Legal cynicism in Men's Rights discourses: using corpus linguistics to investigate how distrust in the legal system excuses and perpetuates sexual violence against women

Article

Published Version

www.reading.ac.uk/centaur

CentAUR

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online
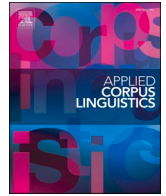
Articles

Legal cynicism in Men's Rights discourses: Using corpus linguistics to investigate how distrust in the legal system excuses and perpetuates sexual violence against women

Kate Barber

University of Reading, Foxhill House, Whiteknights Rd, Reading, RG6 7BY, United Kingdom

A B S T R A C T

The term *legal cynicism* refers to a type of legal disengagement which is associated with a lack of internal commitment to follow legal rules and a failure to acknowledge legal authority, typically stemming from perceived ongoing injustices and rights deprivations. This perception of the criminal justice system enables individuals in extremist communities to rationalise criminal actions, leading to an increased propensity for violent behaviour. Effectively identifying content such as this within online discourses has been argued to be the initial step in mitigating this propensity for violence and corpus linguistic methods, employed as entry points into these discourses, offer effective tools to do such analysis.

Using a 122,000-word corpus of online discourses produced by Men's Right's Activists (MRAs) on blogs and the subreddit *r/MensRights*, quantitative and qualitative approaches are used in this corpus-assisted discourse analysis to determine how legal cynicism is indexed and generated. The ways in which the criminal justice systems in both the United States and United Kingdom are contextualised and reframed to embed legal cynicism in MRA discourses, and the evidential and legal processes highlighted as problematic by MRAs, are explored. The paper discusses the impact of this reframing of the criminal justice system on the potential for violence through conspiracy theories and legal disengagement. It concludes with suggestions for addressing legal cynicism through prebunking and educational strategies designed to challenge misconceptions of criminal justice processes.

1. Introduction

The term *legal cynicism* refers to a type of collective legal disengagement, often associated with a lack of cognitive and ideological commitment to follow legal rules and a rejection of legal authority (Sampson and Bartusch, 1998). This disengagement typically stems from perceived ongoing injustices and legal rights deprivations and has been linked to non-cooperation with police, tolerance and justification of criminal behaviour, and, in some cases, a propensity to commit criminal acts (ibid.; Kirk and Papachristos, 2011; Rottweiler and Gill, 2022). Traditionally, legal cynicism has been associated with disaffection among minority groups who are not fairly or consistently protected or represented by the criminal justice system, for example Black and Hispanic youth (Swaner and Brisman, 2014) and disadvantaged African-American mothers (Bell, 2016). Criminological research on demographics which have suffered these systemic procedural injustices have focused on strategies to repair apathy and indifference towards the legitimacy of the legal system and to build trust in procedural justice.

In contrast to legal cynicism being recognised as a rational, adaptive reaction to systemic rights deprivations in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods and communities (Sampson and Bartusch, 1998: 778), this article investigates how legal cynicism is constructed by an *online* community of men who feel that the justice systems in the United States and the United Kingdom are rigged against them, particularly with regard to accusations of sexual violence. The online community investigated in this study is the Men's Rights Activist (MRA) subcommunity of the *manosphere* – a loosely connected online network of antifeminist groups (see Ging, 2017). Corpora constructed from posts from three MRA-associated blogs (*Chateau Heartiste, Return of Kings*, and *A Voice For Men*) and from the subreddit *r/MensRights* are examined through a criminological lens using corpus-assisted discourse analysis. This methodological approach provides both quantitative and qualitative insights into how legal cynicism is linguistically constructed by the discourse contributors of this community (Wright 2020: 3). Two concepts associated with the legal cynicism cultural frame are also integrated into the analysis, namely *legal socialisation* and *legal neutralisation*.

The former describes the collective *process* of developing attitudes on the criminal justice system and the legitimacy of the law (Nivette et al., 2017), while the latter describes the retrospective, *individual rationalisation* of past criminal actions which can lead to the normalisation of violence and an increased risk of further violent behaviour (ibid.; Rottweiler and Gill, 2022). The aims of the linguistic analyses in this study are to examine how the criminal justice system is indexed in a corpus of posts from MRA-associated blogs to perpetuate legal cynicism and how findings can be used to create more targeted challenges to these discourses through *prebunking* (Lewandowsky and van der Linden, 2021), legal education, and, to a certain extent, addressing grievances raised.

2. Literature review

2.1. The criminological context: legal cynicism

Legal cynicism is a form of *anomie*, or alienation from societal goals, and relates to a collective disengagement from legal norms and the legitimacy of legal authority (Swaner and Brisman, 2014: 497-498). In Sampson and Bartusch's (1998) influential criminological study of residents in 343 neighbourhoods in Chicago, USA, a series of interview questions about the tolerance of deviance were used to determine differences in attitude among subcultures in the neighbourhood towards criminality, procedural justice, and agents of the criminal justice system. Their findings extended understandings of legal cynicism from it being generated at an individual level to it being related to collective, normative orientations of mistrust in the institutions of criminal justice (ibid,: 800). They emphasised that a sense of normlessness, powerlessness, and legally cynical attitudes are not inherent in certain demographics or within individuals themselves but are fostered by the interplay of social and environmental factors in the neighbourhood, together with shared negative experiences of the police and criminal justice system (ibid: 782-801).

Previous research has shown that the development of legal cynicism within a community can correlate with subsequent criminal behaviour. Cavanagh et al. (2022) highlight how unjust treatment by legal authorities can induce a sense of justification in disregarding legal sanctions: "As citizens grow more cynical of legal institutions, perhaps through perceived past betrayals (i.e. an unfair arrest) or letdowns (i.e. a reported crime not punished), they may feel justified in breaking the law" (2022: 479). This is supported by Rottweiler and Gill (2022), who found that low law-related morality (i.e. legal cynicism) is linked to a higher propensity to believe conspiratorial ideologies and commit violence. They found that, on the contrary, high law-related morality acts as a protective factor against criminality and perpetuating violent acts. Kirk and Matsuda (2011) point out that the reinforcement of legal cynicism within communities can be cyclical, with people in those communities who see the law as lacking legitimacy being less inclined to follow it and others underreporting those crimes as they perceive the police as unresponsive (2011: 444). This cycle of criminal tolerance has also been linked to increased criminal offending and higher violent crime rates (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011; Gifford and Reisig, 2019).

Legal cynicism describes a *collective* frame of disengagement with legal norms and procedural justice and the mechanism of constructing that frame is similarly cultivated collectively. This process, known as *legal socialisation,* is fostered and disseminated in groups and communities through social interactions and the sharing of negative experiences (Nivette et al., 2017: 287). This is particularly so among peer groups, who are able to code criminality in a way which aligns and reinforces values relevant to their shared epistemologies (ibid). The ongoing exchange of personal grievances and accumulation of vicarious experiences feeds into culturally-embedded negative attitudes towards the legitimacy of the justice system and justification for disregarding the law (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011: 1201; Cavanagh et al., 2022: 480).

