

# ***Anti-woke culture rhetoric through internet memes: A cross-cultural multimodal narrative approach***

Maria Constantinou<sup>1</sup>

Erika Theofanidi<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** This article investigates how anti-woke rhetoric is constructed in memes and the accompanying comments from a cross-cultural perspective across three comparable datasets: Greek, French, and English. It adopts a multimodal narrative approach to memes and uses framing analysis to detect the main frames used in both comments and memes to deconstruct woke culture and shape anti-woke rhetoric. To detect the main frames, it first examines the salient semantic fields as they unfold in comments and then moves on to a multimodal analysis of memes, considering salient visual and lexical frames. From a narrative perspective, our study considers every meme around anti-woke culture as part of a wider narrative. This wider narrative around woke culture, despite some differences in the three datasets, seems to shape a common rhetoric that appears to be shared at a transnational level on Twitter.

**Keywords:** memes, wokeism, anti-woke rhetoric, narrative approach, critical discourse analysis, framing analysis

## **1. Introduction**

The African American English term ‘woke’, which is historically rooted in the Black freedom struggle, and more recently linked to the Black Lives Matter movement, has replaced ‘political correctness’ and is used to signal the importance of awareness, social consciousness, social justice, and inclusivity (Pilkington 2022, Lenoir 2022). It has become a common watchword for various social movements,

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Cyprus, Department of French and European Studies; constantinou-papanicolaou.maria@ucy.ac.cy.

<sup>2</sup> University of Cyprus, Department of French and European Studies; theofanidi.erika@ucy.ac.cy.

including climate change, feminism, LGBTQ issues, immigration, and other marginalized communities (Luk 2021). However, it has also become a catch-all insult for the political Right to criticize left-wing and progressive causes (Caulcutt 2022) and has sparked heated debates and dominated micro-politics on social media. The semantic broadening of wokeism, its various framings as ‘woke cult’, ‘woke religion’, ‘cancel culture’, or even ‘woke totalitarianism’ along with the replication and oversaturation it has gone through (cf. Lenoir 2022), have led to the demonization and abnormalization of the concept in both mainstream and far-right discourse (Cammaerts 2022), while generating, as we will see, an anti-woke rhetoric that is anchored in crisscrossing narratives that are causally and temporarily constituted.

Our article investigates, from a cross-cultural perspective, how internet memes and the comments accompanying them deconstruct wokeness while reinforcing an anti-woke rhetoric. It relies on a comparable corpus of memes in Greek, French and English culled from Twitter.

The study adopts a narrative approach in which internet memes around anti-woke culture are viewed as partial stories, since “any single internet meme requires other memes or textual material to depict a wider narrative” (de Saint Laurent *et al.* 2021: 2). Along with the narrative approach to internet memes at a macro-structure level, this study will use framing analysis (Entman 1993). It also mobilizes concepts and methods from Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (Rockson 2023) and the Discourse Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak 2015, Wodak & Meyer 2015) to consider the historicity in which the narrative approach is anchored – here internet memes around anti-woke culture are viewed as partial stories. Drawing on previous studies, the three datasets will be compared from both a qualitative and quantitative viewpoint (Baider & Constantinou 2017). The cross-cultural perspective adopted in this study aims to offer a wider transnational picture of what is being currently narrated about wokeism at a translational level<sup>3</sup>.

In doing so, the article will be structured as follows: the theoretical framework will first discuss the uses of the terms *woke*, *wokeness* and *wokeism*, within and outside academic scholarship, and then it will examine the tenets and strategies of anti-woke rhetoric. Next, we will move on to the theoretical framework that will be adopted for the analysis of memes and comments, following which we will describe the methodology used for data collection and analysis. We will proceed with the data analysis both from a quantitative and qualitative perspective, and, finally, we will conclude with the main findings.

---

<sup>3</sup> The term “transnational” is employed here to refer to cross- or trans-bordered narratives among like-minded people, in the sense they go beyond the nation’s boundaries and become narratives that are shared at a global level on the Internet (see also Baider and Constantinou 2017).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Wokeness vs wokeism: definitions and ideological battles

The term *woke*, a synonym for *political correctness*, is a ubiquitous watchword for social justice movements and represents their battles for solidarity, inclusivity and non-discriminatory societies. However, its meaning is subject to the political and ideological positioning of the speaker, as it appears to act as a polarizing term. Merriam-Webster Dictionary reports both negative and positive meanings for the term; these socially and ideologically constituted meanings reflect the polarization inherent to the so-called culture wars. In fact, to be woke means to be “aware of and actively attentive to important societal facts and issues”, especially issues relating to racial and social justice. Examples given by the same dictionary are indicative of the moral obligation to “stay woke”, to “take a stand and be active”, to fight against injustices, hatred and discrimination. However, the term *woke* can also be used to show disapproval. For conservatives, according to the same dictionary definition, it means “politically liberal or progressive [...] especially in a way that is considered unreasonable or extreme”. Further examples in the same dictionary hint at an anti-woke rhetoric that touches upon various aspects of life. For instance, “woke liberalism”, which is seen as an existential threat to the nation and its traditions.

This semantic and ideology-rooted confusion is also reflected in academic literature. As noted by Ayona (2023: 3), some scholars hold the popular definition of woke and wokeness as awareness of structural oppression (Mirzaei *et al.* 2022), which hints at an ethic imperative (Atkins 2020) for active participation in social justice (Sobande *et al.* 2022). Wokeness has also been employed as an anti-racist normative concept in epistemology (Basu 2019, Atkins 2020, 2023). Academic opponents use the terms *woke/wokeism* to mean a specific kind of awareness and practices that are stipulated by the contemporary social justice movements. There is some consensus among these scholars that principles and practices of social justice movements have become fixated with Critical Race Theory, resulting in authoritarianism to the detriment of Enlightenment traditions and liberal ideas (see Ayona 2023, Kaufmann 2023b). For instance, sociologist Heinich (2023) described wokeism as a new totalitarianism and E. Kaufmann argued that wokeism, which is “rooted in the pursuit of equity for all identity groups and safeguarding against the minutest harms... poses a significant challenge for defenders of broadly liberal values” (Kaufmann 2023a: paragraph 1). Moreover, wokeism is associated with a new type of identity politics (see Mitchell 2020, Ayona 2023), e.g., with applied

postmodernism (Pluckrose & Lindsay 2020), third-wave antiracism (McWorter 2021) and a self-identified left, although with different principles (Neiman 2023), and also with academic censorship and restrictions that this ideological movement can have on intellectual freedom (Goodwin 2023, Kaufmann 2023b). The idea of ‘safe spaces’ is well known in academia and has undoubtedly restricted academic freedom, as what is likely to offend the ideological, sexual, biological or aesthetical Other is often restricted and/or punished.

