

## *Original Paper*

# Slurs in Identity Politics

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### **Abstract**

*Slurs are words that diminish the worth of members of our groups. The UK broadcast regulator Ofcom has a list of highly offensive terms that it recommends broadcasters not to use. Bangladeshis, Poles, Greeks and lower-class white males remain of low visibility to Ofcom. Four identities that have high visibility in broadcast television were found to show low levels of slurs and Israeli to have a moderate level. British Asian Muslim identity has many pejorative terms, though most are Arabic and not well-known in English. The terms “gonimoter maal” and “gawur” could be considered severe slurs as they have resulted in rape or murder. “Misogyny” is currently used freely by broadcasters. Thorough lexicology here failed to find a credible psychology for “hatred of women” or a credible set of actions. Presumed actions were found to be mass nouns combining threat, non-sentience, pathology, doctrine, quirk, sometimes crime, and sometimes a comparison with harmful chemicals. They remove sentience from the adversary and preclude empathy and dialogue. Ofcom might ask respondents if they consider “misogynist” a slur.*

### **Keywords**

*Slur, pejorative, gonimoter maal, gawur, misogyny, incel, Gilead*

## **1. Introduction**

Slurs are “remarks that criticise someone and are likely to have a harmful effect on their reputation” (Cambridge) and have the effect of asserting the superiority of an identity over out groups. Slurring is a synonym for dysphemic, pejorative (noun and adjective), denigratory, deprecatory, critical and demeaning. Approbative is its antonym and would be used on the rare occasions that an explicitly positive noun for an out group is needed. In between are euphemisms. The “euphemism treadmill” is best illustrated by the act of human defecation. “Loo” and “bathroom” have replaced “toilet”, an 18th-century euphemism, replacing the older euphemism “house-of-office”, which in turn replaced the

even older euphemisms “privy-house” and “bog-house”. Slurs are often in local dialect or an ancestral language and therefore difficult to track in English texts. This paper searched for pejoratives also in Arabic, Hebrew, Mirpuri and Bengali text, though this will still miss slurs known to native speakers in spoken form only.

Ethnonyms are names of tribes, clans, ethnic communities or ethnolinguistic groups, with language usually being the main criterion for membership. The word ethnonym is extended here so that the perceptions of gays and lesbians, and of people with a disability can be included. Ethnonym could in principle adumbrate “nation”, but the latter term is simpler and preferable here. Nationality is a straightforward ethnonym, since for legal purposes it is the country the issues the individual’s passport. The word exonym (or xenonym) is a name used by outsiders to refer to that identity, e.g. “German”, by comparison with the endonym “Deutsche”; “Welsh” is similarly contrasted with “Cymraeg”. Occasionally a people accept the endonym: Scottish Gaels adopted the Latin word “Scoti” for themselves, for fascinating but obscure reasons. Slurs are usually exonyms.

The status of an identity group can be estimated by its success in achieving a wider consensus against the use of pejoratives about their identity. The best example is “black” as approbative and the taboo status of the N\* pejorative, except when used affirmatively in banter between black males. The endonym “black” has achieved wide approval as the term for persons of African origin in Europe and the Americas and has been very effective in promoting a wide discourse. It now excludes person of Asian origin. Speaking the N\* word aloud, even in reported speech, has led to loss of employment by some academics. Yet the “N\*” word continues to be the neutral adjective for “black” in Spanish. The relation between identity words and their referents changes very rapidly. “Queer” used to be a slur against homosexuals but is now approbative within the LGBT+ identity. Most of us are not sure if “Eskimo” is pejorative. BBC worklife guidance (2017) on gender-based language chooses to identify a class of victims who need affirmation, by contrast with another class of perpetrators having a position of power or criminal behaviour who need to be silenced. BBC Radio 4 regularly uses the word “misogynist” but never its partner “misandrist”. “Gendered power imbalance” is used by Ofcom to favour women, but it does not consider the narcissistically-vulnerable males discovered in paper two to have a “gendered power imbalance”. The words “white supremacist” and “troll” are used freely by broadcasters and even judges, who do not usually ask whether the person thus named feels slurred. While the Ku Klux Klan in the USA chose to call itself “white supremacist”, the number of people choosing that as an endonym in the UK is probably quite small. “Troll” has multiple etymological ancestors: a fishing method; a man who seeks casual gay sex; an ogre in Norse mythology who turns to stone in daylight; a mischievous internet user. Its use by journalists is therefore ambiguous but moderately pejorative.