A key part of legal socialisation is *legal neutralisation.* This cognitive process, experienced *individually* by those who have previously exhibited rule-breaking behaviour or criminal activity, works "to distort or deny the 'bindingness' of the law" (Nivette et al., 2017: 287). It affectively neutralises and justifies past criminal actions. In a similar way to how defiance theory (Sherman, 1993) operates to shift the shame of criminality onto blame on the law (Nivette et al., 2017: 287), legal neutralisation affords the development and deployment of individualised rhetorical strategies that rationalise previous actions, often through victimhood narratives, which can feed into the collective, sociocultural frame of legal cynicism through the socialisation process. This, in turn, can provide the preconditions for potential further offending.

2.2. The discourse context: Men's Rights Activists (MRAs)

The Men's Rights Activist (MRA) community, classified as a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Centre (Lumsden 2019: 98), has been argued to be the most extensive within the manosphere (Ribeiro et al., 2020). Initially evolved from offline groups advocating for men's rights within contexts such as divorce proceedings and child custody (Jordan, 2014), online MRA discourses more recently centre on self-discipline, personal development, and dating strategies (Mountford, 2018). These sites frequently depict women with hostility and frame relationships through conflict, control, and gender antagonism (ibid.). Some MRA content also includes pro-rape discourse, claims that women desire sexual violence, and endorsements of domestic abuse (Bates, 2020: 122–123). Lumsden's (2019) qualitative study of comments taken from the MRA subreddit *r/MensRights*, for example, found a high prevalence of assertions that women lie about rape for attention and/or money, and that men are the real victims of sexual violence. While not all men engaging with MRA discourses are influenced by them (although see Associated Press (2020) report on Roy Den Hollander), they have been argued to perpetuate *rape culture* - a mindset that normalises sexual violence by reinforcing gender norms, sexism, and distancing such acts from the label "rape" (Johnson and Johnson, 2021; Barber, 2022). At the same time, MRA discourses propagate the idea that a 'false rape culture' is being perpetuated by feminists (Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Kettrey et al., 2024). Further, they have been seen to explicitly promote violence against women through campaigns such as that found on the blog *A Voice For Men,* titled 'Bash the Violent Bitch Month' (Gotell and Dutton, 2016: 70).

Disparaging views on the legal system are prevalent in MRA discourses and have been identified in previous research (see Jordan, 2014; Gotell and Dutton, 2016; Dragiewicz, 2018; Barber, 2022; Dickel and Evolvi, 2023; Kettrey et al., 2024). These views can be amplified due to the affordances of the online space, which promote *networked individualism* (Wellman et al 2003), enabling the sharing and validating of personal experiences and allowing individual stories to be told, listened to, and commented on to create a compendium of experiences from which others can draw (see Rafail and Freitas, 2019). Bloggers and posters on the MRA platforms can position themselves as voices of expertise, or 'gurus', to impart advice and clarity on the situations within which men find themselves (see Barber, 2022; Dayter and Rüdiger, 2022).

While previous studies have highlighted MRA attitudes to bias in the legal system, particularly around false rape accusations (see Dickel and Evolvi, 2023; Kettrey et al., 2024), the ways in which this overarching rhetoric is constructed at a more granular level remains underexplored. Corpus linguistic methods can provide this more detailed level of analysis (for corpus linguistic work on manosphere communities, including MRAs, see Krendel et al. (2022) and McGlashan and Krendel (2024)). The present study aims to show how a corpus approach to analysing MRA discourses can offer a more nuanced understanding of this perceived bias and how it influences a much more complex belief system related to the potential for future offending.

Table 1

Overview of corpora, showing the source and number of posts, dates of the data, search terms used and number of tokens.

Source	Corpus Name	Posts dated from/to	Search terms	No. of posts	Tokens
Chateau Heartiste (www.heartiste.org)	CHROK	1/1/16 to 31/12/17	*Rape / sexual assault*	21	14,283
Return of Kings (www.returnofkings.com				37	39,111
					53,394
A Voice For Men (www.avoiceformen.com)	AVFM	1/1/17 to 2/7/24	#falserapeculture	24	40,943
r/MensRights (www.reddit.com/r/MensRights)	r/MR	1/1/17 to 31/12/24	*Rape / sexual assault*	50 posts + first 20 comments	28,630
TOTAL					**122,967**

3. Methodology

A corpus assisted discourse study (CADS) approach was taken (Partington and Marchi, 2015) to analyse how legal cynicism manifests in the MRA community. This approach enables combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of the discourses (2015: 217) and allows for the use of corpus linguistic resources to highlight neutral entry points and levels of generalisability into the analysis while allowing for the discourse context to be taken into account (Marchi and Taylor, 2018: 4). To construct the corpora, four online sources were used for data collection; three blog-type websites and one subreddit. Two of these sources are associated with the MRA and Pick Up Artist[1] sub-communities of the Manosphere, namely *Return of Kings* and *Chateau Heartiste*. While both are now inactive and the former was taken offline in 2022, blog posts on the latter are still accessible online. These blogs were particularly popular among the MRA subcommunity of the manosphere, reaching peak viewing figures just before 2020 (Barber, 2022). A 'manual target search' (Scrivens et al., 2024: 9) was used to identify discussions on sexual violence on these blogs by using the search terms *rape* and *sexual assault* in the sites' search bars. This enabled specialised corpora to be built for further examination of specific references to the law and criminal justice system within the context of sexual violence (ibid.). As the data collected from these two sites cover the same time period (2016-2017) and were based on the same search terms, they were amalgamated into one corpus for this study. The third data source is another MRA blog, *A Voice For Men* (AVFM). Founded in 2009 and still active, it is regarded as one of the first influential misogynistic websites (Dickel and Evolvi, 2023: 1393). The site does not include a search bar so the built-in tag most closely associated with discussions on sexual violence was used to locate relevant posts (*#false rape culture*). Regarding the fourth source, data were collected from the subreddit *r/MensRights*; a forum on *Reddit* which has around 361,000 members (Kettrey et al., 2024: 1619). Using the 'Top' filter and search terms *rape* and *sexual assault*, the first 50 posts and top 20 comments were collected from this subreddit. This gave a total of 1000 entries which were highly focused on the thread topic. Initial investigations into longer threads showed more diluted focus on the original posts, risking less relevant content while making the qualitative analysis more challenging. The *Apify Reddit* scraper (www.apify.com) was used to create the corpus from these threads. Both the AVFM and subreddit data collection process covered the time period 1st January 2017 to 31st December 2024. The corpora were cleaned and anonymised, including the removal of all identifying information. Table 1 gives further details on the data sources and summarises information on the number of posts collected, the search terms/tags used to identify posts, the time period of the posts, and the size of the corpora.

A combined corpus of 122,967 tokens, derived from the three corpora listed in Table 1, was analysed using a range of resources available on Sketch Engine (https://www.sketchengine.eu). A word frequency list was first generated to identify words commonly associated

Table 2

The CJS Word List: The most frequent 25 Criminal Justice System words ('CJS words') from the combined corpus and individual corpora found in the top 250 results of the wordlist analysis (listed by raw frequency and the per million tokens for frequency normalisation).