Academic wokeism has stirred up the political debate. For instance, Dutch Minister of Justice Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegeriu warned against wokeists who claimed for safe spaces at universities. She openly stated that wokeists exclude any form of confrontational knowledge and make freedom of expression subordinate to emotions<sup>4</sup>. French ex-Minister of Education, Jean-Michel Blanquer, a secularist who had been leading the fight against wokeism, went as far as creating a think tank to combat what he deemed U.S.-imported wokeism (Caulcutt 2021, 2022). However, anti-wokeism is not only found in mainstream or far-right political discourse; for instance, the French satirical weekly magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, historically enshrined within the tradition of left-wing radicalism, has published articles denouncing wokeism in academia and in society, accusing it sometimes of anti-Semitism, for example, when commenting on Judith Butler’s positioning against Israel, who called the Hamas attacks an “act of armed resistance” (see relevant article, Biard 2024).

More importantly, anti-woke rhetoric has become pervasive on social media; it serves to deconstruct social struggles including anti-racism, anti-sexism or diversity and pro-LGBTQ rights (Cammaerts 2022), while mobilizing far-right tropes and conspiracy theories (Davies & MacRae 2023). Dominant groups from both the mainstream and the extreme-right use cancel culture to “neutralize contestations against racist, sexist and anti-LGBTQ views” (Cammaerts 2022: 730). Militants of anti-wokeism see themselves “in a battle of good versus evil, reason against the dark forces of pre-modernity” (Davies & MacRae 2023: 3). In this context, the so-called cultural Marxists or a globalist elite aim to destroy western civilization and replace white culture with woke multiculturalism (Davies & MacRae 2023). Anti-woke in-group members represent themselves as “servants of ‘higher’ powers or abstract noble causes” (such as the Enlightenment, reason, our way of life, western civilization, democracy) (Davies & MacRae 2023: 21). Cammaerts argues that this is the “abnormalization of social justice where everything ‘woke’ is represented as aberrant, politically deviant and a threat to the sovereign will of ‘the people’, ‘the common good’, and ‘our Britain’” (Cammaerts 2022: 736). Even Prime Minister

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/news/2022/11/pieters-corner-wokeism>

Sunak appealed to this sentiment while playing the identity card and seeking approval from his audience, when he vowed to take on “lefty woke culture that wants to cancel our history, values and women” (Wood 2022: headline and paragraph 1).

## 2.2. Memeification, narratives and framing

The memeification of the woke movement through social media communication has played a significant role in both popularizing and trivializing the concept of woke. However, distilling complex social and political ideas into easily shareable memes leads to a vague and poorly understood interpretation of what it means to be woke (see Davies & MacRae 2023). Anti-woke movements have adeptly harnessed this trend, employing memes to propagate a harsh anti-woke narrative. By creating and disseminating memes that ridicule or criticize the woke movement, these groups can effectively influence public perception. These anti-woke memes often caricature woke ideals, presenting them in an exaggerated or mocking manner that can appeal to those sceptical of social justice initiatives.

Internet memes are defined here as a specific mode of communication that brings into play multimodal combinations of different elements and different registers of speech (humor and information) to persuade and mobilize the audience (Hakoköngäs *et al.* 2020: 1). Although memes may appear to be humorous, silly or even harmless, or to make light of absurd situations (MacDonald 2020), they can communicate hateful messages, enhance bigotry and polarization and incite to hate and violence (Bogerts & Fielitz 2019: 138). They can work as rhetorical weapons and discursive arguments (Mortensen & Neumayer 2021: 2367) and be used in extreme or extremist online activism to hyper-polarize and create tension by disseminating misinformation (Marwick & Lewis 2017) and spreading conspiracy theories (Bolaños Somoano 2022). On the other hand, memes can also contribute to framing news events, and to shaping political attitudes and behaviours (Ross and Rivers 2017). They can challenge or reinforce hegemonic ideals (Vickery 2014), function as anti-establishment political critique (Huntington 2016, Makhortykh & Gonzalez Aguilar 2020) and/ or serve as a form of coping, resistance and connection as well (Outley *et al.* 2020). In this context, memes appear to be democratic in their widespread use and mutation as they survive and grow through participation, while they remain structurally autocratic in their conservation of a key idea (Hristova 2014: 266).

The term *meme* is a biological metaphor that was coined by Dawkins (1976); it can be an image, a video, and/or a text that is replicated and spread with slight variations on the internet (Seiffert-

Brockmann *et al.* 2018). In this sense, memes can be seen as units of cultural transmission, as they may represent an aspect of a culture such as language, politics, fashion, songs – which evolve, change and spread. In other words, memes replicate and change in much the same way that genes do (Drakett *et al.* 2018). However, Shifman (2013: 4) challenges this conceptualization and suggests that internet memes should be considered as groups of content rather than single units. More specifically, he defines memes as: (a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, (b) which were created with an awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the internet by many users. However, de Saint Laurent *et al.* (2021) go even further and consider that internet memes are “partial” narratives about and around an event. They are “partial as any single internet meme requires other memes or textual material to depict a wider narrative” (de Saint Laurent *et al.* 2021: 2).

If we consider using a narrative approach to memes, we must also include a focus on plot. This will provide the structure of stories, as it connects the beginning to the end, while weaving different episodes together into a coherent and meaningful whole (Murray 2003, Bruner 1991). Narratives encompass a chronicle, a sequence of events, as well as the interpretation of these events’ meaning (Sandercock 2003) to make sense of human experiences. From this perspective, anti-woke rhetoric through memes is conceptualized as a wider narrative that includes not only a plot but also characters and roles. De Saint Laurent *et al.* (2021: 4), in their study on political narratives in Covid 19 memes, draw on the basic triad of Victim – Persecutor – Hero and consider it “to be the narrative kernel of virtually all storylines”. This theoretical perspective focused on characters and roles helps us understand ‘partial stories’ or scenarios and integrate them “into wider narratives that become apparent when more memes, or memes and comments or other contextual data, are put together” (de Saint Laurent *et al.* 2021: 5).

