Memes… More to it than what meets the eye? The use of memes in the alt-right community

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Abstract

Purpose:

Memes are extremely popular in modern society, most people interact with memes in some way. Research has found that memes have a lot of communicative power; memes are involved in advertisements and political discourse. The alt-right, a far-right extremists, often create and post memes on the Politically Incorrect image board on 4chan. This paper aims to understand the affordances of memes and how the alt-right community makes use of the communicative power of memes.

Method:

A qualitative content analysis was conducted on a corpus of memes collected from the Politically Incorrect board on 4chan. A framework was created from existing literature, including the functionalities of memes and the techniques they use. The content analysis aimed to test the initial framework, complement the categories that were developed with new ones, provide practical examples of the functionalities and techniques, and explore the relationship between them

Results:

Memes proved to be very intricate, sometimes serving more than one function. The relationship between the functions and techniques is also complex, the same technique would serve different purposes depending on the function. Techniques were used to increase the efficacy of other techniques. The convincing function was utilised the most and the techniques within the antagonism category were the most prevalent.

Conclusion:

The framework provides insight into the affordances of memes and the techniques that can be used. The framework is the first of its kind, to the best of the author's knowledge, and fills the gap in the research into the affordances of memes. Memes are powerful communicative tools that make use of many techniques to achieve their functions.

1. Introduction

Memes are a concept that most people who frequent the internet are familiar with, colloquially used to signify an image or text that is relatable or funny. Many memes are created daily. Most people would classify them as fun and harmless. However, memes have been used for nefarious purposes in the past. The internet is not a stranger to discrimination, research has shown that online discrimination is something that people have to deal with (Tynes et al., 2004; Tynes et al., 2008; Williams et al., 2016). Memes have also been found to be a source of discriminatory content (Guerrero et al., 2022). But not all controversial memes were made equal. Some of the most controversial and impactful memes have been created by the alt-right.

The alt-right movement is a type of far-right extremism, with a focus on white supremacy and anti-semitism in both online and offline spaces (Valasik and Reid, 2023). One of the first large emergences of the alt-right was at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville in 2017. The attendees of this rally included members of the alt-right and established white supremacy groups, such as the Klu Klux Klan (Blout and Burkart, 2023). During this rally, a man used his car to hit counter-protestors, killing one and injuring many others ("White nationalist rally in Charlottesville", 2017). The alt-right was also involved in the siege of the US Capitol building in 2021 (Newton, 2021).

As previously mentioned, the alt-right is present online and offline. Previously, social media platforms did not take many steps to prevent online extremism, but that has changed, so members of the alt-right have moved to more obscure platforms like 4chan and 8chan (Baele et al., 2023). Platforms like 4chan are well suited for the alt-right as they utilise anonymity, and are much less moderated. While it is not the only platform they use, it is important. Zannettou et al.

(2018) discovered that 4chan's Politically Incorrect board (/pol/) was able to influence the meme ecosystem through its high volume of meme production. 4chan is known for racism and radicalisation, especially in recent years, and /pol/ in particular is considered more concerning than most others (Broyd et al., 2023).

Since /pol/ has such a strong influence on the meme ecosystem, the presence of the alt-right is concerning. The alt-right has already shown that they can take action in the real world, and their use of memes may influence the radicalization of others. Research into the functions of memes is scarce, thus this paper aims to understand the affordances of memes and how the alt-right community makes use of the communicative power of memes. To achieve this, a framework is created, partly informed by current literature, to understand what functions these memes serve, and the techniques that are used to achieve these functions.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Memes

The term meme came into the academic circle in 1976 by Richard Dawkins, he used it to describe the spread of culture from person to person. Memes created discourse in the academic field until the term was eventually abandoned until internet users picked up on the term more recently (Shiffman, 2013). Meme comes from the Greek word Mimema, meaning "Imitate" (Dennett, 1990; Rogers, 2024). Milner (2012, as cited in Grundlingh, 2018) defines an internet meme as "amateur media artifacts, extensively remixed and recirculated by different participants on social media networks." Which is the definition that will be used for this paper. Memes can only exist when a community actively interacts with these artefacts and constantly produces new versions with the poster's added perspective.

For media to be considered a meme, they need to have three attributes: cultural information, reproducibility by imitation, and competition (Shifman, 2013). Cultural information refers to information about an event. This information needs to spread, starting on a small scale; eventually becoming a 'shared social phenomenon'. Reproducibility by imitation relates to how memes are spread. Often by editing the source material to varying degrees or by simply copying the meme. Lastly, competition refers to how suitable the meme is to a certain community, with memes that appeal to the community being selected while the memes that are ill-suited are forgotten. An important aspect of memes is humour. Although memes do not require humour, one of the reasons they gain a lot of traction is their use of humour to convey a message (Miltner, 2018). Humour attracts the viewers and keeps them interested in the contents of the meme.

Memes have a lifecycle. Similar to words that fall out of use in languages, memes are created at a certain point and eventually people stop reproducing the memes. This makes it difficult to determine whether the meme was able to be 'selected' while it is still spreading. On the other hand, cultural information and reproducibility by imitation are easy to determine with little analysis.

2.2 Bigotry in memes

Bigotry is not a foreign concept on the internet. Initially, it was thought that racism would not be prevalent on the internet (Daniels, 2013). This was not the case. While Daniels (2013) explains that the internet has played an important role in the formation and maintenance of some people's racial identities, racism is still prevalent. Bigotry in general is seen in many places on the internet. In the European Union, 80% of the people stated that they have come across hate speech online, while 40% have felt attacked or threatened on social networking sites (Castaño-Pulgarín et al., 2021). Racism, sexism, and anti-semitism can also be seen in online games, even in games aimed at children such as Minecraft and Roblox (Munn, 2023).

Memes are not exempt from this. While memes themselves are neutral, they can spread bigotry even if they are meant to be humorous (Moreno-Almeida, 2021). While many people claim that they are purely jokes and are not meant to be taken seriously, Yoon (2016) argues that they can still have negative effects on those they offend. Memes are difficult to classify as offensive when looking at them from a surface level since they often have both textual and visual elements (Gandhi et al., 2024). When looking at only the textual or visual elements of a meme they may appear harmless, but when the two are combined they could reveal an offensive

message. However, Williams et al. (2016) found that whether a meme is considered offensive is affected by the viewer's personal experiences.

2.3 Functionalities of memes

As established earlier, memes can be a powerful communicative tool. Schulz von Thun developed a simple communication model that, when altered, can be applied to understand the different functionalities of memes. The 'square model' relies on the premise that there is a sender and a receiver for every message. The message has four elements; the content, the information in the message; the appeal, the implied intended action of the receiver; self-revelation, information revealed about the sender; and relationship, how the sender perceives the relationship between receiver and themself (Smith and Mishra, 2010). Memes will typically have all of these elements.

Memes are far less personal than most forms of communication, as they are rarely addressed to a specific individual. For memes, the appeal, self-revelation, and relationship are most often seen in the meme's contents. If certain elements are more prevalent, it is likely intentional. With this, we can assume the memes' functionalities based on the most prevalent elements. An emphasis on self-revelation would be the creator's attempt at expressing their emotions with others. An emphasis on appeal would be the creator's attempt at convincing others. An emphasis on the relationship would be the creator's attempt at maintaining or altering the relationship between the audience and the creator.

