The Populist Brand of *Love Australia or Leave*:
A Corpus-Based Investigation of Antipodean Populism

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Abstract:
This paper explores the production, promulgation and uptake of the ideologies and discourses of *Love Australia or Leave*, a small, peripheral, right-wing populist party in Australia. It applies corpus analysis and discourse analysis to 95 blog entries posted to the party's website and comments on the party's Facebook page to investigate: 1) the main themes and ideologies put forth by the party and how they are structured and articulated; 2) the extent to which the selected content produced by *Love Australia or Leave* exhibits distinctive features of Antipodean populism; and 3) the representation and uptake of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, a contentious global issue. Findings of this article shed light on the party's ideologies and the mechanisms by which the party seeks legitimisation and unveils its platform both overtly and covertly, and casts doubt on the independence and isolationism of this party with respect to other global movements and contexts.

1. Introduction

A reporter at news.com.au featured the *Love Australia or Leave* party soon after it was launched and posed the following question: "is this new political party the most controversial we've ever seen?" (Palin). The Australian Electoral Commission approved the application for the registration of the *Love Australia or Leave* party in 2016 notwithstanding a number of objections on the grounds of the intolerance and discrimination implied by the party and its logo. Indeed, the party's original logo[1] conveyed its message unmistakably: a simple outline of Australia and the word FULL at its centre evoked nationalistic, xenophobic, and anti-immigration sentiments.

The conspicuous language and imagery adopted by the party did not guarantee its success. Rather, its founder failed to obtain a Queensland Senate seat in the July 2016 Federal Election, and the *Love Australia or Leave* party ran unsuccessfully in the 2019 Australian federal election. In light of the fact that this party was unsuccessful at obtaining political power, one may argue that a focus on its discourse and rhetoric is futile and unproductive. However, it can also be argued that minor, peripheral parties like *Love Australia or Leave* shed a series of pivotal insights into both the formation of political and ideological discourses and the uptake of these discourses, even if they exist and thrive on the fringes. Indeed, over three decades ago, political sociologist Hanna Herzog argued that despite their small size minor parties "play an active and significant role in the negotiations on the socio-political boundaries and rules of the game of a given political system" (317). Studying peripheral right-wing parties in the European context, Michelle Hale Williams argues that "peripheral parties matter, they have influence and they demonstrate substantial effects" (33). She further maintains that "despite the smallness in size

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[1] This logo was later replaced by a circular logo that included the words "LOVE AUSTRALIA," the Australian flag, and the party name written four times.

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and often extra parliamentary status of radical right-wing parties, their impact is felt" and "their entrepreneurial ability to frame issues and manipulate sentiment makes them a fascinating focus for analysis" (Williams 2). Markus Wagner—who defines niche parties as parties that "compete primarily on a small number of non-economic issues" and that "(a) do not emphasise economic issues and (b) emphasise a narrow range of non-economic issues" (847)—argues that niche parties play a pivotal role in party competition and the political system (see also Kefford for a discussion of niche parties in the Australian political context).

In the light of the influence that niche parties can have in a political system and their ability to manipulate opinions, *Love Australia or Leave* presents a worthy case of study notwithstanding its failure to rise to power. Thus, this article reports on a preliminary investigation of the right-wing populist party discourse of the peripheral party *Love Australia or Leave*. The first part of this article begins with an overview of populism, as it has been recently conceptualised globally and in the Antipodean context, before exhibiting ways in which the party has described itself in ways that align with populist rhetoric and introducing a contentious, global issue on which this paper will focus, or the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Then, it proceeds with the corpus and discourse analysis of 95 blog entries posted on the party website in order to uncover not only the themes but also the types of language and images used within these entries to promote the party platform. The second part of this article homes in on the way in which the *Love Australia or Leave* Party framed the BLM movement on its Facebook page and how the content of its posts was taken up by followers.

2. Populism and the Far-right in the Antipodes

Cas Mudde defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, the 'pure people' and 'the corrupt elite'" (4). Rob Cover traces the start of contemporary populist political rhetoric in Australia beginning with prime minister Robert Menzies who, in the middle of the twentieth century, depicted the figure of the Australian middle class as both 'authentically Australian' and 'neglected' because, unlike the wealthy and the working class, its constituents commanded less political attention. In the 1970s, Queensland conservative politician Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen reconfigured Menzies's articulation of the 'forgotten people' to encompass not the middle class but a segment of the population comprised mostly by non-urban white workers and, two decades later, Pauline Hanson and her One Nation Party presented a populist articulation of a forgotten white Australian population vulnerable to and threatened by migrants and other parts of the population (see Cover; see also Grant, Moore and Lynch for a recent and in-depth overview of the Hanson phenomenon). Although he provided an overview of the development of the discourse of the 'forgotten people' in Australia, Cover parallels among the contemporary versions of right-wing populism in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, identifying the construction of "a segment of the population as having been simultaneously *forgotten*, *neglected* or *made vulnerable* to *exclusion* yet encouraged to view themselves as the *authentic* subjects of nationhood" (2, emphasis in the original) as an important and common aspect shared by the recent populist movements in these contexts.

