

BSC Hate Crime & Policing Networks Conference: “Hate Crime Perpetrators: The Effectiveness of Criminal Justice Responses”
Nottingham Trent University
5th June 2025

‘Female Privilege’ and the ‘Matriarchy’: Examining Legal Cynicism in Men’s Rights Discourses as a Driver of Sexual Violence Against Women



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Reading



Outline

1. Context of study
2. Data collection and methods
3. Legal cynicism – proposed model
4. Analysis of legally cynical discourses
5. Discussion and challenges
6. Disrupting the legal socialisation process

Barber. K. 2025. Legal Cynicism in Men's Rights Discourses: Using Corpus Linguistics to Expose and Challenge the Propensity for Sexual Violence Against Women. *Applied Corpus Linguistics* (Special Issue: 'Corpus linguistic approaches to tackling online crime')

- Men's Rights Movements (MRM) – started in the 1960s/70s (US and UK) in response to second wave feminism.
- Very much an **offline** movement (*collective action*)
- Focus = re-masculising men, celebrating masculinity, fighting against a perceived decline in rights (*aggrieved entitlement*) (Kimmel 2013) and feelings of oppression in society.
- Issues: shorter life span, military obligations, higher suicide rates, divorce and child custody issues, men's health concerns.
- This changed with the evolution of the internet and social media. *Collective action* morphed into *connective action* (Lance Bennett and Segerberg 2012).
- *Networked individualism* – relies on *emotional contagion* = emotive content significantly affecting the mental state of others (Ferrar and Yang 2015) and *affective intensity* (hate spreads through algorithms Baker et al 2024)

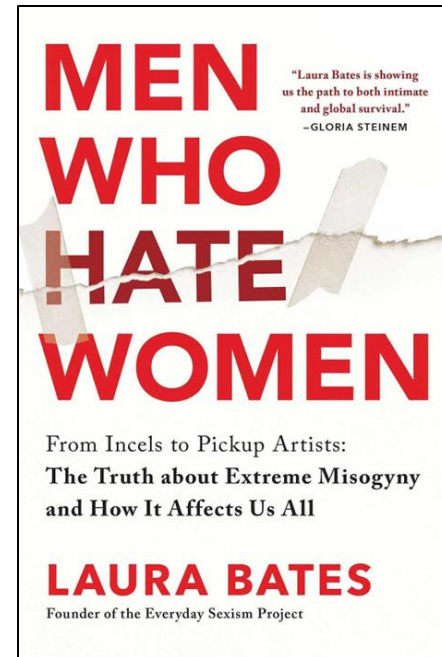


The 'Manosphere'

Ging describes the Manosphere as “a loose confederacy of interest groups united in their adherence to Red Pill “philosophy”, which purports to liberate men from a life of feminist delusion” (2017: 638).

Through the red pill philosophy, feminism is seen to equal misandry and requires men to fight against it (Siapera 2019: 27).

- **Men's Rights Activists (MRAs)**
- Incels ('involuntary celibates' / sub5s)
- Pick-up artists (PUAs)
- Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOWs)



<https://crestresearch.ac.uk/resources/a-short-introduction-to-the-involuntary-celibate-sub-culture/>




Data Sources


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RETURN OF KINGS

[CULTURE](#) [MASCULINITY](#) [STORE](#) [TOPICS](#) [SUBMIT ARTICLE](#)




 **A Voice for Men**
CHANGING THE CULTURAL NARRATIVE



AN EAR FOR MEN

How to train a woman like a dog

BY A VOICE FOR MEN VIDEOS — JULY 1, 2024





 **r/MensRights**

+ Create Post

Join

...

CHATEAU HEARTISTE

Where pretty lies perish.



Dating Market Value Test For Women

May 19th, 2019 by CH

UPDATE:

I've adjusted the scoring and categories a bit because the test was skewed somewhat toward lower scores. For those who have arguments with my scoring system, understand that it is based on averages. I'm sure everyone knows a 34 year old woman who is just as hot as the average 22 year old girl, but the exceptions don't make the rules.