Slurs imply an ethnonym so they differ from general purpose swear words. The latter often refer to bodily functions (e.g. S\*), or depraved sexual acts (F\*). Blasphemous swear words were recognised in previous centuries. A complaint of blasphemy is unlikely to be sustained in the UK now, though the

concept persists in Denmark and Quebec. Indeed, we have forgotten that “cripes” and “jeez” were once mincing oaths, as “sugar!” is currently. Swear words may create minor offence when used alone, but result in criminal conviction if used with an ethnonym (e.g. F\*J\*).

## 2. Method

This is part three of a research series on identity politics and uses a lexicological method. The lexical sources here are principally an Ofcom survey and Wiktionary. Part one of this series (Conduit, 2022a) used a clinical psychology method to evaluate grandiose narcissism in seven prominent identities in the UK. Part two (Conduit, 2022b) looked for evidence of vulnerable narcissism in lower-class white males, but found this demographic grossly under-reported.

The broadcasting regulator Ofcom has stratified pejorative words and recommended that “highly offensive words” be not broadcast, even in indirect speech. We will follow this here and try to refer obliquely to the ethnolinguistic community thus disparaged. Ipsos-MORI (2016) were commissioned and sampled 368 respondents “from a variety of locations and backgrounds”. The target list of about 186 words are predominantly English; a few words that are slurs in Indian languages make it into the list, but of the highly pejorative Arabic words below, only “kafir/ kufaar” makes it. The Ofcom list of vulnerable ethnicities has been extended to include slurs against Chinese and Arabs. Pejoratives about Irish were common two generations ago but are now hardly mentioned. Romanies remain unpopular in many countries, but have achieved high recognition by Ofcom, with three exonyms tabooed as “highly offensive”, including the erroneous attribution of being “Egyptian”. Pejoratives against Poles, who are the UK’s second language group are not mentioned, nor are Bengalis, Romanians or Somalis. We suspect that these communities have not yet shouted loudly enough. Ofcom makes power and victim-perpetrator attributions: it allows some but not all ethnicities to achieve complainant status and be recognised as having hurt feelings, and assigns perpetrator status and a position of power to others who have low power.

### Seven identities

Paper one found that narcissistic features were quite low in Black Lives Matter, LGBT+ and Disabled identities, moderate in Scots and Israeli identities, and high in British Asian Muslim and Women. These seven identities had been selected because of their success in achieving favourable reporting. All of the seven identities in paper one had a few pejoratives. Scots have general purpose pejoratives including numpty, lavvy head, glaikit, nincompoop, teuchter, but only one well-known pejorative for English people, “Sassenach”, which was in common use but is now less frequent. It is the Gaelic word for “Saxon”, similar to Welsh “Saes”, so might be better translated as “lowlander”. Modern Hebrew has general purpose pejoratives, e.g. shtu-yot, debbil, fri’er, Ashkenazi, Cushi and Marokaki. Anti-Arab slurs such as “Arabush”, may be minced to the euphemism “price tag”. There are older pejoratives in Yiddish, such as “goy”, “shikze” and “shmuck” that refer explicitly to Gentiles. Black people seem to use rather few pejoratives towards other ethnicities, at least in written or video-recorded circulation:

“honky” and “whitey” are used occasionally. In the LGBT+ identity there is a long history of gay code words from the times of illegality. Polari included fairly neutral words such as “cottage”, “trade”, “zhoosh”, “palome” and “omi”, but “TBH” (‘to be had’) was pejorative. A “troll” describes a bi-curious male and “trolling” is somewhat pejorative by contrast with “cruising”. The term “homophobia” needs clarification. In Greek it means “fear of the same sex” and until recently referred to heterosexual fear of penetration, including anal rape in prison or the navy. In Freudian terms it refers to the usual, heterosexual, resolution of the Oedipus Complex. The Greek etymology is overridden by its recent use as “unreasonable dislike of those of homosexual orientation” so the fear sense is lost.

