‘the left’s’ construction of Eric Cantor’s defeat (see Figure 6.35). This link is admittedly tenuous, and it is possible to read **Tweet 0001** as implicating only left-wing political organisations. If so, then it is all the more evidence that LCR’s *Media Scepticism* truly began with Trump.

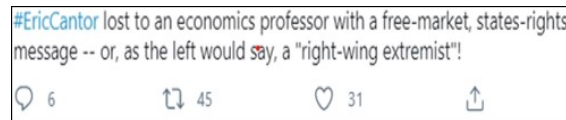


Figure 6.35: **Tweet 0001**. The very first Tweet in the entire sample, sent on June 11th 2014. It engages in subliminal *Media Scepticism* concerning the Primary election defeat of Eric Cantor to Dave Bratt and is discussed in the body of the text.

The second tweet, **Tweet 0036**, attacks the Media (the *Daily Mail* specifically) for a perceived anti-gun bias. It references a 2016 article in the *Mail* about the shooting of an armed gunman at a checkpoint near the White House grounds by the Secret Service (Gillman and Chambers, 2016). LCR claim that a ‘better headline’ would be ‘Secret Service Uses Gun to Save Lives’, followed by a hashtag referencing the second amendment (see Figure 6.36). The implied argument here is clear; recontextualising guns, and gun rights, as a force for good (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). The intention is to spread scepticism of a media that is biased against guns, at least insofar as it does not give gun users sufficient credit.



Figure 6.36: **Tweet 0036**. This Tweet implicitly attacks the *Daily Mail* for presenting a shooting near the White House in a way that they view as critical, or at least insufficiently praising, of guns. The article itself neutrally comments on the shooting (Gillman and Chambers, 2016). It is discussed in the body of the text.

Media Scepticism begins to really escalate in the sample at the time immediately surrounding the 2016 election, specifically concerning Mike Pence. As soon as Trump had won the election, LCR began to propagate the idea that fears surrounding Pence were largely overblown, in spite of the fact that his presence on the ticket had been a key facet in LCR narrowly *not* endorsing Trump for President in that election cycle (Young, 2024). As a result, these tweets represent LCR recontextualising their own history (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). At first glance this might be excused, fairly, as LCR adopting a ‘live and let live’ approach. But upon reading the article linked in **Tweet 0138**, the first *Media Scepticism* tweet to reference Pence, one quickly realises that LCR have adopted a policy of absolute apologetics. Readers will recognise **Tweet 0138** from Chapter 5, as its framing of *Right-Wing Homophobia* was a key element of my analysis (see Figure 6.37, or Figure 5.13 in the previous chapter). The article appended to the tweet addresses Pence’s alleged support for conversion therapy in 2000, and his signing of a *Religious Freedom Restoration*

Act as Governor of Indiana. It excuses both, based on wording technicalities (Benkof, 2016). In this context, the tweet is not only trying to excuse accusations of partisan homophobia, but to frame the mainstream media as liars, seeking to besmirch a prominent Republican.



Figure 6.37: **Tweet 0138**, which references a *Daily Caller* article by David Benkof (2016). It is discussed in the body of the text. It also appeared in Figure 5.13 in Chapter 5.

From there, LCR begin to cement a narrative that the Media is actively lying about Pence, a narrative that would last the length of his Vice Presidential term. There is a notable qualitative change in this particular rhetoric as time goes on; when LCR first begin to promote *Media Scepticism* concerning Pence, their argument revolves around giving him the benefit of the doubt and trying to portray him in a positive light *in spite* of his history. By the end, LCR have completely recontextualised Pence's history as having never been 'anti-gay' in the first place. LCR position Pence as having never 'hated' gay people, and thus as having never been a homophobe, a clear reformulation of history (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016), so as to position his critics in 'Gay Inc' as liars (Fairclough, 2016). As we discussed in Chapter 5, *Right-Wing Homophobia* is conceptually collapsed down to 'hatred', in a manner that *Left-Wing Homophobia* is not subjected to; giving LCR many technicalities to abuse in their defence of Pence and Trump. This can be seen as evidence that LCR have come to align their worldview all the more with the Trump administration; performing 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) on themselves, and rejecting what they used to see as evidence of homophobia.

As noted in Chapter 5, the most crucial factor in LCR's Pence defence is the idea of 'not caring' about somebody being LGBT+. Any homophobic praxis on Pence's part doesn't count, because he keeps it generally private, and he isn't horrible to individual gay people that he meets. Whenever Pence would be mentioned in a sampled Tweet, LCR would make a point to emphasise the 'fact' that he 'is not anti-gay', which carries an implied criticism of the media, even if not explicitly stated. The idea that Pence is a homophobe is a major popular narrative, and by insisting on its falseness, LCR are implicitly criticising the vehicles of such narratives, the media. Pence becomes a delivery mechanism through which LCR position the right, and the right alone, as the 'people's' allies and truth-tellers (Fairclough, 2016) (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

When the Media is explicitly referenced in relation to Pence, it is often through a citation of so-called 'Gay Inc'. This, as mentioned in earlier Chapters, is LCR's shorthand for LGBT+ activist organisations. They are assumed to have deep links to the media and Democratic Party, and are constructed as the embodiment of everything LCR reject in gay politics; leftism, victimhood, and intersectionality. The involvement of 'Gay Inc'



Figure 6.38: **Tweet 0165**, which contains a link to a *Salon* article on the then-incoming Trump administration. The article, which was based on interviews with LCR members, acknowledges fears that the Trump administration will empower evangelicals, and threaten reproductive rights. However, it pushes them aside by insisting that Trump himself is pro-LGBT+ (Sheffield, 2018). The article is particularly interested in downplaying any perceived threat from Pence, and LCR members quoted in the article itself seem unsure whether to qualify Pence as a homophobe, or not. The foregrounding of the article in the Tweet itself is clearly designed to ameliorate fears, and contains the implied narrative of public fearmongering about the Trump administration, thus coding for *Media Scepticism*. Crucial to the tweet's narrative is the dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) positioning of Trump as not only *above* Pence, but as the only member of the executive whose opinion truly matters; if Trump won't target gay people, his team won't either.



Figure 6.39: **Tweet 0718** which contains a link to a *Fox News* article authored by the Tweet sender. It cannot be referenced here, as that would de-anonymise the account in question. The article is a defence of Pence against common media criticisms of his record, one that is dripping in 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]). It repeatedly qualifies actions like signing the Indiana RFRA, or his comments on 'changing sexual behaviour', as not-homophobic. It recontextualises history, based on tenuous interpretations of wording and technicalities (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). Mixed in with these are his rarer, and usually performative, actions, like swearing in Richard Grenell, which are qualified as further evidence of his lack of 'anti-gay' malus.



Figure 6.40: Tweet 0780, which is itself a retweet from LCR-member Rob Smith, a gay army veteran, whose Tweets were *not* part of the sample themselves. The original tweet contains a video of Smith speaking to *Turning Point USA*, and defending Pence's comments on 'changing sexual behaviour'. Smith insists that this was a reference to combatting the spread of HIV, through safe sex and abstinence. Smith insists so heavily on his discourse-historical recontextualisation of Pence's comments (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) that he, and LCR, are incandescent at the mere idea that it could be construed otherwise. LCR use this as a *Media Scepticism* attack on 'Gay Inc', who are, supposedly, lying about Pence having once supported conversion therapy. Smith's argument rests on the insistence that one potential reading of Pence's words, and a highly selective one at that, must obviously be the truth.



Figure 6.41: **Tweet 0884**, which appeared in Chapter 5 when discussing *Right-Wing Homophobia* (see Figure 5.8). The explicit nod to '1000 words' is a dig at media portrayals of Pence, whilst the picture of him standing amiably with Leo Varadkar and his husband, is constructed as the truer portrayal. Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) swiftly reveals this as a colossal recontextualisation of the very idea of homophobia: In this construction, to be merited as a homophobe, one's hatred of gays must be total, to the point of causing a diplomatic incident. The fact that Pence put US-Irish relations ahead of his own convictions about sexuality is not seen as evidence that he is simply a good diplomat and a polite host, but that all criticism of him is invalid.

turns the Mike Pence *Media Scepticism* narrative from one about the media being wrong, or too enthusiastic to criticise Pence, into one where they are actively *lying* about him. Supposedly, this is to compel LGBT+ voters to cleave to the Democrats, and, thereby, perpetuate 'Gay Inc's' own existence. They are positioned as a media parasite in LCR's imagining; self-sustaining by lying to the LGBT+ community about their oppression, in

order to keep donations coming in.

This becomes especially prevalent when Pete Buttigieg enters the picture. The gay 2020 Democratic hopeful, and future Secretary for Transportation, defined himself against Pence during his campaign. The former accused the latter of ‘having a problem with my creator’, turning Pence’s religious homophobia against him, since, in Buttigieg’s view, God had made him gay for a reason. LCR used the opportunity to not only attack Buttigieg for ‘inventing’ a feud with Pence, but also the media for treating Buttigieg’s testimony as true, without verification. LCR, by contrast, believed Pence’s take on the matter, that he had a long and productive history with ‘Mayor Pete’²⁸ and had no quarrel with him (see Figures 6.42-43). Not only does this give LCR a platform to attack the media for a one-sided portrayal of Buttigieg’s narrative, but it, again, allows LCR to insist upon their recontextualised (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016), and extremely narrow, definition of homophobia. Overall, *Media Scepticism* concerning Mike Pence is a straightforward, and barely concealed, effort to de-legitimise any media source not centred on the political right, particularly those catering to an LGBT+ audience.

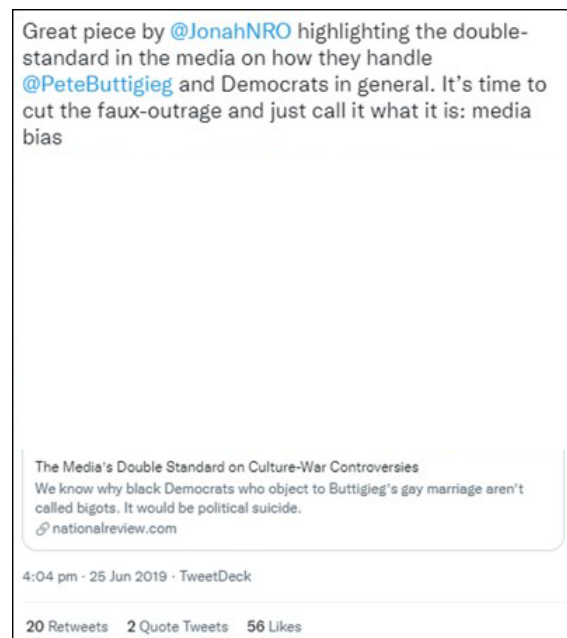


Figure 6.42: **Tweet 0823**, containing a link to a *National Review* piece, which accuses the media of a biased double-standard in how it treats homophobia. It accuses the Democrats of having homophobes in their ranks, particularly Black Democrats, but claims that media attacks on *that* version of homophobia would be ‘political suicide’. The media is then accused of maintaining an anti-Pence narrative, because it is politically safer (Goldberg, 2019). Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates this as an implied argument towards the media being a tool of the Democratic Party. The article goes on to excuse Pence’s homophobia by noting that Pete Buttigieg didn’t raise a public opposition to him before 2020. This equates Buttigieg’s previous ability to tolerate Pence’s views, with Pence not being homophobic at all, and accuses Buttigieg of manufacturing a feud.

Aside from specific political issues like biases against guns, the US itself, or Mike Pence specifically, LCR devote dozens of tweets to generic comments undermining faith in the media by equating it with leftism. As with the tweets about Pence, the most vilified target are the constituent organisations of so-called ‘Gay Inc’, those media and political outlets designed for an LGBT+ audience predominantly. They are recontextualised as being

²⁸Both men had had contemporaneous political careers in Indiana: Buttigieg as Mayor of South Bend, and Pence as the state’s Governor.



Figure 6.43: **Tweet 0766**. This tweet constructs the media as engaged in an openly pro-Democrat double standard, into which a gay Democrat *accusing* Pence of religious homophobia is acceptable, but a gay Republican praising Pence’s religious tolerance is unintelligible. Again this dialectically-rationally positions the media as highly partisan and selective with the truth, if not lying intentionally (Fairclough, 2016).



Figure 6.44: **Tweet 1275** (left) and **1276** (right), which both reference the then-rumoured (and later confirmed) appointment of Pete Buttigieg as Biden’s Secretary of Transportation. This would make Buttigieg the first LGBT+ person to be appointed to the cabinet in a permanent role, but technically the second to be there overall, behind Richard Grenell. LCR attack ‘Gay Inc’ and ‘The Gay Left Media’ for ‘coronating’ Buttigieg. This much is understandable, but LCR use the opportunity to, firstly, imply Donald Trump’s superiority over the Democrats for doing it first. Secondly, they imply that Buttigieg hadn’t earned the role, instead buying a favour from Joe Biden. Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis reveals this narrative to be positioning Trump as properly closer to the LGBT+ community than the Democrats. Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that LCR are reframing Republican hiring as meritorious, and Democratic appointments as corrupt.

‘partisan hacks’, whose sole purpose is to lie to the LGBT+ public, and, thereby, cultivate support for the Democratic Party (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). Tweets undermining such organisations are generally short and blunt, linking an article and dismissing it as false without mincing words. Little attempt to qualify, or argue against, the source is usually made, instead LCR simply assert that the content is wrong by definition. Unlike the more specific Mike Pence narrative, generalised critiques against ‘Gay Inc’ minimally change in tone; LCR maintain a consistent narrative that the gay media is lying from start to finish, only altering it to work in a specific allegation that the media is biased *against Trump*. So-called ‘Trump Derangement Syndrome’ (TDS) is LCR’s shorthand for media criticism of Trump, which they consider illegitimate by definition. In the text-internal world of an LCR tweet, the Media (much like the left) cannot contemplate the idea that Donald Trump could have been a good President in any way, particularly that he could not possibly have done anything beneficial to the LGBT+ community. As a result, the media latches onto anti-Trump narratives and inflates them.

The culmination of years of steady, generalised *Media Scepticism* aimed at mainstream sources, and especially at LGBT+ ones, was LCR’s release of *OUTSpoken*. This was LCR’s own news website, ostensibly promoting intellectual and media diversity. The language used constructs *OUTSpoken* as an unbiased response to a partisan left media environment.



Figure 6.45: **Tweet 1192**. This tweet represents a blunt and completely unverified rejection of the legitimacy of the *Human Rights Campaign*, who are straightforwardly constructed as peddling in false information. To state the obvious, dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates this as a positioning of the HRC as liars.



Figure 6.46: **Tweet 0985**, referencing the appointment of Patrick Bumatay to the 9th Circuit court. The tweet links to a Washington Blade article calling the appointment a ‘shocker’ (Johnson, 2019b), which LCR construct as evidence of the platform’s anti-Trump and anti-Republican ‘bigotry’. The tweet accuses the Blade of equating Democrats with ‘LGBT’ Champions in a dismissive tone, implying that the real source of pro-LGBT+ support is the Republicans.

In reality, the ‘diversity’ *OUTSpoken* represents is that of being a heavily partisan far right platform, something, admittedly, pretty unique in the LGBT+ media market. Its content is anti-academic, transphobic, and designed with the sadistic ‘lulz’ mentality of the alt-right in mind (Flisfeder, 2018) (Greene, 2019) (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020); a gay *Breitbart* presented as the true source of ‘diverse’ media.

OUTSpoken’s very existence is an effort to position right-wing news as ‘truth’, and anything more objective as ‘partisan’ and a lie. *OUTSpoken* appears only rarely in the sample, but always with highly controversial, discriminatory, and Trump-apologist content, that LCR presents as factual. It was set up in the Summer of 2020, and remains active. It did pause publications for a year after it blamed ‘Gay Inc’ and ‘radical trans ideology’ for the Nashville school shooting, as the shooter was transgender (Sances, 2023). Ultimately, it resumed publication in the summer of 2024, and during that silent period its social media accounts remained in use. This suggests that LCR may have pivoted away from deeply reactionary media for a time, but that does not impinge upon *this* analysis. In 2020, LCR were enthusiastically churning out content on *OUTSpoken*, and sharing it on Twitter, in the name of positioning themselves as the voice of truth (Fairclough, 2016)²⁹.

6.5.1 Conclusions on Media Scepticism

Rejecting the Null Hypothesis concerning LCR’s use of *Media Scepticism* is easy. It has become such a staple of their regular Twitter diet, that almost a fifth of all tweets they sent

²⁹LCR have continued to post regularly on *OUTSpoken* into the Biden era. Whilst that period does not form part of the analyses in my research chapters, interested readers are directed to Appendix D, which assesses LCR’s continued reactionary rhetoric after January 2021, of which *OUTSpoken* is a large part.

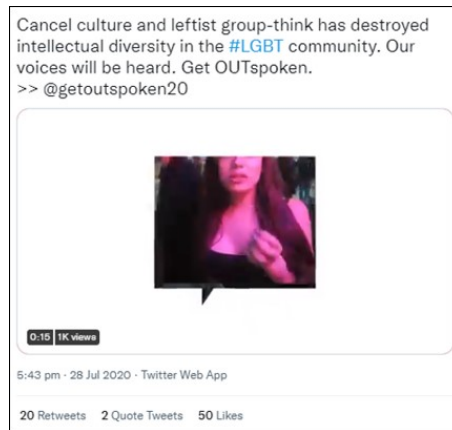


Figure 6.47: **Tweet 1100**, which announced the launch of *OUTSpoken*, LCR’s alt-right news website. Dialectical-relational and socio-cognitive analyses zoom in on the words ‘leftist group think’ and ‘cancel culture’, which represent an effort to position *OUTSpoken’s* content as diverse and fair by comparison, when in reality it is far right (Fairclough, 2016). Likewise, acceptance of a popular right-wing argument is recontextualised as evidence of ‘individual’ thought, by contrast to ‘group think’ (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016), paralleling alt-right ‘red-pill’ rhetoric (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020).

during the Trump administration attacked the media explicitly, or by implication. As we noted at the start of this section, in quantitative terms, this dramatic increase smashed the accepted 95 percent confidence interval against both the *Presidency* ($R=0.120$, $p=0.001$) and *Random Samples* ($R=0.144$, $p=0.029$) tests³⁰. Furthermore, the qualitative dimension of this research firmly cements the results. *Media Scepticism* does begin during the Obama administration, but only truly ramps up when Trump is in the picture; in the winter of 2016-17, between his election victory, and his taking office. After that point, a steady wave of generalised critiques of the media, particularly LGBT+ sources, ramps up. LCR weaponise their narrow definition of *Homophobia* to move from giving Mike Pence the benefit of the doubt, to deriding criticisms of his discriminatory record as outright lies. They further articulate the idea of ‘Trump Derangement Syndrome’; the belief that all media criticism of Trump is fake, and refuses to give him the credit he deserves. In this way, Trump’s influence on Log Cabin is all the more apparent, since not only are they more actively promoting *Media Scepticism*, they are doing it in a way that de-legitimises criticism of Trump and his administration, to the point that LCR launched their own, aggressively pro-Trump, ‘news’ website to promote ‘diversity of opinion’.