Corpus-assisted discourse analysis

- Corpus linguistic methods: corpus software offer tools and resources for language analysis.
- Allows for both quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis.
- Offers entry points into the discourse which are replicable (avoids 'cherry-picking').
- Language patterns can be ascertained, quantified, and compared across corpora.

SATIONS AND THE DENIAL OF MEN'S EMOTIONAL PAIN I keep hearing that	false	accusations	of rape make it harder on real victims of rape.	.		Really?	
nal pain of females and ignoring the emotional pain of males is not exclusive to	false	accusations	.			You see this same pattern most everyplace you look.	
was forced out of school—and investigated for sexual assault—due to a series of	false	accusations	made by female students.			The girls—dubbed "mean girls" in th	
ce of false sexual assault accusations in the wake of the B K hearings.	False	accusations	may not be common, but they do happen.			To pretend otherwi	
ung men who are being accused of such crimes on college campuses.	False	accusations	in the quasi-judicial campus tribunals, forced on the universities by th				
out their adoption of the rape culture narrative that even may have encouraged	false	accusations	.			Suddenly they find themselves on the wrong side of the poli	
d.	false	accusations	of rape have been a matter of intense concern.			If men's sexu	
sexual violence toward women was historical ignored, historical concern about	false	accusations	of men's sexual violence toward women makes no sense.			Be	
rejection that she decided to file a false rape claim.	false	accusations	even against young men she had never met, not just the ones who h				
r sentenced to time served (about 30 days) and a fine of about \$175.00 for the	false	accusations	against the boys.			At this point, the Western media exploded v	

Corpus construction and analytical process

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

*tokens – total volume of words, regardless of repetition

- Top 25 most frequent words in the combined corpus which relate to the criminal justice system were analysed.
- The frequencies of these words were then recorded for each of the three corpora.
- The raw frequencies were normalised to ‘per million tokens’ to allow for cross-corpora comparison.
- The ‘Collocation’ and ‘Word Sketch’ tools were used for analysis of the 2314 concordance lines generated (Sketch Engine)

Legal cynicism

- Legal cynicism: 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 & Brisman 2014: 497-498).
- Sampson & Bartusch 1998: 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).
- Normlessness, powerlessness, and legally cynical attitudes 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).
- Legal cynicism is linked to **increased criminal behaviour** and acceptance of criminality (Kirk & Papachristos 2011; Gifford & Reisig 2019; Cavanagh et al (2022); Rottweiler & Gill (2022))

Legal cynicism:

Legal socialisation & *neutralisation* – a symbiotic relationship

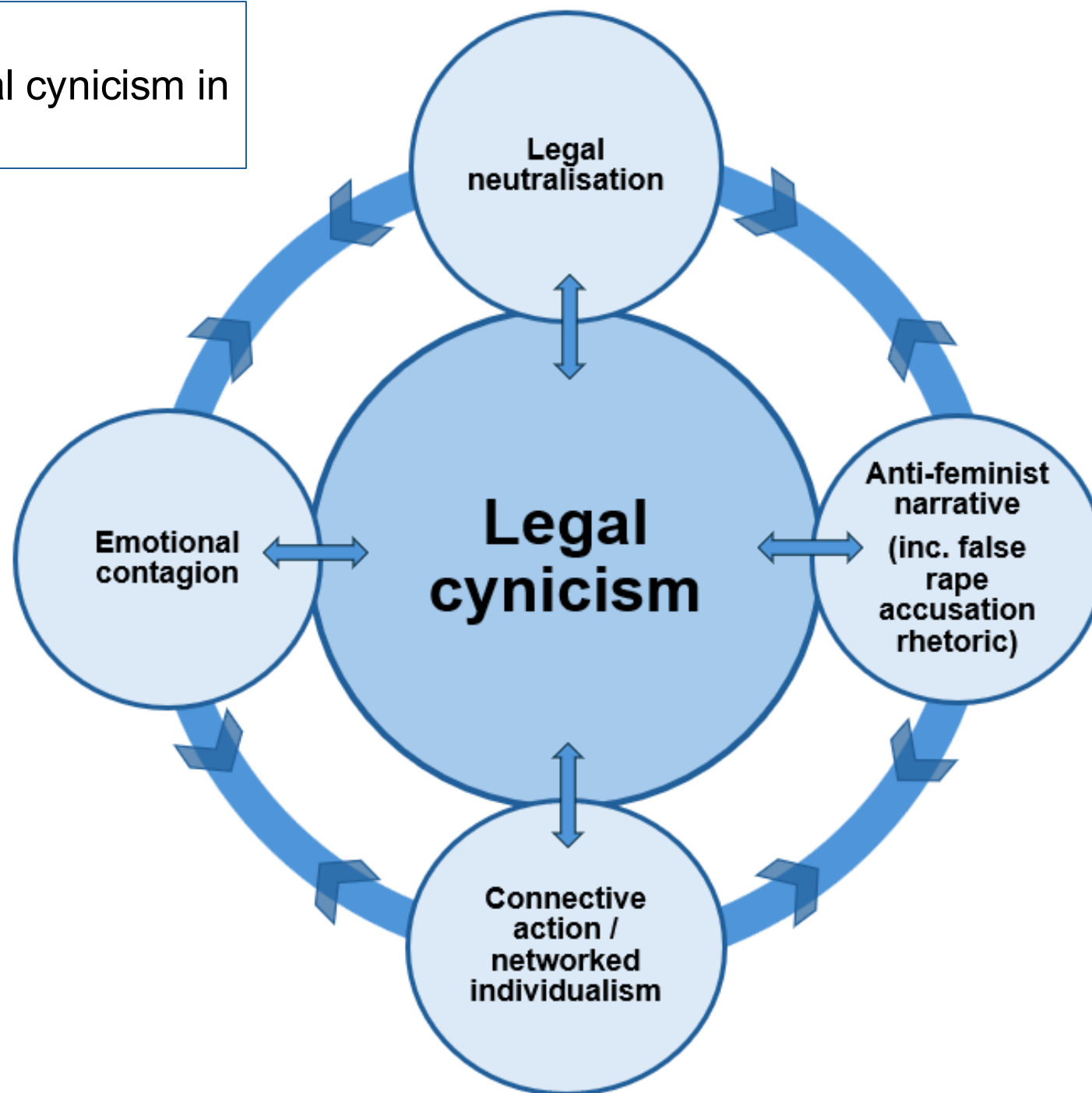
Legal Socialisation

- The process of constructing legal cynicism is also cultivated collectively (*legal socialisation*). It is fostered and disseminated in groups and communities through social interactions and the sharing of negative experiences (Nivette et al 2015: 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).

Legal neutralisation

- A key part of legal socialisation - the mechanism of *legal neutralisation*. This is a cognitive process, undertaken 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 2015: 287).
- It neutralises and justifies past criminal actions. Similar to defiance theory (Sherman 1993), it operates to shift the shame of criminality onto blame on the law (Nivette et al 2015: 287)
- It allows previous criminal behaviour to be sanctioned, accepted and normalised.

Legal socialisation:
The generation of legal cynicism in
the MRA community



False + accusation / allegation**

= Formulaic narrative trope in these discourses (see Burley 2017; Barber 2022, Dickel & Evolvi 2023)

- *False + accusation* / allegation** was the strongest collocation in the dataset overall.
- However, there were differences in the individual corpora.
- The blogs mostly used the plural form, indicating a far more generic use – capitalising on the established legal cynicism rhetoric.
- In the r/MR corpus, the singular form was stronger and more prevalent.
- This indicates more personal, individual storytelling – *legal neutralisation*
- Supported through analysis of concordance lines and more frequent use of should and personal pronouns

	LogDice score			
<i>False +</i>	Combined corpus	CHRK Corpus	AVFM Corpus	r/MR corpus
<i>accusations</i>	11.79	9.88	12.38	12.07
<i>accusation</i>	11.05	-	10.71	12.21
<i>accuser</i>	10.79	11.13	10.69	10.42
<i>rape</i>	10.77	11.42	9.49	10.36
<i>allegations</i>	10.67	10.02	11.53	-
<i>accusers</i>	10.23	-	11.06	-
<i>memory</i>	9.47	10.87	-	-
<i>report</i>	9.45	-	10.77	-
<i>allegation</i>	9.17	-	-	-