2.3.1 Masking

This function relates to the content of the message itself. Masking is when the memes attempt to hide or reduce the severity of controversial statements. Memes rely on cultural

information, and a large part of what makes memes funny (even understandable) is the context that allows the audience to 'complete' the joke (Way, 2019). This reliance on context enables the audience to form different interpretations, based on the information they possess. Imperato et al. (2023) explain that irony is a prevalent trait across memes, allowing them to convey controversial messages in a light-hearted and humorous manner. This is the basis of the masking function.

2.3.2 Convincing

While memes can be images without a message, memes may have an agenda or message. In recent years, memes have been used as an asset for increasing publicity, ranging from advertisements to political campaigns (Kulkarni, 2017; Murray et al., 2014). Since memes allow the creator to add their influence to the content, they can include content that is meant to be persuasive. Aristotle suggested that successful persuasion was reliant on three components: the sender's credibility, a reasonable argument, and the emotions of the recipient(s) (Miceli et al., 2006). While the poster's credibility is difficult to prove from the meme itself, it is easy to suggest a reasonable argument, while also appealing to the readers' emotions.

As stated previously, proving credibility is a challenge for the poster of the meme. However, it is still possible to increase the perceived credibility of the poster. People are more likely to view the source as credible if the content of the message is in line with their beliefs (Housholder and LaMarre, 2014). In the case where the poster of the meme is known, they can seem more credible by posting content that is considered favourable. Additionally, since memes are typically shared on social media platforms, they have another avenue to improve their

persuasiveness. Common methods for gauging engagement, such as liking, commenting, and sharing also aid in persuasion (Wasike, 2022).

2.3.3 Bonding

One of the main attributes of memes is how they are constantly being remixed and uploaded. Individuals continually rehashing and creating memes about a certain topic can foster a community via a shared social identity that is visible through the contents of the memes (Pearce et al., 2016). A strong contributor to this shared social identity is the concept of a shared enemy. People are likely to form positive relationships with others when they share a common enemy (De Jaegher, 2021). Memes that utilize this typically attempt to ridicule or mock an entity or demographic. Furthermore, stereotypes of certain demographics can be utilized to solidify the identity of the shared enemy. Through interaction with other like-minded individuals, a community may form. These bonds are further strengthened when the community reaches homogeneity, where the contents of the memes are aligned with the community's beliefs, creating an echo chamber where they are not exposed to beliefs and ideas that challenge their own (Del Vicario et al., 2016).

Most memes inherently possess a feature that increases their effectiveness as a bonding tool: Humour. Research has shown that humour is an important factor in building a connection with others (Kirkby‑Geddes et al. 2013, Mathies et al., 2016). Since memes are generally humorous, most memes strengthen the bonds between the audience and the poster of the meme. However, it is not guaranteed that the audience will find the meme humorous. For this to happen the meme needs to evoke a positive emotional reaction (Sliter et al., 2017). Whether the meme

was successful in building a relationship between the audience and the poster relies on the meme being perceived as humorous.

2.3.4 Expressing emotion

The element of self-revelation in memes can be varied. Since memes can be made about any topic, memes can reveal the creator's involvement in a certain topic, their pet peeves, or even their political alignment. Beyond this, memes can be used with the distinct purpose of expressing the poster's emotions. For example, the meme character, Pepe the Frog, has been used by people to express their own emotions (Mozdeika, 2023). In these cases, Pepe's facial expressions are altered to match the expressions of the poster. Since Pepe is a fictional character, facial features can be altered beyond what would be humanly possible, allowing for increased flexibility of the emotions that are intended to be portrayed.

Beyond this, memes can take the form of GIFs where the emotions that are being expressed are in a video format. Instead of an image, GIFs display a set of images in a loop, resulting in a video without any audio. GIFs have been used since the 20th century, however, around 2011 GIFs started to be used as a response instead of text (Eppink, 2014). These GIFs would start to be used to react to situations, thus being referred to as reaction memes. Miltner and Highfield (2017) explain that these GIFs place importance on features, such as gestures, and therefore can be an effective tool for expressing emotions.

2.4 Techniques used by the memes

This section is dedicated to the approaches that memes could use to achieve these functions. One technique that could be used, specifically by the alt-right, is the dog whistle. A dog whistle is the use of coded language to hide messages, only understood by those who

understand the code (Beacken, 2024; Smaldino, 2019; Wells et al., 2024). The name is derived from physical dog whistles, which when used produce a sound at a frequency that can be heard by dogs but not by humans. Dog whistles provide a sense of security as only the intended audience will understand the true message. Filimon and Ivănescu (2024) state that dog whistles have been used for a long period in politics, affecting the policy on housing, education, and immigration, among others. They provide further affirmation to the people who understand the coded messages.

Another technique that memes could utilise is the creation of a shared enemy. Friendships can be formed and maintained based on a shared enemy (Rambaran et al., 2015). Rambaran et al. (2015) found that Friendships could be formed from the disliking of the same person, friends typically agree on who they dislike, and people are more likely to not like friends of people they dislike. Since the alt-right is a white supremacist and anti-semitic group, they will likely target people of colour. To create a shared enemy, the content would have to contain a method of vilifying the group (enemy). As memes are diverse, they can utilise textual elements or visual elements, such as the use of slurs or the implication of mental or physical inferiority (Hermida and Santos, 2023).

RQ: What functions do memes serve in the alt-right community and what techniques do they use to fulfill these functions

3. Method

3.1 Research design

To understand how the alt-right uses memes, a qualitative content analysis was conducted of the memes used in an online community. The content analysis aimed to test the initial framework (consisting of functionalities and techniques), complement the categories that were developed with new ones, provide practical examples of the functionalities and techniques, and explore the relationship between them. The research was approved by the ethics committee of the faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences of the University of Twente (Request nr: 240927).

3.2 Corpus

The memes were collected from the /pol (politically incorrect) imageboard on the anonymous imageboard website 4chan.org. The /pol imageboard was chosen for its notoriety, as it is known for fostering alt-right ideologies. Given that it is an imageboard, a variety of memes could be expected in the posts. For memes to be included in the corpus, they must engage in controversial topics, including racism, xenophobia, homophobia, antisemitism, and misogyny. The corpus consists of 94 memes. Data collection took place from 07/05/2024 to 03/06/2024. 4chan frequently prunes posts as most boards can have up to 10 pages, due to this posts are only available for a limited time. This page limit and frequent pruning meant that the memes had to be collected over a longer period rather than all at once.

3.3 Coding scheme

A coding scheme was developed. The starting point was the framework described in Chapter 2. This was complemented with new (sub)categories that emerged bottom-up from analyzing the corpus. Memes were first classified according to their functionalities (masking, convincing, bonding, and expressing emotion). In the coding, memes could be assigned to more than one functionality. After that, the memes were given codes reflecting the techniques they used to perform their function(s). The codebook started with a shortlist of techniques that were already mentioned in the literature, which were then complemented with new techniques based on a thorough analysis of each meme. The codebook was constantly updated to include new techniques that were observed and the memes were reviewed multiple times to ensure that all applicable techniques were included.