- LCR are more likely to engage in authoritarian rhetoric utilising *Media Scepticism* since Donald Trump came to power; either as a significant change in quantity; or in a way that, in context, exonerates Trump or explicitly serves his interests. **Green - Null Hypothesis Rejected.**

6.6 Conclusions on Right-Wing Authoritarianism

In the course of this chapter, I have assessed LCR’s rising commitment to *Right-Wing Authoritarianism* along four axes; their exhortation of violence, their putting leaders on pedestals, their supporting of direct accountability sabotage (Glasius, 2018), and their seeking to control the interpretation of public narratives by their followers. Determining the variables for this analysis meant drawing on both political, and psychological, literature, to paint a picture of authoritarian followers who aggrandise their leaders, believe their worldview utterly, and bitterly oppose all counter-narratives (Adorno et al, 1950 [2019])

³⁰See Figures A.36-37 in Appendix A.

(Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Glasius, 2018) (Hibbing, 2020). Straight out of the gate, I was able to absolve LCR of at least one aspect of authoritarian follower behaviour; whilst there were a couple of worrying signs about LCR normalising violence from sources adjacent to their interests, there is no evidence, yet, to say that they have become a violent movement themselves. Nevertheless, the other aspects of RWA turned up stark results in both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.

It is evident that Log Cabin have come to *venerate* Donald Trump as some sort of messianic shot-in-the-arm to American politics. Extrapolating his being the most pro-LGBT+ *Republican* President to a *deified* status, including being the most pro-LGBT+ President overall. This is not to say that Trump was, in reality, uniformly bad as a President, nor that some of his LGBT+ achievements do not merit praise. Nor do I dispute that he is likely to go relatively uncredited for them. But the pedestal Log Cabin have come to put him on, as a trailblazer who breaks with Republican traditions, is aggrandised heavily. The image becomes one of a crusader against global homophobia, bringing American righteousness to the world. Narratives of strength and force are never far from LCR's commentary on this; concerning Trump's own actions, those of their favourite son, Richard Grenell, or their perceived ally in Haley. Likewise, LCR use such rhetoric to attack the media and undermine efforts to hold Trump accountable. And to gloss the whole affair, there is Melania, for whom fashion is both political *and* apolitical whenever it suits LCR's narrative.

Even more assuredly clear is LCR's willing *Dismissal of Accountability*. It begins with mutually reinforcing *VoA*, via celebrating a foreign policy that enforces America's agenda on the world. It continues by treating Congress like a glorified rubber-stamp, and the concerns of the Democratic minority as illegitimate. It ramps up in its dismissal of the investigations into Trump's conduct, and his links with Russia, whose conclusions do not so much absolve Trump in LCR's eyes, but prove that it was illegitimate to investigate him to begin with. Finally, it hits its authoritarian crescendo with scepticism in, and eventual denial of, the 2020 election; a scandal that ended with a riot at the Capitol, that LCR remained suspiciously quiet about. If anything, the findings on *DoA* represent the most important work of this chapter, the variable most directly influenced by Mariles Glasius' (2018) definition of authoritarianism, and the one with the most stark results. Log Cabin, seemingly, believe that a legitimate election win in the US *must* be a Republican one, that Trump is above suspicion, and that his power must be unchecked. To engage in such rhetoric is to be an authoritarian, plain and simple.

Finally, LCR are willing participants in the Trump administration's efforts to control public narratives, via sowing *Media Scepticism*. They have aggressively ramped up their denial of the legitimacy of the mainstream media, which they construct as a tool of the political left; a populist enemy of the American people (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). They particularly emphasise this in the context of the LGBT+ community, who are, in this narrative, enslaved to the Democratic Party via the lies and 'Trump Derangement Syndrome' of 'Gay Inc'. By recontextualising all media with an objective, or critical, view of Trump as false, LCR have sought to establish control of public narratives so as to cut off Trump's accountability at the knees. After all, articles that criticise Trump are no good if nobody reads them. This ran to the point of launching their own 'diverse', 'unbiased' (read: far right) news platform, *OUTSpoken*, where they could directly challenge 'Gay Inc' with publications of their own.

Log Cabin have unquestionably become an authoritarian institution since the onset of the Trump Presidency. They are so keen to demonstrate their loyalty to the 'greatest president of [their] lifetime', that they view all criticism of him as inherently false, and

the constitutional balancing mechanisms of America as mere hindrances to him. They appear to seek a US in which the Trump Presidency is universally worshipped, the left is uniformly reviled, the other branches of government are subservient, and in which elections produce the predetermined result of Republican victory. They are 'Homo-Authoritarian'; an LGBT+ organisation that sought acceptance by the exchange of loyalty towards an authority figure, only to become so enamoured of them that they continued these gestures for their own sake, in ever more reactionary ways.

Chapter 7

Thesis Conclusions

7.1 Recap: Homo-Authoritarianism.

This thesis has demonstrated conclusively that Log Cabin, the face of the American LGBT+ right-wing, are not the organisation they used to be. They were once a staunchly libertarian bloc within the American right, and hostile to the longstanding, theocratic, authoritarian tendencies of their party. But when Trump dragged the GOP firmly down the path of open anti-democracy, Log Cabin turned about-face, and merrily skipped after him.

This thesis introduces the theory of ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’, the exchange of political loyalty towards an authoriatian figure, in exchange for acceptance, assimilation and mainstreaming. This evolves the theories of Lisa Duggan and Jasbir Puar: Where ‘Homonormativity’ exchanges the reproduction of societal norms for acceptance (Duggan, 2003), and ‘Homonationalism’ exchanges patriotism and submininal Islamophobia for the same (Puar, 2007), ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’s’ coin is *submission*. This can come in a series of forms; legitimising the authority figure’s beliefs, attacking their enemies, refusing to hold them accountable or criticise them, and most importantly, sabotaging the accountability extended to them by others (Glasius, 2018). In short, it is a positioning of oneself properly in uncritical subservience to authority, and working to ensure others do the same.

Over the course of this thesis, we explored ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’ along a variety of axes, using mixed-methods critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2016)(Van Dijk, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). These were, in order:

- **Doublethink:** The Orwellian trait of seemingly believing two things at once, or jumping between beliefs, and back again, so as to ensure one never questions authority (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022).
- **Populism:** Discourse that packages an ideology into the form of a struggle between a good ‘people’ and an evil ‘elite’. In this case, the populist far right use the spectre of a ‘left-wing elite’ threatening ‘the people’ in order to disseminate reactionary beliefs (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).
- **Authoritarian Follower Behaviour:** Rhetoric that seeks to establish an authority figure (or figures) as properly superior to the speaker, and undermine accountability extended towards them, violently if necessary (Adorno et al, 1950 [2000]) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Glasius, 2018) (Hibbing, 2020).

Through these axes, ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’ propagates the view of the authority figure as almost godly. They are beyond criticism, always justified, and a shield against the true

‘enemy of the people’; the spectre of whom further legitimises the acts of the authority figure by comparison, as ‘the people’s’ champion. Over the course of this thesis I have demonstrated a profound rise, in both statistical and contextual terms, in rhetoric that fits all of these categories: Log Cabin have become decidedly ‘Homo-Authoritarian’ as part of their efforts to ingratiate themselves into the GOP and win rights for their community, or at least the parts of their community that they still deem to be acceptable.

7.2 Accepting Hypothesis 2

This thesis rejects the Null Hypothesis established in Chapter 3, in favour of Hypothesis 2, which reads as follows:

- **Hypothesis 2:** LCR have changed their communicative acts on Twitter concerning doublethink, populism and right-wing authoritarianism since Donald Trump came to power; either as contextual, qualitative changes, or in significant quantitative increases. However, this authoritarian turn is not, as of yet, total.

This alternative hypothesis has been accepted in view of the substantive evidence for almost all of the individual hypotheses concerning doublethink, populism and right-wing authoritarianism. Even where we could not reject the Null Hypotheses concerning a *change* in LCR’s behaviour, such cases still contributed to my argument; as shown with LCR’s consistent denunciation of *Left-Wing Homophobia*, being paired with an increasingly forgiving approach to *Right-Wing Homophobia*. Alone of all the evidence I sought, only *Calls to Violence* was notable by its omission, although even then, as Chapter 6 elaborated, there was concerning findings. Over the remainder of this section, I lay out the evidence for each of the three major lines of argument, to demonstrate that LCR are staunchly Homo-Authoritarian, even if they are not, yet, willing to engage in violence to uphold that ideological stance.

7.2.1 Doublethink

Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949 [2000]) posits a totalitarian future, in which mankind is enslaved to ‘big brother’ via intense social conditioning, readily rewriting history, and then writing it back again. This is in service to the ‘higher-order belief’ (Petrović and Žeželj, 2022, 2023) that ‘big brother is always right’; if they cannot reconcile their cognitive dissonance, that must be their own fault, for the state *must* surely be correct (Zuraikat and al-Nawasreh, 2021). Beyond conspiracy theories, this concept received little in the way of sustained academic opinion, with only a few discussions of psycho-social coping mechanisms (El-Sawad, Arnold and Cohen, 2004) (Doldor and Atewologun, 2020), and ‘affective communities’ (Johnson, 2022). I consider it here in its original, Orwellian form; that of a continual re-evaluation of beliefs, based on the idea that the ‘authority’ must always have acted righteously, and correctly. To this, I add Andrew Alan Johnson’s (ibid) analysis of community; by engaging in ‘doublethink’, LCR seek to socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) position themselves as true believers in Trump, and thus be accepted into the ‘affective community’ of his fellow loyalists.

In Chapter 4, LCR’s ‘doublethink’ was explored qualitatively. No single variable could properly identify it (indeed, it may not be statistically measurable at all), and it was not noticed until much later in the research process, during the write-up. Nevertheless, in Chapter 4, I argue that LCR can be demonstrated to have re-aligned their views on several key areas related to Trump’s LGBT+ policy. This is to ensure they continually paint his actions in a good light, even if they must contradict themselves to do so.

The first of these was *Victimhood*, which LCR staunchly deny the existence of, unless it is convenient. It is not that they do not *believe in* discrimination, since promoting that belief would, surely, undermine all of their credibility. Rather, they do not believe in the idea of LGBT+ people being *systemically oppressed*. They see equality as having fundamentally been achieved; homophobes exist, but the system is no longer rigged against LGBT+ people. It is a minimalist version of equality that harkens back to the likes of Bruce Bawer (1993 [1994]), Andrew Sullivan (1995 [1996]) and decades of assimilationist activism that came before them (D’Emilio, 1983 [1998], 1992a, 1992b) (Faderman, 2015) (Young, 2024). On top of this, LCR accuse the LGBT+ left (‘Gay Inc’), of peddling a false victimhood narrative to LGBT+ people, making them *feel* oppressed so that they will continually support the Democratic Party, and donate to organisations like the *Human Rights Campaign*.¹ Yet when LCR seek to make a Conservative argument, they will still, selectively, leverage their status as part of an oppressed community. For example, they justify their opposition to abortion by claiming that an in-utero genocide will surely follow the discovery of the ‘gay gene’ (Ashby, 2004). There cannot, simultaneously, be enough mass homophobia in society to ensure the eradication of the next generation of LGBT+ people, *and* so little that systemic inequality does not exist. LCR jump between these views to ensure that their support of the GOP remains coherent, even when their logic does not.

The second of these was *The Closet*, which LCR construct as a source of necessary, secure refuge; total vulnerability; and abject cowardice, at different times. In this argument, Trump’s actions are directly legitimised; the removal of LGBT+ identifying questions from the 2020 census was decried, first, as an act of ‘federal outing’, and, second, as an act of abject pointlessness, within seconds of each other. Passing as straight cannot be so secure a status that one can hide from the government in it, and yet so fragile that a census will force one out of it. The point of such rhetoric was to create a knee-jerk defence of Trump from multiple angles, even though the arguments contradicted each other. But despite clearly looking at the closet as a necessary place of refuge² from abuse when they needed to defend a Republican, when a controversial Democrat came out, his being closeted was constructed as *cowardice*.

Finally, there was the Judiciary. LCR have celebrated their share of LGBT+ SCOTUS victories, especially during the tenure of Anthony Kennedy, since his victories could be indirectly credited to Ronald Reagan. But when *Bostock vs Clayton County, Georgia* (2020) was being decided, and the Trump administration filed briefs to the effect of *denying* the existence of employment anti-discrimination protections, LCR decried the very idea of winning such rights through the courts. Not only did they defend Trump’s actions, but they cast the very cause of the plaintiffs as invalid; echoing arguments that sounded eerily like the *dissents* to cases like *Lawrence vs Texas* (2003) and *Obergefell vs Hodges* (2015). LCR’s about-face was clearly done for the express purpose of sanctifying Trump’s actions, just as their later flip back to supporting judicial victories was. When Neil Gorsuch handed down the *Bostock* verdict, LCR made a point to note the victory that Trump’s appointee had just won them.

Doublethink was a theme that reappeared at various other points throughout the thesis. Most notably in LCR’s highly selective definitions of forgivable homophobia, demonstrated in Chapter 5; and the validity of investigating elections, demonstrated in Chapter 6. These reappearances, as well as the research in Chapter 4, thus securely demonstrated the first

¹This narrative is tied up heavily in LCR’s ‘populism’, which posits ‘Gay Inc’ and the Democrats as the enemy that legitimises Trump

²A place of refuge from the spectre of *Victimhood*, that they otherwise deny exists.

point of evidence towards LCR being a ‘Homo-Authoritarian’ organisation. When given the opportunity to hold Trump, or the GOP, accountable for transgressing LCR’s standards, they simply re-align those standards to fit.

7.2.2 Populism

Populism is discourse (‘something political actors do, not something they are’ (Bonikowski et al, 2018)), designed to package wider ideological beliefs into the form of a struggle between the ‘people’ and the ‘elite’ (Laclau, 2005). In this context, the struggle is portrayed as being between homonormative (Duggan, 2003) natives on one side, and ‘Gay Inc’ on the other, in which Trump is legitimised as ‘the people’s’ champion. It is defined, here, as anti-pluralist, illiberal and dangerous (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2013) (Bonikowski et al, 2019) (Urbinati, 2019) (Singh, 2021) (Webber, 2023). Populism is a contested concept in academic writing, and this thesis will not change that. As much ink is spent defining it, as is spent arguing over those definitions, and their ramifications. This thesis holds closest to the ‘discursive’ school of thought on Populism, associated most regularly with Ernesto Laclau (2005), but has also taken inspiration from the rival ‘ideational’ school, centred on Cas Mudde (2004). This agonisticism is why, whenever I have referenced the concept of populism through this thesis, I have cited Laclau’s *On Populist Reason* (2005), and Mudde’s *The Populist Zeitgeist* (2004), as a form of shorthand for the wider schools of thought that sprung up around them.

LCR’s populism was explored in Chapter 5 along two axes, both of which directly relate to the exoneration and lionising of the Trump administration. The first of these was *Partisan Homophobia*, i.e discrimination sourced from party elites on the US left and right. What rapidly became apparent when discussing them was that LCR hold them to entirely different standards (reinforced by ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022)). This continually recontextualises the GOP as superior, and closer in position to the LGBT+ community (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) (Fairclough, 2016). *Right-Wing Homophobia* is constructed in a twofold manner; either being solely perpetuated by a dying fringe of the GOP, against which Trump is boldly struggling in a fight he will ultimately *win*; or as variously excusable, non-malicious, acceptably religious, and so on. Transphobia is steadily recontextualised across the sample in this manner, beginning as evidence of *Right-Wing Homophobia*, before being eventually framed as a necessary defence of cis women. Effort is continually made to reorient the populist elite foe of empowered GOP homophobes, so that they are rhetorically located away from Trump, a ‘distancing dynamic’ intended to sanitise his own actions (Wodak, 2021). By contrast *Left-Wing Homophobia* implicates the Democratic Party, whose record on LGBT+ issues is much better than the GOP, but also historically problematic (see for example, Proctor (2022a)). In these cases, the malice that is continually recontextualised in *Right-Wing Homophobia* is either assumed to exist, such as in the treatment of LGBT+ Republicans, or is not part of the discussion. All left/liberal homophobia is constructed as uniformly bad, and endemic within the party. This even includes very similar, or identical, homophobic acts as those they *excuse* when committed by Republicans. This narrative is an integral part of LCR’s ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’ because it acts as implicit ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018) towards Trump. His leadership is justified because he fights against homophobia, and gives LGBT+ people their proper home in the Republican Party, away from the discriminatory left. Criticism to the contrary is waved away with excuses rooted in ‘malice’ and ‘religion’.

The second axis was *The Left*. The goal of these narratives is to position the Democratic Party, Human Rights Campaign, and the other media and activist organisations that

make up ‘Gay Inc’, as the true enemies of the LGBT+ community. Thereby, not only are LCR’s right-wing beliefs legitimised, but attention is drawn away from Trump’s actions and accountability is sabotaged (Glasius, 2018) by undermining his critics. LCR paint a picture of an elite and powerful left-wing political-media apparatus that relentlessly persecutes LGBT+ Republicans, and works continually to keep LGBT+ people shackled to the ‘victimhood plantation’, so as to sustain its own power and relevance. This same left-wing establishment is also caricatured as deeply radical, in league with ‘domestic terrorists’ (sic) like Antifa, and thus a violent threat to LGBT+ Republicans, whom they seek to render politically unintelligible. This rhetoric deploys Islamophobia (Ali and Whitham, 2021) (Uenal et al, 2021) to reinforce these points; by constructing the Democratic Party as being in league with ‘barbaric’ (sic) states like Iran. The overall goal of this rhetoric is to recontextualise LCR’s own support of conservatism broadly, and Trump specifically, as the natural consequence of ‘free thought.’ ‘Identity Politics’, LCR’s perjorative term for LGBT+ leftism, is thus a form of intellectual slavery (hence the ‘plantation’ reference), militantly enforced by ‘Gay Inc’. This serves to fundamentally legitimise LCR’s ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’, since all accountability extended towards Trump’s actions can be, again, redirected or justified, with reference to this monolithic left-wing enemy. Supporting Trump is re-contextualised as the obvious step forward for any rational LGBT+ person able to see beyond their blinkers, and accountability towards him is discarded in the name of ignoring ‘Trump Derangement Syndrome’.