Benjamin Moffitt instead takes a different approach and argues that there is a subtype of populism characteristic of Australia and New Zealand—termed "Antipodean populism" (121)—that possesses a series of distinctive features that "place it somewhere between the radical right populism of Europe and the more rural-based populisms of North America" (130-131). First, contemporary Antipodean populism usually manifests on the ideological right, and it seeks to exclude 'others' and protect 'the people'. 'The people', in turn, are understood as the 'forgotten' and/or 'authentic' people who are closely connected to rural living and distant from

multicultural (non-white) urban centres and are set against three groups: 'the elite', consisting not only of the usual populist targets but also urban dwellers; the immigrant Other; and Indigenous peoples, which mainly manifests in aversion to government assistance for First Nations Australians. Importantly, Moffitt claims "prominent concerns about global or transnational forces—such as the UN or G20 … —that characterise elements of European and American populism are not a major feature of populism in the region" (132). The history and geographical position of the two nations underpin the anxiety about 'invasions' by the other—notoriously the Asian Other—and, according to Moffitt, also explains Australia's "near-pathological obsession with 'boat people'" (134). Lastly, Moffitt argues that a strong anti-elitist undercurrent may foster a predisposition to supporting populists in the region and Antipodean populism is a relatively mainstream phenomenon that plays out through major parties.

Recent research has shed important insights on contemporary far-right populism in Australia, all with an eye to social media discourses. For instance, within an exploration of the mechanisms that govern why individuals identify with and assume the exclusivist ideologies—particularly Islamophobia—of Australian far-right extremist groups, Jade Hutchinson discusses the use of social media among these groups. She argues that social media allow far-right extremists to communicate anonymously in exclusive environments that are uninhibited by opposing views and factual evidence and create echo chambers. Hutchinson maintains that the new far-right in Australia has "re-discovered how to merge ideological and political purpose against foreign identities through the media. Once sufficiently manipulated, today's media platforms can rapidly radicalise and recruit a population at an unprecedented pace" (6). Mario Peucker, Debra Smith and Muhammad Iqbal analyse the textual content of 12 far-right groups' active Facebook pages in Victoria, create a three-fold categorisation of these groups—or anti-Islam, cultural superiority, and racial superiority—, and identify long-term thematic shifts in messaging, which the authors suggest are strategic in nature. Lastly, Arianna Grasso analyses a corpus of tweets posted by selected populist leaders in Queensland State about the refugee crisis to reveal that asylum seekers are portrayed primarily as Islamic terrorists. As a whole, these studies exhibit how social media present fertile grounds for the exploration of contemporary populist discourse.

In the light of these theorisations of populism in the Antipodean context and the research that has been conducted on far-right and/or populist groups on social media, the present article aims to contribute to these understandings with a case study that explores the production, promulgation and uptake of the ideologies and discourses of one small, fringe party described in more detail in the following section.

3. Establishing the *Love Australia or Leave* Party as a Right-Wing Populist Party

The aforementioned 2016 article dedicated to the *Love Australia or Leave* party featured the contents of a news.com.au interview with party founder Kim Vuga, once a Facebook campaigner for the 'Stop the Boats' movement who gained notoriety after she was cast in the SBS docuseries *Go back to where you came from*. Citing foreign aid and demanding that "Australia and its people must come first"—reminiscent of the isolationist "America First" policy pursued by Donald Trump—, Vuga stated: "it's evident that our political leaders are more concerned with the welfare of other nations at the expense of the Australian people" (see Palin, 2016). This type of right-wing populist rhetoric also emerges within the content of the party website. For instance, the 'Meet Kim' area of the website[2] begins with the following affirmations:

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[2] https://www.loveaustraliaorleave.com.au/meet-kim

> The present political debate in Australia, is dominated by arrogant elites. Their policies and aims, are no longer those of the mass of our people. It is time for the majority to take back the shaping of the debate and use the power of our votes to enact policies that reflect our wishes and values.

Here, establishing a 'the elite' versus 'the people' dichotomy, the party content sets "arrogant elites" as the antagonist who advocates for policies and aims that are at odds with "the mass of our people" and the "wishes and values" of the majority.

Another main tenet of the party relates to Islamophobia. Shortly before the 2019 Federal election, an article in the *Herald Sun* entitled "Crazy Policies of Australia's Minor Parties Vying For Your Vote at the Federal Election" also featured the *Love Australia or Leave* party and included a memorable image macro supplied by the party Facebook page. In the image, Kim Vuga is pictured with the Australian flag as her backdrop and the text, in all caps, reads "IT'S TIME TO BAN ISLAMIC IMMIGRATION," thereby foregrounding anti-Islamic immigration. In the 2016 news.com.au interview, Vuga states: "We've been lucky. We've seen a spate of terror attacks, foiled attacks, we've seen Islam on our shores." Thus, in line with recent analyses of right-wing populism (see March), in addition to the vertical people-elite exclusion, evidence of a horizontal exclusion between 'the people' and 'dangerous others' also emerges in the rhetoric of the *Love Australia or Leave* party.

4. The Black Lives Matter Movement

The acquittal of George Zimmerman, who fatally shot 17-year-old African American Trayvon Martin in Florida, was a turning point for American race relations. Although the teenager's murder had already precipitated widespread protests, the words "Black Lives Matter (BLM)" first appeared on Facebook subsequent to the 2013 verdict. The BLM movement emerged as a response to high-profile killings by police of Black Americans, but it came to encompass a range of issues that affect Black Americans including healthcare and racial inequality, and it quickly suffused beyond the bounds of the United States to become a global movement.