Partial stories or scenarios would refer to “any kind of coherent segment of human beliefs, actions, experiences or imaginings” that can be associated with an underlying conceptual frame (Fillmore 1975, cited in Musolff 2006: 27). In this context, framing is an important concept as it enables us to understand how some aspects of wokeness are perceived and evaluated in such a way to causally construe an anti-woke rhetoric. Paraphrasing Entman’s definition of framing, we could say that memeification selects some details of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular definition of wokeness, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation to find against the woke culture and

agenda (Entman 1993: 52). In our study, frames serve as the underlying foundations on which narratives are deployed (Aukes *et al.* 2020); in this way they help to map out main themes and tropes of anti-woke rhetoric, since framing involves both selection and salience (Entman 1993). Also, in our study, salience is limited to the concept of frequency (Baider & Constantinou 2024) – not only of the most frequent lexical units found in the comments but also in the most frequent themes identified in the memes.

### 3. Methodology and data collection

Our study relies on a comparable corpus culled from X, commonly referred to by its former name Twitter. To achieve comparability of the data, we have relied on some comparability criteria: same or similar keywords, hashtags, same time period of the data collection, same number of memes. The corpus is composed of 450 memes in Greek, French and English.

More specifically, the material was collected from December 2023 to April 2024 on a regular basis (every two weeks) for the three language datasets and includes material posted from 18 March 2021.

Memes were all purposively collected (Milner 2013). The key words and phrases used at the first stage to collect our material included *woke*, *wokeism*, *wokism*, *wokeness*, *anti-woke*, *woke culture*. To complete our corpus and attain the same number of relevant memes in the three language datasets, we also used the most frequent hashtags. These were #WokeMindVirus, #woke, #wokeism, #wokism, #stopleswoke, #cancelculture, #WokeMustGo, #WokePropaganda, #WokeIsAJoke, #EndWokeness. For the Greek and French datasets, we conducted language-based research limited first to Greek and then to French and used the same English key words and hashtags. For the Greek data, our search was completed with the use of the Greek words *ατζέντα* ‘agenda’ and *κουλτούρα* ‘culture’ in *woke ατζέντα* and *woke κουλτούρα*, respectively. Material was collected by taking screenshots (see, e.g., Burke 2018, Hakoköngäs *et al.* 2020) and at the same time saving the comments in a different Word document to record frequency of the words used in comments.

We first conducted a visual content analysis (Bock *et al.* 2011, Askanius and Keller 2021), while simultaneously considering the verbal message of each meme and the accompanying comments to verify that the meme expressed an anti-woke message. Next, we classified the material into distinct thematic categories (Askanius & Keller 2021, Aguilera-Carnerero & Tegal 2023), and where deemed necessary, we further divided memes into sub-themes.

Moreover, we undertook a comment analysis to complement this study. As already mentioned, by the time of collecting memes,

posts framing the memes were saved in three separate datasets. A total of 11,179 words were culled: 4,330 words for the Greek data; 4,544 and 2,305 words for the French and English language datasets, respectively.

To detect the main frames, we examined the salient semantic fields as they unfolded in this small corpus; we then conducted a multimodal narrative analysis of memes, considering salient visual and lexical frames.

## 4. Data analysis

### A.1. General results: main thematic categories and frames in memes

In the three datasets we identified six broad themes that target different communities and ideologies:

- a. *gender issues*: anti-feminism and anti-LGBTQ. These memes attack feminism and the LBTQ community and/ or project the heteronormative family as the only morally accepted family norm and/ or demonize LGBTQ through abnormalization;
- b. *nationalism-nativism*: memes depicting woke culture as the enemy of the nation, foregrounding national defense, history, religion, and memes promoting nativism; this category also includes memes depicting political actors who fight against woke culture;
- c. *anti-establishment, anti-systemic content*: memes targeting mainly political and social actors who are said to promote woke culture or agenda. This category also includes memes depicting social or political actors supporting or belonging to the LGBTQ community;
- d. *racism*: memes expressing both embodied (biological) and cultural racism, religious intolerance (mainly anti-Muslim memes) and memes mocking physical appearance and/ or showing weight bias. This category includes memes contesting white racism and Critical Race Theory and or projecting whiteness/ white supremacy;
- e. *anti-Marxism, anti-communism, anti-liberalism*: memes, or memes associating wokeness with Nazism, fascism and totalitarian regimes. This also includes memes framing woke culture as censorship;
- f. *disparagement*: memes framing woke people as idiots or having no brain or as being deceived by wokeism (through imbecilization).



Table 1 below illustrates the frequency of the six main broad thematic categories we identified in the three language datasets:

<i>Theme</i>	Greek	French	English
gender issues: anti-feminism/ anti-LGBTQ	67	43	51
nationalism-nativism – national defense	21	14	8
anti-establishment, anti-systemic content	25	22	16
racism – white racism – white supremacy	7	28	11
anti-Marxism – anti-communism – anti-liberalism	13	16	34
disparagement: portrayal of woke as silliness	27	27	30

Table 1: Frequency of memes according to thematic categories

It becomes obvious that gender-related issues, including feminism and LGBTQ communities, are the most frequent in all three datasets. However, the Greek data displays a higher frequency of LGBTQ issues compared to both the French and English datasets. The second most frequent thematic category in all datasets comprises memes disparaging woke people and describing them as brainless or gullible. Memes with an anti-establishment or anti-systemic content are more present in the Greek and French data, while most memes identifying woke with a particular ideology are found in the English corpus. The Greek data were more focused on nation, family, and religion than the other two datasets, a three-fold schema also found in previous studies focused on far-right discourse (Baider & Constantinou 2024). Memes touching upon racism or white supremacy are less frequent in the Greek data than in the other datasets. Memes related to racism are more frequent (18 memes) than those on white racism or white supremacy (10 memes).

However, it is worth noting that a clear-cut categorization was difficult to achieve; several memes appear to fall into more than two thematic categories: memes conveying or amalgamating anti-feminist and anti-Muslim messages, or memes disparaging and abnormalizing a state leader. Some memes also display other types of harmful social discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and fatphobia, or contest new beauty norms. These sub-categories were not classified as such, as they are fewer and could be classified either in the LGBTQ category or in memes promoting racism.

Memes in the LGBTQ category can also be divided into subcategories, as shown in Table 2:

Sub-theme	Frequency		
	Greek	French	English
Memes contesting feminism, or calling for a redefinition of gender roles	17	9	28
Memes contesting/ disparaging transsexual or homo-parenting	17	3	4
Memes contesting sexual education/ denouncing child sexual indoctrination	4	1	
Memes amalgamating ideologies (mainly communism) and gender fluidity in an ironic tone	8	2	15
Memes boycotting brands that promote inclusivity and non-heteronormative families as the new normal	9	11	4

Table 2: LGBTQ sub-themes

As shown in Table 2, the English data reveal more a call for redefining gender roles rather than contesting transsexuality or homo-parenting. The Greek dataset reveals both a tendency to contest transsexuality and homo-parenting and to question feminism and today's gender roles. Memes in the French data focus mainly on boycotting memes and on amalgamating ideologies with gender fluidity.