3.3 Validity and reliability

The normal procedure to ensure validity and reliability in content-analytic research is by using a second coder who independently codes part of the items. The level of inter-coder agreement forms an indication of the extent to which the coding is free from personal bias. Due to the eclectic nature of many of the memes, this approach was not feasible in this study. It took me a lot of effort to gain access to the meaning of memes and assign codes to them, with a clear learning curve throughout the project. It would be impossible to find a second coder who could use the codebook with a similar level of inside knowledge. Therefore, a different procedure was chosen. To ensure, demonstrate, and be transparent about the validity and reliability of the research, considerations for assigning codes to memes were all made explicit in a separate file.

<div align="center">**4. Results**</div>

In this chapter, an overview will be given of the results of the content analysis. First, the functionalities of the memes will be discussed and exemplified. After that, an overview will be given of the techniques that were used. In the final section, the relation between functionalities and techniques will be analyzed.

4.1 Functionalities of the memes

The functionality of the meme entails what the meme is trying to accomplish with the message they are sending. The functionalities are not mutually exclusive as memes are versatile in the messages they can send. See Table 1 for how often each functionality was found.

Table 1

Frequency of each functionality

| Functionality	Frequency
Bonding	30
Convincing	42
Expressing emotion	37
Masking	10

4.1.1 Bonding

The memes identified as bonding are meant to solidify the bonds within the community. These memes often reinforce the moral and intellectual superiority of the community. Bonding as a functionality appeared 31 times. Figure 1 illustrates the moral superiority. The meme references Schrodinger's cat thought experiment to highlight that immigrants are stealing their

jobs, and once they get those jobs, they are lazy and do not perform their tasks. Firstly, the meme uses the word "stealing", accusing immigrants of unlawfully taking jobs from the natives. The meme explicitly states that immigrants do not perform their duties well, implying that natives are better employees as they have a better work ethic. To reinforce this, in the meme, we can see a person drinking out of a bottle on some steps. This person is meant to represent the immigrant who is too lazy to work. This meme is targeted towards people who share the sentiment that immigrants are stealing their jobs. The meme suggests that immigrants are morally inferior to the natives, suggesting that the natives need to stick together.

Figure 1

An example of bonding
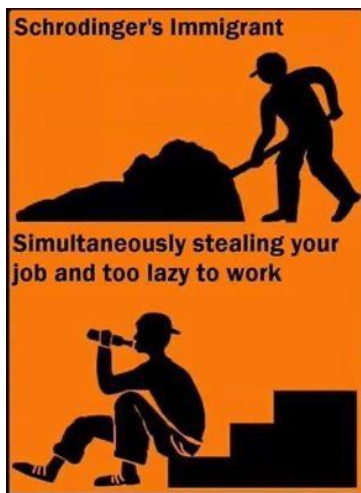
4.1.2 Convincing

Convincing are memes that attempt to convince others of a certain viewpoint. Unlike masking, they do not attempt to hide any malicious intent. Often explicitly expressing sexist, homophobic and/or racist views. Convincing was the functionality that was identified most frequently, with 41 memes using it.

The meme in Figure 2 is an example of the convincing function. It cites Polemon, ancient Roman royalty, to push the idea that people with blonde hair are savages. The meme states that people with darker hair are superior, by deeming people with blonde hair as unintelligent and evil. This is a common theme, the memes often attempt to claim superiority by slandering another group or individual. The characters in the meme reflect this, the man with blond hair appears unintelligent indicated by the drool while the man with dark hair is depicted as attractive with a well-kept appearance.

Figure 2

An example of convincing

Blond and whitish hair, like that of Scythians, signifies stupidity, evilness, and savageness.
-Polemon, Physiognomica, 8.11

The memes that attempt to convince the audience use many different approaches. The meme in Figure 2 uses the pseudoscience Physiognomy, quoting the ancient Greek book Phsyciognomica. However, there are also instances where the meme slanders a group, by making them appear as savages. Figure 3 provides a good example of this, the meme uses a caricature of an Indian and Pakistani man arguing with each other, threatening the other's family, as well as

white women, with sexual violence. The use of broken English alongside the vulgar language implies savagery. The side the sentences are on signifies the person speaking, using this we see that the Indian man is on the left and the Pakistani man is on the right. The meme also indicates that the Indian man is covered in faeces seen by the brown spots in his hair. This is a reference to the stereotype that Indians defecate on the streets. This meme reinforces the stereotype that South Asians are savages. The meme is meant to warn others about this potential threat to the community.

Figure 3

Another example of convincing

4.1.3 Expressing emotion

Another function that is very important in the alt-right community is to be able to convey their emotions to other members of the community. Memes that were used to express emotions were found 37 times, second to convincing. In the community, the members often attempt to express their approval (or disapproval) with memes that reflect their feelings. Mostly using characters with different facial features depending on what they are trying to express. The meme

in Figure 4 was used to express the poster's disapproval of the current situation. This is identified by different characteristics of the facial expression. Firstly, the lips are elongated, with the sides slightly angled downwards. Since the lips are only slightly angled downwards we can infer that the emotion is not sadness but rather disappointment. Secondly, the slightly raised eyebrows imply an element of surprise, further confirming that the character is expressing disappointment.

Figure 4

An example of expressing emotion

In the meme in Figure 5, a different approach to expressing emotions can be seen. The meme uses a scene from the film The Ballad of Buster Scruggs. where the character is at the gallows waiting to be hanged and he asks if it is the other character's first time doing this. Unlike the meme in Figure 4, this meme makes use of both the facial expression and the accompanying text. The character's face is calm for someone at the gallows, waiting to be hanged. To reinforce his calm demeanour, he interacts with another character who is also at the gallows. He asks if it is their first time, implying that he has been in this position before. This meme was used as a reaction to another person's plight, and the poster indicates that they have been in a similar situation and empathises with them.

Figure 5

Another example of expression emotions

4.1.4 Masking

Masking is when a meme attempts to hide or reduce the impact of a controversial statement or ideology using humour. Masking was the least popular functionality of the 4, with 10 memes utilising it. The meme in Figure 6 attempts to normalise antisemitism and islamophobia. The meme uses the format of a text message, given the use of emojis and colloquial language it can be inferred that this is a conversation between friends. The message starts by saying "Jews be like", which is reminiscent of the 'point of view' format that many memes utilise. In the message, they use the word 'kike', a derogatory term used to refer to Jewish people. The word is used in a variation of the phrase 'my brother in Christ', where it would be replacing the word brother. Reducing the impact of the word as the phrase implies a close relation to the person in question. Furthermore, the person sending the message does not refute the claim that Muslim neighbourhoods are dangerous. Instead, they indirectly agree, claiming that Jews are responsible for the immigration of Muslims to Europe. The meme does not make use of aggressive language to spread their thoughts, rather they make use of humour,

popular phrases, and common meme formats to normalise the message being sent. Masking the severity of the content of the message.

Figure 6

An example of masking

4.1.5 The co-occurrence of functionalities

As stated previously, memes serve multiple functions. Table 2 shows the co-occurrence of functionalities. Out of the 94 memes, 27 served two functions. Only one meme had more than two functions, these were bonding, expressing emotions, and convincing. The most common combination of functionalities was bonding and convincing with 11 memes serving both functions, followed by bonding and expressing emotions with 8 memes. Bonding had the most co-occurrences, with 20 memes, followed by convincing with 18 memes. Expressing emotions and masking had the lowest co-occurrences, the former with 11 memes and the latter with 4 memes.