Perez Hazel, who identifies 2017 as the start of the BLM movement in Australia, recognises a shared history between the United States and Australia "of inequality and violence that disadvantage their Black communities" (61). However, Perez Hazel adds that 'Blak' Aboriginal Australians not only face "the struggle to reform the prison system, end deaths in custody, stop the taking and/or killing of their children" but are also "fighting to restore their right to land, to stop the closure of their remote communities and to gain political and personal power" (61). In the Australian context, the BLM movement became a platform through which activists and community groups could engage in and fight for these and other issues. The intensification of the movement following the 2020 murder of George Floyd in the US also occurred in the Australian context and again interested the lives of Indigenous peoples. A powerful, exemplary example was put forth by the leaders of Australian nursing and midwifery in their unified call to action (Geia et al. 298):

> Now is the time for Indigenous and non-Indigenous nurses and midwives to make a stand together, for justice and equity in our teaching, learning, and practice. Together we will dismantle systems, policy, and practices in health that oppress. The Black Lives Matter movement provides us with a 'now window' of accepted dialogue to build a better, culturally safe Australian nursing and midwifery workforce, ensuring that Black Lives Matter in all aspects of health care.

One of the main foci of this article is how the *Love Australia or Leave* party (re)presents the BLM movement and this phenomenon was chosen as an object of study to explore a series of nexuses, among which those that connect/differentiate distinct geohistorical contexts and right-wing populist discourses. Specifically, the article examines social media—and specifically Facebook—threads initiated by the *Love Australia or Leave* party website and dedicated to the BLM movement and what people make of the extremist discourses therein. In so doing, this article contributes to other recent studies that have analysed how the public has interacted with the BLM movement on social media (see, for instance, Ince et al. for a discussion of the dynamics of the BLM movement on Twitter) and pays heed to the covert and overt ways in which anti-stances and sentiments are occasioned and linguistically deployed in online talk.

5. Methodology

5.1. Research Aims

Via the analysis of select online content of the *Love Australia or Leave* party, the article investigates 1) the main themes and ideologies put forth by the party and how they are structured and articulated; 2) the extent to which the selected content produced by *Love Australia or Leave* exhibits the distinctive features of Antipodean populism outlined by Moffitt; and 3) the representation and uptake of a contentious global issue (the BLM movement).

5.2. Data Set 1: Blog Posts

The first data source is 95 blog entries posted on the *Love Australia or Leave* party website (https://www.loveaustraliaorleave.com.au/) from June 2019 to June 2020, which constitute a small 61,058-token corpus. All blog entries and view count data were retrieved from the party website and were written by Kim Vuga and her associates. The scatterplot in figure 1 displays the view count over time of all but three blog entries which had extremely high view counts and instead are shown in an adjacent table. In fact, the average view count across all blog posts was about 709.3 views but the average decreased to 294.3 when the three outliers were excluded. Additionally, the greatest proportion of entries were posted in 2019, with over 50 percent of entries occurring in the first two months under study.
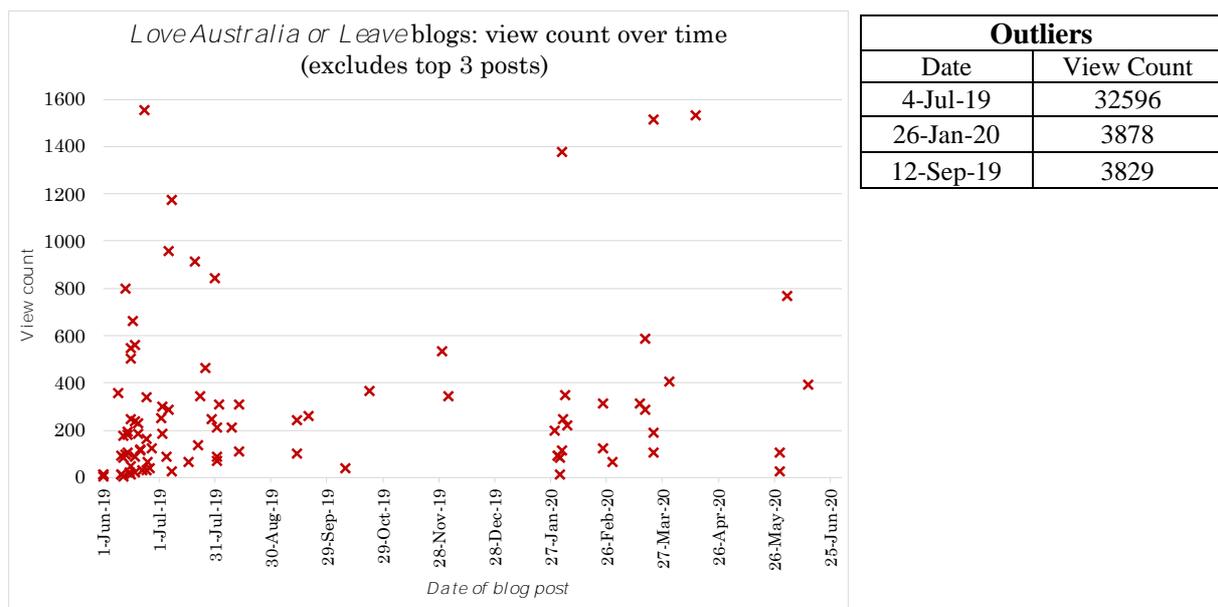

Outliers	
Date	View Count
4-Jul-19	32596
26-Jan-20	3878
12-Sep-19	3829

Figure 1. Scatterplot *Love Australia or Leave* blogs: view count over time (excludes top 3 posts)

The first level of analysis of the blog corpus, aimed at identifying the main themes and ideologies put forth by the party, was corpus analysis. This was first performed using the online text analysis tool Sketch Engine to explore the most frequently used lemmas (nouns), and their original context via the concordance tool across all 95 blog entries. Then, comparative keyword analysis was conducted against the Australian domain .au subcorpus of the reference corpus English Web Corpus (enTenTen) 2020 constituted by roughly 1.3 billion tokens from texts collected from the Internet between 2019 and 2021. This reference corpus was deemed fitting because it was not only a temporal match with the small corpus under study, but it also reflected the same geographical context and, therefore, variety of English. Comparative keyword analysis generated a list of keywords, or words that occur with unusual frequency in a given text, among those with a frequency of at least 10 in the blog corpus.