Populism will be a contested concept for a long time in academic writing, but its role as a delivery mechanism for reactionary beliefs is indisputable. This thesis has demonstrated that, through conjuring the spectre of ‘Gay Inc’, and selectively re-interpreting homophobia, LCR are able to present their support of Trump as not only necessary and good, but *rational*. As has been acknowledged earlier in this work, it is undoubtedly true that Trump’s GOP is the most pro-gay iteration of the Republican Party that there has ever been, which is absolutely a good thing; but LCR’s populism presents him as a defender of the LGBT+ *demos* without fault. As with ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022), the goal is to demonstrate continual alignment with Trump, but in this case, it is in his capacity as the people’s defender against ‘Gay Inc’s’ ‘Identity Politics’ and discrimination, and the residual spectre of the GOP old guard. The populist (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) use of elite foes, juxtaposed against ‘the people’, serves to legitimise everything else and sabotage Trump’s accountability (Glasius, 2018) by dodging or undermining criticism.

7.2.3 Authoritarian Follower Behaviour

Chapter 6 found compelling evidence of Log Cabin’s willingness to erode democratic principles and institutions in order to maintain their loyalty to Donald Trump. They are not outwardly violent, but this does not undermine their authoritarian tendencies, it only means that they are not *blackshirts*. They otherwise demonstrate many worrying behaviours that evidence authoritarian follower behaviour (Adorno et al, 1950 [2000]) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Glasius, 2018) (Hibbing, 2020).

Firstly, they are showing signs of a worrying *veneration* of Donald Trump that casts him, not as simply a great President, but as the greatest of all time. They repeatedly lionise his achievements, particularly his ‘leadership’ qualities³. That latter point, itself, shows worrying authoritarian trends, as LCR demonstrate that they associate zero-sum narratives of ‘strength’ with leadership. They seek figures who will not allow themselves to be accountable to others. This applies to Trump’s inner circle also, who they *venerate* for presenting an un-accountable foreign policy, whether that is Nikki Haley defying the UN, or Richard

³Melania is then used as a ‘fashionable’ veneer to further glorify him

Grenell dictating trade policy to ‘Mr Volkswagen’. In venerating these qualities, LCR not only place Trump on a pedestal, but they also seek to elevate the US to a position of, not only global pre-eminence, but as a sort of global *ruler*, above the concerns of other states or the UN.

Even more compelling is Log Cabin’s repeated insistence on *Dismissal of Accountability*, a variable directly adapted from Mariles Glasius’ (2018) definition of authoritarianism. LCR take a reactionary stance against any attempt to limit Trump’s power. This logic applies even if the limits in question are the guardrails on democracy, provided by the US Constitution; the powers to investigate, impeach, and vote out the President. At various points, they rhetorically reduce Congress to a sort of rubber stamp, with it’s minority party considered wholly illegitimate, and the majority subordinate to the President. But the commentary on elections was most telling. LCR spent years breathlessly denying that there was anything suspicious about 2016, and decrying all efforts to investigate it as a witch-hunt; demanding proof of guilt before an investigation to *find that proof* would be approved. Yet they very much got behind the calls for an ‘election audit’ and denied the validity of the results in 2020, and were certainly *slow* to condemn the capitol riot, in which some of their allies, like Brandon Straka, were arrested.

Finally, there was their relationship to the media. LCR became hyper-invested in the promotion of *Media Scepticism* during the Trump administration. Interweaving with their populist criticism of *The Left* (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) is an effort to seize control of the public narratives available to their supporters, and instill a deep-rooted suspicion of any source that is, even slightly, critical of Trump. Mike Pence was regularly the star of the show here, with LCR making repeated overtures to the effect that the media was slandering him, or juxtaposing him unfairly against ‘Mayor Pete’ Buttigieg to manufacture conflict. The tweet that claimed Mike Pence was not a homophobe just because he *had dinner* with Leo Varadkar (**Tweet 0884**, see Figure 6.41 in Chapter 6), and stated ‘a picture is worth 1000 words’ was a thinly veiled attack on the media that is entirely representative of their attitude. Log Cabin rhetorically normalise the idea that only those sources that represent a right-wing opinion qualify as ‘facts’, and, to that end, they launched *OUTSpoken*; a gay *Breitbart* with all that such a moniker implies, hiding reactionary rhetoric behind the veneer of impartiality.

Chapter 6 firmly cemented LCR’s turn towards ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’. There, I repeatedly demonstrate the many ways in which LCR are engaged in ‘accountability sabotage’ (Glasius, 2018), as well as acts of veneration common to psychological accounts of authoritarianism (Adorno et al, 1950 [2019]) (Altemeyer, 1981, 2009) (Duckitt et al, 2010) (Ho et al, 2015) (Hibbing, 2020). In short, they think Trump is the greatest thing to happen to the Oval Office in decades, certainly the greatest friend the LGBT+ community have ever had in the White House. Not only that, but they unsubtly point to a desire for unilateral executive rule, with the legislature reduced to a rubber stamp and elections serving only as the process by which a *Republican* legitimises their rule, not something in which a Democrat can challenge them. Other states are rendered subordinate to US dictation in the same manner; he that rules the US, properly rules the world. Furthermore, he that rules the US *must be Trump*; a monstrous injustice would have to have taken place for it not to be so (Urbinati, 2019). Lastly, they reduce all public criticism of Trump to the realm of fantasy; of fictitious, sensationalised journalism in the sway of ‘Gay Inc’, a narrative that they intended to fight with the ‘truth’ on *OUTSpoken*.

7.3 Concluding Remarks

In Chapter 1, this thesis firmly stated that this research *does not* conclude that there is anything wrong with being an LGBT+ *Republican*. Nor should any of its findings be used to make such arguments; I refute that logic explicitly. It is tantamount to dictating to a whole community that they have failed in their identities because of how they vote; that they have ordered their lives incorrectly, as though there is an objective standard for such. Rather, the purpose of this thesis is to identify and argue against the growth of *Homo-Authoritarianism*, since it increasingly renders people unable to recognise, or oppose, their own oppression. Even though there are anti-democratic trends within conservative ideology, ultimately it is very possible to pursue a conservative agenda, and couch one's fight for rights in conservative language, whilst remaining a supporter of democracy. Log Cabin have pursued such an agenda for a very long time (Young, 2024), but since the onset of the Trump era, they have demonstrated a manifest failure at doing so.

Homo-Authoritarianism is the demonstration of absolute loyalty by a portion of the LGBT+ community, towards an authority figure, in exchange for acceptance and mainstreaming; repeatedly, enthusiastically, and willingly, in spite of any of their actions and any ramifications thereof. This persists in spite of the authority's acts at de-democratisation, and illiberal treatment of one's own community (Glasius, 2018). If that authority figure has a questionable record on LGBT+ rights, something that the Homo-Authoritarian has long fought for, then the Homo-Authoritarian will simply declare victory prematurely instead. This is because continuing to push for reforms, even limited ones, calls into question the authority's ability, and subjects their actions to accountability. Having declared victory, the Homo-Authoritarian redefines discrimination into something the authority cannot ever be guilty of. They, then, redefine it again when the authority can be credited with stamping it out. The Homo-Authoritarian distances themselves from the authority's critics, and does so loudly and publicly, hoping to demonstrate loyalty and trade it for political capital. At this point, it is an open question whether the Homo-Authoritarian even recognises their own self-interest anymore, or they simply accept that it is whatever the authority tells them.

If the authority begins to turn its ire towards their community, the Homo-Authoritarian cleans house. They excise those former allies that do not fit the authority's mould for acceptability, and denounce their supporters as deranged radicals. The Homo-Authoritarian downsizes their community until they pass muster, and joins in the vitriol against those they have abandoned. They build up a populist narrative about a left-wing elite, outside the true *demos*, and yet threatening it with identity politics. The authority becomes a saviour figure in such rhetoric, protecting LGBT+ people and uplifting them from the 'victimhood plantation'.

The Homo-Authoritarian venerates the authority as a larger than life figure and undermines anything that may challenge them; whether that is the media, the rest of the government, or even the ballot box. They recontextualise criticism as being part of a grand media conspiracy. They reposition Congress into a rubber stamp. They relocate political minorities into irrelevance. They reconstruct elections as simply a plebiscite by which *the authority's* rule is legitimised. Given the choice between Democracy, or keeping the security afforded them by their outspoken loyalty to the authority, the Homo-Authoritarian chooses the latter. It is willful and enthusiastic accountability sabotage (Glasius, 2018).

To put the above point more colloquially, the Homo-Authoritarian is happy to normalise the boot on their own neck by any means. More than simply building bridges with the oppressor, this is the total denial that the boot is there *at all*, and the belief that the

real enemy are those who dare to oppose the, clearly righteous, owner of said boot. The Homo-Authoritarian has become an abused attack dog, broken into loyalty to their master, and vicious in their defence.

The Homo-Authoritarian has traded loyalty for security to the point where they no longer appear to remember *what it was* that they wanted security from; until they can selectively remember it and, either, credit the authority for fixing it, or somehow spin it against their enemies. Discrimination and victimhood don't exist until the authority has uplifted them from it, democracy only works when the authority wins. It is 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949) in its purest form. They harden themselves entirely against those who fight for their own liberation, because empowering those people would weaken the authority, even if it will help the Homo-Authoritarian themselves. They have spent so long demonstrating their loyalty to the authority in exchange for a modicum of societal equality, that they now do it for its own sake.

This is not necessarily a US-exclusive problem. Indeed it is a pattern that we may yet see other authoritarians follow, as a way of buttressing their support; offering a minority group a place in the mainstream in exchange for total loyalty, until that group can no longer recognise their own oppression. This allows institutionalised discrimination to become fully hegemonic amongst those that it abuses, to the point that even those who once fought against oppression cannot recognise it, nor desire their release from it. This thesis has exclusively researched this phenomenon in the context of Trump's America, but it should absolutely be researched in other contexts as well. Is Homo-Authoritarianism observable in Orban's Hungary, or Meloni's Italy? Can it be seen amongst Likud, Reform UK, or Rassemblement National? There may be evidence just waiting to be uncovered that proves *Homo-Authoritarianism* to be far more than just a Trump-specific trend. 'Pinkwashing' is an established phenomenon, one need look no further than Israel for that (Elia, 2012). Perhaps the use of LGBT+ rights as a smokescreen for other abuses will devolve into a similar exchange of loyalty for mainstreaming by LGBT+ groups in such places?

Let us conjecture for the sake of argument that a future Trump administration seeks to strip away LGBT+ rights and protections; namely via the overturning of federal equal marriage laws like the *Respect for Marriage Act* (H.R.8404 – 117th Congress). Ron DeSantis, Trump's rival for the 2024 GOP Presidential nomination, ran on an explicitly anti-gay platform, and was denounced by LCR in 2023, despite him having previously been a favourite of the organisation. In the same statements they lambasted the idea of trans inclusivity, and created populist distancing dynamics (Wodak, 2021) between themselves and 'radical Left gays' (see Figure 7.1). The implied narrative of such statements was that 'radical left gays' were an acceptable target for discrimination. Their statements stongly suggest that the group remains receptive to far-right rhetoric. The crux is that the discriminator in question much couch their views in a manner that gives LCR a technicality upon which to defend them (something that DeSantis failed to do). Readers are reminded of the many technicalities that LCR have abused in their rhetoric; that Trump was only 'clarifying the law' in *Bostock* (see Chapter 4); that Mike Pence didn't 'hate' anyone (see Chapter 5); that the election wasn't 'stolen' but it needed an 'audit' (see Chapter 6). LCR look for evidence of plausible deniability, and when found, engage in authoritarian, and populist, rhetoric, shot through with doublethink, in order to defend their chosen champions. DeSantis' crime was not his homophobia, it was the lack of *excuses* he gave LCR.

So in that vein, let us imagine that Trump argues for the need to 'return marriage to the states', rather than engage in 'federal overreach', and wins a Republican congressional majority to help him return the US to the pre-*Obergefell* status quo. Authoring a bill to

overturn the *Respect for Marriage Act* would likely be accompanied by a sustained legal challenge to *Obergefell*. In such a case Trump's DOJ would file amicus curiae briefs calling the ruling into question. The conservative SCOTUS majority, which includes several of the original case's dissenters, and three judges appointed by Trump himself, would have the final say. This would be accompanied by state-level trigger laws that ban gay marriage immediately upon the death of both the bill, and the case, as happened with *Roe v Wade*.

In such a scenario, I have *zero* confidence that Log Cabin would oppose Trump's agenda. They certainly would have done a decade ago. But now, they appear likely to spin and reconstruct the whole affair as some fight against 'special rights', 'radical leftist ideas' and 'big government', and remain committed to, and uncritical of, Donald Trump. So long as he gave them an excuse, even just technicalities in wording, they would latch onto it.

If Donald Trump publicly endorsed the repeal of equal marriage, Log Cabin would be truly forced to choose between their authoritarian loyalty to him on one hand, and their own self-interest on the other. And, sadly, everything I have researched in the last five years forces me to conclude that they would side with him yet again, and watch on, enthusiastically, as their rights were eroded. Indeed, they would be wholly convinced that it was wrong for them to have such rights in the first place, because he said so.



Figure 7.1: A thread of LCR tweets, censored to remove the account information, reacting to the release of the DeSantis campaign video. The original tweet by @DeSantisWarRoom, the account attached to his campaign, criticised Trump sarcastically for doing ‘more than any other Republican’ to celebrate Pride, intending this as a negative. LCR’s response made a point to engage in distancing dynamic (Wodak, 2021) rhetoric castigating pro-trans causes as ‘Left-wing gays’ trying to ‘hijack’ equality, and claiming that DeSantis cannot tell the difference ‘between commonsense gays and the radical Left gays’. This rhetoric serves multiple reactionary purposes, aside from denouncing DeSantis. Firstly, it legitimises transphobia by recontextualising it as ‘common sense’ (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016), a common far right tactic (see Newth (2024)). Secondly, it implicitly condoned the idea that DeSantis should have discriminated against ‘radical left gays’ by positioning them as a legitimate target (Fairclough, 2016). Even when LCR denounce *Right-Wing Homophobia* they continue to live in the technicalities, explicitly spelling out exactly how DeSantis could have launched a reactionary, discriminatory campaign, and still won their support; by only discriminating against ‘radical left gays’.

Chapter 8

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Appendix A

Quantitative Tables

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	171	1055	1226
		% within Presidency	89.1%	95.2%	94.3%
	Both Present	Count	21	53	74
		% within Presidency	10.9%	4.8%	5.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V		0.094**** (p=0.001)			
Pearson's R		-0.094**** (p=0.001)			

Figure A.1: Crosstab of *Right Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total	
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5		
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	89	98	100	93	94	97	571	
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	15.6%	17.2%	17.5%	16.3%	16.5%	17.0%	100.0%	
	Both Present	Count	11	2	0	7	6	3	29	
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	37.9%	6.9%	0.0%	24.1%	20.7%	10.3%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	600
				% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Cramer's V			0.169**** (p=0.004)							
Pearson's R			-0.048 (p=0.243)							

Figure A.2: Crosstab of *Right-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	173	1064	1237
		% within Presidency	90.1%	96.0%	95.2%
	Both Present	Count	19	44	63
		% within Presidency	9.9%	4.0%	4.8%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.098**** (p=0.001)		
Pearson's R			-0.098**** (p=0.001)		

Figure A.3: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *Right-Wing Homophobia* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total	
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5		
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	90	98	100	94	96	97	575	
		% within Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	15.7%	17.0%	17.4%	16.3%	16.7%	16.9%	100.0%	
	Both Present	Count	10	2	0	6	4	3	25	
		% within Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	40.0%	8.0%	0.0%	24.0%	16.0%	12.0%	100.0%	
		Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	600
				% within Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%
Cramer's V			0.159**** (p=0.009)							
Pearson's R			-0.056* (p=0.169)							

Figure A.4: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *Right-Wing Homophobia* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	189	1097	1286
		% within Presidency	98.4%	99.0%	98.9%
	Both Present	Count	3	11	14
		% within Presidency	1.6%	1.0%	1.1%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V		0.020 (p=0.480)			
Pearson's R		0.020 (p=0.480)			

Figure A.5: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Right-Wing Homophobia* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	98	100	100	100	99	98	595
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.5%	16.8%	16.8%	16.8%	16.6%	16.5%	100.0%
	Both Present	Count	2	0	0	0	1	2	5
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	40.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Right-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.099 (p=0.321)						
Pearson's R			0.016 (p=0.694)						

Figure A.6: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Right-Wing Homophobia* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Left Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	189	1065	1254
		% within Presidency	98.4%	96.1%	96.5%
	Both Present	Count	3	43	46
		% within Presidency	1.6%	3.9%	3.5%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V		0.045* (p=0.109)			
Pearson's R		0.045* (p=0.109)			

Figure A.7: Crosstab of *Left-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
LGBT+ Republican IVP + Left Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	97	98	95	94	96	97	577
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Left Wing Homophobia IoE	16.8%	17.0%	16.5%	16.3%	16.6%	16.8%	100.0%
	Both Present	Count	3	2	5	6	4	3	23
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Left Wing Homophobia IoE	13.0%	8.7%	21.7%	26.1%	17.4%	13.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within LGBT+ Republican IVP + Left Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.070 (p=0.709)						
Pearson's R			0.018 (p=0.664)						

Figure A.8: Crosstab of *Left-Wing Homophobia* and *LGBT+ Republicans* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Left-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	188	1096	1284
		% within Presidency	97.9%	98.9%	98.8%
	Both Present	Count	4	12	16
		% within Presidency	2.1%	1.1%	1.2%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V		0.032 (p=0.246)			
Pearson's R		-0.032 (p=0.246)			

Figure A.9: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Left-Wing Homophobia* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Left-Wing Homophobia IoE	Not Both Present	Count	98	100	98	98	100	98	592
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Left-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.6%	16.9%	16.6%	16.6%	16.9%	16.6%	100.0%
	Both Present	Count	2	0	2	2	0	2	8
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Left-Wing Homophobia IoE	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Left-Wing Homophobia IoE	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.082 (p=0.542)						
Pearson's R			0.000 (p=1.000)						

Figure A.10: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Left-Wing Homophobia* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Republicans and Left-Wing Identity Politics	Not Both Present	Count	187	1019	1206
		% within Presidency	97.4%	92.0%	92.8%
	Both Present	Count	5	89	94
		% within Presidency	2.6%	8.0%	7.2%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.074*** (p=0.007)		
Pearson's R			0.074*** (p=0.007)		

Figure A.11: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Republicans* and *Left-Wing Identity Politics* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	
			Sample	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4	Sample 5	
LGBT+ Republicans and Left-Wing Identity Politics	Not Both Present	Count	96	90	90	93	90	90	549
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	96.0%	90.0%	90.0%	93.0%	90.0%	90.0%	91.5%
	Both Present	Count	4	10	10	7	10	10	51
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	4.0%	10.0%	10.0%	7.0%	10.0%	10.0%	8.5%
	Total	Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.082 (p=0.542)						
Pearson's R			0.047 (p=0.248)						