Table 2

The co-occurrence of functionalities

Functionality	Masking	Convincing	Bonding	Expressing emotion
Masking				
Convincing	3			
Bonding	1	11		
Expressing emotion	1	4	8	

Figure 7 displays a meme that uses both convincing and bonding as functionalities. The meme states that Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin have the same goals. The meme wants to convince people that supporting one of them means you should also support the other as they have the same interests. The meme states that they are both against Nazism and paedophilia, which most can agree are bad. The inclusion of "globohomo", referring to the increasing acceptance of the LGBTQ+, is likely to attract people with homophobic ideologies. The meme strengthens the bonds of the people who support one but not the other.

Figure 7

A meme with both convincing and bonding functionality

4.2 Techniques used in the memes

Multiple techniques were used by the memes to fulfil their function. These techniques were grouped into categories based on how they affect the meme. There is a total of 29 techniques, grouped into 7 categories (See Table 3). The stereotype (visual) is the only technique that is present in two categories, all other techniques are present in only one category.

Table 3

Frequency of the types of techniques used

Type of Technique	Number of Techniques	Frequency
Antagonism	5	115
Deception	2	11
Emotional	3	24
Literary	5	39
Rational	3	13
Rational with fallacy	8	19
Visual	4	89

4.2.1 Antagonism

The techniques in this category are aimed at attacking an individual or group by different methods. Out of the seven types of techniques, antagonism was used the most in the observed memes. This category comprises 5 techniques: ridicule, shared enemy, scapegoat, and visual and behavioural stereotypes. These techniques were observed 116 times (see Table 4).

Table 4

Techniques in the antagonism category

| Technique	Frequency
Ridicule	28
Scapegoat	4
Shared enemy	45
Stereotype (Behaviour)	18
Stereotype (Visual)	21
Total	116

The technique most frequently used out of these was shared enemy. The meme creates an enemy that the community can get together and target. In this way, it is similar to the scapegoat technique, where the meme blames a group or individual for something negative that has happened. They can often achieve this by reinforcing negative stereotypes about the target, this can be both behavioural and/or visual stereotypes. Behavioural stereotypes are widely held but fixed and oversimplified ideas of how a certain group behaves, while visual stereotypes focus on the appearance of a group. Lastly, the ridicule technique is when an individual or group is disrespected in the meme.

The meme in Figure 8 is a good example of most of these techniques being used. The image was used to express the emotions of the poster, and the text is the situation that they are reacting to. In the text, the poster claims that the reduction in the quality of Boeing Airlines is due to their black employees. The poster used stereotypes to introduce the idea that black people

are unintelligent, used an anecdote to reinforce this, and reached the conclusion that black

people's incompetence is the cause of poor quality control from Boeing Airlines.

Figure 8

Example meme that contains techniques within the Antagonism category
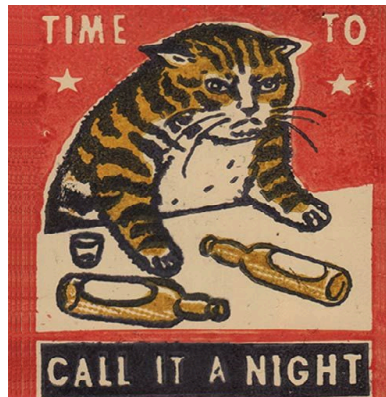
>be me
>air maintainer for big leaf airliner
>been doing this since I was 18. 5 years military, 8 years civilian
>airline needs diversity
>nog gets hired
>we wuz aviayshun n sheeeiiiit
>forgets tools inside the aircraft, closes panels, tells no one
>drops shit in the engines, takes no reponsibility
>we task nigger with sweeping hangar, holding flashlights and handing out tools
>he can't even do that holyfuck
>this guy is actually retarded
>boss is a DEI pajeeta

>anon you need to let Jamal do more hands on work
>fucknofuckthis
>nigger gets tasked with a job that takes half a day
>I see him doing nothing in the break room 2 hours later
>sheeeeiiiiitt anon, I'm already done
>go inspect
>fuel lines loose, oil lines not connected, small personal pocket flashlight inside the engine
>takes pictures for higher ups
>Pajeeta not amused
>"you should mentor Jamal rather than bringing it higher up, anon"
>accused of doing a rayciss
>sensitivity training
>2 more niggers get hired a week later
I should move to Europe before I lose my mind

Note. The meme in this figure is the cat, the text is what the poster of the meme typed along with

it.

4.2.2 Deception

Memes that are present in this category contain untrue or misleading information. There are two techniques within this category: False quote and dog whistle. These techniques were observed 11 times (see Table 5).

Table 5

Techniques in the deception category

Technique	Frequency
Dog whistle	9
False quote	2
Total	11

The false quote technique is when the meme claims that a person has said something, while they haven't. The meme in Figure 9 claims that Joe Biden has expressed that Serbia and Serbians need to be eradicated. I was unable to locate any source for this quote besides hearsay. It is important to note that in the 1990s, Joe Biden had shown support for aggressive action by NATO in the Balkan regions. The meme uses this fact and attempts to accomplish one of two things. Slandering Joe Biden by accusing him of supporting the genocide of Serbians, or portraying Serbians as the enemy by claiming that the current president of the United States of America had previously expressed his distaste for Serbians.

Figure 9

Example meme with a false quote
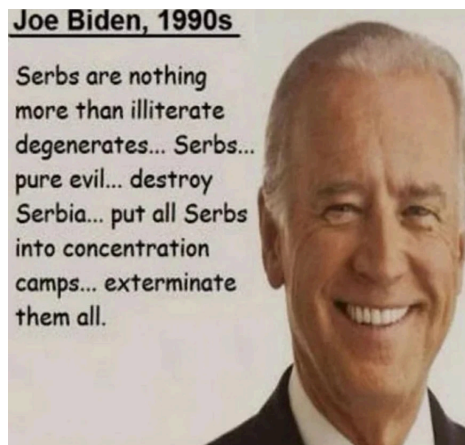
The next technique is a dog whistle. This technique involves the use of language that is only known to people within the community, appearing harmless to people who are not aware of the hidden meaning. The meme in Figure 10 has the popular syrup brand that had to rebrand in late 2020 due to the mascot being a female slave archetype. The brand was quite popular in American households, and it caused an uproar when they decided to rebrand. The post could be referring to how *they* (liberals most likely) had taken away something that many people had grown up with. However, the meme could have a second meaning. Considering that /pol is home to many white supremacists, it is possible that they are not referring to the syrup, but rather to slavery. In this case, the syrup is symbolic of slavery, and like the syrup, people decided it was inappropriate and no longer accepted. Identifying dog whistles proves challenging as there may be many within the community that the researchers were unable to detect, regardless, they are a phenomenon that is present in some memes used by the alt-right community.

Figure 10

Example meme with a dog whistle

4.2.3 Emotional

These memes are meant to trigger an emotional response from the audience. There are 3 techniques in this category: relatability, sympathy, and farming sympathy. These techniques were observed 24 times (see Table 6). Relatability is when a meme attempts to be relatable to the audience, often done by referencing something that many people have experienced. Sympathy is when the meme expresses sympathy for an individual or group, similarly, farming sympathy is when the creator of the meme wants the audience to feel sympathetic towards them.