*14.00 = entirely exclusive combination

False + accusation* / allegation / charges*

- 1. H allegedly filed the **false accusations** even against young men she had never met, not just the ones who had consensual sex or declined her offer. (AVFM)*
- 2. 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)*
- 3. Can't the girl be brought up on charges for **false accusation** of a crime? (r/MR)*
- 4. - 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.
- In western countries the legal system is specifically designed to keep women out of jail. (r/MR)*
- 5. I've been put in jail four times for domestic violence **charges** every single time found to be **false**. (r/MR)*

Analysis:

Perceived lack of faith in evidential procedure

- *false accusations*: Shows catastrophising and reliance on narratives of imperilment throughout. Contributes to rhetoric around normlessness and powerlessness.
- Attempts to get validation for actions by relying on established legal cynicism in the community.
- No context given in the narratives, no concessions made or acknowledgment of procedural rigour. Immediate blame onto the legal system and women as a generic group.
- *evidence* (second most frequent word): multiple modifiers show focus on the degree and quality of evidence used rather than a claim of innocence (e.g. *a lack of evidence, no hard evidence, not enough evidence, proper evidence, physical evidence*)
- *lies, crime* and *trial* also show how legal neutralisation and cynicism is propagated through analysis of co-text (*women lie, my crime, fair trial, witch trial*)
- Prolific use of 'himpathy' (Manne 2018:197) - describes feelings extended to men perceived to be the unjust victims of a rigged system

Analysis:

Perceived illegitimacy in legal authorities

- The government, the judiciary, and the police / law enforcement are denigrated in the dataset.
- Conspiracy theories around rape quotas were found:

*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)*

- These conspiracy theory discourses, linked to legal cynicism, are linked to increased violence and extremism (Rottweiler & Gill 2022)
- Legal neutralisation present in personal narratives:

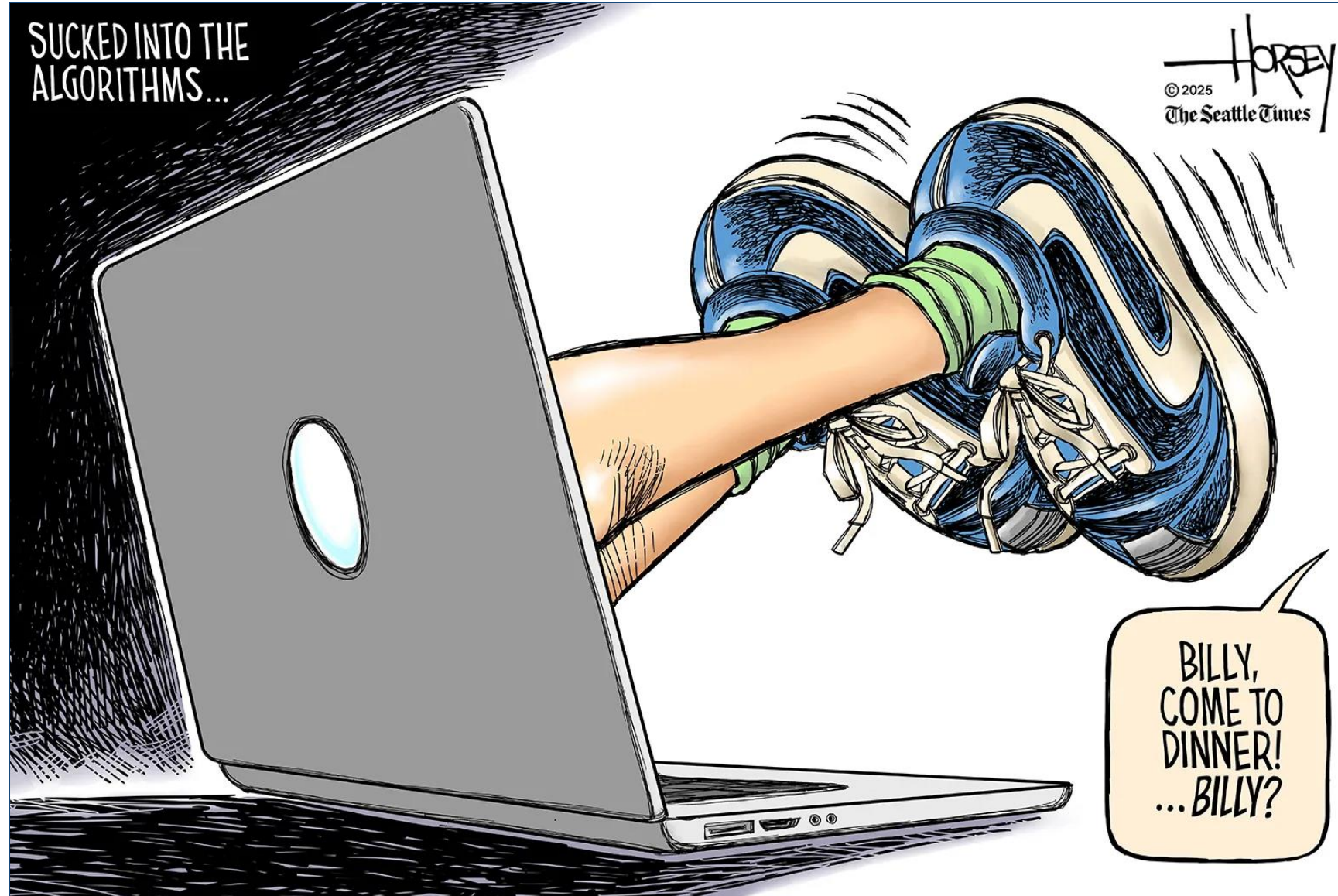
*As stated, specifics couldn't be discussed, but they told my attorney that **law enforcement** was incredibly biased against me to a remarkable degree. (r/MR)*