Figure A.12: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Republicans* and *Left-Wing Identity Politics* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Republicans and The Democratic Party	Not Both Present	Count	189	1031	1220
		% within Presidency	98.4%	93.1%	93.8%
	Both Present	Count	3	77	80
		% within Presidency	1.6%	6.9%	6.2%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.080*** (p=0.004)		
Pearson's R			0.080*** (p=0.004)		

Figure A.13: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Republicans* and *The Democratic Party* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
LGBT+ Republicans and The Democratic Party	Not Both Present	Count	99	94	92	97	88	93	563
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	99.0%	94.0%	92.0%	97.0%	88.0%	93.0%	93.8%
	Both Present	Count	1	6	8	3	12	7	37
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	1.0%	6.0%	8.0%	3.0%	12.0%	7.0%	6.2%
	Total	Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.147*** (p=0.024)						
Pearson's R			0.087*** (p=0.033)						

Figure A.14: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Republicans* and *The Democratic Party* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Not Both Present	Count	187	1047	1234
		% within Presidency	97.4%	94.5%	94.9%
	Both Present	Count	5	61	66
		% within Presidency	2.6%	5.5%	5.1%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.047** (p=0.091)		
Pearson's R			0.047** (p=0.091)		

Figure A.15: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *Identity Politics* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	
			Sample	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4	Sample 5	
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Not Both Present	Count	96	93	94	94	94	94	565
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	96.0%	93.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.0%	94.2%
	Both Present	Count	4	7	6	6	6	6	35
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	4.0%	7.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	6.0%	5.8%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.038 (p=0.972)						
Pearson's R			0.015 (p=0.722)						

Figure A.16: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *Identity Politics* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Democratic Party IoE	Not Both Present	Count	190	1038	1228
		% within Presidency	99.0%	93.7%	94.5%
	Both Present	Count	2	70	72
		% within Presidency	1.0%	6.3%	5.5%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.082**** (p=0.003)		
Pearson's R			0.082**** (p=0.003)		

Figure A.17: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *The Democratic Party* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	
			Sample	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4	Sample 5	
Republican Party and Conservatives IVP + Democratic Party IoE	Not Both Present	Count	100	91	94	97	89	96	567
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	91.0%	94.0%	97.0%	89.0%	96.0%	94.5%
	Both Present	Count	0	9	6	3	11	4	33
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	0.0%	9.0%	6.0%	3.0%	11.0%	4.0%	5.5%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.162**** (p=0.008)						
Pearson's R			0.049 (p=0.229)						

Figure A.18: Crosstab of *Republican Party* and *The Democratic Party* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Not Both Present	Count	191	1087	1278
		% within Presidency	99.5%	98.1%	98.3%
	Both Present	Count	1	21	22
		% within Presidency	0.5%	1.9%	1.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.038* (p=0.173)		
Pearson's R			0.038* (p=0.173)		

Figure A.19: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Identity Politics* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total	
			Obama-Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era	Trump Era		
			Sample	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3	Sample 4	Sample 5		
LGBT+ Community at Large IVP + Identity Politics IoE	Not Both Present	Count	99	95	99	98	98	97	586	
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	99.0%	95.0%	99.0%	98.0%	98.0%	97.0%	97.7%	
	Both Present	Count	1	5	1	2	2	3	14	
		% within Randomly Sampled Group	1.0%	5.0%	1.0%	2.0%	2.0%	3.0%	2.3%	
		Total	Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
			% within Randomly Sampled Group	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.091 (p=0.419)							
Pearson's R			0.006 (p=0.874)							

Figure A.20: Crosstab of *LGBT+ Community* and *Identity Politics* vs *Random Samples*.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Present	1300	100.0	100.0	100.0

Figure A.21: Frequency information for *Calls to Violence*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Veneration of the Leader (Composite)	Not Present	Count	186	1034	1220
		% within Presidency	96.9%	93.3%	93.8%
	Present	Count	6	74	80
		% within Presidency	3.1%	6.7%	6.2%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.052, p=0.059		
Pearson's R			0.052, p=0.059		

Figure A.22: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
Veneration of the Leader (Composite)	Not Present	Count	95	98	96	92	94	94	569
		% within Veneration of the Leader (Composite)	16.7%	17.2%	16.9%	16.2%	16.5%	16.5%	100.0%
	Present	Count	5	2	4	8	6	6	31
		% within Veneration of the Leader (Composite)	16.1%	6.5%	12.9%	25.8%	19.4%	19.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Veneration of the Leader (Composite)	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.084 (p=0.0514)						
Pearson's R			0.046 (p=0.258)						

Figure A.23: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
VoA Nikki Haley	Not Present	Count	192	1107	1299
		% within Presidency	100.0%	99.9%	99.9%
	Present	Count	0	1	1
		% within Presidency	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.012 (p=0.677)		
Pearson's R			0.012 (p=0.677)		

Figure A.24: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Nikki Haley* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
VoA Nikki Haley	Not Present	Count	100	100	100	100	100	99	599
		% within VoA Nikki Haley	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.5%	100.0%
	Present	Count	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
		% within VoA Nikki Haley	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within VoA Nikki Haley	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.091, p=0.415						
Pearson's R			0.060, p=0.143						

Figure A.25: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Nikki Haley* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
VenA Melania Trump	Not Present	Count	192	1099	1291
		% within Presidency	100.0%	99.2%	99.3%
	Present	Count	0	9	9
		% within Presidency	0.0%	0.8%	0.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.035 (p=0.210)		
Pearson's R			0.035 (p=0.210)		

Figure A.26: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Melania Trump* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
VenA Melania Trump	Not Present	Count	100	100	99	100	100	98	597
		% within VenA Melania Trump	16.8%	16.8%	16.6%	16.8%	16.8%	16.4%	100.0%
	Present	Count	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
		% within VenA Melania Trump	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within VenA Melania Trump	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.108, p=0.218						
Pearson's R			0.062, p=0.128						

Figure A.27: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Melania Trump* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
VoA Richard Grenell	Not Present	Count	192	1086	1278
		% within Presidency	100.0%	98.0%	98.3%
	Present	Count	0	22	22
		% within Presidency	0.0%	2.0%	1.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.055*** (p=0.049)		
Pearson's R			0.055*** (p=0.049)		

Figure A.28: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Richard Grenell* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
VoA Richard Grenell	Not Present	Count	100	99	99	96	98	99	591
		% within VoA Richard Grenell	16.9%	16.8%	16.8%	16.2%	16.6%	16.8%	100.0%
	Present	Count	0	1	1	4	2	1	9
		% within VoA Richard Grenell	0.0%	11.1%	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within VoA Richard Grenell	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.104, p=0.267						
Pearson's R			0.044, p=0.280						

Figure A.29: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Richard Grenell* vs *Random Samples*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
VoA Donald Trump	Not Present	Count	186	1061	1247
		% within Presidency	96.9%	95.8%	95.9%
	Present	Count	6	47	53
		% within Presidency	3.1%	4.2%	4.1%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.020 (p=0.470)		
Pearson's R			0.020 (p=0.470)		

Figure A.30: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Donald Trump* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
VoA Donald Trump	Not Present	Count	95	99	97	95	96	97	579
		% within VoA Donald Trump	16.4%	17.1%	16.8%	16.4%	16.6%	16.8%	100.0%
	Present	Count	5	1	3	5	4	3	21
		% within VoA Donald Trump	23.8%	4.8%	14.3%	23.8%	19.0%	14.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within VoA Donald Trump	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.075, p=0.638						
Pearson's R			0.003, p=0.948						

Figure A.31: Crosstab of *Veneration of the Authority* with subject *Donald Trump* vs *Random Samples*.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Present	1240	95.4	95.4	95.4
	Present	60	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	1300	100.0	100.0	

Figure A.32: Frequency information for *Dismissal of Accountability*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Dismissal of Accountability	Not Present	Count	192	1048	1240
		% within Presidency	100.0%	94.6%	95.4%
	Present	Count	0	60	60
		% within Presidency	0.0%	5.4%	4.6%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.092, p=0.001		
Pearson's R			0.092, p=0.001		

Figure A.33: Crosstab of *Dismissal of Accountability* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
Dismissal of Accountability	Not Present	Count	100	94	97	97	95	91	574
		% within Dismissal of Accountability (Composite)	17.4%	16.4%	16.9%	16.9%	16.6%	15.9%	100.0%
	Present	Count	0	6	3	3	5	9	26
		% within Dismissal of Accountability (Composite)	0.0%	23.1%	11.5%	11.5%	19.2%	34.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Dismissal of Accountability (Composite)	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.138*** (p=0.044)						
Pearson's R			0.101*** (p=0.014)						

Figure A.34: Crosstab of *Dismissal of Accountability* vs *Random Samples*.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not Present	1086	83.5	83.5	83.5
	Present	214	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	1300	100.0	100.0	

Figure A.35: Frequency information for *Media Scepticism*.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H.		
			Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Media Scepticism	Not Present	Count	181	905	1086
		% within Presidency	94.3%	81.7%	83.5%
	Present	Count	11	203	214
		% within Presidency	5.7%	18.3%	16.5%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.120**** (p=0.001)		
Pearson's R			0.120**** (p=0.001)		

Figure A.36: Crosstab of *Media Scepticism* vs *Presidency*.

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
Media Scepticism	Not Present	Count	97	84	84	82	85	84	516
		% within Media Scepticism	18.8%	16.3%	16.3%	15.9%	16.5%	16.3%	100.0%
	Present	Count	3	16	16	18	15	16	84
		% within Media Scepticism	3.6%	19.0%	19.0%	21.4%	17.9%	19.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Media Scepticism	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.144, p=0.029						
Pearson's R			0.090, p=0.027						

Figure A.37: Crosstab of *Media Scepticism* vs *Random Samples*.

			Media Misrepresentation		Total
			Not Present	Present	
Statements Out of Context	Not Present	Count	1201	38	1239
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	100.0%	38.4%	95.3%
	Present	Count	0	61	61
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	0.0%	61.6%	4.7%
Total		Count	1201	99	1300
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

			Media Misrepresentation		Total
			Not Present	Present	
Total Misrepresentation	Not Present	Count	1201	61	1262
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	100.0%	61.6%	97.1%
	Present	Count	0	38	38
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	0.0%	38.4%	2.9%
Total		Count	1201	99	1300
		% within Media Misrepresentation (Composite)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure A.38: Crosstabs of *Statements out of Context* (top) and *Total Misrepresentation* (bottom) respectively, vs *Media Misrepresentation*. Collectively they show the share of the 99 *Media Misrepresentation* tweets that code for each category of the variable.

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
Media Misrepresentation	Not Present	Count	173	1028	1201
		% within Presidency	90.1%	92.8%	92.4%
	Present	Count	19	80	99
		% within Presidency	9.9%	7.2%	7.6%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.036 (p=0.197)		
Pearson's R			-0.036 (p=0.197)		

Figure A.39: Crosstab of *Media Misrepresentation* vs *Presidency*

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
Media Misrepresentation	Not Present	Count	89	93	93	94	89	93	551
		% within Media Misrepresentation	16.2%	16.9%	16.9%	17.1%	16.2%	16.9%	100.0%
	Present	Count	11	7	7	6	11	7	49
		% within Media Misrepresentation	22.4%	14.3%	14.3%	12.2%	22.4%	14.3%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within Media Misrepresentation	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.074, p=0.652						
Pearson's R			-0.016, p=0.695						

Figure A.40: Crosstab of *Media Misrepresentation* vs *Random Samples*

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
MedMis Statements Out of Context	Not Present	Count	180	1059	1239
		% within Presidency	93.8%	95.6%	95.3%
	Present	Count	12	49	61
		% within Presidency	6.3%	4.4%	4.7%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.031 (p=0.269)		
Pearson's R			-0.031 (p=0.269)		

Figure A.41: Crosstab of *Statements Out of Context* vs *Presidency*

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
MedMis Statements Out of Context	Not Present	Count	94	94	95	98	91	95	567
		% within MedMis Statements Out of Context	16.6%	16.6%	16.8%	17.3%	16.0%	16.8%	100.0%
	Present	Count	6	6	5	2	9	5	33
		% within MedMis Statements Out of Context	18.2%	18.2%	15.2%	6.1%	27.3%	15.2%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within MedMis Statements Out of Context	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.090, p=0.427						
Pearson's R			0.002, p=0.958						

Figure A.42: Crosstab of *Statements Out of Context* vs *Random Samples*

			Presidency		Total
			Barack H. Obama	Donald J. Trump	
MedMis Total Misrepresentation	Not Present	Count	185	1077	1262
		% within Presidency	96.4%	97.2%	97.1%
	Present	Count	7	31	38
		% within Presidency	3.6%	2.8%	2.9%
Total		Count	192	1108	1300
		% within Presidency	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.018 (p=0.520)		
Pearson's R			-0.018 (p=0.520)		

Figure A.43: Crosstab of *Total Misrepresentation* vs *Presidency*

			Randomly Sampled Group						Total
			Obama-Era Sample	Trump Era Sample 1	Trump Era Sample 2	Trump Era Sample 3	Trump Era Sample 4	Trump Era Sample 5	
MedMis Total Misrepresentation	Not Present	Count	95	99	98	96	98	98	584
		% within MedMis Total Misrepresentation	16.3%	17.0%	16.8%	16.4%	16.8%	16.8%	100.0%
	Present	Count	5	1	2	4	2	2	16
		% within MedMis Total Misrepresentation	31.3%	6.3%	12.5%	25.0%	12.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	100	100	100	100	100	100	600
		% within MedMis Total Misrepresentation	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	100.0%
Cramer's V			0.085, p=0.493						
Pearson's R			-0.030, p=0.459						

Figure A.44: Crosstab of *Total Misrepresentation* vs *Random Samples*

Appendix B

Liberal Islamophobia

Introduction

In Chapter 5, I briefly introduced LCR’s use of Islamophobic tropes as a supplement to their populist commentary against *The Left*. This appendix serves as a broader, qualitative overview, of the kinds of ‘liberal Islamophobia’ (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020) that Log Cabin engage in. Islamophobia is a common element of far right rhetoric, often associated with narratives about the so-called ‘clash of civilisations’ (Huntingdon, 1996), which positions ‘western culture’ and Islam as diametrically opposed (Mudde, 2019) (Mondon and Winter, 2020). ‘Liberal’ Islamophobic arguments, in which Islam is caricatured for practices like the veiling of women, are then used to legitimise Islamophobia in the mainstream; something to be cast out, lest it ‘illiberalise’ society (Mondon and Winter, 2017, 2020).

Islamophobia did not receive a research chapter to itself in the final draft of this thesis. It *is* used in Chapter 5, when LCR use Islamophobia in a directly Homo-Authoritarian manner; legitimising Trump via attacking the left for being ‘soft’ on Islamic ‘barbarism’ (sic). But LCR’s background Islamophobia does not affect their trade of loyalty for acceptance, and thus it plays only a supplementary role. Furthermore, were I to devote a chapter to it in full, I would have little to say there that was not extremely iterative of other authors, Jasbir Puar (2007, 2013) most especially. However, an appendix gives me the perfect opportunity to not let the research that demonstrated LCR’s Islamophobic rhetoric go to waste, whilst reserving the thesis’ research chapters for those things that represent a genuinely original contribution to academia; the support for the theory of ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’. This appendix touches on the key areas in which Islamophobia was more generally deployed by LCR; in the context of the Pulse Nightclub shooting, and in foreign policy.

Tweet 0019, sent in December 2015, was the first observed instance of Islamophobia in the sample. Its Islamophobia is implied, rather than obviously stated, and thus bears some explanation (see Figure B.1). It is an excited statement about the author, a member of LCR’s leadership, meeting conservative political commentator Mark Steyn. Steyn’s publications, *America Alone* (2006), and *After America* (2011), are deeply racist works that foretell the collapse of Western civilisation as a result of debt, immigration and the influence of Islam. **Tweet 0019** calls Steyn a ‘legend’ and the *AfterAmerica* hashtag suggests strongly that *that* is the book being signed by the author in the foreground. Socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) analysis centres on the word ‘legend’ (which is fully capitalised to ensure its meaning cannot be missed), as a straightforward, and wholehearted, endorsement. Almost a year before Trump was elected, a member of LCR’s leadership was openly endorsing an Islamophobic doomsayer, and by extension, their anti-Islamic sentiment, and



Figure B.1: **Tweet 0019**, discussed in the body of the text. It has been partially censored to protect the identity of the Tweet's author.

conspiratorial beliefs about the infiltration of the West (Uenal et al, 2021). This was the only instance of *conspiritorial* Islamophobia in the sample (ibid), but it is a telling case.

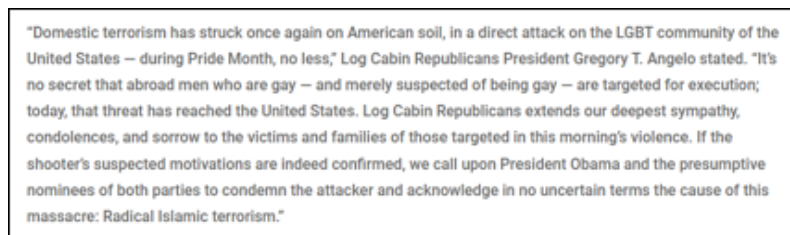


Figure B.2: An excerpt from the LCR press release linked in **Tweet 0040**, concerning the Pulse Nightclub massacre. LCR construct 'radical Islamic terrorism' as an explicit other, and condemn President Obama by implication for orienting the issue around other causes (Log Cabin Republicans, 2016b). A socio-cognitive reading (Van Dijk, 2016) focusses on the words 'radical' and 'Islamic' as adjectives to terrorism, noting how these are used to reinforce the notion of the shooter as an 'other'.

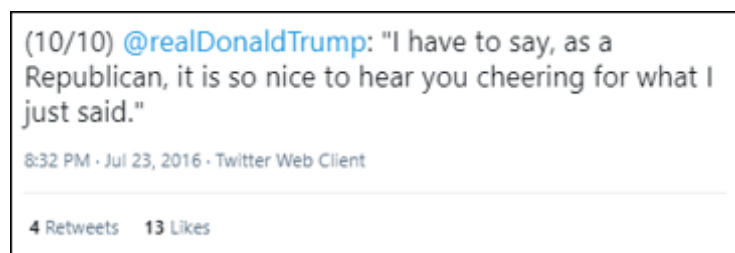


Figure B.3: **Tweet 0091**, part of a thread concerning the 'pro-LGBT' comments made by Republican leaders at the 2016 GOP convention. Trump's comment was a pledge to 'protect' the LGBT+ community from 'radical Islamic terrorism', which was met with a standing ovation, to which he was pleasantly surprised. A discourse-historical reading (Reisigl and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates a re-contextualisation of the moment as LCR's ultimate victory; the endorsement of the community by the GOP, even though in practice it was a brief segment of an otherwise extremely lengthy speech, and the need to fight 'radical Islam' may have been the thing people were actually cheering.