## A.2. Semantic fields and framings in comments

According to the posts framing each meme, wokeism is discursively framed mainly as: an illness, an abnormality, a cult/ religion, rubbish/shit, a dictatorship/ totalitarian regime.

Framing	Lexical units/ expressions found in comments		
	Greek	French	English
<b>Illness</b>	woke σύνδρομο 'woke syndrome' (1); οχιζοφρένεια 'schizophrenia' (3); τρελές 'crazy' (2); ψυχίατρο(ς) 'psychiatrist(s)' (3); woke εκφυλισμού 'woke degeneration' (1); παραλόγου 'irrational' (1); παράνοια 'paranoia' (1); woke λοβοτομή 'woke lobotomy' (1)	virus 'virus' (9); maladie mentale 'mental illness' (2); malade 'sick' (2); maladie dégénérative 'degenerative disease' (1), maladie contagieuse 'contagious disease' (1); la contagion bienpensante 'the contagion of political correctness' (1); cancer 'cancer' (2); délire 'delirium' (3); paroxysme 'paroxysm' (1); véritable métastase 'real metastasis' (1)	mental disorder (1); illness of the left (2); virus (4); mind virus (17); mental illness (2); disease (2); mental disease (2)

Total number	<b>10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Abnormality</b>	<p>ανωμαλία ‘abnormality’ (1); ανωμαλίες ‘abnormalities’ (2); παιδεραστία ‘pedophilia’ (1); παιδεραστές ‘pedophiles’ (4); παιδοφιλία ‘pedophilia’ (6); παιδοβιαστές/ής ‘child rapists’ (4); πολυσυντροφικές σχέσεις ‘polyamorous relationships’ (1); ερωτική σχέση με ζώα ‘erotic relationship with animals’ (1); σόδομα και γόμορα ‘sodom and gomorrah’ (1); παροξυσμός ‘paroxysm’ (1)</p>	<p>gros pédophiles ‘big pedophiles’ (1); perversion ‘perversion’ (1); dégénéré ‘degenerate’ (4); Sodome et Gomorrhe ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ (1)</p>	<p>bestiality (1); sex changes (1)</p>
Total number	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Cult/religion</b>	<p>νεοπαγανιστική θεότητα ‘neopagan deity’ (1); νεοαίρεση ‘new heresy’ (1); woke θρησκεία ‘woke religion’ (1); ισλαμολαγνεία ‘islamophilia’ (1); woke πεποιθήσεις ‘woke beliefs’ (1); ΛΟΑΤΚΙ «ΚΑΤΗΧΗΣΗ» ‘LGBTQI “CATECHISM”’ (1); θρησκεία ‘religion’ (2)</p>		<p>religion (4); religion of the left (4) ; fascist religion (1); cult (4); secular religion(2); woke doctrine of original sin (1); the 10 #woke commandments (1); woke gender cult (1); Leftist cult (2); anew Age apocalyptic cult (1)</p>
Total number	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Dictatorship- censorship- regime</b>	<p>δικτατορία ‘dictatorship’ (4); woke νόμος/νόμοι ‘woke law/laws’ (2); επιτάσσει η woke κουλτούρα τους ‘dictated by their woke culture’ (1)</p>	<p>censure ‘censorship’ (4); embrigadement ‘indoctrination’ (1); macronisme ‘macronism’ (2); macronie / makronie ‘macronia’ (2); on s’autocensure ‘we self-censor’ (1)</p>	<p>under a woke government (1) Fascist (1), Nazism (1), nazi (1); TRUDOLF SHITLER</p>

Total number	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Rubbish, shit</b>	μαρξιστικό σκουπίδι 'Marxist garbage' (1); woke σκουπίδια 'woke garbage' (1); σκουπίδι/ά 'garbage' (4);	merde 'shit' (6); cul 'ass' (2)	shit (10); this sh!t (2) woke shit (4), bullshit (4) Shitler (1)
Total number	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>20</b>

Table 3: Lexical units and framing in comments

As shown in Table 3, the prominence of each semantic field varies across the different contexts. For instance, in the English and French datasets, wokeism is often depicted as a disease or virus, suggesting it spreads and affects society in a harmful way. In contrast, within the Greek context, wokeism is more commonly framed as an abnormality, implying it deviates from what is considered normal or traditional. Wokeism as a religion or cult is also very frequent in the English data, while in the Greek data set there are fewer occurrences. Interestingly, religion in the English language data is associated with the Left (*Religion of the left*), and idiocy (*Wokism: a religion sprung from a particular (and idiotic) strain of the left*) or related to a new age (*Wokeism is a new Age apocalyptic cult*). Wokeism as shit is also more frequent in the English language dataset than in the French and Greek datasets. The dictatorship frame unfolds differently in the three language datasets. The English language dataset reveals historical analogies with Nazism (*TRUDOLF SHITLER MUST GO ASAP, memories of Nazi Germany*) in an ironic tone. The Greek dataset compares wokeism with dictatorship, and most probably with the Greek junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974. The French language dataset associates wokeism with Macron's government; the use of playful neologisms (*macronisme, makronie, macronie*) suggests online activists' stance-taking on the French President and his implication in woke culture.

Apart from the semantic fields shaping frames, recurrent lexical units found in the data appear to construct multiple Others, who can be defined in terms of their ideology, religion, origin and sexuality:

- The ideological Other is primarily seen as the Left: More than 40 lexical units in the English dataset target this group (*the Left, lefties, far left, Communists, Marxists*, etc.). About 25 words in the French data also target the Left (*gauchisme* 'leftism', *de gauche* 'of the left', *communiste* 'communist', *islamogauchisme* 'islamoleftism', etc.), while the Greek data reveals 30 words targeting the Left (*Syriza* 'Syriza', *Μαρξιστές* 'Marxists', *κομμουνισμός* 'communism', etc.);
- The religious Other is identified as the Muslim/ Islamist in

- all data, although with many fewer occurrences: 13 for the French data, 8 words for the Greek data, and only 6 for the English language data;
- The biological Other is primarily identified as the foreign migrant or one whose skin colour is different (i.e., not white). Eleven relevant lexical units were found in the Greek data (*μετανάστες* ‘migrants’, *λαθρομετανάστες* ‘illegal migrants’, *Πακισταν\** ‘Pakistani’, *Φιλιππινέζα* ‘Filipina’, *μαύροι* ‘Blacks’). Seven occurrences were found in the French data (*migrants* ‘migrants’, *immigrants* ‘migrants’, *personne noire* ‘black person’), and only two occurrences (*migrants*) were found in the English data. The sexual Other is most targeted in the Greek data, where we found 50 words related to this group (*LGBT*, *fags*, *queer*, *drag queen*). In contrast, there are fewer such occurrences in the French (20 words: *LGBT*, *transgenre* ‘transgender’, *trans* ‘trans’, *trans identité* ‘trans identity’) and English data (16 words: *LGBT*, *gay*, *trans*).