Word	Combined Corpus		CHROK Corpus	AVFM Corpus	r/MR Corpus
	Frequency ranking	Raw frequency (per million tokens)	Raw frequency (per million tokens)	Raw frequency (per million tokens)	Raw frequency (per million tokens)
false	94	202 (1,426.34)	65 (1057.93)	80 (1708.56)	57 (1708.79)
evidence	100	182 (1285.12)	102 (1660.13)	39 (832.92)	41 (1229.13)
accused	103	177 (1249.81)	76 (1236.96)	71 (1516.35)	30 (899.36)
police	110	152 (1073.29)	69 (1123.03)	71 (1516.35)	12 (359.74)
allegations	150	101 (713.17)	63 (1025.37)	31 (662.07)	7 (209.85)
case	156	99 (699.05)	22 (358.07)	36 (768.85)	41 (1229.13)
accusations	157	99 (699.05)	42 (683.58)	38 (811.57)	19 (569.6)
crime	158	98 (691.99)	47 (764.96)	24 (512.57)	27 (809.43)
law	168	90 (635.5)	18 (292.96)	38 (811.57)	34 (1019.28)
victims	186	80 (564.89)	26 (423.17)	30 (640.71)	24 (719.49)
legal	188	78 (550.77)	36 (585.93)	26 (555.28)	16 (479.66)
guilty	192	77 (543.70)	25 (406.89)	31 (662.07)	21 (629.55)
prison	199	74 (522.52)	33 (537.10)	15 (320.36)	26 (779.45)
claims	202	72 (508.40)	36 (585.93)	26 (555.28)	10 (299.79)
system	206	71 (501.34)	32 (520.82)	28 (598.00)	11 (329.77)
trial	208	70 (494.28)	29 (472.00)	24 (512.57)	17 (509.64)
falsely	210	70 (494.28)	32 (520.82)	23 (491.21)	15 (449.68)
cases	211	70 (494.28)	29 (472.00)	32 (683.42)	9 (269.81)
lie	212	69 (487.22)	14 (227.86)	42 (897.00)	13 (389.72)
justice	216	68 (480.15)	22 (358.07)	31 (662.07)	15 (449.68)
criminal	222	67 (473.09)	33 (537.10)	29 (619.35)	5 (149.89)
innocent	231	64 (451.91)	15 (244.14)	34 (726.14)	15 (449.68)
violence	233	63 (444.85)	18 (292.96)	29 (619.35)	16 (479.66)
charges	241	61 (430.73)	18 (292.96)	13 (277.64)	30 (899.36)
accusation	246	60 (423.67)	16 (260.41)	18 (384.43)	26 (779.45)

---

[1] Dayter & Rüdiger describe pick-up artists as: "men who practice speed seduction of women, strongly influenced by the belief that the application of specific routines and scripted techniques are key to being successful in this endeavour." (2022: 2)

Table 3

Collocates of *false* (L0-R2, >3) in the combined and separate corpora using LogDice scores. Ordered in descending value by combined corpus LogDice score.

false +	LogDice score (raw frequency)			
	Combined corpus	CHRK Corpus	AVFM Corpus	r/MR corpus
accusations	12.18 (42)	12.00 (13)	12.38 (19)	12.07 (10)
accusation	11.72 (27)	11.47 (7)	10.97 (6)	12.43 (14)
allegations	11.16 (21)	11.34 (10)	11.53 (10)	-
rape	10.86 (47)	11.55 (35)	9.49 (7)	10.36 (5)
accuser	10.79 (14)	11.13 (6)	10.69 (5)	-
accusers	10.23 (9)	-	11.06 (6)	-
report	9.93 (7)	-	11.25 (7)	-
allegation	9.76 (6)	-	-	-
memory	9.47 (5)	10.87 (4)	-	-

with the law and criminal justice system. The terms *rape, sexual*, and *assault* were disregarded as they were ranked particularly high due to the search terms used in the corpora constructions. The most frequent of these 'criminal justice system' words (CJS words) in the top 250 words were recorded to avoid low frequency occurrences and to focus the analyses. This resulted in 25 words which could be related to discussions on the criminal justice system in relation to sexual violence. The raw frequencies of these words were noted for the combined corpus as well as for the three individual corpora. As the analysis in the sections below considers elements related to the three individual corpora, all of which are different sizes, the per million token (pmt) figures were recorded to allow for frequency normalisation and comparison across corpora. The results are listed in Table 2.

4. Analysis and discussion

Using the CJS word list (Table 2), concordance lines were analysed for the way in which the CJS words were used in discussions on the law, legal system and procedural justice within the broader topic of sexual violence. Various tools in Sketch Engine were utilised in the analysis, including collocation analysis and Word Sketch. Comparisons were also noted in relation to differences across corpora. Rather than organising the analysis by word or term, the sections below summarise the findings in relation to two key dimensions of legal cynicism, namely: *perceived lack of faith in evidential procedure* (4.1) and *perceived illegitimacy in legal authorities* (4.2). As *false* and *accusation* have a high frequency of occurrence and are used in a variety of ways to express and introduce legally cynical views, for example, this organisation of the findings allows for a more specific mapping of discourse onto the criminological concepts being examined.

In the following sections, concordance lines are shown where they exemplify a particular pattern of discourse from the analysis. All identifying names have been replaced by an initial and the bolded words refer to those in the frequency list in Table 2.

4.1. Perceived lack of faith in evidential procedure

Of the CJS words (Table 2), *false* (202) and *evidence* (182) had the highest raw frequencies in the combined corpus (1426.34 and 1285.12 pmt respectively). Within the three separate corpora, *false* was the most frequent in the AVFM (80 / 1708.56 pmt) and r/MR (57 / 1708.79 pmt) corpora, while *evidence* was most frequent in the CHRK corpus (102 / 1660.13 pmt). As mentioned above, previous research on MRA discourse has highlighted the prevalence of 'false rape accusation' rhetoric to discredit accusers and disseminate narratives of male imperilment (Burley, 2017; Barber, 2022; Dickel and Evolvi, 2023; Kettrey et al., 2024) and, using collocation analysis, it is clear that there is a strong association between false and accusation*/allegation* in the present dataset. Given the search terms and tag used in the AVFM data collection process, this is to be expected. However, there are differences in these collocates across the three specific corpora. The association measure

LogDice is used here to allow for standardised comparison across the different sized corpora (Rychlý, 2008). The maximum scoring LogDice measure of 14 indicates an entirely exclusive combination (Gablasova et al., 2017: 164). Table 3 shows the strength of collocations with *false* (L0-R2, with a frequency above 3), for the combined and separate corpora.

The collocation analysis shows that discourses in the CHROK and AVFM corpora focus largely on false accusations/allegations in the plural (12.00/11.34 and 12.38/11.53 respectively). An examination of the concordance lines shows that, in these corpora, there is a focus on generic discussions of false accusations, which capitalise on an assumed legally cynical view held by the readership, as exemplified in [1] and [2]:

> [1] Normal women are capable of identical behavior [sic] regarding **false accusations**, or in divorce and child custody cases. (CHROK)
> [2] There were literally pages of links listing **false allegations** by women. (AVFM)

These examples epitomise discussions in the dataset around false accusations. The inclusion of 'normal women' in [1] and the emotionally charged focus on the vast number of allegations in [2] create a sense of threat to men. Throughout the dataset, they generate the implication men are powerless to predict where those threats of a life-destroying allegation may originate, amplifying the foundational legally cynical discourse of 'normlessness and powerlessness' (Sampson and Bartusch, 1998). In [1], reliance on historical legal cynical views based on fathers' rights (Jordan, 2014) can also be seen ("in divorce and child custody cases"), signalling a recursive reaffirmation of victimisation by the legal system.