Table 6

Techniques in the emotional category

Technique	Frequency
Farming sympathy	7
Relatability	13
Sympathy	4
Total	24

Figure 11 uses relatability and sympathy, the meme is meant to be relatable to people who received the same treatment from their parents, who are likely baby boomers. The meme accuses baby boomers of bad parenting which leads to their children becoming NEETs (Not in employment, education, or training). The meme uses the baby boomers as a scapegoat for their and sympathises with the children as they are just victims of their circumstances.

Figure 11

Example meme with the relatability and sympathy technique
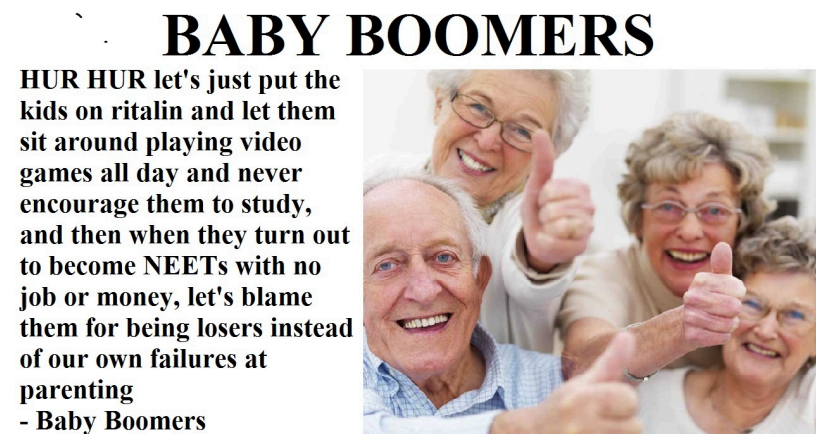
4.2.4 Literary

These memes use literary techniques to support their message. There are 5 techniques in this category: hyperbole, metaphor, misleading language, personification, and vulgar language. These techniques were seen 43 times in the memes (see Table 7).

Table 7

Techniques in the literary category

Technique	Frequency
Hyperbole	6
Metaphor	9
Misleading language	2
Personification	4
Vulgar language	18
Total	39

The most frequent technique in this category was the use of vulgar language. This includes profanities that are more commonly accepted and profanities that are widely considered inappropriate. The meme in Figure 12 shows how different groups of people interact with various cryptids (animals whose existence is disputed like the Yeti or Bigfoot). The American resort to violence, calling the cryptid a "sonovabitch" (read as 'son of a bitch'). The cryptid replies by saying it will 'fuck the corpse' after killing him. In this case, the language suggests strong hostility between the two groups. The Bremmies (people from Bremen, a German city) handle the cryptids by proposing that they receive oral sex from each other, which the cryptid agrees to.

Figure 12

An example of vulgar language

Europeans With Cryptids

What whimsical creatures! Let's invite them in for tea!

Oui! Thankyou! We'd love some tea! Let us celebrate!

Americans With Cryptids

This is the last forest you're haunting you sonovabitch

*Lmao, I'm gonna f*ck your corpse when I'm done.*

Bremmies with Cryptids

I'll suck your dick if you suck mine.

Deal!

Metaphor is a technique used to compare two situations, it differentiates itself from the comparison technique as it is meant figuratively, rather than making a literal comparison. The meme in Figure 13 features a metaphor. It compares a Ukrainian person's brain to faeces, while untrue, the comparison is meant to call Ukrainians unintelligent. Hyperbole is the use of exaggeration in the meme to make something seem more significant. Personification is the technique where non-human characters represent an individual or group. This technique is used in the same way mascots are, the difference lies in the fact that mascots are strictly based on Pepe and the Wojaks, while personification is for other characters. Misleading language is the rephrasing of information or events to make their points seem more reasonable

Figure 13

An example of a metaphor

4.2.5 Rational

These memes use logical reasoning to perform their functions. This category consists of three techniques: comparison, exposing logical fallacies, and exposing double standards. These techniques were seen 13 times in the memes (see Table 8).

Table 8

Techniques in the rational category

Technique	Frequency
Comparison	7
Exposing double standards	2
Exposing logical fallacies	4
Total	13

Comparison is when the meme compares two situations to point out similarities or differences. Similarly, exposing double standards refers to when the meme explicitly highlights two situations that are held to different standards when they are similar and should be held to the same standard. Comparison and exposing double standards differ in their end goal, comparison is meant to highlight differences, while exposing double standards highlights the mistreatment of something. Exposing logical fallacies is when the meme highlights invalid reasoning that may have gone unnoticed. The meme in Figure 14 exposes the hasty generalisation fallacy. One person claims that the owner of the web archiving service archive.is Jewish, then others conclude that the entire team behind archive.is supports Israel. Immediately disregarding the beliefs of the rest of the staff, and generalising that all Jews support Israel.

Figure 14

Example meme that exposes a logical fallacy

4.2.6 Rational with fallacy

These memes contain flawed reasoning to perform their functions. There are 8 techniques in this category, and these techniques were detected 19 times (see Table 9). These techniques are based on common logical fallacies.

Table 9

Techniques in the rational with fallacy category

Technique	Frequency
Ad hominem	3
Bandwagon effect	3
Either-or	1
Hasty generalisation	5
Non sequitur fallacy	2
Red Herring	1
Slippery slope	2
Strawman argumentation	2
Total	19

The most prominent technique in this category is hasty generalisation. This is when a small sample or exceptional cases are used to draw conclusions. The meme in Figure 15 is an example of the latter, the meme is a GIF in which the man is running. He appears very athletic given his physique. The poster asks whether it is a smart decision to start a race war with black people. This question was rhetorical as the man in the GIF is more fit than the average person, it was intended to make people reconsider starting a race war. The poster implies that all black people are athletic, using the man in the GIF as the basis for this assumption.

Figure 15

Example meme that uses hasty generalisation

Text: Do y'all SERIOUSLY want to
start a race war?

Note. The meme in this figure is the image, the text is what the poster of the meme typed along with it.

The ad hominem technique is another technique that was used frequently. When a meme uses this technique, it does not try to refute the points made by the opposing party, instead, it opts to attack the person's character or actions to ruin their credibility. Figure 16 displays this accurately. The meme was used as a reply to another post where someone was supporting Jewish people. The meme completely disregards any points made by the original post, claiming that their opinion is invalid due to their belief.

Figure 16

An example of the ad hominem technique

Thanks for sharing your opinion

but you're Jewish

The next technique, the bandwagon effect, was detected as frequently as the ad hominem technique. This technique bases the validity of an argument on the number of people who agree with or believe in it. The memes that used this technique did not explicitly state that many people hold the same belief, rather they imply that it is a commonly held belief. In Figure 17 we see that the meme uses the format of household decorations, similar to those that have statements like 'live, laugh, love'. These decorations generally contain motivational messages, and due to this are quite popular. This meme replaces the motivational message with a message that has anti-immigration ideologies. The use of this format implies that this is a message that can be seen in many households.