Normlessness and powerlessness: The loss of patriarchal norms and influence

*[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)*

*We live in a **legit Matriarchy**. Unfortunately, most laws and university codes are written that rape is only classified by penetration (r/MR)*

Discussion and challenges



<https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/the-manosphere-is-feeding-our-boys-poison/>

Discussion and challenges

- Sampson & Bartusch argue that “reducing legal cynicism is a necessary element of delinquency prevention.” (1998: 478). Targeting the legal socialisation process regarding legal cynicism could also tackle online hate and the potential for offline violence against women.
- It is also important to challenge these discourses to tackle hate speech and on/offline misogyny.
- Criminal justice responses: balancing online interventions with offline consciousness-raising?
- 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). Any interventions must also rebuild faith in the legitimacy of the criminal justice process for victims.
- Algorithmic issues (Baker et al 2024). How can we disrupt these? Corpus linguistic methods can help with more targeting interventions and be adapted to specific platforms.

Disrupting the legal socialisation process in MRA discourses?

Pre-bunking strategies

- 'Inoculation' against the rhetoric.
- Delivered through digital literacy classes.
- Taps into psychological resistance to being manipulated.
- Consideration of platforms and method of delivery needed.

Legal transparency

- Changes in reporting on sexual violence cases and criminal justice responses in the media
- Changes in archaic and impenetrable legal language.
- Criminal justice responses: publishing policies on charging decisions, open data initiatives, court transcripts if appropriate.