Further examination of the co-text around the collocation of *false + accusation(s)* in the corpora gives a more granular examination of how this contributes to the cultural framing of legal cynicism and, importantly, legal socialisation and neutralisation. In [3], for example, a sense of imperilment is generated by the underlined claim which implies *all* men are at risk. This emotive statement not only indicates perceived failings in procedural justice and the legal norms of evidentiality but also shows how affective rhetoric is generated. Such affective communication is believed to trigger *emotional contagion*, influencing the emotional states of others in significant ways (Ferrara and Yang, 2015).

> [3] H allegedly filed the **false accusations** <u>even against young men she had never met</u>, not just the ones who had consensual sex or declined her offer. (AVFM)

Perceptions of systematic evidential failings and futility are also seen in [4], constructed as advice-giving to the readership. The blogger here presents himself as both the expert in evidential procedure and as the mentor of others seen as naïve in the workings of the legal system:

> [4] Give up on the idea of saving everything to prevent **false accusations**, though. Unless you plan to have a GoPro switched on every second of your life, that is. (CHROK)

The co-text around *false accusations* in [3] and [4] highlight the legal socialisation process, through the exchange of knowledge and advice, effectively educating the readership on the perceived absence of legal protection and the realities associated with what is seen as a corrupt legal system. The nihilistic outlook represented in these posts imply that there are no legal norms and men are disempowered within the criminal justice system, contributing to the evolving frame of legal cynicism among the community.

Legally cynical views on rape accusations are also present in co-text from the subreddit corpus r/MR for the *false accusation* collocation. However, the highest LogDice score in the r/MR corpus uses the singular *accusation* (12.43) through discussions on individual cases and

experiences, as exemplified in [5] and the thread of comments in [6] (individual comments in the thread are separated by /).

> [5] Can't the girl be brought up on charges for **false accusation** of a crime? (r/MR)
>
> [6] She was at the party getting her freak on and didn't want that third guy to think that she was a ho. /
>
> Let her ass go to jail. /
>
> If her insanity's limited to **false accusation** and is able to function normally in her life otherwise it's bullshit [sic] /
>
> In western countries the legal system is specifically designed to keep women out of jail. (r/MR)

Example [6] shows how a threat to all men gets extrapolated from a comment on one case, effectively demonstrating how a post which could be construed as legal neutralisation (i.e. a particular issue of potential criminality being excused and validated) is both influenced and influences legally cynical discourse. The example, which resembles collaborative rhetorical move-steps (Swales, 1990; Casal and Kessler, 2024), also shows emotional contagion as the thread continues, culminating in the reiteration of legally cynical views.

In the r/MR corpus, the focus on individual experiences which are shared and contribute to the legal socialisation process is also evident in the comparatively high frequency of *charges* (899.36 pmt, compared to 292.96 and 277.64 in the CHROK and AVFM corpora respectively). Examples [7] and [8] exemplify how the rhetoric of 'false accusations' is exploited in relation to the deflection of personal accountability relating to multiple charges of violence:

> [7] I've been put in jail four times for domestic violence **charges** every single time found to be **false**. (r/MR)
>
> [8] At trial, I was found not guilty of one of my **charges**, the others were a hung jury. (r/MR)

The lack of context given here by the subreddit users, along with an apparent confidence in their own credibility not being questioned, indicates how legal cynicism allows denial of criminal responsibility through the procedural injustice lens. This relates to Swaner and Brisman's (2014) summary of the dimensions of procedural justice, which involve the subjective judgments that people hold about appropriateness and fairness in the exercise of authority by the police and by agents in the criminal justice system, often, but not always, when reflecting on personally-experienced events (2014: 498-499).

Crime was used relatively more frequently in the r/MR corpus (27 occurrences, 809.43 pmt) than the CHROK and AFFM corpora (47 occurrences, 691.99 pmt and 24 occurrences, 512.57 pmt respectively) (see Table 2). Legal neutralisation also occurs in the co-text of *crime*, particularly in the r/MR corpus, as individuals' experiences in the criminal justice system are outlined, as seen in [9] to [11]:

> [9] I was being charged with a life ending **crime** and I had a giant shit eating grin on my face watching my attorney work (r/MR)
>
> [10] I have suffered greatly and I haven't even been charged with a **crime** (r/MR)
>
> [11] My **crime** is that I left myself open to being accused of a crime. (AVFM)

These individualised confessional posts rely on what Suler describes as 'online disinhibition' (2004: 321), whereby the affordances of the Reddit platform allow for anonymised contributions and for more personal narratives to be shared. The assumed legally cynical views of fellow readers then allow for the neutralisation process of those confessionals to take place and contribute to legal socialisation. This also relies on the presence of Manne's concept of 'himpathy' (2018: 197) on the site, which ensures that any confession of being involved in the criminal justice process is met with sympathy and understanding of the perceived rigging of the system to target men.

An analysis of the use of *evidence* shows further examples of how legal cynicism is constructed in relation to a lack of faith in procedural and evidential process. A key discussion point in the co-text around *evidence* in the corpora is the quality and robustness of evidence used in trials. Collocates in the co-text, found through the Word Sketch tool, include terms related to a complete lack of evidence, e.g. (raw frequencies from combined corpus in brackets) *no* (16), *not any* (10), *without* (6), *zero* (5), *actual* (5); an evaluation on the quality of evidence (*hard* (10), *objective* (9), *proper* (6)); and the type of evidence used (e.g. *video* (6), *physical* (5)). Less frequent modifiers of *evidence* include *incontrovertible, not enough, little, insufficient* and *DNA*. The co-text suggests that rather than asserting innocence, the MRAs focus largely on the evidentiary process, capitalising on the rhetoric of bias and corruption in the system, as shown in [12] and [13]:

> [12] A lack of objective **evidence** is a defining feature of most rape trials today (CHROK)
>
> [13] Imprison him, no **evidence** needed. (CHROK)

There is little acknowledgement in the discourses of the evidential challenges inherent in cases of sexual violence, where the issue is often related to establishing whether consent was present rather than of determining whether sexual activity actually took place (Triggs, 2018; HM Government's End-to-End Rape Review Report, 2021). When evidential challenges *are* acknowledged, misogynistic narratives are employed to reinforce legally cynical attitudes on the perceived bias in the system, as shown in [14] and [15].

> [14] Rather than being dependent on the testing of proper, objective **evidence**, a man's fate is usually left to he-said-she-said calculations that automatically favor [sic] any emotional woman crying rape. (CHROK)
>
> [15] Despite a lack of **evidence** in the trial, the judge took C's word over M's and sentenced the innocent man. (r/MR)

The corpus-assisted analysis highlights how personally perceived injustices and collective acceptance of routine failures in evidential processes contribute to the legal socialisation process to construct legal cynicism. They create a sense of futility and a perception that legal norms and procedural fairness have been abandoned in favour of a feminist agenda. This disillusionment can foster a sense of marginalisation, increasing the propensity for criminality due to a lack of faith in the criminal justice system (Cavanagh et al., 2022).