The prominence of the concept of the nation in the Greek data is significantly higher compared to the other two. This is evidenced by the identification of more than 50 words that contribute to the semantic field of the nation, including terms such as *history*, *Greek*, *Greece*, *nation* and *homeland*. These words collectively underscore a strong national identity and patriotic sentiment within the Greek context.

## 5. Qualitative analysis

As mentioned previously, when memes are viewed as partial narratives they also frame the main scenarios, characters, and roles. Based on our data, the characters or protagonists are social, political, and economic actors who are depicted as promoting a woke agenda. These could include state leaders such as US President Joe Biden, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, French President Emmanuel Macron, Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis, political parties, and so forth. The sexual Other (LGBTQ community) and the ideological Other (mainly the Left) are also portrayed as being behind or serving wokeism. The victims are primarily children, institutions, and values (such as religion, education, family, beauty standards/stereotypes, western civilization and history), as well as films being somewhat censored (for example, reclassification of the *Mary Poppins* film), or changed in the name of diversity and inclusivity (for instance, Disney characters, Netflix’s portrayal of *Queen Cleopatra*). The saviors are the anti-woke activists themselves or anti-systemic social and political actors, including former

US President Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, who project themselves as fighting for the survival of white western civilization.

As shown in Table 1 above, the main targets are the LGBTQ community and the perceived new life standards imposed by the woke agenda. The new normal is contested through various strategies. Meme creators often play the biological evidence card, for instance, by comparing the past with the present to highlight the paradox of wokeism and the need to save children from the woke virus (2). Woke culture is associated with gender fluidity or the multiplicity of genders, with the Left portrayed as the main culprit (1). Memes also rely on true facts, here on world population data to argue that homo-parenting violates the laws of nature, asserting that men have never given birth to a child, and only heteronormativity can protect and perpetuate humanity (1).

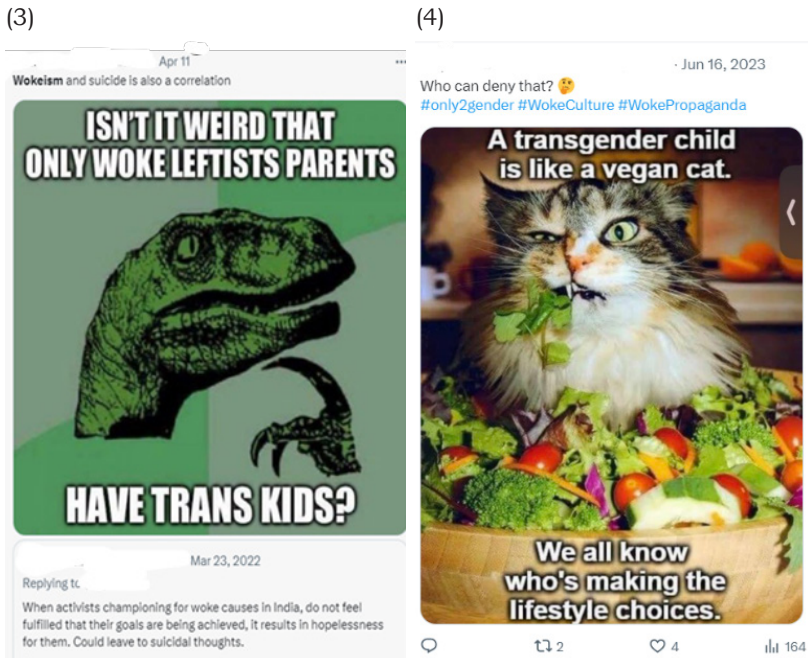
(1)



(2)



Mememes are employed to argue that transgender identity is merely an ideological construct and not a biological fact. Meme (3) uses the Philosoraptor character to question the legitimacy of transgender children, suggesting that only parents with woke leftist ideologies have transgender kids. The combination of visual irony and rhetorical questioning discredits wokeism and frames transgender identity as a consequence of ideologically biased parenting rather than a natural phenomenon. Similarly, meme (4) features a cat eating vegetables, drawing an analogy between a vegan cat and a transgender child to underscore the perceived incongruity between the two conditions (childhood *vs* transgender ideology). Both memes aim to delegitimize progressive ideologies, portraying them as extreme and unnatural, and highlighting the perceived dangers of wokeism.



The Greek dataset contains more memes using strategies of abnormalization, with the use of realistic images featuring actual transgender individuals or homosexual parents. For instance, meme (5) replicates a picture of a transman at two different moments: while pregnant and after giving birth. The comments frame the situation as abnormal and aberrant, suggesting that the couple should be treated as mentally disordered. The meme responds to the transman's assertion that pregnancy should not necessarily be associated with being a woman.

Meme (6) depicts a drag queen described as ready to read stories to children. While in heteronormative societies, a drag queen would typically not be welcomed at a school to read stories to children, in fact, this meme echoes parents' reactions following visits by drag queens to Greek schools. The verbal message (*Μη φοβάσαι, παραμύθια θέλει να σου διαβάσει* 'don't be afraid, it wants to read fairy tales to you') aims to disparage the event and woke culture, which is accused of the presumed paradox. Hashtags used in the post emphasize framing woke as a threat (*#προστατέψτε τα παιδιά* '#protect the kids'), identify the culprit (Syria, the Greek Left), and further disparage the entire situation and those involved (*#σούργελα* '#laughingstock').





(9)



(10)



Meme (9) features a cartoon that criticizes woke culture using both lexical and visual elements to depict a Scottish totalitarian regime. The text, ‘Scotland under a woke government’ and ‘Police Scotland Re-education Camps’, frames woke culture as authoritarian and suggests imposed ideological conformity. The visual element depicts a school setting but instead of a teacher a Scottish policeman is forcing students to repeat two opposing realities: the verbal message ‘A woman’ and ‘Another woman’ *vs* the visual message depicting a woman and a man. This irony mocks the acceptance of diverse gender identities while evoking coercion and indoctrination, equating contemporary social justice efforts with historical re-education camps and totalitarian practices. The meme’s multimodal strategy aims to delegitimize woke policies by framing them as extreme and oppressive. Similarly, meme (10) depicts a woman wearing a hat reminiscent of Nazi uniforms and applying a Hitler-style mustache, visually linking contemporary social justice movements to historical fascism. The accompanying text reinforces this association by claiming that woke individuals demand obedience rather than acceptance, associating woke culture with totalitarian regimes. This hyperbolic comparison seeks to demonize and delegitimize woke culture and discredit social justice movements by casting them in the same light as one of history’s most notorious regimes.