The Pulse nightclub shooting, and the 2016 GOP convention that followed it, saw LCR further engaging in 'liberal Islamophobia'. It was also the point where the group first

became seriously enamoured of Donald Trump, as he took the opportunity to make pro-LGBT+ statements (see Chapter 5). Almost all of these statements, which were picked up on and celebrated by LCR, were made in the context of protecting LGBT+ people from ‘radical Islamic terrorism’, and the need for Republican leadership in doing so. Independent of the role this played in legitimising Trump, it’s worth noting that emphasis was repeatedly placed on othering said terrorists as ‘radical’ and ‘Islamic’, and thereby socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) making Islamic terrorism appear *worse* than other kinds; in an othered category of its own. That LGBT+ people had been the victims of the pulse shooter (Omar Mateen, who claimed allegiance to ISIS) was further used to juxtapose the LGBT+ community against Islamic culture; the religion was made out to be an inherent danger to LGBT+ people.

As elaborated on in Chapters 5 and 6, Log Cabin paid particular attention to Donald Trump’s foreign policy, being particularly praiseworthy of his ‘strong’ methods deployed against Islamic-majority states. These allowed LCR to position ‘real Homophobia’ as something that happens elsewhere in the world, rather than in the US (Fairclough, 2016). What I would like to call attention to here is the use of the word ‘barbarism’ to describe such states. It is evident from the implications in these tweets that Log Cabin view western culture, American culture specifically, as superior to those of others, in classic homonationalist fashion (Puar, 2007, 2013). But they reserve specific ire for Islamic-majority ones. States like Iran and Saudi Arabia are the only ones ever described as ‘barbaric’, as though their institutionalised homophobia (which is, admittedly, very extreme; prescribing the death penalty for homosexual intercourse) qualifies them as subhuman. Implied in the term ‘barbarian’ is the desire to ‘civilise’ them by the forceful, colonialist, export of one’s own culture. In short, Log Cabin view those parts of the world in which Islam is the dominant religion, particularly those where Sharia forms the basis for the state’s laws, as in need of ‘civilising’.

In summary, Log Cabin engage in rhetoric that ‘others’ Islam as being a sort of alien culture that is uniformly hostile to LGBT+ people. It justifies this with reference to the worst excesses perpetrated in the name of Islam, as though they are reflective of the culture as a whole. Such tactics are common to the far right; co-opting pseudo-liberal narratives about equality and minority rights in order to invisibilise the institutional discrimination found in their own states, via a convenient scapegoat.

In Chapter 5 we briefly touched on how Log Cabin utilise these tropes in an explicitly populist (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) context; when discussions of Islamic ‘barbarism’ are used to attack the Democratic Party for being ‘soft’ on Iran, and thereby making them into an elite foe that threatens the LGBT+ ‘people’. Then, in Chapter 6, we discussed how LCR’s attitude to foreign policy emphasised ‘strength’ and unilateralism, constructing America as a polity that cannot be legitimately held accountable by other states. In the case of Islamophobia, that meant celebrating Richard Grenell dictating to German businesses that they stop trading with Iran. This appendix serves to put such beliefs in context.

As noted at the start of this appendix, this particular strand of my work is iterative of Jasbir Puar’s (2007, 2013) conclusions about ‘Homonationalism’; whereby patriotic, and subliminally Islamophobic, rhetoric may be traded for mainstream acceptance of LGBT+ people. In the research chapters, we have seen how Log Cabin have moved beyond this concept and into ‘Homo-Authoritarianism’, in which the goal is to legitimise an authority figure and undermine their accountability, with Islamophobia used to assist in the undermining of that authority’s enemies. Nevertheless, this short appendix serves as a welcome



Figure B.4: **Tweet 0923**, which links to a *Jerusalem Post* article about Mohsen Lorestani, a famous Kurdish singer, being charged with homosexuality in Iran, thus making him subject to execution if found guilty (Weinthal, 2019). The short article also refers to Wikileaks data, suggesting that between 4000-6000 homosexuals have been executed by the Iranian regime since 1979. LCR use this as evidence of the need for 'American leadership', specifically Donald Trump's leadership, to fight the 'barbarism' in Iran. Socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) readings identify the accusation of 'barbarism', casting Iran as uncivilised. A dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis identifies the positioning of the US as moral arbiter.



Figure B.5: **Tweet 1120**. It references Maximo Alvarez' speech at the 2020 Republican convention, where he talked about his impoverished life growing up in Cuba, his fleeing to the US and his love for his adopted country. LCR emphasise the 'powerful rebuke of communism' which can be interpreted as another broad-strokes critique of the left, and thus a dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) positioning of the Democratic Party as being un-American. The key thing readers should take away here is that communist states are considered ideologically *lesser* than the US, but Cuba is not written off as 'barbaric', unlike an Islamic-majority state would be.

reminder that the conclusions of *Terrorist Assemblages* (2007) are every bit as relevant to understanding LGBT+ Conservative behaviours today, as they were 17 years ago; Islam remains a scapegoat for homonationalists.

Appendix C

Media Misrepresentation

C.1 Introduction

This appendix concerns the selective way in which LCR use and legitimise some sources of media, whilst disregarding others. The overall goal being that LCR portray right-wing aligned news as legitimate, and use it for sharing their own discourse, whilst they delegitimise the mainstream media, in particular LGBT+ publications like the *Washington Blade*. Ultimately, whilst originally researched with a view to being added to Chapter 6, this content was moved to an appendix, as, on reflection, it cannot be said to be a sign of authoritarianism on its own, only political bias. Nevertheless, readers may find it of interest in supporting the conclusions of Chapter 6 on *Media Scepticism*. It leaves LCR firmly in a right-wing media echo-chamber, one that they reproduce even at the expense of distorting the content of the articles they share.

The quantitative results of the research into *Media Misrepresentation* were inconclusive, demonstrating no meaningful change across the sample. There *was* a practically significant decline, but not one that was reflected in the sub-variables; *Statements Out of Context* and *Total Misrepresentation*¹. LCR are thus deemed to have consistently maintained these tactics. The qualitative information gleaned on the *ways* in which they do this are still of supplementay value to the work in Chapter 6 however.

C.2 LCR's Media Engagement

Before diving into *Media Misrepresentation*, it is worth presenting to readers the full context of the kinds of media that LCR consume and reproduce. Each tweet that contained an appended article was coded based on Log Cabin's representation of the article in question, and this rapidly demonstrated that LCR exist in a right-wing media echo-chamber. 410 tweets in the sample made use of a media source in total; they are divided into several categories listed below. In order to demonstrate LCR's most frequent forms of media consumption, and reproduction, in each category, the top ten most cited sources for each have been provided, excepting those sources that were cited only once each.

- **Face Value Sources:** (N=196) Sources that were accurately represented in the tweet in which they appeared. The intention of these tweets is to present the source as truthful and authoritative and usually to encourage the reader to engage with them.

1. *Washington Examiner* (N=22)

¹See Figures A.39-44 in Appendix A

2. *Fox News* (N=13)
 3. *The Hill* (N=9)
 4. *Daily Caller* (N=7)
 5. *Breitbart* (N=7)
 6. *Washington Times* (N=7)
 7. *New York Post* (N=6)
 8. *National Review* (N=5)
 9. *The Federalist* (N=4)
 10. *New York Times* (N=4)
 11. *Metro Weekly* and *The Daily Beast* were both also cited 4 times.
- **Misrepresented Sources:** (N=99) Sources that were misrepresented in some form, either through *Statements out of Context* or *Total Misrepresentation*. They are the key focus of this Appendix.
 1. *Washington Blade* (N=14)
 2. *New York Times* (N=7)
 3. *NBC News* (N=5)
 4. *Washington Post* (N=4)
 5. *Los Angeles Times* (N=4)
 6. *Wall Street Journal* (N=4)
 7. *Huffington Post* (N=3)
 8. *Miami Herald* (N=3)
 9. *DW.com* (N=3)
 10. *The Hill* (N=3)
 - **LCR-Written Sources:** (N=82) Sources that are presented as *Face Value*, but were authored by a known LCR member. These included links to LCR's website, social media, *OUTSpoken*, or to an LCR-written article in an external publication. Again these are presented as true, and authoritative.
 1. *LCR Website* (N=26)
 2. *OUTSpoken* (N=26)
 3. *Fox News* (N=7)
 4. *Washington Post* (N=3)
 5. *Washington Examiner* (N=3)
 6. *Breitbart* (N=2)
 7. *The Federalist* (N=22)
 8. *LCR Facebook* (N=2)
 9. *LCR-Sponsored Ads* (N=2)
 - **Critiqued Sources:** (N=31) Sources that are presented in tweets that actively decry their content. All of these were also coded for *Media Scepticism* (see Chapter 6), since the reader is meant to distrust the source as a result.
 1. *Washington Blade* (N=5)

2. *New York Times* (N=3)
 3. *CNN* (N=3)
 4. *NBC News* (N=3)
 5. *LGBTQ Nation* (N=3)
 6. *GLAAD* (N=2)
 7. *The Advocate* (N=2)
- **Satirical Sources** (N=2): Sources that the reader is clearly not meant to take seriously. These sources will play no part here.
 1. *The Onion* (N=2)

Of the 196 *Face-Value* sources, the most commonly cited were almost all right-wing partisan ones, with the *Washington Examiner* appearing most frequently (N=22), followed by *Fox* (N=13). Whilst the relatively neutral source *The Hill* is in third place (N=9), the top five are rounded out by the far right *Daily Caller* and *Breitbart* (N=7 each). This strongly suggests that LCR, either, see conservative and reactionary sources as more truthful, or they want their readers to believe such, or both. Compounding this further are the 82 *LCR Written* sources. 24 of such tweets linked to articles written in external publications, and most of these, again, lean far right. The most commonly cited is *Fox News* (N=7), with the *Washington Examiner* joint second with the *Washington Post* (N=3) and *Breitbart* third (N=2). Taken together, this suggests that LCR most closely align themselves with such right-wing sources, and feel that their message will be best received on such a partisan platform. They, thus, rhetorically position the right adjacent to truth, and anything else as leftist lies (Fairclough, 2016).

The alt-right platform *Breitbart* appears repeatedly in the sample, contributing 7 *Face Value*- and 2 *LCR-Written* sources. This is proof on its own that LCR are actively complicit in the propagation of the far right media machine. But the greatest evidence to this end is the quantity of links to *OUTSpoken*. The far-right media site was launched by LCR in mid-2020, yet it is referenced in 26 of the 1300 tweets in the sample. For context, LCR references *OUTSpoken* in the July 2020-January 2021 period as frequently as they had referenced their own main website (such as in the case of press releases) *in the entire sample*, and more frequently than they had referenced articles written by their members in external publications in the same time frame. *OUTSpoken* quickly rose to dominate LCR's media communication in the run up to, and fallout from, the 2020 election. It is clear that when LCR want to back up their arguments with a source, so as to make it appear truthful and/or authoritative, and thus shape public narratives to their benefit, they turn, overwhelmingly, to partisan right-wing sources. Recontextualising the far right as objective and non-partisan (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) and positioned close to 'the people' and away from their 'Gay Inc' enemy, in a manner reflective of the populism observed in Chapter 5 (Fairclough, 2016) (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

The dialectical-relational analysis of LCR's populist media choices is borne out in the pattern of sources that LCR cite, either, erroneously, or to discredit their contents (Fairclough, 2016) (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). These pieces are invariably either mainstream sources, or those written specifically for an LGBT+ audience. The most commonly cited *Misrepresented* source (N=14) and *Critiqued* source (N=5) was the *Washington Blade*, one of the US' most circulated LGBT+ newspapers, with the *New York Times*, in second place on both counts (*Misrepresented* 7 times, and *Critiqued* 3 times). With the exception of the *Blade*, the other most commonly *Misrepresented* sources were largely mainstream publications designed for mass circulation, and some of the most widely-read papers in

America were frequently cited, as was *NBC News*; one of its titans of Network TV. It is clear, therefore, that in spite of the conclusions of Chapter 6 on *Media Scepticism*, LCR are neither unaware of which media brands are the most influential in the US, nor unwilling to use them, albeit in a warped manner.

Consistent with my analysis is the predominance of LGBT+ publications amongst the *Critiqued Media* sources. These include the aforementioned *Blade*, along with *LGBTQ Nation* (N=3), *GLAAD* and *The Advocate* (N=2 each). LCR frequently promote the idea that they are the lone, and oppressed, ‘true’ voice of reason, diverse opinion and free thought in an otherwise shamelessly left-partisan gay media environment. Indeed, this was the purpose of launching *OUTSpoken* in the first place. It is totally unsurprising, then, that LCR actively discredit the contents of America’s most read LGBT+ publications. It is, whether explicit or implicit, a direct way of trying to replace other LGBT+ media influences with their own, and, thus, try to align the community to the right

In short, LCR exist in a right-wing media bubble, one that they continually reproduce around themselves. They position conservative, and far right, sources as adjacent to objective fact, and the mainstream media as a font of lies. When they want to author a piece themselves, they generally choose platforms like *Fox* to do so, but pivoted to launching their own media channel, *OUTSpoken*, in imitation of the editorial style of the likes of *Breitbart*. They are, however, not above borrowing the legitimacy of the mainstream media for their own purposes however, provided they can present a line out of context, completely misrepresent the contents of an article, or borrow an unreflective, exaggerated title. It is to such cases that we devote the remainder of this appendix.

C.3 Variable Descriptions and Frequencies

Having established the key patterns in LCR’s media behaviour, we now turn to *Media Misrepresentation* more fully. It appears in 99 tweets across the sample, and concerns those in which the author would append a source (usually an online newspaper article) as a way of backing up the point they were making, only to misrepresent the content of said source in the text of the tweet. This presents a false narrative to readers; the natural inclination to many of us when we see an argument backed up by a citation, is to assume that the argument is more authoritative, it is, after all, supported by quoted evidence. Were one to read the tweet, see the appended article, and *not* follow the link to the article itself, one would likely take the text’s representation of it at face value, and be more likely to believe it as a result. In this way, Log Cabin often add a false veneer of truth to their arguments by selectively borrowing from the mainstream media that they otherwise deride. Log Cabin convince their followers to tune out the media in general but pay attention to specific interpretations of it when they are in line with LCR’s beliefs.

Media Misrepresentation was coded via two sub-variables, each demonstrating a different method of recontextualisation. The first, and most common, of these was *Statements Out of Context* (N=61), in which LCR would use the text of a tweet to quote from the appended article or summarise a short section of it. This foregrounding of a selected part of the article naturally colours any reading of it, since it will be read *first*, and thus those perusing the text will have LCR’s selective quotation in the forefront of their brains as they do so. Furthermore, if one does not read the article, one is left assuming that the article’s content reflects LCR’s foregrounding. In fact, many of these statements were partially, or wholly, unreflective of the pieces in question. It was not uncommon for LCR to cherry-pick favourable quotations from several paragraphs down the page, in articles that were otherwise critical of the point they were driving at, and use that exceedingly

selective quotation to foreground the whole article. Even more commonly, LCR would simply restate the *title* of an article, which appeared to support their point, even if the article's contents as a whole were more measured. This latter point is, naturally, not entirely LCR's fault, and incorporates the unbalanced editorial standards of the sources in question. However, it speaks to Log Cabin either wilfully misrepresenting a source, or simply not bothering to read it properly; neither of which reflect well on them, and both of which reflect a desire to jump at any scrap of media evidence that supports their own narrative.

A respectable minority of tweets coding for *Media Misrepresentation* were classified as *Total Misrepresentation* (N=38)², in which LCR's foregrounding of the article simply did not reflect the contents in any way. This is as close to *lying* about media narratives as LCR ever get. Typically this is done as a way of criticising, either, the article itself, or someone (usually a political opponent) referenced in the article's subject matter. Again, this lends a layer of legitimacy to a falsehood; if one were to read the tweet and not have the time or inclination to follow the source, one would end up more sympathetic to LCR's construction of reality than is warranted.

C.4 Examples

Unlike Appendix B's work on 'Liberal Islamophobia', there were no flashpoints, or particular periods of emphasis, in LCR's use of *Media Misrepresentation*, there was neither a tonal or quantitative shift in the tactic at any point. This limits my capacity to present the work that went into this in a structured way, with running commentary. As a result, I have given over this section to a series of representative examples of both *Statements Out of Context* and *Total Misrepresentation*, which readers may find illuminating.



Figure C.1: **Tweet 0447**. It contains a linked article from the *Empire State Tribune* (Campbell, 2018). In this case, LCR use the testimony of Jennifer Williams, a trans GOP member, to paint the party as inclusive of her identity. This codes for *Statements Out of Context*, as, in reality, the article notes how Williams finds life actively difficult and attests to her victimisation from all sides, particularly discrimination *by Republicans*. Discourse-historical analysis shows that LCR have taken an article about managing to *survive* as a trans Republican, and recontextualised it as being about *thriving* as a trans Republican (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

²Frequency information for *Statements out of Context* and *Total Misrepresentation* can be found in Figure A.38 in Appendix A.



Figure C.2: **Tweet 0354**, which celebrates the selection of Richard Grenell as the prospective ambassador to Germany by Trump. LCR have only paid attention to the opening paragraphs of the piece, in spite of the wider article being more critical, thus coding the tweet for *Statements Out of Context*. LCR have reworked the content to foreground Grenell's sexuality, thus dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) suggests this is an effort to position the GOP as adjacent to the LGBT+ community. The article, which also appears in **Tweets 355** and **357**, actually makes *no* mention of Grenell's sexuality, and, furthermore, it actually criticises his social media behaviour, and expresses doubt about the Trump administration's agenda towards Germany. Far from a celebration, or a coup for LGBT+ rights, as LCR make it out to be, the *DW* article is, if anything, unsure about the prospect of Grenell's credentials and certainly doesn't care about his sexuality (DW, 2018).



Figure C.3: **Tweet 1151**, which takes the title of a *Newsweek* article out of context to support its anti-liberal argument. Not only does the tweet make an implied anti-Democrat dig, by presenting them as out-of-touch urbanites (and thus a subliminally populist elite enemy (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005)) which the article *does not*, but the article also takes great pains to remind readers that LGBT+ Conservatives are still in the minority, and that the US's increased numbers are both an isolated phenomenon, and simply bringing the gay vote closer to the national average. Furthermore, the article expresses some scepticism about the validity of the poll in question (Villarreal, 2020). Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) points to this being an open-and-shut positioning of the Democrats as an elite enemy (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005), but the framing of that populist argument casually ignores the context of the article.