Further analysis shows similar sentiment expressed using *lies* in the discourses. Line [16], for example, illustrates legal socialisation in the form of advice, effectively warning men and galvanising them to be prepared for an attack:

> [16] The onus is on you to be prepared for any malicious mudslinging that comes your way. You must have a backup plan and means of counterattacking standard issue female **lies**. (CHROK)

Similar to example [4], which is more nihilistic, the discourse in [16] mirrors findings on advice-giving among other manosphere communities (see, for example, Wright, 2020; Dayter and Rüdiger, 2022). The blogger here, presenting himself as experienced in and enlightened to the 'reality', is relying on and further propagating legal cynicism to position himself as an expert and mentor. The inclusion of an emotionally-charged sense of danger in this post adds to the potential for emotional contagion with regard to the perceived lack of protection of legal norms, values and procedural justice.

Through their analysis of the subreddit *r/MensRights*, Kettrey et al. (2024) introduce the idea of *aspirational oppression* to describe MRAs' perception of victimhood, diminishing male privilege, and the desire to return to patriarchal gender norms. The aspirational oppression evident

in the MRA discourses in this study can be seen to enforce and perpetuate the rhetoric of hopelessness and normlessness associated with legal cynicism, linked to the perceived loss of patriarchal norms and values in the criminal justice system.

4.2. Perceived illegitimacy in legal authorities

An examination of the concordance lines in the dataset shows that *false* was also used in a wider context to denigrate actors and institutions within the legal system, adding to the rhetoric that men are at risk of being targeted by wider, systemic injustice as well as from that perpetuated by women. Lines [17] and [18] show how corruption is perceived to be inherent within the government and judiciary (underlined):

[17] The British government rarely prosecutes **false accusers**. The result is that false accusations in the UK are soaring, and, convictions are plummeting. (AVFM)

[18] The girl should be jailed for **false** rape **accusation** but instead the guy was jailed for two years because the liberal judge felt there [sic] it was CRAZY to think "a young woman" would be so sexually brazen. (r/MR)

In example [17], the misinformed causal argument demonstrates how illegitimacy in the legal system is extrapolated from the false accusation rhetoric, with the government seen as enabling the perceived imperilment to men. Line [18], containing the indexing of the judge as 'liberal' exemplifies an attempt at legal neutralisation by blaming the judge for being out of touch and ignorant of the 'realities' of young women's behaviour.

Corruption in the legal system is also expressed through the extended co-text here in line [19] in relation to perceived rape quotas (underlined). Here, although feminists are seen as the instigators of that corruption, the implication is that legal authorities are not only complicit in the feminist agenda but are willing to disregard procedural fairness and, opt, instead, for a statistics-driven approach to convictions:

[19] Another **falsely accused** man had to escape Britain for good. Why? Because, armed with a political and social climate of "listen and believe always" feminists and their enablers have successfully argued for rape quotas that leave matters of evidence and due process in the dustbin of history. (CHROK)

This example, which dramatically links illegitimacy in legal authority with having to flee the country, exemplifies the conspiratorial elements highlighted by Rottweiler and Gill (2022) and presents a particularly worrying belief system. The researchers found that individuals with legally cynical perspectives and who believe in conspiracy theories are more likely to be drawn into violent extremism (2022: 1495). The belief here that those with power and authority within the legal system in England and Wales have a specific number of men to target falls within the definition of a conspiracy theory, outlined by Peker and Dufour (2025): 2) as: an explanation for social and political circumstances that attribute hidden, coordinated, and often harmful intent to powerful groups, typically opposing official or mainstream accounts. The suggestion of a quotas-based conspiracy in this post effectively allows accused men to blame a random, statistics-based system rather than to have any accountability. Corruption deeply embedded in the legal system, seen to be perpetuated by feminists, is also seen in [20] below, referencing the US legal system (the D.A. being the District Attorney):

[20] [T]he D.A. has refused to press **charges** against [The Girls] due to "gender-based discrimination". In other words ""Female Privilege"". Meanwhile this man spends the rest of his life battling the stigma of this **false charge** due to deeply seeded gender-based discrimination. (r/MR)

The affective tone is integrated into the supposed consequences of the D.A.'s actions with *battling* and *stigma* used to describe the accused man. The pattern of firstly identifying a specific case and then quickly extrapolating catastrophic consequences is indicative of the discourses as a whole.

Regarding legitimacy in the police, the MRA corpora show slight differences. In the combined corpus, there were 152 occurrences of *police* (1073.29 pmt), as shown in Table 2. The AVFM corpus includes the most frequent use of *police* (raw frequency 71 / 1516.35 pmt), with the CHROK corpus showing 69 occurrences (1123.03 pmt). Very few mentions of the police are found in the r/MR corpus (12 occurrences / 359.74 pmt) as *law enforcement* was more commonly used (8 out of the 15 occurrences in the combined corpus were from r/MR – 53.33%), signalling a North American register. The vast majority (66 out of 71 occurrences (92.96%)) of the references to the police in the AVFM corpus used neutral or supportive language to discuss them. For example, the co-text of *police* focused on women calling the police (10); police responses to callouts (9); and the police finding exonerating evidence to support accused men (9). Other categories include references to police interviewing, women lying to the police and police writing reports. Very few references indexing illegitimacy in the police were found in the corpus, suggesting a reticence to associate the police with other agents in the legal system perceived to be corrupt. It should be noted here that *law enforcement* appeared four times in relation to the military, all with negative indexing. Overall, this indicates a key nuance in the analysis and possible affiliations or sympathies with the police among bloggers and/or readership of *A Voice For Men*. However, in the CHORK corpus and particularly in r/MR, there is more illegitimacy indexed with regard to the police / law enforcement (25 out of 70 occurrences (35.71%) and 9 out of 12 (75%) respectively for *police* and 4 out of 8 (50% for *law enforcement* in r/MR). Line [21] shows how supposed bias in law enforcement is used for legal neutralisation, seemingly exonerating the subreddit user by placing blame for their legal situation on the bias in the system:

[21] As stated, specifics couldn't be discussed, but they told my attorney that **law** enforcement was incredibly biased against me to a remarkable degree. (r/MR)

Perceptions of illegitimacy and contested authority in the legal system through anti-male bias is also seen in the co-text of *criminal justice system*. This is most notable in the AVFM corpus, where the terms *criminal, justice*, and *system* are most frequently used (see Table 2). The overarching and repeated pattern of associating the justice system with anti-male bias and of protecting women is exemplified in line [22]:

[22] "That is the law in the UK; All of the mechanisms of the **criminal justice system** are reversed when a woman commits the crime of filling a false police report of sexual assault" (AVFM)

It is clear from [22] and the examples listed above that there is recognition of the power and role of the criminal justice system. These men recognise the *potential* legitimacy in the legal system when it is not related to false accusations and the influence of feminism. As can be seen in [22] above, the 'mechanisms of the criminal justice system' are described as working until they are 'reversed' by women seen to be abusing the system through false allegations. This illustrates the influence of the false allegation trope on the MRA legal socialisation process, the dominance of 'aspirational oppressive' mindsets (Hensman Kettrey et al 2024), and the importance of challenging this rhetoric in order to restore faith and a belief in the legitimacy of the legal system.