Then, in order to glean more detailed insights into the themes embedded within the blog entries, their structure and other salient aspects, a discourse analytical approach was applied to the analysis of the top ten blog entries. This analysis first comprised consideration of the structure of the blog entries and their multimodal content, including cover images and other features (i.e., hashtags). It was then followed by a closer, more critical reading of the language, style and representations used within the posts and how contextual information comprising, for instance, greater socio-political phenomena was incorporated (or omitted), and how exclusionary talk was enacted.

5.3. Data Set 2: Facebook posts and Comments

The second data source were the three posts about the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests posted on 2, 5 and 6 June 2020 and the 492 Facebook user comments added in response to these posts on the '*Love Australia or Leave* Political Party' Facebook page. The content of the posts was analysed discursively to better understand how the BLM movement was framed by the party. The Facebook user comments, which constitute a small, 9,487-token corpus, were analysed via corpus analysis (most frequent lexical bundles and concordancing) to explore what users make of the extremist discourses in these threads.

6. Seeking legitimacy, unveiling ideology: Blogging *Love Australia or Leave*

The present section delves into the analysis of 95 blog entries posted on the *Love Australia or Leave* party website. An overview of the findings of the corpus analysis of the blog entries precedes a closer look into the structure and content of the most viewed blog entries.

6.1. Corpus Analysis

The identification of the most frequently used nouns, displayed in Table 1, provides insights into the most common content and themes in the blog entries.

	Item	Frequency		Item	Frequency
1	Australia	294	11	charity	78
2	people	190	12	day	78
3	government	162	13	country	75
4	time	137	14	police	75
5	money	104	15	case	73
6	year	103	16	media	71
7	China	88	17	gun	64
8	UN	86	18	climate	62
9	Cross	85	19	party	61
10	child	84	20	world	60

Table 1. Most frequently occurring lemmas (nouns)

The most frequent noun, 'Australia', also supported by 'people' and 'country' (which in 15 instances co-occurred with 'our'), denotes a nationalistic focus of the party. Although 'government' was at times used to refer to other nations' administrations (e.g.: 'Chinese Communist government' and 'NZ government'), an exploration of the term in context using Sketch Engine's concordance tool reveals that it was most often used to refer to the Australian government in adversarial terms, as also exhibited in the following three examples from the first half of June 2019:

> a) TYPICAL! Leave it to someone that is disadvantage [sic] themselves to be doing more than the **governments** (both left and right sided) have done to tackle the ignored issue of Australian homelessness. ("Homeless Man, Born Without Hands, Sells Sketches to Tackle Homelessness," 11 Jun 2019)
> b) For the men that we send to the front line to defend not only our soil but our citizens, our **government** needs to do so much better regarding these mens [sic] welfare upon their return. ("Last Year, 49 Veterans Took Their Own Lives, Almost One Every Week," 11 Jun 2019)
> c) The arrogance of the **government** sometimes defies logic. ("Veterans Suicide by Government Red Tape," 13 Jun 2019).

In these examples, the Australian government is framed as indolent, negligent, and hubristic. 'China', 'UN', 'Cross' (part of Red Cross), and 'media' also emerged as primary antagonists for the party that evoked Sinophobic, anti-global, anti-aid, and anti-media sentiments, respectively. Additionally, with respect to policy-related terms, we see 'gun' for 'gun control' and 'climate' for 'climate change', both of which are policies that ran counter to the party's platform.

Comparative keyword analysis was conducted using Sketch Engine in order to generate the list of keywords contained in Table 2. The top 20 keywords are arranged by their 'keyness', or a statistic determined by a Log-likelihood calculation performed by the software.

	Item	Freq. (focus)	Freq. (ref.)	Score		Item	Freq. (focus)	Freq. (ref.)	Score
1	Celeste	30	1096	266.9	*11*	nazism	16	1246	134.2
2	GetUp	31	1247	259.4	*12*	Cubbie	10	409	125.3
3	Folau	41	2164	252.1	*13*	mosque	43	6938	111.1
4	GoFundMe	22	687	236.3	*14*	Warragamba	11	874	108.3
5	Arps	14	48	222.1	*15*	Ardern	11	1196	94.3
6	Wuhan	25	1340	201.9	*16*	Waugh	13	1728	91.8
7	Sharrouf	12	69	187.6	*17*	fascism	22	4211	85.1
8	jihadi	13	443	159.5	*18*	left-wing	21	4601	75.9
9	Khaled	12	445	147.1	*19*	mis-management	11	1884	73.9
10	burka	10	175	145.2	*20*	Vinnies	10	1603	73.7

Table 2. Comparative keyword analysis - blog corpus (focus) v. .au subcorpus of enTenTen20 corpus (ref.)