Figure C.4: **Tweet 1284**, which contains the final *Statement Out of Context* in the sample. The Tweet has been partially censored to protect the identity of the sender. The *NPR* article in the original Tweet makes no mention of Pete Buttigieg’s qualifications (Naylor, 2020), but LCR highlight *NPR*’s foregrounding of Mayor Pete’s statement about a ‘personal love of transportation’ and reconstruct it to be Buttigieg’s only qualification for the role; thereby qualifying the author to be Treasury Secretary because they love Monopoly. The choice of ‘Monopoly’ rather than simply ‘money’ or ‘spending money’, is a further implied dig, since Monopoly is a game, equating it to Buttigieg’s qualifications makes him appear immature and out of touch; playing games instead of living in the real world. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates that this seizing of a line out of context is intended to extrapolate an entire narrative, that positions Buttigieg as colossally out of touch. It is part of LCR’s wider discourse-historical recontextualisation of Buttigieg as an inferior ‘diversity hire’ and unworthy successor to Richard Grenell.



Figure C.5: **Tweet 0105**, an example of *Total Misrepresentation*. The *Washington Blade* article in question focusses on the ambivalence of many in the LGBT+ community towards Clinton, and her comparatively unsuccessful polling numbers, relative to her predecessor, Obama. The article speculates that she might poll the lowest out of any *Democratic* presidential candidate amongst the LGBT+ community (Lee, 2016). LCR have spun this into a narrative about her polling lower than *any* candidate, implying she would lose to any Republican also. This positions her away from the LGBT+ community, and Trump closer (Fairclough, 2016). This completely misconstrues the premise of the article so as to aggrandise the existence of a gay GOP voting bloc. Ironically, the candidate who did garner the ‘LOWEST share of gay votes EVER’ was Clinton’s 2016 opponent, *Donald Trump*.



Figure C.6: **Tweet 0269**, which engages in *Total Misrepresentation* towards an appended *Miami Herald* article, about the resignation of Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen. The article does not comment on her LGBT+ record, which was mixed-to-positive; with early support for homophobic policies that levelled out into a pro-gay marriage stance by the early 2010s (Klas, 2017). LCR, nevertheless, use it to buttress an argument about her being a pro-LGBT+ ‘powerhouse’ and ‘our strongest ally bar none’. Whilst a case can certainly be made for Ros-Lehtinen being the strongest *internal* ally of an LGBT+ Republican specifically; socio-cognitive analysis of the companion words of ‘LGBT equality’ and ‘our’ in the sentence, suggest that she is being held up as the predominant ally of the whole community (Van Dijk, 2016) (Fillmore, 1985), and thus her allyship is implied to be superior to that of Democrats also. Once again, dialectical-relational analysis demonstrates this as an effort to position the GOP closer to the LGBT+ community than their rivals, even though the article says nothing of the sort (Fairclough, 2016).



Figure C.7: **Tweet 0128**, a case of *Total Misrepresentation* of, both, Michaelangelo Signorile’s article in the *Huffington Post* about LCR, and Dan Savage’s response to it. Signorile’s article makes no reference to violence but is actively critical of LCR’s support of Trump, and constructs them as cowardly for dog-whistling an endorsement of him, only to turn about face right before the 2016 election (Signorile, 2016). Savage’s summation of this as ‘slapping around’ LCR is clearly constructing it as a ‘verbal slap’, or a dressing down. It’s a poor choice of words, certainly, but it can be understood in context as a verbal attack only. LCR completely misrepresent this and, recontextualise the whole affair as an open call for physical reprisal against gay conservatives. Furthermore, LCR construct Savage’s prior work on anti-bullying as evidence of hyper-partisanship, part of their wider narrative that the LGBT+ community’s leaders are only interested in caring for gay liberals, and instead see gay conservatives as the enemy (see Chapter 5 on ‘the Left’). Rather, the text has been recontextualised so as to position gay liberals as violently repressive (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).



Figure C.8: **Tweet 0735**, which appends an *Out.com* article criticising Trump’s 2019 decriminalisation initiative. It will, likely, not surprise readers that *Out.com* are decidedly *not* against the decriminalisation of homosexuality, but they do view the issue as worryingly tied up in Trump’s desire to diplomatically isolate Iran (Rodriguez, 2019). But LCR are happy to rework this as yet another partisan gay left argument; that liberalism and Democratic loyalty is more important than gay rights, and that the gay left are chronically incapable of crediting Trump with any success. Dialectical-relational analysis has an easy job demonstrating this tweet to be a positioning of the left-wing *away* from the LGBT+ community.



Figure C.9: **Tweet 880**, a *Total Misrepresentation* of a *crooksandliars.com* article about climate change. The article’s assertion that Greta Thunberg’s arguments are often chauvinistically dismissed, and that she is frequently talked down to by male public figures (Belle, 2019), has been spun by LCR into a wild claim that undefined ‘liberals’ think male climate sceptics are inherently sexist, and that female climate sceptics are ‘self-hating’. This is a deliberate, reactionary, effort to undermine the cause of environmentalism, by recontextualising its rhetoric as extreme, and falsely claiming victimhood (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). Socio-cognitive analysis also notes the words ‘radical environmental agenda’, making the entire belief system of environmentalism appear dangerous and illegitimate by implication.

C.5 Conclusions on Media Misrepresentation

This appendix was intended to supplement the conclusions of Chapter 6 on LCR’s *Media Scepticism*. Where the latter is a directly authoritarian attribute, designed to establish control over public narratives, so as to directly undermine the accountability of an authority figure (Glasius, 2018); *Media Misrepresentation* can be explained as a combination of partisanship, laziness, and seizing upon poor editorial standards. It is, however, a pattern of behaviour that mutually reinforces *Media Scepticism*.

LCR exist in a conservative media bubble, but they seek to utilise the mainstream media strategically to boost their message. When they are not expressing scepticism of it, as shown in Chapter 6, they may selectively lift portions of its’ content in order to re-contextualise them. This allows them to subliminally present their arguments as more authoritative, for having ‘evidence’ appended to them in the form of non-partisan reporting. But, typically, these sources have been warped in some way, in a combination of deeply selective reading, or just seizing on catchy titles, when the contents of the article, read more carefully, are not always in alignment with such points.

Readers may find this work a fitting complement to Chapter 6, as well as the work on populism that informed Chapter 5, and of the ‘doublethink’ (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) in Chapter 4. In LCR’s mind, the mainstream media is the tool of ‘Gay Inc’, and thus an enemy of the people, until they aren’t. They position conservative sources towards truth, but will suddenly forget their hostility to the media when a sentence, two thirds of the way down an article, appears to agree with them. Like so much of LCR’s rhetoric, their engagement with the media is malleable, adjusting to fit the demands of partisanship.

Appendix D

Log Cabin in the Biden Era

D.1 Introduction

This thesis' research limited itself to the results observable during the Obama and Trump administrations, and to those Twitter accounts fully active for the entirety of that period. Here, in the appendices, we turn to Log Cabin as we see them today. This is intended for the benefit of anyone choosing to pursue research on the current iteration of LCR, to serve as a leg up for their work. Since the accession of Joe Biden to the Presidency, Log Cabin have seemingly doubled-down on the worst aspects of *Homo-Authoritarianism* and reactionary politics more generally. Therefore, this appendix is intended to supplement the thesis' argument, by demonstrating that its conclusions about *Homo-Authoritarianism* have stood the test of time. LCR did not merely hit that stage by January 2021, they sustained it through 2024 and, if anything, committed further.

This began to come to a head during the last months of the Trump Presidency, when Log Cabin launched *OUTSpoken*. This was discussed during Chapter 6's commentary on *Media Scepticism*, it was LCR's attempt to cash in on the market for reactionary alt-right 'news', fulfilled by the likes of *Breitbart* and *InfoWars*. It claimed to be impartial, but was uniformly far right. The implication here is where *OUTSpoken* is 'unbiased', the regular media leans to the left. LCR thus perpetuate the tropes of liberal mind-control and mob rule that have appeared so frequently in this thesis. *OUTSpoken* has appeared numerous times in this work, as its content was retweeted across the studied accounts, but since it was not itself founded until 2020, its own Twitter account was not sampled. Studying it in more detail was not part of the scope of this thesis' research, but it makes for a perfect appendix to accompany it.

OUTSpoken has repeatedly promoted the following narratives, all of which are demonstrated in inset figures throughout this Appendix:

1. Trans women are men, masquerading as feminine in order to breach women's spaces, sexually assault them, and muscle them out of their sports.
2. Academia and secondary education are engaged in conspiracies to convince white heterosexuals to be ashamed of their identity, and to 'groom' young children to experiment with their gender and sexuality at an inappropriate age.
3. Queer sexuality is abhorrent. To wit, the gay victims of the 2022 monkeypox pandemic were entirely deserving of their fate for sleeping around.
4. There is nothing to be 'proud' of about sexuality, or gender identity, rather one should be nationalistically proud about being *American*.

5. ‘Gay Inc’ is complicit in causing irreparable social damage, including to gay people (read: heteronormative homosexuals) by promoting the above.



Figure D.1: A screencap of a tweet sent by Clay Travis, a writer for the sports commentary site *Outkick.com* (not part of the sampled accounts), that was retweeted without additional comment by one of the LCR accounts from this thesis’ sample. The tweet itself describes Lia Thomas, and all trans female athletes as ‘men who identify as women’. Discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) reading of this tweet recontextualises trans lives as being false. The article itself is relatively neutral, but does contain a subliminally transphobic tweet by Team GB swimmer Sharon Davis in support of FINA’s ban on trans athletes (Graff, 2022). That LCR retweeted this without comment suggests full agreement with the idea of Lia, and others like her, being ‘men.’



Figure D.2: A screencap of an *OUTSpoken* thumbnail linking to an article about FINA’s ban on trans women competing against cisgender women. The headline’s trolling title, seemingly enjoying the ‘leftist tears’ spilled on the issue, is an open-and-shut case of alt-right ‘lulz’ baiting, a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) communication of allegiance to alt-right trolling circles, and an implication that making progressives angry is *funny* (Flisfeder, 2018) (Greene, 2019) (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir, 2020). The article itself called the move a ‘slam dunk for common sense’ and claimed that furor over it would only cost the Democrats votes, and alienate them from centrists (Lloyd, 2022a). Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis demonstrates a positioning of transphobia towards the moderate centre, rather than the right, so as to imply that engaging in it is a sound electoral strategy.

The most visceral attacks made by *OUTSpoken* are reserved for the political left. But where the site departs from the other sources that have occupied this thesis’ research is its usage of linguistic tropes associated with the alt-right; namely parody obscuring biting criticism, and ‘trolling’. The latter represents the posting of targeted offensive content for the express purpose of getting an upset reaction (‘triggering’) from political opponents, for the amusement (‘lulz’) of the poster. Use of such rhetoric is a socio-cognitive (Van Dijk, 2016) communication of allegiance to the far right (Flisfeder 2018) (Greene, 2019) (Hodge and Hallgrimsdottir). Whilst, arguably, LCR have been far right for some time, due to their affiliation with Trump, rarely have they been so open about it.



Figure D.3: A screenshot of an *OUTSpoken* thumbnail linking to an article denouncing queer, and especially non-binary identities. The article claims that non-binary people have nothing in common with the rest of the LGBT+ community, and should not be part of it, politically or otherwise. Specifically, it claims that the genderfluid nature of someone's existence, described in the article as 'choosing' what gender to be on a given day, must be kept apart from the rest of gay activism, since it undermines the idea that being gay isn't a choice, something that has been a cornerstone of LGBT+ activism (Sances, 2022a). Dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2016) analysis demonstrates LCR trying to position queer identities far from themselves, so they look sanitised by comparison. Furthermore, discourse-historical (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) readings demonstrate a recontextualisation of sexuality as *narrowly* defined, and of LGBT+ activism's achievements as fragile; threatened by the mere existence of non-binary people. Readers are reminded of LCR's commitment to 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022), in which LCR suddenly change their viewpoint to make a conservative argument (see Chapter 4). For a group who so regularly promotes LGBT+ equality as having been secured, to suddenly claim those achievements are easily undermined is a whiplash turn, provoked by the 'need' to denounce non-normative parts of their community.

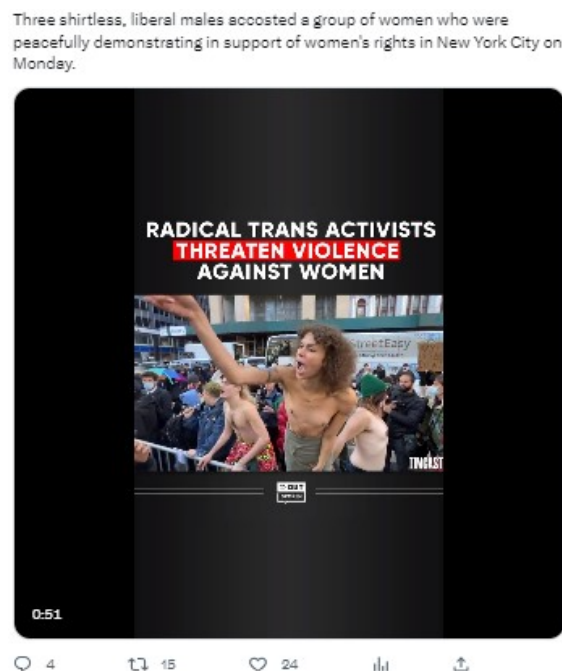


Figure D.4: A screenshot of an LCR tweet sent on November 16th 2022, about trans activists who counter-protested a women's rights march in New York. The tweet openly calls the activists 'males'. Even though the video testimony identifies them as trans. This means that the tweet author chose the word 'males' intentionally, so as to recontextualise trans lives as false (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

Part of this alt-right communication is attempts at 'comedy'. To this end, *OUTSpoken* have maintained a dedicated series of parody articles written under pseudonyms. 'Ann Lesby PhD's' pieces are designed to mock academic discourse around issues like intersectionality; and 'Hogatha Cysty's' works are designed to mock LGBT+ liberal activism. Between them they recontextualise the language of the academic establishment, and LGBT+ liberation, in order to make both look ridiculous, dangerous, and generally worthy of scorn (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). A particular tactic of note is their repurposed use of 'alphabet soup' (sic)



Figure D.5: A screncap of an LCR tweet sent on September 23rd 2022 about a drag queen event at a library. The tweet, and the *OUTSpoken* article appended to it, rail against the supposed ‘sexualisation’ of children supposedly inherent in exposing them to trans people, and assorted moral panics related to it (Leatherwood, 2022b). Discourse-historical analysis (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016) demonstrates that LCR are intentionally seeking to recontextualise *any* exposure of a child to trans and/or queer people as a sexual act, intentionally promoted by ‘Gay Inc’.

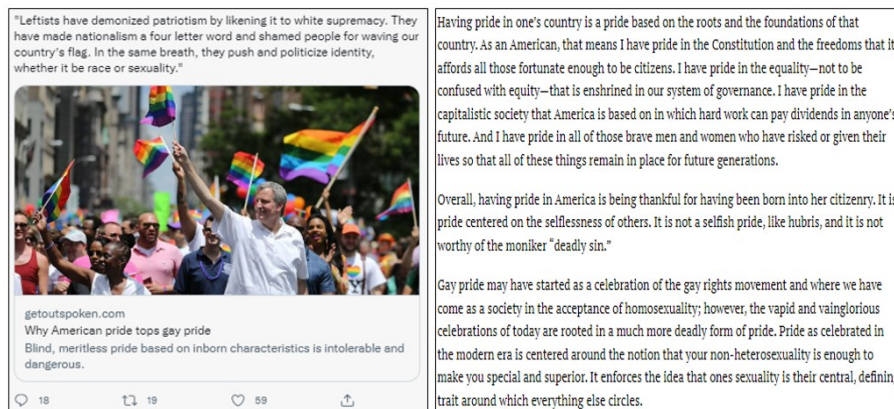


Figure D.6: Screenshots of an LCR tweet sent on the 7th June 2022 (left) and an excerpt from the *OUTSpoken* article linked therein (right), respectively. The tweet, and the article, are framed as a reclamation of American patriotism from the narratives of the left. It attacks the notion of gay pride as ‘vapid and vainglorious’, and denounces the idea of politicising an LGBT+ identity, or even making it an important part of who you are. Instead, it endlessly canonizes the virtues of an American identity, particularly its capitalism, whilst not failing to get an implied dig in at the idea of political equity (Sances, 2022c). Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) has an easy job in assessing that this tweet seeks to position LCR, and the broader LGBT+ community, as close to political conservatism, and nationalism, whilst simultaneously making left-wing elements of that community look illegitimate and ‘vapid’.

rhetoric, referring to the widening list of additions to the LGBT+ acronym (eg. LGBTQIA: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Agender, to name one). To those who support the fullness of the LGBT+ community, this is an inclusive move to represent the diversity of sexual and gender identities, including those that did not previously have a set name. To LCR, this is a ridiculous effort to marginalise gay men and lesbians, as the community competes in a race to the bottom to see who is the most underprivileged?

For example, Lesby’s article *Why I’m reclaiming the ‘G’ Word* (G standing for ‘Groomer’),



Figure D.7: A screenshot of an *OUTSpoken* article introducing its new staff, including this artistic illustration of Hogatha Cysty. The article identifies her as a 'vegan fluid, misgendered, nonbinary, disabled feminist' and an 'intersectional queen' (Leatherwood, 2022a). Her articles are designed to be parodies of LGBT+ activist talking points on trans and non-binary issues. Her existence, and lengthy series of titles, are designed to socio-cognitively communicate the idea that identities like genderfluid and non-binary are ridiculous (Van Dijk, 2016). Hence, 'vegan fluid', a portmanteau of genderfluid and vegan, two entirely separate identity categories, both associated with progressivism, that make no sense together.



Figure D.8: A screenshot of an 'Ann Lesby PhD' (2022) article about reclaiming the title of 'Groomer'. The intention is to parody trans advocacy in academia. Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates a deliberate use of stereotypes about 'grooming' to position gender nonconforming people as adjacent to paedophiles.

is a parody of the trans community, that plays to paedophilic stereotypes (see Figure D.8). One could also turn to Cysty, supposedly, identifying as a 'vegan-fluid, misgendered, non-binary, disabled feminist' (see Figure D.7). Such rhetoric has the potential to do significant damage by portraying much-needed academic, and activist, work on intersectionality, as harmful and worthy of scorn. Likewise, the aforementioned Lesby article identifies her as 'a multi-intersectionally oppressed, neurodivergent, semitrans lesbian who dates men.' Both Cysty and Lesby's descriptions co-opt pseudo-academic language to make such issues sound stupid, and socio-cognitively (Van Dijk, 2016) communicate the idea that such identities are false, and/or a backdoor for heterosexuals into the community. 'Lesbian who dates men' could be either an implication that Lesby is straight, but pretending to be LGBT+; or a confused bisexual/pansexual, but, in either case, it is a deliberately overt misuse of sexual labels designed to de-legitimise all such identities.