Other memes depict wokeism as the religion of the Left, which is a prominent frame in the English language dataset, as already noted. This analogy, as expressed in the comment of meme (11), serves as an argument in favor of secular education, where woke religion has no

place. This meme functions as an umbrella narrative, featuring various stories (mandatory vaccination and masks, gender fluidity, LGBTQ issues, social media’s disconnection from the real world, mass media manipulation, etc.) related to wokeism by contrasting two individuals: the woke (depicted as wrong) and the patriot/nationalist (depicted as right), who is portrayed as holding his national flag and values. Similarly, meme (12) criticizes how the motto ‘follow the science’ is used for climate change and Covid-19, yet conveniently ignored when it comes to the treatment of transgender women as identical to women.

(11)

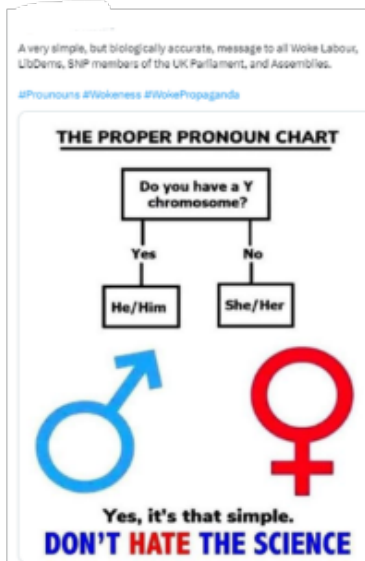


(12)



The slogan ‘Trust the Science’ is also echoed in memes associating woke propaganda with gender identity. The appeal to biological evidence (13) recurs in such memes, wherein the authority argument promoted by woke propaganda is disparaged and depicted as a logical fallacy. These memes denounce how the woke Left employs science to accommodate double standards and manipulate it to fit their agenda, while suggesting a presumed disdain they hold for science.

(13)



(14)



The appeal to the obvious, i.e., how some simple things are easy to understand, relates to the image anti-woke activists shape about woke people: memes depict them as being brainwashed, lobotomized (15, 16, 17), or deceived (18). For instance, meme (15) depicts a person having his brain removed after converting to wokeism and stating that he no longer needs it as he has been saved.

(15)



(16)



Memes also question the perception of freedom among woke individuals, depicting them as only believing and reproducing the dominant culture (17) and the directives of authorities, such as the EU (18). For example, in meme (18), through the use of an animalized metaphor, the EU is depicted as a wolf telling evident lies ('I am vegan') to deceive gullible and naive European citizens (depicted as sheep).

(17)



(18)



The strategy of imbecilization is also employed in reference to politics and the military. This is achieved, for instance, by ridiculing LGBTQ individuals through eccentric appearances, fabricated scenarios of alternative human reproductive processes, and depictions of transmen breastfeeding (19). State leaders are often targeted and caricatured. As illustrated in (20), (21) and (22), visual homophobic rhetoric is intertwined with discussions of national defense. Interestingly, in both Canadian and French contexts, memes target their respective state leaders, President J. Trudeau and President E. Macron, using similar strategies. These memes aim to highlight abnormality, opposing hetero-nationalism and rigid masculine gender norms within the military, while also undermining and deconstructing both state leaders through feminization and disparagement strategies (such as using colors and motifs echoing Barbie and/or the LGBTQ rainbow). The memes often allude to the state leaders' stances against Putin, suggesting their inability to confront him.

(19)



(20)



(21)



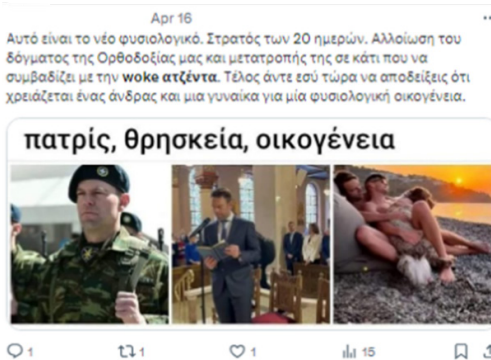
(22)



In contrast to the French and English data, in this Greek dataset politicians are generally denounced for betrayal and/or for not protecting family, history, and the nation, or for projecting non-heteronormative values that are considered a threat to the nation. This is exemplified in the case of S. Kasselakis, an openly gay politician and leader of the left party (Syriza), who publicly expressed his wish and intention to become a parent. Example (23) features Kasselakis in three distinct instances (in the army, in church, in a family moment), representing the three-fold schema also expressed in words: homeland, religion, family – values that risk being distorted under ‘the new normal’.

Other memes juxtapose the past with the present to emphasize the importance of traditional values and underline the damage caused by the woke agenda. For instance, meme (24) depicts a toddler in a soldier's uniform holding a rifle. The commenter states that "this was the toy that parents used to buy for their boys before 'woke' culture". This, of course, hints ironically at genderless toys and echoes other memes denouncing neutral or genderless toys, clothes and transgender upbringing (for instance, celebrities who choose to dress their boys as girls or vice versa).

(23)



(24)



Changes in the racial background of characters in films/cartoons, or shifts in beauty standards toward a more inclusive and tolerant society, are often depicted and caricatured in memes. However, these memes can serve crisscrossing narratives: they may reflect and perpetuate white supremacy and/or warn against perceived threats to white people, while disseminating vitriolic in a subtle way and reinforcing polarization. For instance, meme (25) alludes to the racial reimagining of Queen Cleopatra in a *Netflix* documentary. The commenter argues that the aim of the underlying agenda is not merely to replace white people but even worse, to erase them from history. This meme broadens the Great Replacement scenario (Hernández Aguilar 2024), suggesting a more catastrophic scenario, in which the intention is not only to replace them but also to erase white western civilization and reinvent history.

Meme (26) features Miss Czech Republic: the comment is implicitly racist as it promotes white supremacy while making a racist statement – i.e., that the winner is in contrast to Miss Germany, who diverges from conventional beauty standards and is not European. Such memes and comments emphasize that when conventional beauty wins, wokeism is disturbed. Wokeism in the comment is once



## 6. Conclusions

This study uses a cross-cultural perspective to examine how woke culture is deconstructed through memes, revealing consistent patterns of anti-woke rhetoric across Greek, French, and English datasets. The LGBTQ+ community emerges as the primary target, with Greek memes focusing on family and national themes through explicit and vitriolic imagery, while French and English memes present critiques more subtly, often employing humor and analogies.