The language used about people with learning difficulties in the past rapidly became slurs: “idiot”, “imbecile”, “moron”, “low grade”, “defective” etc. (Henderson Taylor, 1974). Names for people with physical disabilities also often became pejorative - “spastic”, “cripple”, “epileptic” - even though these terms were adopted by sufferer support groups. This process of an inoffensive word becoming pejorative is a form of semantic drift known as pejoration, the opposite of the euphemism treadmill mentioned above. Pejoration was interrupted by the principle of normalisation, developed in Scandinavia by Bengt Nirje and expanded by Wolf Wolfensberger (1999). A neat separation of the impairment and the person has been highly successful. Disabled people do not often slur able-bodied, but the term “neurotypical” may be used somewhat pejoratively by people with autism. The following extract shows how the “neurodivergent” author Chris Packham’s (2015) way of speaking of himself in the third person and crowding in sensory adjectives may make “neurotypical” people initially uncomfortable.

“The cinnabar caterpillars that had trundled so frenetically in their exotic ochre and black stripes whilst annihilating fronds of smelly ragwort had been emulsified and remained only as a brown soup corrupting the bottom of the jar. The last two-legged tadpole, which had bravely outlived so many hundreds of its spawn fellows since March, was now struggling through a mat of choking algae to desperately gulp for warm air. This year metamorphosis would be understood only from books, not witnessed in nature. A coiled bronze bangle gleamed, a tailless slow-worm, too heavily petted, perhaps too long confined. Fifteen minnows, a tortoiseshell butterfly, three male smooth newts and too many garden snails were already ‘gone’ and the worm jar was ominously still.”

### **British Asian Muslims**

This identity scored eight out of a possible nine signs of grandiose collective narcissism in paper one. Narcissism is contrasted with healthy self-esteem because it seeks to diminish the worth of out-groups. The Disabled identity is the clearest counter-example for narcissism, having been successful in promoting self-esteem though Paralympics, which have few pejorative effects on able-bodied Olympians. A search was made for pejoratives in the web-site of the Council of Muslims of Britain. The lexicon of Islam has many Arabic loanwords to describe disfavoured people, including: *kufir*, *munafiq*, *ridda*, *messianist*, *jahudi* (infidel, blasphemy, apostasy, hypocrite, Christian, Jew). The word *kufir/ kafir/ kufaar* above is the most damning, as it has sometimes meant “infidels who deserve death,

which glorifies the killer”. Greek expatriates remember the Ottoman Turkish form *gawur* to describe the citizens of Smyrna who were burnt alive. There are also pejoratives in Mirpuri, e.g. *paagal* ‘crazy’. The slur with the most severe behavioural implications is *gonimoter maal* (‘public property’ or ‘war booty’ in Bengali). Religious leaders in Pakistan during Operation Searchlight in 1971 gave that status to Bengali women, and at least 200,000 were raped.

The list of most offensive words from Ipsos-MORI includes the first morpheme of the country name Pakistan. That lexical element illustrates rapid change in the social determination of slurs. It means “pure” in Urdu and was chosen as approbative when the country was founded in 1947. It is used with ironic stress by Salman Rushdie (1981) in his novel “Midnight’s Children” to refer to gruesome historical events. In 2021 broadcasters decided that its casual use by Yorkshire cricketers was highly offensive. Ipsos-MORI had found that first generation immigrants from south Asia recall its use of them in the same way. Although there are dozens of mildly pejorative ethnonyms, many brought in by the US military, few have the force of this P\* word. “Brit”, “Yank” or “Iti”, even with spitting emphasis do not become very offensive, even during a protracted bitter war.

Forceful expletives have properties of breathing and stress that are probably more important than their morphology and etymology. The word “f\*\*king” is extremely widely used, has little connection with depraved sex, but has characteristic stress: “fùk ñ!” Similarly, the word “w\*\*ker!”, used frequently by football supporters, has a pattern of falling pitch, a velar stop, emphatic release of breath and rising pitch: “w ànkA!” (For want of a better transcription, a grave accent is used here for falling pitch, and an acute for rising pitch). The effect is similar to the snorting of an enraged bull. Broadcasters considered Rafiq’s use of “Zimbo” to his interlocutor Gary Ballance as acceptable. This suggests that the complainant has to have some power over media reporting to be seen as a credible victim. Tobacco farmers of European origin who emigrated from Zimbabwe are a small group who do not command media attention.