Legal education

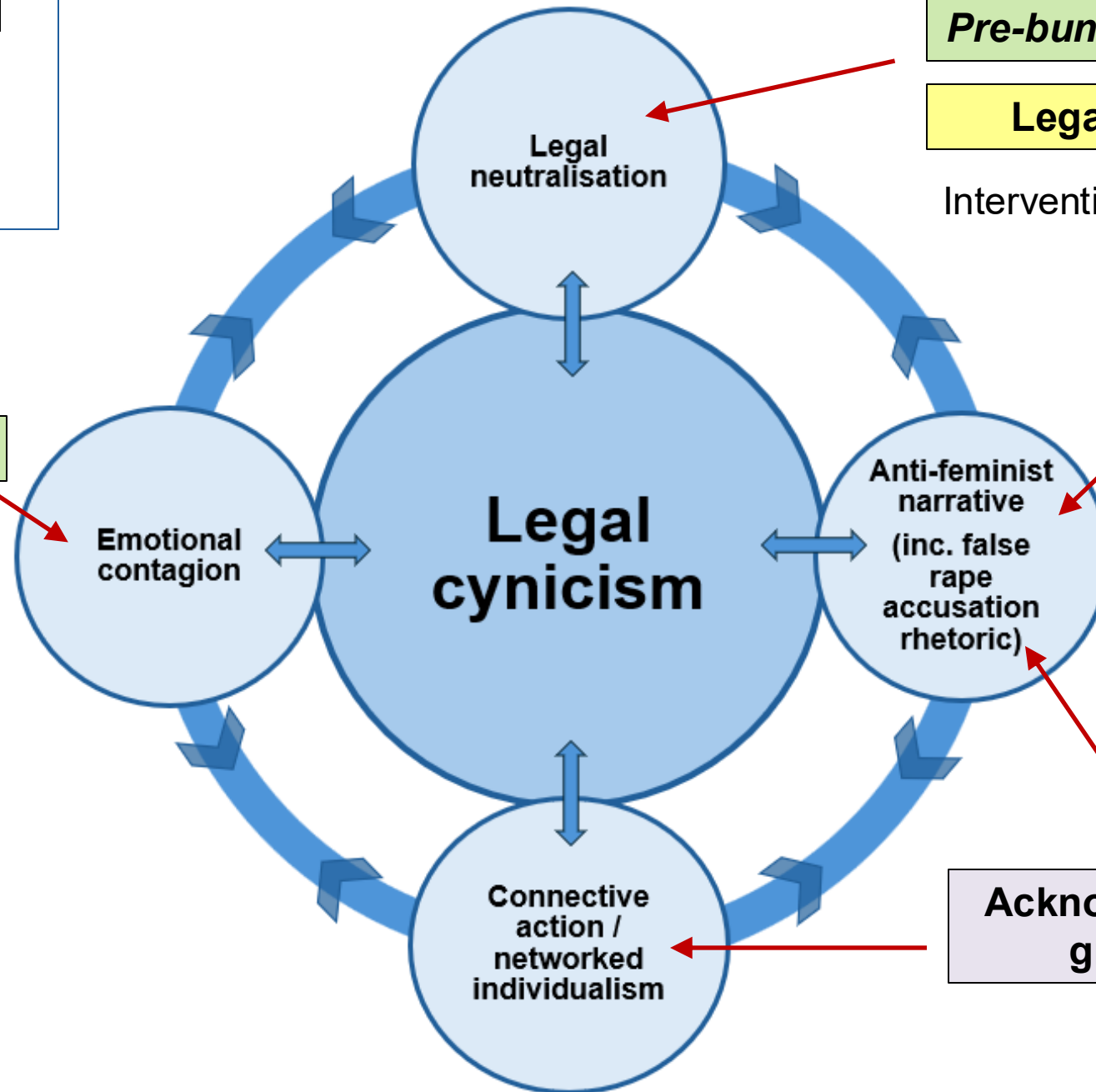
- Integrating more awareness of legal procedure into school curricula.
- Consciousness-raising of strategies: initiatives related to vulnerable witnesses and anonymisation.

Acknowledgement of grievances?

- Gotell & Dutton (2016) and Ebner (2020) argue that denying the grievances in these discourses exacerbates them. Addressing them takes the power out of the victimhood rhetoric.
- Anonymity for defendants in rape cases?
- Problematic?

**Disrupting the legal
socialisation
process in MRA
discourses**

Pre-bunking strategies



Pre-bunking strategies

Legal education

Interventions must be platform specific

Pre-bunking strategies

Legal education

Legal transparency

**Acknowledgement of
grievances?**

- There is already some great work being done in this area.
- However, a more targeted approach could make intervention strategies more effective.

Talk Consent
Education to End Sexual Violence.



GOTPROJECT
GETTING ON TOGETHER
Valuing Diversity : Promoting Integration

**Young
citizens**

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Thank you for listening



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