5. Discussions and routes to intervention

This paper draws upon Sampson and Bartusch's (1998) research on legal cynicism, which considers the interplay between social and
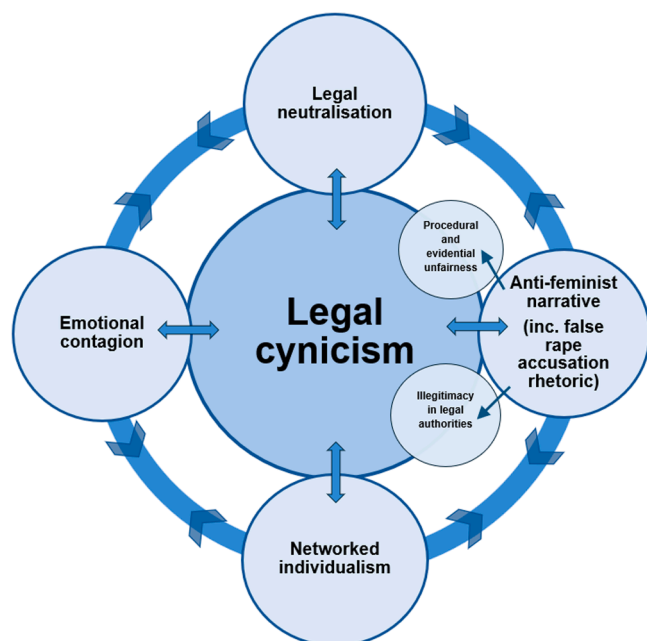
Fig. 1. A conceptualisation of the elements which contribute to the MRA legal socialisation process around legal cynicism.

environmental factors and collective negative experiences of the legal system within offline communities, and applies them to the social and *digital* environmental factors of the online MRA community. As has been outlined above, corpus-assisted discourse analysis of words associated with the criminal justice system can show multiple linguistic and criminological elements which help to perpetuate legal cynicism among the MRAs through the legal socialisation cycle. These elements include legal neutralisation; the rhetoric of false accusations and the feminist agenda (which incorporates procedural and evidential unfairness and lack of faith in legal authorities); the influence of individual contributions (*networked individualism*); and emotive elements linked to narratives of imperilment. As shown in Fig. 1, these elements are mutually reinforcing and symbiotic, collectively shaping and building on the shared cultural framing of legal cynicism in the MRA community through the legal socialisation process.

In their commentary on young people and crime, Sampson and Bartusch argue that "reducing legal cynicism is a necessary element of delinquency prevention." (1998: 478). It is suggested here that tackling legally cynical attitudes by disrupting this legal socialisation process among MRAs online could help to mitigate the potential for offline violence against women. To challenge the MRA legal socialisation process and legal cynicism frame, corpus-informed linguistic strategies, outlined below, can be employed to provide a multifaceted approach to inoculation and education to promote legitimacy in the criminal justice systems in the United States and United Kingdom.

5.1. Prebunking

Young men and boys who look at online content are subjected to pervasive messaging and toxicity generated by misogynistic content creators and amplified by algorithms (see Baker et al., 2024; Renström and Bäck, 2024 for discussions on this within the context of MRAs). Legal cynicism not only creates the precondition for future offending but also enables hate crime, hate speech, and misogynistic attitudes which are spread online. In the same way that inoculation narratives can prime recipients of harmful messaging and arm them with counter-arguments (see Braddock, 2020), *prebunking* can disrupt the MRA legal socialisation process through raising awareness of pervasive and conventional discursive patterns. As part of digital literacy education, prebunking

strategies rely on raising awareness of the manipulative and persuasive misinformation before it is presented (Lewandowsky and van der Linden, 2021: 356). Knowing how to recognise the form of that misinformation and understanding its semantic framing can help build epistemic vigilance (ibid.) and activate psychological reactance against being manipulated (Braddock, 2020: 116). This can also undermine emotional responses to the messaging and so limit the emotional contagion effect.

As mentioned above, corpus-assisted discourse methods can help optimise prebunking strategies to specific platforms. As seen in this study, blog posts have a higher frequency of generic messaging around legal cynicism, incorporating and reinforcing the established frame. However, on the subreddit, there was more evidence in this study that legal neutralisation was taking place by using this established rhetoric to excuse and justify previous actions and contribute to the legal socialisation of others on the platform. Further research on other social media platforms used by MRAs could highlight more nuances in legally cynical discourses, which can then be used in digital literacy education to forewarn online users of these platforms of the form and effect of this rhetoric.

5.2. Legal education and legal transparency

It has been argued that education is one of the most important remedies to tackle the increasing rate of politicised violent misogyny (Ebner, 2020: 204). Raising awareness of the mechanisms of each stage of the criminal justice process, including the considerations facing the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in bringing a case to trial, can be integrated into school curricula to help challenge the conspiratorial discourses found in MRA online spaces. The importance of getting boys and young men engaged in sexual assault prevention measures to target educational strategies to address specific issues that they have been exposed to online has also been highlighted (see Orchowski and Berkowitz, 2022). Programmes designed to raise awareness of legal and procedural processes regarding sexual violence are, thankfully, becoming more common. Talk Consent (www.talkconsent.org) and Young Citizens (www.youngcitizens.org), for example, provide age-appropriate workshops to challenge online messaging, educate students on issues around sexual violence, and to address their concerns regarding the law and legal processes. Corpus methodologies can help to refine strategies and messaging to show how frequently occurring patterns of language are used and to highlight misinformation embedded in the online discourses. Further, Oliveira and Jackson, 2021 argue that "To be seen as legitimate, institutional actors need to show to citizens that they share and respect key normative expectations about the proper exercise of power" (2021: 115). Including input from legal authorities in legal education programmes to address specific messaging highlighted by CADS could help to avoid generic, institutional responses.

It should also be noted that legal cynicism has been found to prevent women from reporting sexual violence committed against them due to a lack of faith in the criminal justice system and the various agents within it (Stewart et al., 2024). Establishing the legitimacy of bodies involved in each stage of the criminal justice process is also essential for increased reporting. The inherent complexity of legal systems, compounded by their often opaque and exclusionary language, facilitates the emergence of conspiratorial interpretations and misunderstandings. Unpacking this complexity, informed by corpus-assisted methodologies to target these conspiracies, would also have much wider benefits regarding legal awareness.