Despite slight differences in numbers, frames, and strategies, our analysis suggests the emergence of a common transnational narrative framing woke culture as an extreme, aberrant, and oppressive ideology. Memes frequently depict wokeism as a virus, an illness, or a form of totalitarianism, amplifying fears of societal decline and enforced ideological conformity. In particular, these frames construct wokeism as a deviation from traditional norms, positioning it as a threat to biological, cultural, and moral values. By framing woke culture as ‘the religion of the Left’, these narratives contribute to moral panic over the perceived left-wing dominance (Cammaerts 2022). The main frames also echo critiques from opposing academic scholarship and political discourse, which view woke culture as a form of authoritarianism that restricts academic freedom, excludes confrontational knowledge, and makes freedom subordinate to emotions.

While anti-woke memes often overlap with hate speech or exclusionary rhetoric, perpetuating racist stereotypes, discrimination, polarization, and opposition to inclusive ideologies, not all of them employ hateful or dehumanizing language (see also Baider & Gregoriou, this issue). Some convey anti-establishment messages, questioning the role of elites in promoting ideological conformity. Others use logical arguments, satirical critiques, or challenge the authority of science to highlight perceived contradictions within progressive ideologies or policies, without targeting a specific group.

Each meme contributes to a broader narrative about woke culture, collectively shaping a rhetoric that transcends national boundaries. This shared narrative underscores the global reach and impact of anti-woke rhetoric, which mobilizes far-right tropes and conspiracy theories, particularly evident on online platforms like Twitter.

## References

- Aguilera-Carnerero, C., Tegal, M. (2023), “Multimodal islamophobia: Gendered stereotypes in memes”, *Journal of Arab & Muslim Media Research*, 16/2, p. 201-222, [https://doi.org/10.1386/jammr\\_00063\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jammr_00063_1).
- Askanius, T., Keller, N. (2021), “Murder fantasies in memes: fascist aesthetics of death threats and the banalization of white supremacist violence”,



- Information, Communication & Society*, 24/16, p. 2522-2539, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1974517>.
- Atkins, J. S. (2020), "Moral encroachment, wokeness, and the epistemology of holding", *Episteme*, 20/1, p. 86-100, <https://doi.org/10.1017/epi.2020.50>.
- Atkins, J. S. (2023), "Defining Wokeness", *Social Epistemology*, 37/3, p. 321-338.
- Aukes, E. J., Bontje, L. E., Slinger, J. H. (2020), "Narrative and frame analysis: Disentangling and refining two close relatives by means of a large infrastructural technology case", *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 21/2, <https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-21.2.3422>.
- Ayona, D. (2023), "A preliminary overview of "wokeism": Three major issues for IR research", *FISIP Department of International Relations*, IV/6, p. 1-7, <https://ir.fisip.ui.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Vol.-IV-No.6-Sept-2023.pdf>.
- Baider, F., Constantinou, M. (2017), " 'Burn the antifa traitors at the stake...'. Transnational political cyber-exchanges, proximisation of emotions", in Kecskes, I. Assimakopoulos, S. (eds), *Current issues in intercultural pragmatics*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, p. 75-102.
- Baider, F. et Constantinou, M. (2024), "The Ultra-Right: Media, Discourses, and Communicative Strategies| Transnational Conspiracies Echoed in Emojis, Avatars, and Hyperlinks Used in Extreme-Right Discourse", *International Journal of Communication*, 18, p. 5065-5087, <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/16809>.
- Baider, F., Gregoriou, A. (this issue), "Annotating linguistic features of extreme narratives: a literature review and a proposal".
- Basu, R. (2019), "Radical moral encroachment: The moral stakes of racist belief", *Philosophical Issues*, 29/1, p. 9-23.
- Biard, J. (2024), "La servante cramoisie", *Charlie Hebdo* (13 March), <https://charliehebdo.fr/2024/03/international/la-servante-cramoisie/>
- Bock, A., Isermann, H., Knieper, T. (2011), "Quantitative content analysis of the visual", in Margolis, E. & Pauwels, L. (eds), *The SAGE handbook visual research methods*, SAGE Publications, Inc, p. 265-283.
- Bogerts, L., Fielitz, M. (2019), " "Do you want meme war?" Understanding the visual memes of the German far right", in Fielitz, M., Thurston, N. (eds), *Post-Digital Cultures of the Far Right: Online Actions and Offline Consequences in Europe and the US*, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, p. 137-154.
- Bolaños Somoano, I. (2022), " The Right-leaning be Memeing': Extremist Uses of Internet Memes and Insights for CVE Design", *First Monday*, 27/5.
- Bruner, J. (1991), "The Narrative Construction of Reality", *Critical Inquiry*, 18/1, p. 1-21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343711>.
- Burke, S. (2018), "The discursive "othering" of Jews and Muslims in the Britain First solidarity patrol", *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 28, p. 365-377.
- Cammaerts, B. (2022), "The abnormalisation of social justice: The 'anti-woke culture war' discourse in the UK", *Discourse & Society*, 33/6, p. 730-743, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09579265221095407>.
- Caulcutt, C. (2021), "French education minister's anti-woke mission", *Politico*, 19 October 2021, <https://www.politico.eu/article/macron-education-minister-jean-michel-blanquer-anti-woke>