The top results shed light on the news stories—and the underlying ideologies embedded therein—that the blog featured. Terms specifically related to Islam, or 'jihadi', 'burka', 'mosque', were among the top 20 keywords and the examination of these terms in context demonstrated that their lexical domain related to Islamophobia. Additional keywords evoke the political opposition: we see the predictable 'left-wing' along with New Zealand prime minister and Labour Party leader Jacinda 'Ardern' and Progressive Australian political activist group

'GetUp'. Of note, far-right extremist labels 'nazism' and 'fascism' are also occasioned in oppositional terms. 'Celeste' Barber (who launched a fundraiser for the New South Wales Rural Fire Service following the 2019-20 Australian bushfires), the online fundraising platform 'GoFundMe', and The Society of St Vincent de Paul (the 'Vinnies') refer to the misuse of funds and donations, a critique that is also inherent in the term 'mismanagement'. Other keywords evidence other issues to which the *Love Australia or Leave* blog dedicated coverage, including support for Israel 'Folau's' talk on—or against—gender fluidity, support for New Zealander Philip 'Arps' who was condemned for sharing footage of the Christchurch mosque massacre, caution against Australian media and their misleading coverage of COVID-19 in 'Wuhan' at the onset of the pandemic, and disdain for the return to Australia of foreign fighter Khaled 'Sharrouf'.

Overall, the snapshot obtained by this analysis suggests that the main narrative propounded by the party is that the welfare of the people, understood in nationalistic terms, has been overlooked by select flawed or corrupt institutions and threatened by 'dangerous' (e.g.: Muslim, institutions limiting freedom of expression) and deceitful (e.g.: liberals, the media) others.

6.2. The Top Ten Blog Entries

To delve into these aspects in more detail, the top ten blog entries were identified by their view count. A perusal of these titles, displayed in Table 3, evidences the groups that serve as the other—against which the people are set—which are largely in line with the corpus analysis findings.

Date	Views	Blog Title
4-Jul-19	32596	United Nations slaps caveat on Warragamba Dam
26-Jan-20	3878	Coronavirus outbreak: What the Media aren't telling you
12-Sep-19	3829	$4 Million family day-care fraud syndicate Western Sydney
23-Jun-19	1554	Hypocrisy - the Media and the Left
14-Apr-20	1530	Sydney: Villawood hardened criminals threatening to hang themselves if not set free
22-Mar-20	1514	Australia sent 90 tonnes of our medical supplies to China just weeks ago
2-Feb-20	1376	Coronavirus outbreak: China's been lying to the world
8-Jul-19	1174	Convicted for "Causing Muslim Pedophiles Anxiety"
6-Jul-19	956	UN is coming to Australia's prisons & care facilties [sic] to investigate with 'unfettered' access
20-Jul-19	914	Islamic Council of Victoria cries Islamophobia as two mosques & Islamic morgue given green light

Table 3. Top Ten Blog Entries (by view count)

Notably, although Moffitt held that concerns over global or transnational forces are not a major feature of Antipodean populism, we see that two of these widely viewed titles condemn the United Nations. Other antagonists include 'the Media', 'the Left', 'China', and Islam, and they are framed as deceitful, manipulative, hypocritical, and again not serving in the interests of Australians. Other devices we see utilised are scare quotes that draw scrutiny and express sarcasm, and the use of strongly negatively connoted terms (e.g.: 'claps', 'hypocrisy', 'hardened criminals', 'cries') that serve as linguistic markers of emphasis and intensification.

6.3. Blog structure and content

The blogs were characterised by structural similarity. Most of these top blogs begin with a largely neutral account of an event, as exhibited in the following example of the beginning of

the post titled "Islamic Council of Victoria cries Islamophobia as two mosques & Islamic morgue given green light":

> The City of Casey held their council meeting on Tuesday night, 16 July and has approved a planning application for a (Mosque), place of worship to be located at 365 – 367 Belgrave – Hallam Road, Narre Warren North. Police attended and stood guard outside the chambers, with Mayor Amanda Stapledon confirming there were "safety concerns". The proponents of the proposed mosque tried to lodge an application for the mosque in 2016 however, council knocked it back due to failing to meet planning requirements.

This section includes a description of the approval of the construction of mosques and an Islamic morgue that adheres to journalistic conventions and recounts details—such as precise dates ('16 July'), locations ('365 – 367 Belgrave – Hallam Road, Narre Warren North') and people involved ('Mayor Amanda Stapledon') as well as contextual information (previous 2016 application attempt)—to frame this as a news story. This approach can be viewed as a legitimisation strategy, wherein facts and exact figures are deployed to serve as indicators of precision and accuracy to reinforce the author's—and, in this case the website's—authority as a voice of expertise (Reyes), and therefore as a reliable provider of information.

After this initial framing, the subsequent section of the blog entries presents a shift in style to include highly evaluative and opinionated language through which the party's stance and platform is disclosed. For instance, the end of the aforementioned blog entry about the building of mosques is reproduced below:

> Shocked residents have vowed to take the fight further to the planning tribunal VCAT with many disgusted by councils [sic] decision to approve the mosque to go ahead. Ironically it appears that as long as it doesn't look like a mosque, is not seen from the road and everything is hidden and that the mosque blends in—everything is okay. Add in a garden roof top and presto—planning application is approved. Nearly 800 objections yet, the council have refused to listen to the residents. Is it any wonder why people are fed up? It is time to make sure that social issues surrounding mosques and the real impacts on communities are also taken into account instead of just fighting mosque applications on planning issues alone.