Figure 17

An example of the bandwagon effect

The next techniques were rarely seen in the memes. The non-sequitur (a Latin expression meaning "it does not follow") technique is when a meme reaches a conclusion that is not logically supported by the information or events that precede it. It is similar to the slippery slope technique, which entails a small step leading to a chain of events resulting in an undesirable outcome without any proof of such a chain reaction occurring. The red herring technique is the deliberate attempt to distract the audience by introducing an unrelated issue to oppose the original topic. The strawman argumentation functions similarly to the red herring technique. When the strawman argumentation is utilised, the opposition's argument is distorted to make it easier to refute. In contrast, a new -unrelated- issue is presented when the red herring technique is used. Lastly, the either-or technique. This technique implies that there are only two options or sides when there are more.

4.2.7 Visual

The memes use different types of visual elements to support the message. This category has four techniques: depictions of violence, mascot, visual creativity, and visual stereotypes. These techniques were observed 89 times (see Table 10).

Table 10

Techniques in the visual category

Technique	Frequency
Depictions of violence	9
Mascot	43
Visual Creativity	15
Stereotype (Visual)	22
Total	89

The most frequent technique used in this category was mascot. This technique is the inclusion of the community's mascots in the memes. Figure 16 is an example of one of these mascots; Pepe, a frog with human features that is often used in memes. Pepe's appearance is altered to serve different purposes in the memes. He often displays different emotions or feelings that the poster wants to portray. The Pepe with the dunce hat in Figure 16 is crying. This is indicative that the pepe is being punished for something. However, the child-like nature of the punishment and reaction implies that the reason they were being punished was quite light.

While Pepe generally has the same defining features (which can be seen in Figure 18), big eyes, green skin, and brown lips; he can also be altered more in some extreme cases. Figure 19 shows some heavily altered versions of Pepe. The Pepe on the left in Figure 19 loses

cartoon-like features in favour of a more realistic depiction. This Pepe has better-defined

wrinkles and facial features, and most notably, he removes the iconic lips to reveal another set of

lips that are the same colour as his skin. The Pepe on the right of Figure 19 was given more

human facial features, with human eyes and a human mouth. However, the resolution of the

image was reduced to the point where these features are almost indiscernible. But it is still

possible to determine that Pepe is expressing shock and disgust. The eyes look forward and the

mouth is open but the jaw is clenched. The poster used this Pepe to express their disapproval of

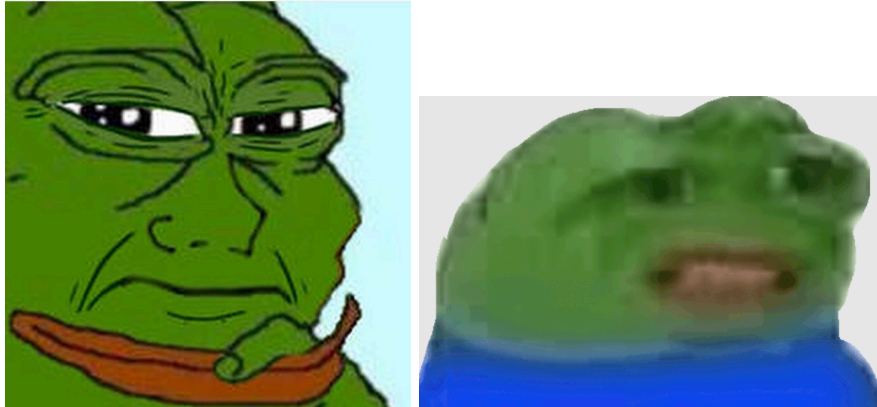the content from another community member.

Figure 18

Pepe the frog

Figure 19

Heavily altered Pepes

Pepe is not the only mascot that is used by this community. The Wojak characters are used frequently. While Pepe is one character, Wojaks are more reminiscent of archetypes of characters. Different Wojaks have different connotations. Figure 14 (from the Rational sub-section) displays two different types of Wojaks, the Chad Wojak on the left and the non-playable character (NPC) Wojak on the right. The Chad Wojak embodies the perfect individual, often used as the protagonist in memes. In contrast, the NPC Wojak is meant to represent people who are unable to think for themselves, relying on others to form opinions for them. Figure 20 is another example of the Chad Wojak. In this meme, the Chad Wojak states that the other Wojak's opinion is worthless due to them being overweight. This meme uses the Chad archetype to imply that this line of reasoning is acceptable. The Wojak archetypes are used to imprint certain characteristics on the people that they represent.

Figure 20

Different Wojaks interacting with each other

You think my opinion is worthless because I'm obese?

Yes.

Visual stereotypes are the inclusion of stereotypes of the appearance of a group of people. The meme in Figure 21 uses the negative stereotype that South Asians have bad body odour. In the meme, the South Asian men are wearing a tilaka (the markings on their foreheads) and have green lines above them to indicate bad body odour. The meme also includes faeces with the same tilaka, equating the South Asian men to faeces. Furthermore, they are also depicted as being unintelligent, as seen by the drool coming out of their mouths. Figure 20 also makes use of visual stereotypes by giving the overweight Wojak sweat stains, indicating profuse sweating. A common stereotype of overweight people.

Figure 21

*An example of visual stereotypes*

Visual creativity is the use of editing to introduce visual aspects to the meme to increase its depth. The meme in Figure 22 makes good use of visual elements to spread its message. The meme aims to prove that trans people are delusional by implying that once they die, they will be identified by their sex assigned at birth. While the meme does not include transphobic language, many visual elements in this meme suggest this. The setting is that of an educational institution where they are studying anatomy, as seen on the blackboard in the background. The cadaver they are analysing represents a transgender person, following the stereotype that members of the LGBTQ+ dye their hair unnatural colours, in this case, purple. The flip chart shows a list of indicators to determine a person's sex, such as reproductive organs, cranial shape, and shoulder width, among others. This pushes the idea that transgender people's efforts to appear as their chosen identity are in vain, as they still have indicators of their original sex. Furthermore, it appears that the cadaver had died of asphyxiation, indicated by the purple tongue, the bloodshot and rolled-back eyes, and the tears on their face. Implying that the person had taken their own life by hanging. This is indicative of another stereotype, that transgender people are mentally unstable and are more likely to commit suicide. Given that this meme pushes a transphobic

narrative, and that the flip chart indicates that the cadaver is male. It can be assumed that the person identified as female while alive. However, only the genitalia are covered, but the breasts remain uncovered. Since it is acceptable for men to reveal their chests, but it is inappropriate for women, they are disrespecting the person's chosen identity.

Figure 22

An example of visual creativity
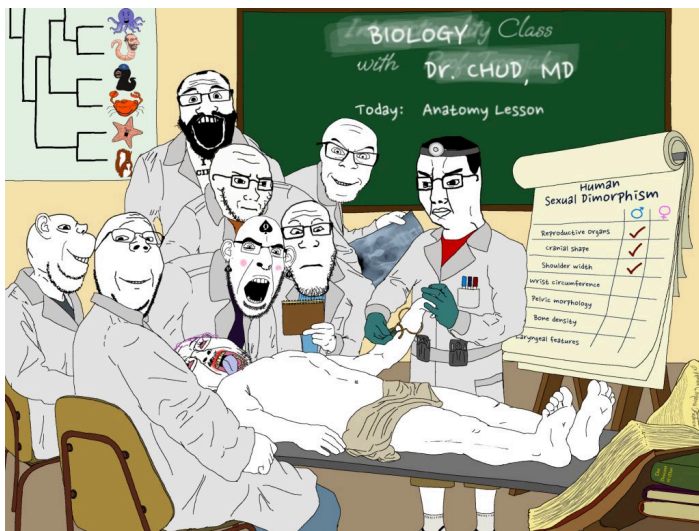
The last and least frequently used technique is depictions of violence. This is when the meme includes violent acts towards another individual or group. The meme in Figure 23 was originally a GIF showing the entire kick in slow motion. The meme uses the kick to symbolise the damage feminism is causing to society (indicated by the bottle labelled Civilization falling) but also to women. Figure 23 is tame compared to some of the other depictions of violence that were seen. Figure 24 contains a graphic depiction of a Jewish Wojak hanging from a noose. The Wojak in this meme features bloodshot- rolled-back eyes with tears running down their face and a blue tongue, the same as the cadaver in Figure 22.