### **Women as an identity**

“Women” as an identity statement has very high prominence in broadcast media. The degree to which its spokespersons can claim the support of the biological female half of the population is unknown. The identity “women” scored eight of a possible nine signs of grandiose collective narcissism in paper one. There are many attributive nouns used by women’s groups that refer to disliked adversaries that are currently considered acceptable by broadcasters. “Misogynist” is now very frequently used but might be considered pejorative. A Google search in April 22 found 94.1 million hits for this, higher than the abstract noun “misogyny” (61M) and “-ism” (438K). Current usage is consistent with etymology: “hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against, women”, from Ancient Greek μισέω + γυνή (‘I hate’ + ‘woman’). Its coordinates and antonyms misandry, philogyny and gynophobia are hardly ever used. As μισέω, ‘hatred’ is central to the definition, lexicology should find clarification of the negative emotion. Gilmore (2001) says it is the “male malady” and therefore presumably diagnosable by doctors. In his chapter on “Malevolent Maidens”, Gilmore says, “Misogynistic fear centres on the flesh that

makes woman man's opposite and renders her unknowable to him. Misogynists tremble before the bodily labyrinth: veins, intestines, sexual organs. With her lunar cycles and genital effluvia, woman destroys the idealist's illusions of a pristine universe. But physical repugnance is only part of the picture. For many misogynists revulsion grows into an indictment not of feminine flesh but of her spirit, her intellect, her character and will. For the committed woman-hater, woman is malignant not only in body, but in her intentions toward man ...". This author uses very high-flown language appropriate to literary criticism. Although Gilmore seems to equate hatred with fear and postulates a class of men with a pathology, this is difficult to commensurate with forensic clinical psychology and equally difficult to analyse lexically.

The unclear presumed perverse motive is discussed by Pinson Wrisley (2021), who notes that "feminist theory ... lacks a comprehensive theory of misogyny" and diagnoses the problem in three noun phrases: "the conflation of misogyny with sexism, the elision of misogyny's affective elements and the supplanting of misogyny with gendered violence". Pinson Wrisley seems to see unnamed authors in a power struggle using "conflation", "elision" and "supplanting", so wants to reinsert an emotion  $\mu\iota\sigma\acute{\epsilon}\omega$ . Other authors speak of a "desire to punish", which is clear, but qualified by "usually unconscious", which then precludes a clear referent. The free dictionary introduces its own quirk with a child development model to a well-defined pathology: "an extreme dislike of females, frequently based upon unhappy experience or upbringing". It is extremely difficult to find semantics of this presumed "hatred of women" which could be compared with forensic psychology models.

A psychological account might start with the reproductive drive in humans. Male sexuality, which tends to be directed towards multiple partners, frequently has negative effects on women, so that "misogynism<sup>(3)</sup>" at base could be a dismissive approach to sexual conquests. The fear component might be connected with sexually transmitted infections. Fear of contracting syphilis has historically been seen as a reason for self-aggrandising hostile acts. Adolf Hitler had extreme difficulty in consummating a relationship with a woman and a substantial part of *Mein Kampf* is about syphilis (Post, 2003). These hypotheses are hard to find in feminist writing, so a good psychological theory of motive is absent. The next approach therefore is to specify a set of actions of "misogyny/ -ism".

Lexical semantics analyses words and their meanings into sets, for example by Venn diagrams, and relations such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy, polysemy and coordination. If we try to apply such tools to publications such as Dickle and Evolvi (2021) on "networked misogyny", it is extremely hard to find such sets, synonym/ antonym etc. and named authors. They conclude: "the manosphere is not a homogeneous network but a cluster of misogynist networks characterized by different viewpoints and degrees of violence, and entangled with racist, homophobic, and far-right ideologies". These questions arise for lexicography: can a horizontally-linked network of independent nodes ever be "homogeneous"? If the "degrees of violence" may vary from 0% to 100%, can a common characteristic be assigned? Is the "entangled cluster" a root ball, a spoil heap or a puddle?

Wikipedia (24/05/22) redirects searches “misogynism” to “misogyny”, defined as “hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women. It is a form of sexism that keeps women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the societal roles of patriarchy”. The lexicology places three synonyms in a subset of “sexism”. The latter may be a subset or target of “patriarchy”. Wikipedia continues: “an example of misogyny is violence against women, which includes domestic violence and, in its most extreme forms, misogynist terrorism and femicide. Misogyny also often operates through sexual harassment, coercion, and psychological techniques aimed at controlling women, and by legally or socially excluding women from full citizenship. In some cases, misogyny rewards women for accepting an inferior status.”