In this section, hyperbolic, highly charged language is used to describe residents against the construction of mosques. They are not only 'shocked' and 'disgusted' but also 'fed up' that their '800' objections have been ignored by the local council; thus, recalling the Menzian rhetoric of a neglected people. Then, the narrative aims for an ironic effect both explicitly with the opening 'ironically' and implicitly by creating contrast between positive lexical choices ('a garden roof top', 'presto') and the negative framing of the approval of mosques. With this latter mechanism the author presents a core stance of the party, included in the final sentence: the representation of Islam poses critical social issues and has 'real impacts' on communities.

Another entry entitled "United Nations Slaps Caveat on Warragamba Dam," which reports on the request by a UNESCO committee for Australia to submit an environmental impact statement for the construction of a wall above a dam, also generally follows this same structural pattern in which a representation of the event that draws on a seemingly objective account of the facts is followed by the enactment of charged ideological discourse. Below is the ending of this blog entry:

> The irony is that the United Nations, that insists we up the intake of our immigration program, is now the same entity stifling plans that would ensure the water supply to the current residents and immigrants that will arrive here under their open borders agenda. It's time for Australia to remove itself from the clutches of the over-reaching United Nations once and for all. Sign the Petition to Leave the United Nations: https://www.leave-un.com.au/petition
> JOIN THE LOVE AUSTRALIA OR LEAVE PARTY 'LET'S LEAVE THE UN'!
> #unitednations   #unitednationscaveat   #leaveunitednations   #unexit #unitednationsopenbordersfail #unitednationsprohibitswatersupply #sydneywater #worldheritagecommitteesux   #warragambadam   #buildthewall   #raisethewall #leavetheun

Here, the author frames the UN as an intruder meddling in Australian affairs, first by stating that it insists on an increase in the intake of immigrants and then by maintaining that it is 'stifling plans' related to the water supply. This paves the way for the unveiling of an element of the *Love Australia or Leave* party platform: the appeal 'for Australia to remove itself from the clutches of the over-reaching United Nations once and for all'.

Noteworthy is also the use of hashtags that conclude the blog entry. While most accentuate the 'Leave the UN' message (i.e., #unexit, #leavetheun), others connect to populist rhetoric championed in other contexts. Although the proposal on which the blog post focuses refers to building an actual wall on a dam, #buildthewall and #raisethewall are undeniably associated to the inflammatory rhetoric about building a wall between the US and Mexico famously propagated by Donald Trump to accentuate anti-immigration sentiment. When these slogans are re-contextualised within anti-UN discourse, they bridge the ideologic stance(s) they represent (anti-refugee, anti-immigration, and xenophobia) with UN membership.

Another critical aspect that cannot be overlooked with respect to the content of the blogs are the images embedded within blog entries. Indeed, the framing of the story of one of the top blog entries entitled "$4 Million Family Day-Care Fraud Syndicate Western Sydney" was akin to the coverage by other news agencies, with only some evaluative language referencing the perpetrators of the fraudulent scheme. The ideological stance of the post is in fact not made clear by the textual content but by the visual content. Indeed, the cover of the story, shown on the left of Figure 2, depicts a woman wearing a hijab smoking a cigarette who looks startled at the camera, as if she has been caught red-handed. Inserted within the blog post, this image channels the larger Islamophobic party message that is not overtly stated within the text of the entry.

Figure 2. Blog entry images

Another example is included in the blog entry "Coronavirus outbreak: What the Media aren't telling you." As suggested by the title, the content of the entry frames the media as the primary antagonist but the cover image of the story, shown on the right of Figure 2, depicts a very different story. A central male Caucasian figure, shaded in blue, is surrounded by figures who are Asian, as suggested by both how their eyes are drawn and also by the use of red, reminiscent of the Communist menace, who are ominously approaching him. Parts of the central figure, including his body and nose, are coloured in red, suggesting contamination not only by an infectious virus but also from the menacing figures around him whose facial expressions suggest they are far from well-intentioned. This image therefore positions the 'dangerous others' as a deliberate threat of infection, personifying the deadly COVID-19 virus. Most poignantly, they are constituted by a specific race, thus serving as a pictorial embodiment of Sinophobia.

In summary, the top *Love Australia or Leave* party blog entries generally begin by presenting a largely neutral news story that reads as unbiased and impartial, thereby seeking legitimisation. This initial authorisation makes way to the deployment of predicational and delegitimisation strategies aimed at depicting the opposition—whether it be local pro-Islam authorities, the UN, criminals of Islamic faith or Asians—as a menacing or deceitful force intent on quashing the rights, sovereignty, and wellbeing of the Australian people. Visual and textual elements construct and reinforce the party's explicit platform and less explicit ideologies that also latch onto the ideologies professed by other populist movements in different contexts such as Donald Trump's anti-immigration "Build the Wall" campaign. This latter aspect, in fact, casts doubt on the position that the *Love Australia or Leave* party is more isolationist in nature than other populist parties in European or North American contexts. More insight will be shed on this aspect in the following analysis on BLM coverage by the party on Facebook.

7. BLM through the Lens of the *Love Australia or Leave* Party

This section shifts the focus to the *Love Australia or Leave* Party Facebook page, which had 24,881 followers as of 15 March 2021, and homes in on party posts dedicated to the BLM movement. Following a summary of the comments, shares and reactions, including a break-down of the specific reaction type, included in Table 4, a brief description of three posts under study follows.