Figure 23

An example of depictions of violence

Figure 24

A Jewish Wojak hanging

4.2.8 The co-occurrence of techniques

One meme can use many different techniques to achieve its function. Often the efficacy of techniques increases when other techniques are incorporated with them. The meme in Figure 25 uses three techniques, relatability, shared enemy, and vulgar language. The meme uses the opening scene from the cartoon The Powerpuff Girls, to illustrate the creation of the perfect woman. In the cartoon, professor Utonium attempts to create the perfect girls by adding sugar, spice, and everything nice. The professor proceeds with his experiment until he accidentally spills a chemical into the concoction known as chemical X, which is expected to ruin the results. Fortunately, the girls came out fine and now have superpowers. The meme replaces the original intended ingredients with sex appeal and chemical X is replaced by other features such as Jews and the LGBT, among others.

Figure 25

A meme where the techniques complement each other

The use of the Powerpuff Girls opening creates a sense of nostalgia for people who have watched the show, making them feel a connection to the meme. The addition of sex appeal to create the perfect woman will attract straight males, the majority of users on 4Chan. Since the meme has established an emotional connection with the audience by being relatable, the audience is much more likely to be accepting of what comes next. The meme creates enemies by claiming that these people or features ruin the perfect woman. Since the audience already created a connection to the meme, it is easier to agree that those features would ruin the perfect woman.

4.3 Relation between functionalities and techniques

Depending on the function of the meme, different techniques need to be used. The antagonism techniques were the most popular for the masking, convincing, and bonding functions. Expressing emotions is the only function that uses visual techniques more frequently (see Appendix).

4.3.1 Convincing

The convincing function is meant to persuade the audience of a certain view or ideology. It is the function with the most techniques used from every category, except the emotional category. The technique that was used most for this was the creation of a shared enemy from the antagonism category, the technique was used 27 times. This technique found most use in memes that are anti-immigration. They portray all immigrants as harmful to their society, and therefore immigration needs to end. This task becomes easier to accomplish when using other techniques, such as stereotypes and hasty generalisation techniques. Both stereotype techniques and hasty generalisation techniques serve the same purpose when used to create a shared enemy for the convincing functionality. They use generalisations of an entire group to create reasons for the

discrimination of that group. In the process of using these generalisations, they ridicule the group in question.

Convincing is the functionality that makes the most use of deception techniques, specifically the dog whistle technique. Since the only people who would understand the dog whistles likely already agree with the ideas, these techniques are meant to further reinforce ideologies. Serving as a reminder rather than an introduction to the topic. Similarly, convincing used the false quote technique most frequently. In the memes that were observed, the false quotes were meant to slander the people mentioned in the meme, claiming that they dislike certain groups. Convincing others made the most use of rational with fallacy and rational techniques. These techniques are aimed at providing argumentation that appeals to logical reasoning. This approach is reliable when attempting to convince others, regardless of the validity of the argumentation.

4.3.2 Bonding

The bonding function is meant to bring the community together and strengthen their bonds. Similarly to the convincing function, the shared enemy technique was used most frequently for this function. When used for bonding, the created enemy is a reminder of the community's superiority—typically implying moral superiority, indicating to the community that they need to support each other to avoid being negatively impacted by the enemy.

Emotional techniques are often used for bonding, with relatability being used most often in the observed memes. Memes that aim to be relatable to the audience, make them feel more comfortable. The audience feels a stronger connection to the creator of the meme as they share

similar experiences. Allowing them to feel a stronger connection to the community. Sympathy and farming sympathy function similarly.

4.3.3 Expressing emotion

The technique most frequently used for this function is the mascot technique. The mascots that are used by this community have many variations which can be used for many different scenarios. They are more descriptive than words, and more specific than emoticons. The mascots are simple drawings, leading to them being highly customizable. The facial features of the mascot can be manipulated to express different emotions, hand gestures can be added for further emphasis. Wojaks specifically are more versatile, as many different archetypes allow for many different situations and emotions.

4.3.4 Masking

Masking used techniques from the antagonism category the most frequently. Since masking is meant to hide or reduce the impact of controversial statements, it frequently antagonises an individual or group. The antagonism techniques are the only ones of note for masking, as they are the techniques that create controversial statements. They all utilised humour to a degree to reduce the impact of these statements, however, beyond that they are very unique.

4.3.5 Same techniques for different functions

Some techniques are used differently depending on the function that they serve. The best example of this is the shared enemy technique. It was used very frequently for the convincing and bonding functions. When used for convincing, the created enemy is viewed as an immediate threat, while in bonding, the enemy acts as a reminder of the community's superiority. When

used for convincing, the focus is on the enemy. When used for bonding, the focus shifts from the enemy to the community. This can be seen in Figures 26 and 27, both utilise the shared enemy technique but the former is from bonding functionality and the latter is from the convincing functionality. Figure 26 focuses on how the Ukrainians are being scourged by others, however, the focus is on the betrayal that the Ukrainians have faced. Implying that the only people that they can rely on at this point are themselves. While the meme doesn't refer to the moral superiority of Ukrainians, but rather the moral inferiority of the Russians, Americans, Europeans, Jewish, and Polish. In contrast, Figure 27 focuses solely on the fact that the conflict is caused by the Jews. Stating that it must be a curse that was placed on the land by the Jews many years ago.

Figure 26

Ukrainians getting whipped by a Jewish person

Text: THIS IS A CRUCIFIXION. UKRAINE IS BEING SCOURGED NOT JUST BY THE RUSSIAN SCUM, BUT THE AMERICAN, EUROPEAN AND JEWISH. EVEN THE FUCKING POLACKS COULDN'T STAND ASIDE AND PUT A KNIFE IN OUR BACK. YOU WILL ALL BURN IN HELL

Note. The meme in this figure is the image, the text is what the poster of the meme typed along with it.

Figure 27

A person explaining that the war in Ukraine is a Jewish curse

Text: Jews have used the same subversion and genocide playbook for thousands of years. But it's so fucking brazen to genocide millions of goyem IN THE EXACT SAME PLACE less than a hundred years later.

I wonder if it's part a ritualistic revenge curse for them being driven out of Khazaria. Now, any non-Khazarian who lives there must be genocided at least once a century to appease Moloch.

Just a schizo thought for a schizo world.

Note. The meme in this figure is the Pepe, the text is what the poster of the meme typed along with it.