5.3. Acknowledgement of grievances

In their examination of MRA discourses, Gotell and Dutton suggest that addressing the concerns and grievances raised in MRA discourses is important: "Feminist denial of the realities of men's perceptions of victimisation plays into their rhetoric." (2016: 76), particularly with
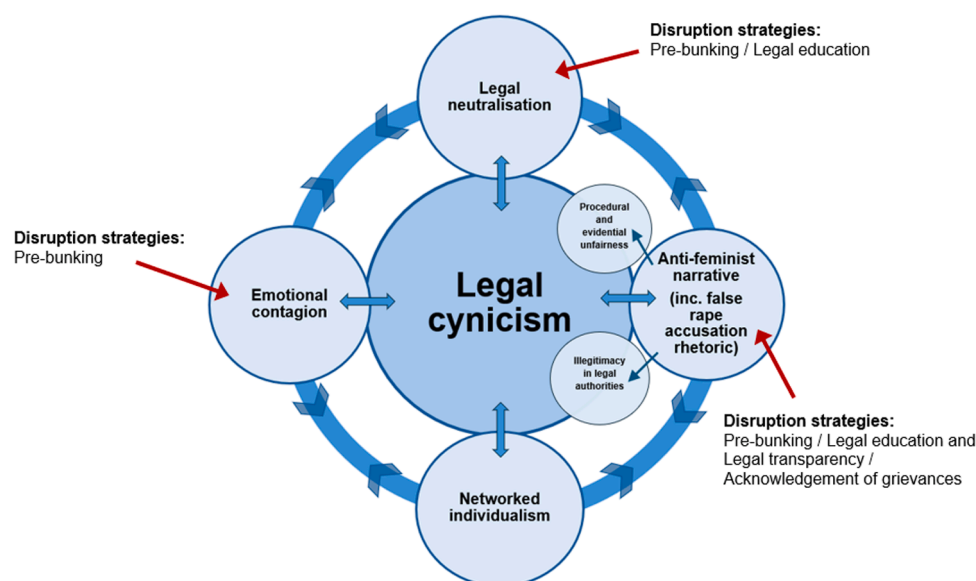
Fig. 2. Possible entry points and corpus-informed strategies for disrupting the MRA legal socialisation process and challenge the legal cynicism frame.

regard to 'aspirational oppression' (Hensman Kettrey et al 2024), as detailed above. The victimhood narratives which capitalise on these grievances have far-reaching impacts, for example, radicalisation into extremism (Ebner, 2017: 198).

Acknowledging grievances raised in these discourses is problematic as any validation of the rhetoric could possibly legitimise misogynistic ideologies. However, ignoring issues which may have some validity is arguably riskier. While sexual violence against men is substantially less prevalent that that against women (Office for National Statistics, 2025), it is a significant issue and still largely taboo, leading to underreporting and the under-resourcing of support services (see Pearson and Barker (2018) for key discussions in this area). The impact on male victims of 'forced penetration' by women has been investigated by Weare et al. (2017) and there are valid arguments associated with this crime to review the definition of rape in England and Wales, as outlined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. A specific example of a grievance highlighted in the corpus-assisted discourse analysis in this project and which, arguably, has credibility, is the lack of anonymity for male defendants accused of sexual violence, for example in line [20]. While it is controversial, it could be critically (re)evaluated. Engaging with repeatedly expressed resentments, highlighted by these linguistic studies, could possibly generate higher legal morality to act as a protective factor against criminality (Rottweiler and Gill, 2022) and re-establish faith in procedural fairness to generate compliance with criminal justice agencies (Swaner and Brisman, 2014: 511).

Fig. 2 shows an updated version of Fig. 1 to summarise the above strategies for disrupting the MRA legal socialisation process and where in this process the strategies could be most effective.

6. Conclusion

This study suggests that corpus-informed approaches to linguistic analysis can highlight how legal cynicism is constructed in MRA discourses. It should be acknowledged that there may be some instances outlined in the examples above whereby injustices have been committed and the perceptions articulated by the men in the online discussions could be justified. However, the feeding of cynical views on the law and legal system within the context of sexual violence on sites renowned for misogynistic views, and the prevalence of mis/disinformation, exaggeration and catastrophising, indicate that the examples above, instead, represent subjective misrepresentations which have been strongly influenced by the frame of legal cynicism. As has been discussed, legal cynicism provides not only the ability to neutralise and validate previous violence but is also a precondition to possible further offending. Tackling the lack of faith in criminal justice is a potential way to mitigate this going forward.

The limitations of this study include the size and scope of the corpora being analysed. The size of the dataset means that, although close analysis was possible, this is very much an initial insight into the language of legal cynicism in the MRA discourses within the frame of sexual violence against women. Larger corpora and the inclusion of data from a different range of platforms would enable further analyses, and widening the scope to include other crimes, or the legal system in general, would generate interesting comparisons. Platforms which are not text-based, such as TikTok and Instagram, which may have a wider reach than those outlined in this study, would also provide researchers with valuable data on the how legal cynicism is perpetuated. With extended research in this area utilising corpus-assisted discourse methods, the routes to intervention outlined above, i.e. prebunking; legal education and legal transparency; and the acknowledgement of grievances, could be refined and enhanced further.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Kate Barber: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Resources, Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation.

Declaration of competing interest

The author declares that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

and who helped me clarify my ideas. This includes Dr Tereza Spilioti at Cardiff University, where this paper was initially conceived, and my Criminology colleagues at the University of Reading. I would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers whose feedback greatly improved the final version of this paper.

References

Associated Press, 2020. FBI Links 'Anti-Feminist' Lawyer Suspected of Murder to Separate Killing of Colleague. The Guardian, 22nd July. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jul/22/roy-den-hollander-mens-rights-lawyer-killing.

Baker, C., Ging, D., Andreasen, M., 2024. Recommending Toxicity: The Role of Algorithmic Recommender Functions on YouTube Shorts and TikTok in Promoting Male Supremacist Influencers. DCU Centre, Dublin City University, pp. 2–33.

Barber, K., 2022. (Re)framing Rape: A Sociocognitive Discourse Analysis of Sexual Violence at the Intersection of White and Male Supremacy. PhD Thesis. Cardiff University.

Bates, L., 2020. Men Who Hate Women: From Incels to Pickup Artists, the Truth about Extreme Misogyny and How it Affects Us All. Simon & Schuster UK Ltd, London.

Bell, M.C., 2016. Situational trust: how disadvantaged mothers reconceive legal cynicism. Law Soc. Rev. 50 (2), 314–347.

Braddock, K., 2020. Weaponized Words: The Strategic Role of Persuasion in Violent Radicalization and Counter-Radicalization. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Burley, S., 2017. Fascism Today: What Is It and How To End It. AK Press, Chico, CA.

Casal, J.E., Kessler, M., 2024. Rhetorical move-step analysis. In: Kessler, M., Polio, C. (Eds.), Conducting Genre-based Research in Applied Linguistics: A Methodological Guide. Routledge, London, pp. 82–104.

Cavanagh, C., Fine, A., Cauffman, E., 2022. How do adolescents develop legal cynicism? a test of legal socialization mechanisms among youth involved in the justice system. Justice Q. 39 (3), 478–496.

Dayter, D., Rüdiger, S., 2022. The Language of Pick-Up Artists: Online Discourses of the Seduction Industry. Routledge, Abbingdon, Oxon.

Dickel, V., Evolvi, G., 2023. Victims of feminism": exploring networked misogyny and #metoo in the manosphere. Fem. Media Stud. 23 (4), 392–1408.

Dragiewicz, M., 2018. Antifeminism and backlash: a critical criminological imperative. In: DeKeseredy, W.S., Dragiewicz, M. (Eds.), Routledge Handbook of Critical Criminology, 2nd Ed. Routledge, London, pp. 334–347.

Ebner, J., 2017. The Rage: The Vicious Circle of Islamist and Far-Right Extremism. I.B. Tauris, London.

Ebner, J., 2020. Going Dark: The Secret Social Lives of Extremists. Bloomsbury Publishing, London.