That this implicitly polices diverse bodies, and opinions, within LCR, and, thus, normalises damaging social hierarchies, should go without saying, and this policing is intentional. In the *OUTSpoken* article *Move Along CRT, Critical Gender Theory is All The Rage This Year* (Sances, 2022b), the author argues that conceiving of structural oppression in society is ‘horseshit’, designed to produce ‘straight guilt’, and ‘[raise] up the immoral alphabet mob as moral superiors...’. He, further, argues that this is evidence that the ‘The TQ+ has hijacked the movement from the LGB and are turning it against us’ (See Figure D.10). Readers should note the ‘us’ in this sentence; queer, and especially trans, bodies are the enemy, only the normative gays count as ‘us’.



Figure D.9: A screncap of an LCR tweet sent on March 29th 2023. It links to an *OUTSpoken* article about the 2023 Nashville school shooting, and blames the event on the Human Rights Campaign and the ‘victimisation’ promoted by the left (Sances, 2023b). It is discussed in the body of the text.

In March 2023, *OUTSpoken*’s response to the Nashville school shooting presented one of their most obvious uses of transphobia. The attack was carried out by Aiden Hale, a transgender student. *OUTSpoken* ran an article claiming that ‘Gay Inc has blood on its hands’; it deadnamed, and repeatedly misgendered, Hale throughout, and claimed that LGBT+ people that armed themselves were only doing so because of ‘the fear instilled in them by the leftist media’. It further decried the HRC for claiming that trans people are more likely to be the victims of shootings than perpetrators (Sances, 2023b)¹. This was accompanied by a series of tweets by LCR decrying ‘radical trans ideology’. It is clear to see that LCR, and their media arm, are engaged in active efforts to other the trans community, and take aim at any group or belief system that includes them. They seek to recontextualise the very idea of trans people, and their inclusion, as socially dangerous (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

Perhaps anticipating that they would be stigmatised as transphobes for their rhetoric, and seeking a pre-emptive defence, LCR have kept trans personnel on their writing staff, including contributors to *OUTSpoken*. However, these authors contribute to the denunciation of their fellow trans people. This gives LCR a convenient trans voice to ‘legitimately’ engage in transphobic rhetoric in a way that a cisgender person couldn’t do without backlash (not

¹ *OUTSpoken* went completely inactive following the publication of this article in March 2023, until early June 2024. It is possible that LCR wanted to move away from publishing such openly alt-right content for a time. Ultimately, after fifteen months, they took it back up.

This same line of reasoning has been adopted by the gender ideologists. Gender and biological sex have been conflated and collapsed into one entity. Now when you hear that gender is a social construct, that means that sex is also a social construct and is not rooted in biology. Perhaps the best example is the issue of trans women in sports. Trans women who have gone through puberty as a man have biological advantages over women due to the effects of different hormone levels. Those hormones lead to generally greater muscle mass and natural athletic advantage; that is biological and scientific fact. However, we are being asked to look the other way as biological men like [Lia Thomas](#), who couldn't pass muster in men's sports, give the middle finger to women athletes. The activists get away with it by simply slapping a ten dollar phrase on the opposition like "biological essentialists."

[Critical race theory](#) also espouses that the lives of people of color, and only people of color, are fraught with discrimination and they are constant victims of their environment solely because of the race they were born. This type of belief creates a reality in which anything and everything can be labeled as racist. The book also states, "Because racism advances the interests of both white elites (materially) and working-class people (physically)... society [has] little incentive to eradicate it." This assertion subtly accuses the more populous race—in the case of the United States, white people—of being complicit racists by supporting a system that allegedly alienates and discriminates against minorities.

Similarly, gender is now being described as a hierarchy of oppression. Jeffery Marsh, a well-known influencer and frighteningly vapid creature who goes by "[they/them](#)" pronouns, posted a video on TikTok recently addressing this issue.

"It is a system of oppression. Gender is a hierarchy and a system of oppression. And the easier it is to define 'gender', the easier it is to keep the oppression going. It's dangerous," Marsh claimed with an air of victimhood. This is essentially saying that those who live within the gender norms and gender binary are oppressors simply by existing.

Clearly the gender ideologists saw the successful proliferation of critical race theory into education and mainstream society, so they decided to play copycat. As such, we are witnessing critical gender theory spread through the country like a virus. Unfortunately, many are attacking and treating the symptoms of the virus while ignoring the virus itself. This is most likely because the ideology has not been given a name yet in the widespread media. How can we rally against and defeat something we do not know exists?

I think the antidote comes from within the community. The TQ+ has hijacked the movement from the LGB and are turning it against us. They are using activist organizations like GLAAD and [HRC](#) as well as the Democrat party as willing accomplices because doing so means money and political capital. We need the rational and logical voices of the LGBT community to speak out against this dangerous and divisive rhetoric. If we start calling the ideology what it is, critical gender theory, we can rally an already mobilized anti-CRT movement around us to help shut it down.

Figure D.10: Two screen-capped excerpts from *OUTSpoken's* May 2022 article on 'Critical Gender Theory'. LCR unceremoniously deny the logic of systemic oppression, and portray those who see gender binaries as oppressive as ridiculous and damaging; pushing an ideology of straight white guilt. The article describes trans female athletes as having decided to win at women's sports because they were unsuccessful in men's leagues, a common transphobic stereotype. It further implies that 'they/them' pronouns are a reason to mistrust someone, and unsubtly casts the 'TQ+' as the enemy of the 'LGB' community. It calls for the mobilisation of anti-Critical Race Theory activism against pro-trans activism and academia (Sances, 2022b). Dialectical-relational analysis (Fairclough, 2016) demonstrates that, collectively, this article positions progressive politics, and every non-normative part of the LGBT+ community, as a populist elite enemy that must be mobilised against by the rest (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005).

that this stops cisgender *OUTSpoken* authors). These are trans women who feel that they *are* a threat to women’s spaces, and sports, and are willing to loudly declare that they will stay out of them. Other than Cysty and Lesby², the other primary trans contributor to *OUTSpoken* is Sarah Higdon, a trans veteran, who frequently posts about the threat posed by trans women to women’s spaces. For an illustrative example, on March 3rd 2023, she attacked Hersheys for posting an ad about a promotional chocolate for International Women’s Day (‘Her for She’) that featured trans women. Aside from describing the trans women in the ad as ‘males’, Higdon claimed that IWD is for ‘adult human females’, subliminally referring to biology to socio-cognitively exclude trans women, and using a popular gender-critical slogan to demonstrate allegiance (Van Dijk, 2016)). She, further, claims that trans people get ‘a whole other month and just about every other day of the year so I think we can sit this one out’ (see Figure D.11). This comment erases trans discrimination by acting as though trans women get year-round public affirmation, rather than being a marginalised community. This example is representative of *OUTSpoken*’s attitude to the trans community; outright derision legitimised by using a reactionary trans writer as a smokescreen.³.

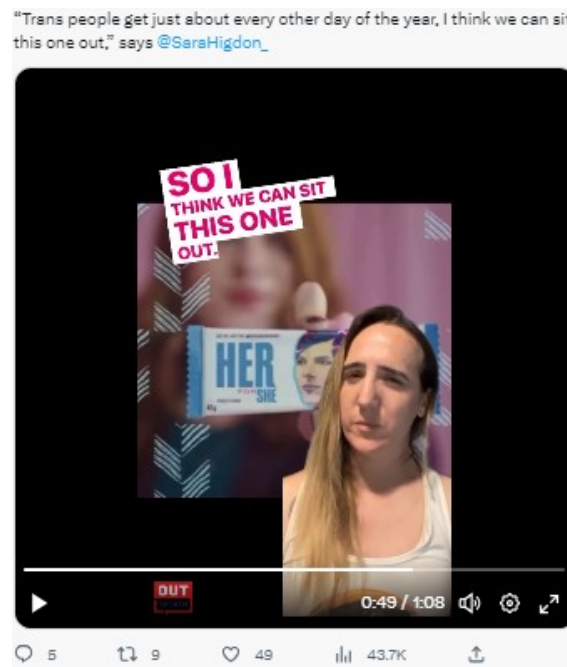


Figure D.11: A screenshot of an LCR tweet sent on March 3rd 2023. It contains a video testimony by Sarah Higdon, decrying the presence of trans women in adverts related to International Women’s Day. The screenshot was taken at the point where Higdon suggests that trans women ‘sit out’ IWD. The text was not added by me, it is present in the video itself. The tweet is discussed in the body of the text.

In short, LCR’s attitude to trans people is, if anything, even more reactionary than it was during the Trump Presidency. It is known that high profile trans Republicans left LCR after they endorsed Donald Trump for the 2020 election (Evans, 2019). LCR appear to have waved them out the door, and enthusiastically leaned in to transphobia; retaining

²Since both of these are parody accounts it is possible that neither authors are actually trans people at all, and are instead cis people playing a role. This thesis will not speculate on the veracity of that claim, but when considered in the context of LCR’s generally derisive attitude to the trans community, the possibility must be acknowledged.

³This is a tactic that LCR have used before, in order to avoid accusations of racism; using Christian Walker as a mouthpiece to attack *BLM* as ‘the KKK in Blackface’ and claim ‘some cultures are better than others’ (See Chapter 5).



Figure D.12: A screencap of an LCR tweet sent on April 10th 2023. It contains a link to a *Fox News* piece that comments neutrally on the opposition of Megan Rapinoe and Sue Bird to the *Protection of Girls and Women in Sports Act* of 2023 (H.R.734 – 118th Congress) (Gaydos, 2023). LCR misrepresent the content of the article, which neither supports, nor criticises, Bird and Rapinoe’s opinion, to claim that this is evidence of female athletes who had a ‘fair chance to succeed’ shutting out those that came after (i.e by forcing them to compete against trans women). This recontextualises trans inclusion as something that will forever lock cis women out of elite sports (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

only those trans members that will reproduce it themselves. They promote the idea that ‘males’ will infiltrate women’s spaces, assault and ‘groom’ their children, and that the Left will help them. So enthusiastic are they to denounce non-normative sexuality and gender, that, in places, they decry the idea of an LGBT+ identity altogether, and restate their patriotism instead. This is all in an effort to rhetorically distance themselves from those parts of the LGBT+ community that are more easily stigmatised by the GOP, and legitimise that stigma in order to retain mainstream political access.

When they are not using *OUTSpoken’s* pages to police their own community (or rather, define people out of their community), LCR are spending their ink and ire on the Democratic Party, just as they did during the Trump era. LCR construct Democratic politicians as either ideologically dangerous, grossly incompetent, or both. A frequent appearance on *OUTSpoken’s* Twitter account is ‘Bidenspiration’ and ‘Kamalalalightenment’, which represent out-of-context quotations from Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, designed to make them look unintelligent (see Figure D.14).

Biden, in particular, is mocked for his age and slow, diverging manner of speech. Whilst Biden is certainly no elocutionist⁴, this particular criticism is hard to swallow from a group that has spent several years hanging on Donald Trump’s every word. In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of ‘Bidenspiration’, the 46th President is doddery, absent minded and ancient. ‘Kamalalightenment’ takes a similar tone, though readers will not fail to note the unsubtly racist use of orientalist tropes about ‘enlightenment’, used to describe a brown-skinned woman. These items tend to be taking Harris’ statements out of context to present them as redundant. The goal of both is a dialectical-relational positioning of the Biden administration as unfit to govern, by virtue of age and stupidity (Fairclough, 2016).

⁴Biden, famously, had to drop out of the 2024 Presidential race, after a disastrous, stumbling, performance in a debate against Donald Trump.

I often use the term "Gay Inc." when speaking disparagingly or derisively about activist organizations like the Human Rights Campaign and GLAAD. It has recently occurred to me, however, that this is a misnomer. Instead, I should call them "Trans Inc." since they do not seem to give a shit about gays anymore.

It's not enough that these organizations have replaced us with these so-called marginalized groups. To add insult to injury, they expect the LGBs to champion and fight for our replacements. If we do not fall in lockstep, we are branded as transphobic and excommunicated from the community. I, as a gay man, am obliged to lend time, money, and voice in support of people who have absolutely nothing in common with me solely because they have been forcefully lumped into my community. This is the brainwashing religion of collectivism at its finest.

In an attempt to take the edge off of this harsh reality and to make us feel the slightest bit included, activists refer to the collective as "queer", a word that was until very recently considered a pejorative for gays and lesbians. This bizarre attempt at reclamation and rebranding is supposed to give us a sense of solidarity despite the fact that sexuality and gender expression are in no way comparable.

Of course fighting the age-old battle between collectivism and individualism is just the tip of the iceberg of gay erasure. Activists and gay media have been working hard to erase gay history, again by injecting trans ideology. The trite example of [Marsha P. Johnson](#) is prototypically illustrative of this movement. The lie that Johnson was a transgender woman who threw the brick that sparked the Stonewall riots and by extension the gay rights movement has been repeated ad nauseam despite the fact that Johnson was a male drag performer who was not even present at Stonewall that fateful evening. That lie has been pushed to make gays beholden to the trans community and cause, as if we owe them something.

Figure D.13: A screencapped excerpt from an *OUTSpoken* article, entitled *We're living in an era of leftwing gay erasure* (Sances, 2023a), denouncing pro-trans activism by LGBT+ organisations. The article reads like a subliminal effort at 'Great Replacement Theory', claiming that organisations like the Human Rights Campaign 'do not give a shit about gays anymore' and are instead obsessed with trans people, who are 'so-called marginalized'. The article itself is subtitled 'They expect the LGBs to champion and fight for *our replacements*' (I have added italics for emphasis). It is even part of a category of articles labelled 'Big Trans' on the site, creating an implied populist narrative about some kind of transgender controlling elite (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005). The article explicitly denounces the idea that gay and trans people have anything in common, appears to laugh at the concept that 'we owe them something', and makes assertions about the gender of Marsha P. Johnson; uniformly shooting down the idea that she was trans (Johnson was a drag queen, a role and identity that has many overlaps with trans people). The entire article reads like a socio-cognitive effort to instill 'replacement' theory into readers in an LGBT+ context, and thereby make them amenable to the alt-right.

Beyond simply portraying Democrats as old and/or incompetent, there are also many published sources by LCR that increasingly portray them as dangerous, to both the LGBT+ community, and the US broadly. Monkeypox was the key flashpoint here; this was constructed as a much-deserved scourge of the dangerous, leftist, immoral, queer community (See Figure D.15), right up until the moment that Log Cabin realised that it could be used as a stick to beat the Biden administration. As soon as the mainstream media began questioning Biden's pandemic preparedness, and vaccine plans, LCR were once again the defenders of the LGBT+ community; castigating the President for mishandling a pandemic that disproportionately affected LGBT+ people (see Figure D.17). 'Doublethink', to which Chapter 4 was devoted, remains part of their rhetorical arsenal into the post-Trump era (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022). They further attacked the perceived leftist double-standard in gay media, who they accused of giving Biden a break because of his Democrat allegiance, when they would loudly attack a Republican on the same grounds; once again presenting a populist far right take that positions the media as a left-aligned, elite, enemy (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) (Fairclough, 2016). Whether Monkeypox, Biden, queer sexuality, so-called 'wokeness', or the media, is the real culprit changes to suit whichever way LCR's partisan wind is blowing. Indeed, a member of LCR's leadership gave an interview to *Breitbart* in which he blamed them all at once, and then piggybacked the argument to attack government healthcare and the 'erosion of liberties' during the Covid-19 pandemic (see Figure D.16).



Figure D.14: Representative cases of ‘Bidenspiration’ and ‘Kamalighenment’ displayed on Twitter. Both of which take statements by Joe Biden, and Kamala Harris, out of context, in order to recontextualise them as being unintelligent (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

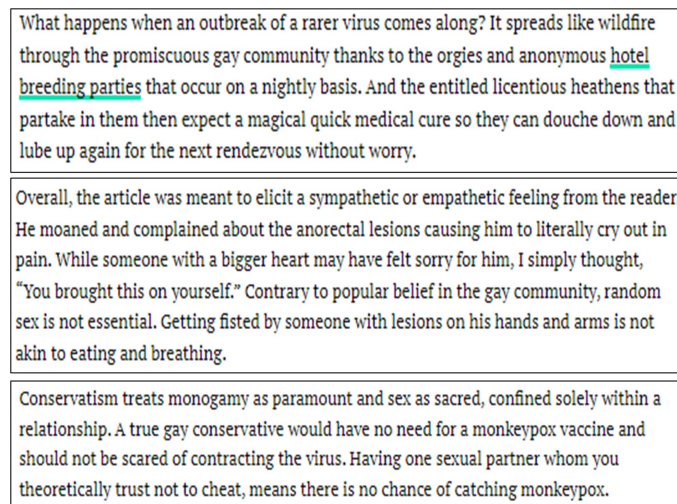


Figure D.15: Three screenshots from an *OUTSpoken* article entitled ‘No Sympathy For Monkeypox’ (Sances, 2022d). The article attributes the spread of the virus to gay promiscuity, and explicitly victim-blames throughout, before ending by promoting the ‘conservative’ attitude of treating sex as sacred, and belonging only in a monogamous relationship. It also implicitly accused any gay conservative who contracted the disease of being inauthentically right-wing, by *not* engaging in monogamy. The rhetoric used very much parallels the evangelical victim-blaming that was common during the AIDS pandemic, and may, thus, be an effort to socio-cognitively position LCR further within the reactionary GOP mainstream (Van Dijk, 2016)(Fairclough, 2016).

As these illustrative figures demonstrate, LCR retain their staunch and bitter opposition to the Democratic Party, and to progressive politics, reproducing many of the narratives found in Chapter 5. *The Left* remain a populist elite enemy in LCR’s eyes, one which retains its connections to the media. Simultaneously, they seek to use these narratives to ingratiate themselves further with conservative social beliefs; insisting upon sex-negative, ultra-normative, attitudes to sexuality that are reminiscent of GOP rhetoric during the AIDS crisis. The goal is to demonstrate that LCR will treat progressive ideals in a reactionary manner, and that they themselves live ‘normal’ lives; thereby legitimising right-

He remarked, "It's entertaining watching the left sit here and say, 'Don't stigmatize gays for this being a — quote — gay disease,' but at the same time, the health direction is, 'This would probably be a good time to reduce your number of sexual partners or to limit your different types of exposure,' and then people turning around and saying, 'Well that's just homophobic,' but at the same time turning around and saying, 'You're not doing enough for our population. Gays are going to be contracting this just like they were AIDS.'"

He added, "You've got to choose. You can't choose to be a victim but also say you want to put a piece of tape over the mouths of health advocates who are trying to say, 'These are the things you can do if you're in the target population to reduce your risk,' but again, welcome to the Democrats. Nobody ever wants to take personal responsibility for their actions and then that's what happens."