Another example of techniques being used differently for different functions is the mascot technique. The technique was used frequently by convincing and emotional expression. When used for emotional expression, the facial features of the mascots are used to convey the emotions of the poster, while for convincing, the mascots are used as characters that act out a scene. Pepe was mainly used for conveying emotions, while the Wojaks were used more frequently for convincing. However, this was not always the case. The different character archetypes that the Wojaks present allow for easier storytelling. Figure 28 shows a Pepe making a judgemental face, this is amplified by the distortion of the image which emphasises the raised eyebrow. Pepe is expressing the emotions of the poster in this case. Figure 29 makes use of the Wojaks. Each character is given their own Wojak, customised to fit their roles. The Wojaks are

customised to represent their respective groups, making it easier for the message to be understood.
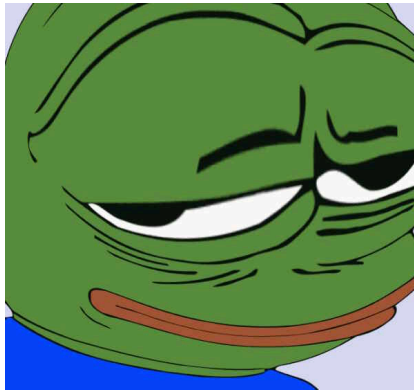
Figure 28

A judgemental Pepe

Figure 29

A meme against BRICS

5. Discussion

5.1 Main findings

This study aimed to explore the functions of memes within the alt-right movement, creating a framework to classify memes into their functions and the techniques used. The framework consists of four functions and 29 techniques, the latter was grouped into seven categories. It was observed that memes can serve more than one function and use many techniques. Researchers have already observed the multi-functionality of memes and their various applications (Rathi & Jain, 2024), however, they do not take the same view as what was done in this paper. The memes have demonstrated that they are complex. The content of the memes was diverse, even within the same functionality. They use techniques differently depending on the purpose of the memes, they can use techniques to improve the efficacy of other techniques.

Convincing was the most frequent function used in the observed memes. This is not surprising, as the memes were taken from a political board. This was seen before in a more extreme capacity. Wu and Fitzgerald (2023) explore the 2016 Diba expedition to Taiwan, they found that pre-made memes were used as weapons to defend the "One-China" policy by attacking the idea of Taiwan's independence. Many memes that were observed in this research used similar approaches to those seen in Wu and Fitzgerald (2023). The Chinese memes used techniques like ridicule and shared enemies to dehumanize the people supporting Taiwan's independence. They further explain that this technique was also used on other occasions afterwards. Adiga and P. (2024) support that memes have concerning persuasive power, however, Cui (2023) suggests that political memes that use pop culture allow the youth to separate

themselves from politics and engage in playful humour. However, Cui (2023) specifies that the memes do not lose their political nature.

Convincing and bonding were the functions that had the most co-occurrences. This is likely due to both functions being related to each other. Miceli et al. (2006) explain that an important factor in persuasion is the credibility of the person sending the message, especially their moral standing. The bonding function is often used to imply the moral or intellectual superiority of the community, making people from the community more likely to believe the message that is being sent in the meme. Similarly, creating a shared enemy was the most frequent technique for the bonding functions. Rambaran et al. (2015) found that friendships in adolescents can be formed by disliking the same person. Applying this concept to the functions can also explain why they had the most co-occurrences, the audience is more likely to view the meme positively when they vilify a group or person that the audience also dislikes.

5.2 Practical implications and theoretical contribution

As far as the author is aware, this framework is the first of its kind. It should be a worthwhile contribution to the literature regarding memes and meme culture. The framework can help further understand the affordances of memes, and techniques that are used to best utilise these affordances. This can be used to inform strategic communications campaigns that aim to use memes to their full extent. The findings help in understanding how the alt-right uses memes, allowing for a better understanding of their community. Allowing experts to be able to potentially combat the spread of white supremacy.

5.3 Limitations

The memes were exclusively taken from 4chan's /pol/ board. Thus they lack generalisability in terms of the platform the memes were taken from, as well as the political focus of the memes. Furthermore, 4chan is a public website, so the memes posted on the /pol/ board may not be from people who consider themselves a part of the alt-right. To minimise the chance of this, only memes that contain controversial content were included. Because of this, the framework may not be generalisable to other contexts as all memes contain some form of bigotry. Additionally, this research was not able to determine the efficacy of the meme.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

Since the framework was created using politically charged memes with controversial content, applying the framework to more general memes would be interesting. Comparing the effectiveness of the framework in different contexts. Leading to the possible expansion of the framework or the creation of another framework that can be better applied to the context. As this research was unable to gauge the efficacy of the memes, research that focuses on the effect of the different functionalities and techniques would be a large contribution to the current literature.

5.5 Conclusion

This research was successful in creating a framework to understand the affordance of memes and the techniques used in the context of the alt-right. The framework was partially informed by existing literature and was expanded upon by the analysis of memes taken from the /pol/ board on 4chan. The framework consisted of the functionalities of the memes, and techniques that are used to achieve these techniques. The memes revealed that there is a complex relationship between the functions, between the techniques, and between the functions and

techniques. Memes could have multiple functions and techniques. The same technique could change how it is used depending on the function it serves. It was observed that memes were able to use techniques to support other techniques that were used in the meme, allowing for a stronger effect. The alt-right made frequent use of the convincing function, which is likely due to the political nature of /pol/. The alt-right frequently used techniques that antagonise another individual or group, such as the use of stereotypes to negatively portray them. However, they also frequently made use of characters like Pepe the Frog or the variety of Wojak archetypes. This framework is meant to fill the gap in the research regarding the affordances of memes.

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Disclaimer:

During the preparation of this work, I used no artificial intelligence tools.

Appendix

The frequency of each technique per functionality

Category	Technique	Functionality			
		Bonding	Convincing	Expressing emotion	Masking
Antagonism	Ridicule	11	14	5	4
	Scapegoat	2	2	1	1
	Shared enemy	21	27	9	4
	Stereotype (Behaviour)	7	9	2	3
	Stereotype (Visual)	7	12	3	3
Total		48	64	20	15
Deception	Dog whistle	5	6	1	1
	False quote	1	2	0	0
Total		6	8	1	1
Emotional	Farming sympathy	3	1	6	0
	Relatability	13	5	3	1
	Sympathy	3	1	2	0
Total		19	7	11	1
Rational	Comparison	2	3	1	1
	Exposing double standards	0	2	0	0
	Exposing logical fallacies	2	3	0	0

Total		4	8	1	1
Literary	Hyperbole	2	2	2	2
	Metaphor	2	7	0	2
	Misleading language	1	1	0	0
	Personification	0	2	1	1
	Vulgar language	5	12	3	2
Total		10	24	6	7
Rational with Fallacy	Ad hominem	1	1	2	0
	Bandwagon effect	3	3	0	0
	Either-or	1	1	0	0
	Hasty generalisation	3	2	2	1
	Non sequitur fallacy	0	1	2	0
	Red Herring	0	1	0	0
	Slippery slope	0	2	0	0
	Strawman argumentation	0	2	0	0
Total		8	13	6	1
Visual	Depictions of violence	3	2	4	2
	Mascot	9	15	26	4
	Visual Creativity	6	11	0	3

	Stereotype (Visual)	7	12	3	3
Total		25	40	33	12