Ferrara, E., Yang, Z., 2015. Measuring emotional contagion in social media. PLoS One 1–14.

Gablasova, D., Brezina, V., McEnery, T., 2017. Collocations in corpus-based language learning research: identifying, comparing, and interpreting the evidence. Lang. Learn. 67 (1), 155–179.

Gifford, F.E., Reisig, M.D., 2019. A multidimensional model of legal cynicism. Law Hum. Behav. 43 (4), 383–396.

Ging, D., 2017. Alphas, betas, and incels: theorising the masculinities of the manosphere. Men Masculinities, 1097184X17706401.

Gotell, L., Dutton, E., 2016. Sexual violence in the 'manosphere': antifeminist Men's Rights discourses on rape. Int. J. Crime Justice Soc. Democr. 5 (2), 65–80.

HM Government, 2021. The end-to-end rape review report on findings and actions – ADD. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/end-to-end-rape-review-report-on-findings-and-actions.

Kettrey, H.H., Quinn, S., Waddell, C., Evans, J., Imbody, C., Nunez-Garcia, F., 2024. A woman, with no evidence, can send any man to jail whenever she wants": Men's Rights Activists' digital narratives of a culture of false rape allegations. Sex Roles 90 (11), 1616–1632.

Johnson, N.L., Johnson, D.M., 2021. An empirical exploration into the measurement of rape culture. J. Interpers. Violence 36 (1–2), 70–95.

Jordan, A., 2014. Every father is a superhero to his children": the gendered politics of the (real) fathers 4 justice campaign. Polit. Stud. 62, 83–98.

Kirk, D.S., Matsuda, M., 2011. Legal cynicism, collective efficacy, and the ecology of arrest. Criminology 49 (2), 443–472.

Kirk, D.S., Papachristos, A.V., 2011. Cultural mechanisms and the persistence of neighborhood violence. Am. J. Sociol. 116 (4), 190–1233.

Krendel, A., McGlashan, M., Koller, V., 2022. The representation of gendered social actors across five manosphere communities on reddit. Corpora 17 (2), 291–321.

Lewandowsky, S., van der Linden, S., 2021. Countering misinformation and fake news through inoculation and prebunking. Eur. Rev. Soc. Psychol. 32 (2), 348–384.

Lumsden, K., 2019. I want to kill you in front of your children" is not a threat. it's an expression of desire": discourses of online abuse, trolling and violence on r/MensRights. In: Lumsden, K., Harmer, E. (Eds.), Online Othering: Exploring Digital Violence and Discrimination on the Web. Palgrave MacMillan, London, pp. 91–120.

Manne, K., 2018. Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny. Penguin, London.

Marchi, A., Taylor, C., 2018. Introduction. In: Taylor, C., Marchi, A. (Eds.), Corpus Approaches to Discourse: A Critical Review. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, pp. 1–15.

McGlashan, M., Krendel, A., 2024. Keywords of the manosphere. Int. J. Corpus Linguist. 29 (1), 87–115.

Mountford, J.B., 2018. Topic modeling the red pill. Soc. Sci. 7 (42), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci7030042.

Nivette, A., Eisner, M., Ribeaud, D., 2017. Developmental predictors of violent extremist attitudes: a test of general strain theory. J. Res. Crime Delinq. 54 (6), 755–790.

Office for National Statistics (HM Government), 2025. Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2024. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2024#sexual-offences.

Oliveira, T.R., Jackson, J., 2021. Legitimacy, trust and legal cynicism: a review of concepts. Tempo Soc. 33 (03), 113–145.

Orchowski, L.M., Berkowitz, A.D., 2022. Engaging Boys and Men in Sexual Assault Prevention: Theory, Research, and Practice. Academic Press, London.

Partington, A., Marchi, A., 2015. Using corpora in discourse analysis. In: Biber, D., Reppen, R. (Eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 216–234.

Pearson, J., Barker, D., 2018. Male rape: what we know, don't know and need to find out - a critical review. Crime Psychol. Rev. 4 (1), 72–94.

Peker, E., Dufour, F.G., 2025. Bridging the cognitive/collective and supply/demand divides in conspiracy theory research. Soc. Sci. Q. 106 (2), 1–12.

Rafail, P., Freitas, I., 2019. Grievance articulation and community reactions in the Men's Rights movement online. Soc. Media + Soc. 5 (2), 1–11.

Renström, E.A., Bäck, H., 2024. Manfluencers and young men's misogynistic attitudes: the role of perceived threats to men's status. Sex Roles 90 (12), 1787–1806.

Ribeiro, M.H., Blackburn, J., Bradlyn, B., De Cristofaro, E., Stringhini, G., Long, S., Greenberg, S., Zannettou, S., 2020. From pick-up artists to incels: a data-driven sketch of the manosphere. XYOnline 1–12.

Rottweiler, B., Gill, P., 2022. Conspiracy beliefs and violent extremist intentions: the contingent effects of self-efficacy, self-control and law-related morality. Terror. Polit. Violence 34 (7), 1485–1504.

Rychlý, P., 2008. A lexicographer-friendly association score. RASLAN 6–9.

Sampson, R.J., Bartusch, D.J., 1998. Legal cynicism and (subcultural?) tolerance of deviance: the neighborhood context of racial differences. Law Soc. Rev. 32 (4), 777–804.

Scrivens, R., Freilich, J.D., Chermak, S.M., Frank, R., 2024. Data Collection in online terrorism and extremism research: strengths, limitations, and future directions. Stud. Confl. Terror. 1–23.

Sherman, L.W., 1993. Defiance, deterrence, and irrelevance: a theory of criminal sanction. J. Res. Crime Delinq. 30, 445–473.

Stewart, S., Willmott, D., Murphy, A., Phillips, C., 2024. I thought i'm better off just trying to put this behind me"– a contemporary approach to understanding why women decide not to report sexual violence. J. Forensic Psychiatry Psychol. 35 (1), 85–101.

Suler, J., 2004. The online disinhibition effect. Cyberpsychology Behav. 7 (3), 321–326.

Swales, J., 1990. Genre Analysis. CUP, Cambridge.

Swaner, R., Brisman, A., 2014. Legal cynicism among civically-engaged youth. Varstvoslovje: J. Crim. Justice Secur. 16 (4), 492–517.

Triggs, C., 2018. False allegations of sexual violence: the reality. In: Milne, E., Brennan, K., South, N., Turton, J. (Eds.), Women and the Criminal Justice System: Failing Victims and Offenders? Springer International, Cham, pp. 43–66.

Weare, S., Porter, J., Evans, E., 2017. Forced-to-Penetrate Cases: Lived Experiences of Men. Baseline Research Findings. Lancaster University, Lancaster. Available at https://wp.lancs.ac.uk/forced-to-penetrate-cases/files/2018/07/Forced-to-Penetrate-Cases-Lived-Experiences-of-Men-Project-Report.pdf.

Wellman, B., Quan-Haase, A., Boase, J., Chen, W., Hampton, K., Díaz, I., Miyata, K., 2003. The social affordances of the internet for networked individualism. J. Comput.-Mediat. Commun. 8 (3).

Wright, D., 2020. The discursive construction of resistance to sex in an online community. Discourse Context Media 36, 1–9.