	Comments	Shares	Reactions	Angry	Like	Haha	Sad	Love	Wow
2-Jun-20	122	67	236	140	73	14	7	1	1
5-Jun-20	105	45	334	3	269	21	0	41	0
6-Jun-20	265	38	229	95	96	28	4	3	3

Table 4. Reactions to the three BLM posts

The first Facebook post under study was uploaded on 2 June 2020 with the purpose of promoting a blog post written by Kim Vuga and entitled "THE ABC HIJACKS GEORGE FLOY'D [sic] DEATH MAKING IT ALL ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS." The Facebook post features, in all caps, the title of the blog followed by the words: "THE ABC SHOWS IT'S [sic] TRUE COLOURS!" along with the cover image of the attached link to the post, which includes a backdrop of the American and Australian flags and the depiction of a didgeridoo player. Curiously, the use of this image was already compellingly censured by Randin Graves in a 2017 article entitled "Yolngu are People 2: They're not Clip Art" because the image of a young Djapu clan man from Yirrkala was "chosen to feature a token Aboriginal didgeridoo player" to promote an event with an American didgeridoo player. The choice to use this visual is even

more striking in the case of the *Love Australia or Leave* blog post because the post does not refer to music or cultural practice but to First Nations Australians as a whole, therefore presenting a highly stereotyped image.

With respect to the text of the Facebook post, the author presents an overt attack on the media —and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in particular—for 'hijacking' the high-profile murder of an African American and 'making it all about the Indigenous'. The reassignment of emphasis from African Americans to First Nations Australians allows the news agency to show its 'true colours', or ostensibly forcing a connection between an event that occurred in a distinct context to the Australian context and/or displaying favouritism for pro-Indigenous causes. Although the actor remains the ABC, within this post is embedded a covert attack against First Nations Australians, who are stripped of agency but are nonetheless co-opting a movement. Of the three posts, this post received the greatest number of shares and the greatest proportion of 'angry' reactions. This finding is in line with recent research that has suggested that users are more likely to share what makes them angry and upset over what they like or love (see e.g., Larsson).

The second post was uploaded on 5 June 2020, and it celebrates a New South Wales Supreme Court decision to ban BLM protests. It presents the lowest number of comments but highest number of reactions, with over 92 percent constituted by 'like' or 'love'. Before including a link to the ABC story about the ban (interesting due to how the news organisation was framed in the aforementioned post), the post reads as follows:

> 🚨 🚨 BREAKING NEWS 🚨 🚨
> NSW Supreme Court bans Sydney Black Lives Matter protest 👏 👏 👏 😜
> Normally I would agree with ANY protests but given that the lives and the health of ALL Australians matter as we come out the other side of COVID19, it is important that we take the advice of the health directives.
> Otherwise we will undo all our hard work.
> Why? Because #AllLivesMatter

After literally applauding the Supreme Court decision with the use of clapping hands sign emoji, the author clarifies that s/he '[n]ormally … would agree with ANY protests' but does not in this instance due to the importance of health directives. However, the reference to the health of 'ALL Australians'—with 'all' written in caps as an intensification measure—is a thinly veiled reference to the 'All lives matter' countermovement made explicit in the final hashtag '#AllLivesMatter'.

The All lives matter slogan also emerged in the last Facebook post under study, from 6 June 2020, that responds to a local BLM rally organised by First Nations Australians activists. The third post received more comments (265) than reactions (229). This is aligned with research that has evidenced that negative posts tend to receive more comments than likes, since users tend to provide their own opinions on posts of this nature without liking them (e.g., Rafi et al.). Indeed, the number of 'angry' reactions almost equal 'likes'. The text of the post, inserted before a photograph of the two rally organisers including survivor of the Stolen Generations Florence Onus and a link to the event, follows:

> Black Lives Matter rally has been organised for Townsville today, with the organisers Florence Onus and Brenton Creed wanting the entire community to jump on their bandwagon.

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> Black Lives Matter only fuels the race debate, without acknowledging the real issues because they only see one colour.
> ALL we ever wanted as Australians is to be treated all the same, not because of one's colour.
> Therein lies the real issue when it comes to racism, it's groups like this along with the media that continue to divide us creating a us and them.
> Just how many other's [sic] died in Australia when it comes to deaths in custody?
> At the end of the day shouldn't ALL LIVES MATTER, ……. shouldn't it?
> So who's a racist now?
> #AllLivesMatter

The critique of the BLM rally embedded within this post begins with negatively framing the organisers' intent. First, by using 'the entire community', the author implies that uncritical acceptance of the BLM movement is expected of everyone, and the figurative expression 'jump on their bandwagon' further accentuates a perceived need for full and committed espousal of the movement. The author then reveals their stance on BLM—or negative appraisal based on the belief that the movement 'only fuels the race debate' and ignores 'the real issues'—thereby not only problematising the movement but also casting a negative light on the organisers. The stance object becomes the movement, rather than the rally organisers, which is positioned—alongside the media—as the real perpetrator of racist acts because they create an 'us' versus 'them' divide, wherein who constitutes the two parties is unspecified, but one may presume that 'us' is constituted by whites and 'them' by non-whites. Indeed, the question 'So who's a racist now?' redirects the onus of perpetuating racial inequality to the media and the BLM movement, further solidified with the final hashtag #AllLivesMatter.