- Caulcutt, C. (2022), "France's culture wars reignited after Macron appoints 'woke' minister", *Politico*, 30 May 2022.
- Davies, H. C., MacRae, S. E. (2023), "An anatomy of the British war on woke", *Race & Class*, 65/2, p. 3-54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/03063968231164905>.
- Dawkins, R. (1989, [1976]) (2nd edn), *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- de Saint Laurent, C., Glăveanu, V. P., Literat, I. (2021), "Internet Memes as Partial Stories: Identifying Political Narratives in Coronavirus Memes", *Social Media + Society*, 7/1, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305121988932>.
- Drakett, J. et al. (2018), "Old jokes, new media – Online sexism and constructions of gender in Internet memes", *Feminism & Psychology*, 28/1, p. 109-127, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09593535177275>.
- Entman, R. M. (1993), "Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm", *Journal of Communication*, 43/4, p. 51-58.
- Goodwin, M. (2023), "The woke Left and extreme Islamism have joined forces to try to reshape society around values that are deeply divisive and unBritish", *The Daily Mail*, 19 November 2023, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-12766765/MATT-GOODWIN-woke-Left-extreme-Islamism-joined-forces-try-reshape-society-values-deeply-divisive-unBritish.html>
- Hainsworth, P. (2000), *The Politics of the Extreme Right: From the Margins to the Mainstream*, Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, United Kingdom.
- Hakoköngäs, E., et al. (2020), "Persuasion through bitter humor: multimodal discourse analysis of rhetoric in internet memes of two far-right groups in Finland", *Social Media + Society*, 6/2, p. 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120921575>.
- Heinich, N. (2023), *Le wokisme serait-il un totalitarisme ?*, Albin Michel.
- HernándezAguiar, L.M. (2024), "Memeinga conspiracy theory: On the biopolitical compression of the great replacement conspiracy theories", *Ethnography*, 25/1, p. 76-97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14661381221146983>.
- Hristova, S. (2014), "Visual memes as neutralizers of political dissent", *TripleC: communication, capitalism & critique*, 12/1, p. 265-276, <https://doi.org/10.31269/triplec.v12i1.507>.
- Huntington, H. E. (2016), "Pepper spray cop and the American dream: Using synecdoche and metaphor to unlock internet memes' visual political rhetoric", *Communication Studies*, 67/1, p. 77-93.
- Kaufmann, E. (2023a), "Beyond Wokeness: Cultural Socialism and Its Impact", Podcast by *Manhattan Insights*, <https://manhattan.institute/multimedia/beyond-woke-culture-socialism-and-its-impact-eric-kaufmann>.
- Kaufmann, E. (2023b), "Ideological conformity and censorship" with Eric Kaufmann, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1LqfbmT8w8>.
- Lenoir, L. D. (2022), *The memeification of "woke culture": a multimodal critical discourse analysis of its articulation in essence; O, The Oprah Magazine; and Teen Vogue*, University of Missouri, Columbia, <http://hdl.handle.net/10355/94284>.
- Luk, J. (2021), "Why 'woke' became toxic", *Aljazeera*, 24 June 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/6/24/what-is-woke-culture-and-why-has-it-become-so-toxic>.
- MacDonald, S. (2020), "What Do You (Really) Meme? Pandemic Memes as Social Political Repositories", *Leisure Sciences*, 43/1-2, p.143-151, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1773995>

- Makhortykh, M., González Aguilar, J. M. (2020), "Memory, politics and emotions: internet memes and protests in Venezuela and Ukraine", *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 34/3, p. 342-362, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2020.1764782>.
- Marwick, A., Lewis, R. (2017), "Media manipulation and disinformation online", *Data & Society Research Institute*, [https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety\\_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline.pdf](https://datasociety.net/pubs/oh/DataAndSociety_MediaManipulationAndDisinformationOnline.pdf).
- McWhorter, J. (2021), *Woke Racism: How A New Religion Has Betrayed Black America*, Portfolio/Penguin, New York.
- Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d. "Woke", Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/woke> [Accessed April 3, 2023].
- Milner, R. M. (2013), "Pop polyvocality: internet memes, public participation, and the occupy wall street movement", *International Journal of Communication*, 7, p. 2357-2390, <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1949>.
- Mirzaei, A., Wilkie, D. C., Siuki, H. (2022), "Woke brand activism authenticity or the lack of it", *Journal of Business Research*, 139, p. 1-12, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.09.044>
- Mitchell, J. (2020), *American Awakening: Identity Politics and Other Afflictions of Our Time*, Encounter Books, New York.
- Mortensen, M., Neumayer, C. (2021), "The playful politics of memes", *Information, Communication & Society*, 24/16, p. 2367-2377, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1979622>.
- Murray, M. (2003), "Narrative psychology and narrative analysis", in Camic, P. M., Rhodes, J. E., Yardley, L. (eds), *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design*, American Psychological Association, p. 95-112, <https://doi.org/10.1037/10595-006>.
- Musolff, A. (2006), "Metaphor Scenarios in Public Discourse", *Metaphor and Symbol*, 21/1, p. 23-38, [https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms2101\\_2](https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms2101_2).
- Neiman, S. (2023), *Left is Not Woke*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Outley, C., Bowen, S., Pinckney, H. (2020), "Laughing while black: Resistance, coping and the use of humor as a pandemic pastime among blacks", *Leisure Sciences. Advance online publication*, p. 305-314, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2020.1774449>.
- Pilkington, A. (2022), "Perspective Chapter: Black Lives Matter and the Anti-Woke Campaign in the UK", *IntechOpen*, doi: 10.5772/intechopen.99929.
- Pluckrose, H., Lindsay, J. A. (2020), *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything about Race, Gender, and Identity-and Why This Harms Everybody*, First edition, Pitchstone Publishing, Durham.
- Reisigl, M., Wodak, R. (2015), "The Discourse-Historical Approach", in Wodak, R., Meyer, M (eds), *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies* (Introducing Qualitative Methods series) (Third), SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 87-121.
- Rockson, K. (2023), "The representation of COVID-19. In Daily Guide's Akosua Cartoons. A multimodal critical discourse analysis", in Henaku, N., Edzordzi Agbozo, G., Nartey, M. (eds), *Communicative Perspectives on COVID-19 in Ghana*, Routledge.
- Ross, A., Rivers, D. (2017), "Digital cultures of political participation: Internet memes and the discursive delegitimization of the 2016 U.S Presidential candidates", *Discourse, Context & Media*, 16, p. 1-11, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.01.001>.

- Sandercock, L. (2003), "Out of the closet: The importance of stories and storytelling in planning practice", *Planning Theory & Practice*, 4/1, p. 11-28.
- Seiffert-Brockmann, J., Diehl, T., Dobusch, L. (2018), "Memes as games: The evolution of a digital discourse online", *New Media & Society*, 20/8, p. 2862-2879, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817735334>.
- Shifman, L. (2013), "Memes in a digital world: Reconciling with a conceptual troublemaker", *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 18/3, p. 362-377.
- Sobande, F., Kanai, A., Zeng, N. (2022), "The hypervisibility and discourses of 'wokeness' in digital culture", *Media, Culture & Society* 44/8, p. 1576-1587, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437221117490>.
- Vickery, J. R. (2014), "The curious case of confession bear: The reappropriation of online macro-image memes", *Information, Communication & Society*, 17/3, p. 301-325.
- Wodak, R., Meyer, M. (2015), *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*, SAGE Publications Ltd, New York.
- Wood, A.J., (2022), "Rishi Sunak vows to 'take on lefty woke culture that wants to cancel our history, values and women' ", *GBNews* (19 August), <https://www.gbnews.com/news/rishi-sunak-vows-to-take-on-lefty-woke-culture-that-wants-to-cancel-our-history-values-and-women/355237> (Accessed on 18 April 2024).