Figure D.16: A screncap of a *Breitbart* account based on an interview with a leading LCR Member. It cannot be referenced without de-anonymising the author. It actively demonises LGBT+ people for having multiple sexual partners, and engages in victim-blaming about Monkeypox. LCR were actively hostile to any sex-positive efforts to limit the spread of Monkeypox, which they decried as 'wokeness', and continually re-iterated Conservative talking points about monogamy. Once again, this is an effort to socio-cognitively position themselves firmly within the GOP mainstream, by reproducing conservative sexual attitudes about when, and how, it is appropriate to have sex (Van Dijk, 2016) (Fairclough, 2016).

If Biden was a Republican, the Democrat cable news chorus around his monkeypox failures would be deafening and Leftist LGBT activists would be selectively claiming victimhood to advance their narrative against Republicans. Instead, they're staying silent. We won't. As Guy Benson **recently put it on his radio show**:

"If this were a Republican Administration screwing up this badly over and over again on a public health issue, it would be a much bigger story than it is. Especially given the fact that it is overwhelmingly targeting gay and bisexual people. You can almost imagine what the outcry would sound like and look like. You'd have activists, you'd have the media, you'd have Democrats, 'This Administration doesn't care about gay people! They don't care about our lives! They don't prioritize us! This is callous disregard! This is dereliction! This is bigotry! This is what modern bigotry looks like!' That is what they would be saying if exactly this set of facts applied to the other political party."

Figure D.17: A screncapped excerpt from an LCR Press release, slamming the Biden administration for its Monkeypox response. Whilst the article, like those cited in Figures D.14 and D.15 does make a point to blame 'woke' attitudes (i.e sex-positive advice, rather than enforced monogamy, or abstinence), the main thrust of the article is about the Biden administration's logistical failures. LCR have engaged in 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022), they have pivoted between decrying Monkeypox as a failure by Biden that hurts the LGBT+ community, whilst also victim-blaming and claiming they have 'no sympathy' for the victims, who they construct as having sexed their way to disease. LCR present the issue in a manner that allows them to hit several reactionary conservative talking points at once. Furthermore, this press release also makes a point to spread *Media Scepticism*, explicitly arguing that there would be a broad public condemnation of the monkeypox response if it was carried out by a Republican, but public narratives give Democrats a free pass (Log Cabin Republicans, 2022c). Collectively this serves to, once again, socio-cognitively demonstrate LCR's alignment with many conservative stances, as well as build up the media and Democratic Party as a dangerous left-wing elite (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) (Van Dijk, 2016) (Fairclough, 2016).

wing stigma towards the LGBT+ community, but excepting themselves. When they want a laugh doing it, they can always use orientalist humour about Kamala Harris, or laugh at Biden's speech. This is done to the point of 'doublethink', as with so much else (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022).

LCR's commentary on the 2022 *Respect for Marriage Act* (HR 8404 – 117th Congress) displayed further evidence of LCR's continued commitment to the kinds of reactionary 'doublethink' that was examined in Chapter 4. The act was Democrat-authored, repealed the *Defence of Marriage Act* (H.R.3396 - 104th Congress), and enshrined the equal right to marry into federal law. It was supported by every single Democrat in the House of

Representatives, as well as 47 Republicans. Log Cabin constructed the bill as a *Republican* victory, giving no credit at all to the unanimous support of the Democratic Party, and minimal coverage to the 147 Republicans who opposed it. They, simultaneously, denounced the bill as a Democratic mind-game, designed to make the Republicans look bad. Subjecting several of LCR's press releases to discourse-historical analysis, it becomes extremely clear that they sought to recontextualise this bill, and the events surrounding it, as a full exoneration of the GOP from accusations of homophobia (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).



Figure D.18: A screencap of an LCR Press release, calling on Republican legislators in the House of Representatives to vote 'Yes' on the *Respect for Marriage Act* (HR 8404 – 117th Congress). This screencap presents the press statement in its entirety, as do Figures D.19-21 for theirs. The statement makes a point to other the bill as rushed, and, effectively, needless, and denounces the 'fear-mongering' about *Obergefell*, but nevertheless calls for its support, as it would provide a stronger basis for equal marriage than a court case. LCR also use the statement to implicitly police their own community, slamming pro-trans ideas as an 'assault on Title IX', or a threat to children, but reiterate that equal marriage is a separate and acceptable issue (Log Cabin Republicans, 2022a). Dialectical-relational analysis of this text reproduces the sorts of left-elite populist narratives (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) that run throughout this thesis. LCR position the Democratic Party as powerful and influential towards the LGBT+ community, but simultaneously false; spinning a yarn about Republican discrimination, that the GOP has to repudiate in order to win the election (Fairclough, 2016). Discourse-historical analysis demonstrates LCR recontextualising the entire process as needless, since they view *Obergefell* as safe; something that 'couldn't hurt' rather than something necessary (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985) of LCR's Twitter feed and press statements, there is no legitimate basis for a law specifically protecting gay marriage because the *Obergefell* decision is not under threat in the post *Roe v Wade* world. In this narrative, the Democrats designed the *Respect for Marriage Act* on the assumption that the Republican Party would rally against it, meaning that, when it failed, the Democrats could ride the backlash into the 2022 midterms, and take seats from Republicans accused of homophobia. Likewise, LCR made a point to use rhetorical distancing techniques to separate LGBT+ marriage from other pro-LGBT+ causes such as 'the Left's assault on Title IX and gender identity lessons in kindergarten classrooms' (sic, see Figure D.18), again creating boundaries of 'acceptable', and 'unacceptable', sexuality based on conservative norms. This represents an effort to position the GOP close to the LGBT+ community, and the



Figure D.19: A screenshot of LCR's press release on the passage of the *Respect for Marriage Act* (HR 8404 – 117th Congress) through the House. The bill is constructed as an entirely Republican endeavour in defeating 'Democratic Mind Games' (Log Cabin Republicans, 2022b). Discourse-historical analysis demonstrates that LCR have recontextualised the Democratic contributions, namely, authoring the bill and unanimously voting for it, as entirely unimportant (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). It is true that without the support of those 47 Republicans, the bill would not have passed. But this statement gives them the sole credit, ahead of 220 Democrats.

Log Cabin Republicans Statement on Postponement of Respect for Marriage Act Vote

Sep 15, 2022 | Uncategorized

Log Cabin Republicans President Charles Moran released the following statement:

"We said at the beginning that this bill was a political stunt by Congressional Democrats to solve a problem that didn't exist to paint Republicans into a corner – and it didn't work. We are thankful for the determination of the 47 Republicans who voted in the affirmative in the House. We also look forward to the U.S. Senate taking up this bill after the election, where it will be considered on the merits instead of being used as the Democrats' political football to distract voters from their leadership failures. In the meantime, we will continue to work with our allies in Congress and candidates that wish to expand growth, opportunity and prosperity for ALL Americans."

Figure D.20: A screenshot of LCR's press release on the delaying of the Senate vote on the *Respect for Marriage Act* (HR 8404 – 117th Congress). LCR reiterate the belief that the bill represents an illegitimate form of political football, and take the prospect of an indefinite delay to the bill in their stride, confidently asserting that it will be 'considered on its merits' after the election (Log Cabin Republicans, 2022d). Discourse-historical analysis notes that this re-contextualises Republican senators as strictly meritocratic, and unbiased, and entirely discounts the possibility of the bill being filibustered. Indeed, the tone is praiseworthy of the potential defeat of this 'political stunt' (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

Democrats far away, via a narrative of the latter using LGBT+ rights as a political football; an implicitly populist argument that reproduces the idea of a 'left elite' exploiting 'the people' for power, that has been omni-present in LCR's rhetoric through this thesis' research chapters (Mudde, 2004) (Laclau, 2005) (Fairclough, 2016). It also, simultaneously, seeks to position LCR closer to the GOP mainstream, by trying to disentangle the idea of LGBT+ marriage from progressivism; recontextualising marriage as politically sensible,

Log Cabin Statement on 12 Senate Republicans Who Voted For Respect for Marriage Act

Nov 16, 2022 | Uncategorized

Log Cabin Republicans President Charles Moran released the following statement:

"Twelve Senate Republicans were the key to breaking a key procedural hurdle voting to move forward with the Respect for Marriage Act in the U.S. Senate today. By advancing this legislation, these forward-thinking Republicans are aligning our laws with not only where the vast majority of Americans are, but the majority of Republicans too. There is still more legislative work to be done to get this bill signed into law, but between these twelve Senate Republicans and the 47 House Republicans who voted for the Respect for Marriage Act earlier this year, we're confident it will get done."

Figure D.21: A screencap of LCR's press release on the passage of the *Respect for Marriage Act* (HR 8404 – 117th Congress) through the Senate. The accusations of Democratic mind-games are absent here, as the advancement of the bill through the Senate only came *after* the 2022 midterms, when the Democrats had retained control of the chamber. Once again, however, the passage of the bill is recontextualised as an entirely Republican affair (Log Cabin Republicans, 2022e) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

but other LGBT+ causes as stigmatised (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

The Bill's supporters in the Senate opted to delay any vote on it until after the midterms, since it was believed that its current language (though it received bipartisan support) would not convince enough Republicans to break a filibuster (Johnson, 2022) (Carlisle and Aguilera, 2022). Whilst LCR had lobbied Republican Senators to support the bill, and were tweeting about the need to get the bill through the Senate up until two days before, when the delay was announced, Log Cabin immediately released a statement once again denouncing it as a solution to 'a problem that didn't exist', and an effort to 'paint Republicans into a corner' to 'distract voters from *Democratic* leadership failures', and welcomed the delay (see Figure D.20). This recontextualising of the delay, which was caused by Republican homophobia, as an exercise in avoiding 'political football', is consistent with LCR's continual treatment of GOP discrimination by different standards, defended by technicalities. They promptly flipped back the other way to celebrate the *Republican* effort to eventually pass it, whilst, also, welcoming the amendments to it that enabled homophobic discrimination by faith-based organisations (see Figure D.21), demonstrating their continued commitment to 'doublethink' (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022). As always, LCR play Republican LGBT+ policy both ways; a bill is illegitimate when Republicans slow it down, but a huge success when they help to pass it.

Related to this discourse on marriage was LCR's commentary on *Roe vs Wade*. As was stated in Chapter 4, LCR are generally pro-life (see, also, Ashby (2024)), but their beliefs on abortion are not in focus here. Rather, they seek to reframe the right to privacy associated with *Roe*, which was cited in several other progressive SCOTUS decisions. Log Cabin clearly believed that *Roe* could be overturned without threatening the entire proverbial Jenga tower stacked on top of it. Their logic for this has some merit, as, during the *Dobbs v Jackson Womens Health Organization* (2022) ruling, the Opinion of the Court stated the following:

'...to ensure that our decision is not misunderstood or mischaracterized, we emphasize that our decision concerns the constitutional right to abortion and no other right. Nothing in this opinion should be understood to cast doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion.' (Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization, 2022).



Figure D.22: An LCR Tweet on the *Dobbs* ruling that cites the exception SCOTUS highlighted on abortion law. LCR present this as evidence that other judicial decisions that rested upon the right to privacy, outlined in *Roe*, such as equal marriage, weren't under threat by the latter's overturning. They rhetorically position SCOTUS in a position of absolute power and consistency, thereby constructing this argument as watertight, and not open to re-interpretation by a later court. The possibility that a later, more conservative, SCOTUS would see this carve-out as incorrect, and use *Dobbs* to threaten LGBT+ marriage, contraception, or other progressive decisions, is recontextualised as non-existent. (Fairclough, 2016) (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016).

The Court was explicit in stating that its decision should *not* be used as precedent for other matters concerning privacy, it only took issue with abortion rulings, as these concerned the right to *life* specifically. But this affords the right to marriage no true security. It would only take a new court, with some changes in personnel, to decide that *Dobbs* had been wrongly decided (as they had with *Roe*) and that the right to privacy in supposedly 'moral' issues was not secured. Log Cabin's whole argument is based on the dubious concept of 'settled law', which has no constitutional or legal standing whatsoever, but is recontextualised as absolute (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). 'Settled law' arguments were made by Trump's SCOTUS appointees about *Roe* during their Senate hearings, but this did not stop them overturning it at the first opportunity (Gore et al, 2022). Undermining LCR's argument even further is the concurring statements made by Justice Clarence Thomas, a long-time dissenter to all LGBT+ friendly judicial opinions since his appointment in 1992. In the transcript of *Dobbs* he claimed that the fourteenth amendment's 'due process' clause did not *protect* any rights at all, only that they not be deprived without recourse to proper legal examination and procedure, and that cases like *Obergefell* should be reconsidered in future, so that their 'errors' can be 'corrected' (*Dobbs v Jackson Women's Health Organization*, 2022).

Whilst the passing of the *Respect for Marriage Act* (H.R.8404 – 117th Congress) may have saved *Obergefell*, the fact remains that its survival became instantly tenuous in the post-*Roe* world, as have other major LGBT+ rights rulings, like *Lawrence vs Texas* (2003). Indeed, without a judicially recognised right to privacy, a further change in personnel on the court could see legal challenges that strike the *Respect for Marriage Act* down. Its foundations have gone, and at least one member of the court is openly calling for the rest of the structure to be demolished. But, as Log Cabin construct reality, however, Thomas' statements don't count, the Opinion of the court should be taken at face value, and the notion of gay marriage having ever been under threat is just Democrats blowing smoke. Considering the track record of Log Cabin on LGBT+ legal issues, particularly their commentary on the

"Our decision concerns the constitutional right to abortion and no other right," Alito wrote. "Nothing in this opinion should be understood to cast doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion."

And that's the key point that most people seem to be missing: abortion is profoundly unique in that it's the only issue that involves ending another human life. For this reason, and this reason alone, it stands apart from all the other equality issues.

Ergo, it's totally cringe for liberal gays to pretend they're as vulnerable as fetuses in the womb. Trust me, judging by the rabid protesting and calls for mass unrest, they aren't.

Besides, the Supreme Court isn't even hearing any cases that could threaten same-sex marriage, so the reaction is completely excessive.

Furthermore, the current Supreme Court line-up appears to be quite friendly to same-sex equality. Back in 2020, the Court ruled 6-3 that gay and transgender individuals are protected from discrimination by the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which they didn't have to do. The justices could have easily held that a statute that prohibits discrimination based on sex does not include protection based on LGBTQ status, but they didn't.

Even if it did overturn gay marriage, it would simply return the issue to a state level, where local lawmakers would rule on it after lengthy consultations with local communities. This means ordinary people (as opposed to a few select judges) would get direct influence over the law, giving them that all-important 'seat at the table' they've been demanding.

Maybe that's what scares them – the prospect of having to debate something properly, rather than shouting at clouds for maximum attention.

Figure D.23: A screenshot from an *OUTSpoken* article denouncing liberal reactions to the *Dobbs* ruling. Its argument rests on the statements made about the exception carved out for abortion in the majority decision, as well as statements made by Samuel Alito and Brett Kavanaugh to that effect, as well as the court's pro-LGBT+ ruling in *Bostock v Clayton County, Georgia* (2020), all of which are recontextualised as irrefutable evidence that the court will not make anti-LGBT+ rulings off the back of overturning *Roe* (Reisgil and Wodak, 2016). Clarence Thomas' statements to the contrary are dismissed in the article, and he is presented as an outlier, whose deeply conservative opinion is unreflective of his colleagues (which, in fairness, may well be true); he is positioned as a homophobe, but a powerless one (Fairclough, 2016). This article does not engage with the possibility that, without *Roe*, a future court may take a more anti-LGBT+ line. The article also makes a point to explicitly argue that abortion and equal marriage are not morally equivalent, by positioning the liberal protests of the wider LGBT+ community as evidence of their empowered status, and thus, their lack of 'vulnerability' (Fairclough, 2016). This barely-veiled victim blaming is reminiscent of the anti-victimhood narratives explored in Chapter 4. What is most shocking about the article is that, after paragraphs of dismissing the possibility that equal marriage be overturned, *OUTSpoken* then presents it as a relatively harmless '[returning of] the issue to a state level', recontextualising the pre-*Obergefell* status quo, from a state of regular institutional discrimination, to a political *positive*, where issues get 'debated properly' (Lloyd, 2022b).

Bostock v Clayton County (2020) case discussed in Chapter 4, it is hard to say with any confidence that Log Cabin would even oppose a SCOTUS ruling that 'returned the issue of marriage to the states', or whether they would, instead, join the chorus of conservative moralising about 'judicial overreach', and portray themselves as obedient, normative, and loyal to the party line once again. In fact, LCR's own *OUTSpoken* articles cast doubt on this, even without any speculation by myself. Tucked into the bottom of their June 2022 article on the *Dobbs* decision (see Figure D.23) was a statement trying to paint 'returning the issue to state level' as harmless (Lloyd, 2022b). In the text-internal world (Fillmore, 1985), returning to the pre-*Obergefell* reality would *not* be one in which many LGBT+ people were denied rights and treated as second class citizens; but instead where the issue would be properly decided by 'consultations with local communities'. That LCR fought for, and celebrated, the legalisation of equal marriage seems entirely unimportant to them now. As with so much else, LCR's commitment to 'doublethink' persists here; They have learned to forget their own history on command (Orwell, 1949 [2000]) (Johnson, 2022).

D.2 Conclusions on Log Cabin in the Biden Era

This Appendix was intended for consumption by readers interested in pursuing further research into Log Cabin, as they exist today. The time frame covered in this Appendix runs up to the Summer of 2023, ahead of this thesis' initial submission. It is evident from these tweets, and press releases, that LCR have remained committed to reactionary *Homo-Authoritarian* politics until well into the Biden era. This is particularly true of their continued commitment to transphobia.

OUTSpoken has regularly churned out content in that time, denouncing all forms of progressivism, and seeking to fully divorce the idea of inclusion for LGB people from, not only the T+, but, also, anything resembling left-wing ideals. Gay pride is 'vapid', promiscuity is dangerous, gay marriage needs a 'debate', and treating trans women with dignity is an assault on their cisgender contemporaries. LCR promote a kind of heavily policed gay rights, that allows them to ingratiate themselves further into the GOP, whilst actively legitimising discrimination against any LGBT+ person less assimilated than themselves.

Looking ahead to the 2024 election, I restate my skepticism from the end of Chapter 7 that Log Cabin would be able to denounce a GOP assault on equal marriage, or indeed any other of their rights, especially if a second Trump administration was behind it. Their equivocation on marriage 'returning to the states' was a truly stark picture of LCR's commitment to their loyalty narrative, even if it was crowbarred into the end of an article (see Figure D.23). This demonstrated a willing abandonment of the community's most celebrated victory if it will maintain their conservative credentials.

As a supplement to this thesis' research chapters, this Appendix demonstrates that my conclusions were, not only, accurate, but have been sustained over time. Sadly, since another Trump administration may be coming, Log Cabin are not done yet.