The appropriation of the 'All Lives Matter' (ALM) counter-slogan is in line with the adoption of aforementioned hashtags #buildthewall and #raisethewall. The use of ALM became prevalent almost immediately after the emergence of BLM in the American context, alongside 'Blue Lives Matter', launched by US police departments, unions, and support groups. Bock and Figueroa characterise the ALM slogan as "seemingly inoffensive but tone deaf to the racial disparities of American life" and as one of the "battling hashtags" that "amplified the contentious discourse" surrounding the BLM movement (3098). Sang Hea Kil adds that "ALM's race-neutral flattening not only helps to deny BLM's claim of police racism, but also creates a slippery slope to deny the very long U.S. history of anti-Black racism" (35). Thus, ALM serves the purpose of muting racism against non-whites on a sociohistorical level.

With respect to the analysis of the aggregate Facebook comments written in response to these posts, the most frequent lexical bundle was not 'Black Lives Matter' (only 7 occurrences) but 'All Lives Matter' (21 occurrences). This suggests the uptake of the ALM slogan put forth by the *Love Australia or Leave* Facebook page posts and may also be evidence of awareness of the language used surrounding the BLM movement in other global contexts, and primarily in the US.

Another salient aspect that emerged was that BLM was principally reframed to concern First Nations Australians across the three posts. In the light of this, it is interesting to consider the uptake of this message by Facebook users who replied to the posts. Indeed, if we look at the concordance results with the word 'aboriginal', depicted in Table 5, there is evidence of Moffitt's assessment that Antipodean populism features Indigenous peoples as an antagonistic group principally expressed in terms of aversion to government assistance. In these five randomly selected comments, we see only one attack on the media agency ABC, but this is

explicitly connected to anti-Indigenous sentiment where ABC is renamed 'Aboriginal betterment cause'. Then we see much of the blame turned to Indigenous peoples, for 'jumping in on' (adopting the language used by the party) Floyd's murder, for getting 'extra special treatment', and for taking government money. There is evidence of an uptake of the reversed racism charge: taxpayer money allocated to the Aboriginal community unduly benefits said community and does not contribute to the wellbeing of 'whites'.

	Left	KWIC	Right
1	They should be ashamed of themselves and so to the	aboriginal	community jumping in on that poor mans death for their own benefit, they are not treated anywhere near the way American black people are
2	Does ABC stand for	Aboriginal	Betterment Cause.
3	Here the	aboriginal	people get $30 billion every year, from the taxpayers whites don't, so where's the white privilege?
4	Well if you want to be treated the same, how about we take the first question off every government form, are you	Aboriginal	or Torres Straight Islander, because if you are you get extra special treatment in this country because of the colour of your skin, that's racism.
5	You hear these Black Life Matters people saying the government is not doing enough for	aboriginal	people which is a load of garbage, over the years billions of taxpayer dollars has been given to the welfare of the Aboriginals

Table 5. Concordance results with the word 'aboriginal' (random selection)

In conclusion, the latter part of this article analysed both the *Love Australia or Leave* party Facebook posts and user reception of posts related to the BLM movement. This analysis, albeit brief, cast some light on how this debate was co-opted in a completely different geographical context. While in the blog posts Indigenous were positioned as among the people—especially when juxtaposed against Muslims or Asians—they were instead positioned as blame-worthy and undeserving on Facebook. Therefore, the party and its users attack the opposition and index stances of anti-press and anti-people of colour, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Indigenous sentiments within the message of the *Love Australia or Leave* party.

8. Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis of select online content produced by the *Love Australia or Leave* party revealed that the main narrative propounded by the party is that the welfare of the people, understood in nationalistic terms, has been neglected by institutions and threatened by 'dangerous' (e.g.: Muslim, Asian) and deceitful (e.g.: liberals, the media) others. Blog entries opened by presenting expected journalistic conventions and details that framed the story as legitimate and impartial, and the source as an authoritative and reliable voice of expertise (Reyes), before explicitly revealing the stance of the party through which the adversary—multiply understood in each blog entry—as a menacing or deceitful force intent on quashing the rights, sovereignty, and wellbeing of the Australian people. Hashtags and visual elements were used to connect to the ideologies professed by other populist movements in different contexts such as Donald Trump's "Build the Wall" campaign and to construct and lay bare covert ideologies such as Islamophobia in a story of embezzlement and Sinophobia in a story dedicated to COVID-19.

In terms of distinctive features of Antipodean populism outlined by Moffitt, this analysis of the selected online content reveals that the *Love Australia or Leave* Party is exclusive and manifests on the right. A main purpose of the discourse constructed by the party is to protect the people against antagonists. However, we did not see evidence of an authentic people that is necessarily attached to rural areas, instead the dichotomy developed was primarily 'Australian' versus

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'outsider/foreigner'. In this vein, urban dwellers were not demonised but the usual right-wing populist targets—or the media and the left—were set as the antagonists, as were China and Islam. The UN also emerged as a primary target, in line with other populist movements and in opposition to Moffitt's specifications. However, the way in which the UN was described—or in terms of the inappropriateness of its meddling in Australian affairs—is well aligned with Moffitt's description of the region's anxiety about invasion from the Other.

In addition, the analysis of the representation and uptake of the BLM movement suggests a desire for the *Love Australia or Leave* Party to position the movement as belonging to a different context, therefore it reflected on African Americans and not on Australian minorities, and it attacked news agencies that connected the plight of black Americans to the plight of First Nations Australians. However, the party co-opted the phrase "All Lives Matter" thereby joining in the countermovement, which originated in the United States, and used this basis to position the media and activists as threatening the wellbeing of white Australians. This provides evidence of a pervasion of global populist sentiments beyond national boundaries likely accelerated by the global nature of social media communication. This finding may be indicative of a trend that calls into question whether a unique Antipodean brand of populism can continue to exist for long.

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