The sets and hierarchy seem to have changed, but the mass nouns remain similar (in bold, with identifier letter superscripts) as components of “misogyny”, starting with **sexual harassment** <sup>(b)</sup>. “Harassment” has two distinct meanings: a feeling, and a cavalry method (Conduit, 2020). In the case of *R v Love*, the accused had spent a whole night texting his former partner after she had broken off their relationship. Love’s obvious anger would be viewed in Kohut’s theory (paper two) as the emotion appropriate to narcissistic hurt. His texts were shown to police and prosecution followed. Lacking psychological training, the court decided that the presumed hurt feelings of the woman made her the victim of a criminal act. It supplied military metaphors to the accused’s monologue, such as “you organised a campaign” and “you bombarded her”. It sentenced him to prison. The crime of harassment is discussed in Conduit (2020) as the paradigm of a “sexist transitive verb”. It involves a discourse analysis of this kind:

{HIS}	{WORDS}	{CAUSE +ED}	{HER}	{HARASSMENT}
	(MILITARY ACTS)		(FEELINGS)	

A transitive effect of male words on female feelings is also found in **Coercion** <sup>(c)</sup>. Gillian Guy (2015) of the Citizens’ Advice Bureau justified a law making this a criminal offence entirely by examples of a man trying to restrict the spending of female partner. “**Controlling**” is a near synonym. The Coercion law has hardly been used in that way; it would take a particularly angry woman to seek imprisonment of her ex after arguments about money. **Excluding from full citizenship** <sup>(d)</sup> presumably refers to the slow reduction of suffrage requirements - property-ownership, gender and age. In the year 1265 a small percentage of property owners had a vote; in 1921 all men over 21 and some property-owning women over 30 acquired a vote; and in 1931 universal suffrage for all over-21s was achieved. Is “Exclusion for full citizenship” now historical? **Misogynist terrorism** <sup>(e)</sup> involves recursive definitions: “terrorism motivated by the desire to punish women ... an extreme form of misogyny ... the policing of women’s compliance to patriarchal gender expectations ... act of violence to induce fear”. It is hardly analysable. **Femicide** <sup>(f)</sup> is etymologically from Latin ‘woman + slay’ (cide) “because of gender, especially misogynist”. A *mens rea* is introduced here, but with an unfathomable mental state, whereas forensic psychology finds the most common reason for spouse murders is sexual jealousy. Recursion is again present, well-known to computer specialists as a cause of crashes. It also means that if a woman were

throttled during theft of her necklace, the motive would be “femicide” and not “theft”. **Domestic violence** <sup>(g)</sup> is the next mass noun. This is currently treated in UK law as a first cause, not a phase in domestic arguments, of a crime in which the victim is female, although the VAWG charity is now obliged to recognise some male victims. In reality the boundary from angry argument to exchange of blows is usually first crossed by the female partner. Frieze (2008), a feminist professor was reporting this three decades ago and Archer (2002) reported 82 studies in all of which women hit first and more frequently. **Violence against women** <sup>(h)</sup> in public settings is infrequent; the group suffering the highest level of violence in public is young Afro-Caribbean males. The noun phrase in (h) again ignores motive, which could be theft, rage or reckless driving. This group of mass nouns (b) to (h) form a subordinate set of “misogyny” (a), without making it any clearer.

Lexicological analysis of the <-ism> suffix is the next strategy. The <-y> suffix would usually build on a stand-alone morpheme, e.g. “mess (N) + -y → messy” and “run (V) + -y → runny”. “Misog-” is not a stem, so analysis of “misogyny” is difficult. The less frequent <-ism> suffix will be analysed below. Wiktionary gives six possible classes. Exemplars are used, as they are easier to follow than the rather wordy class descriptions:

- 1 baptism, magnetism - a state resulting from a verb
- 2 Protestantism, Congregationalism - a school of thought
- 3 atheism, heroism, feminism - action or state of a class of persons
- 4 Gallicism, archaism - quirk of language
- 5 speciesism, ableism - discrimination based on a sense of superiority
- 6 rheumatism, automatism - syndrome, disease

“Misogynism” does not seem to be in class (1) or (4). To be (2), a school of thought it would need texts and spokespersons. If it were (3), a behaviour, it would be in the same class as “feminism”, but class members would need to own the title as an endonym. If were (6), it might be like botulism or epileptic automatism - biological and wholly involuntary. This leaves (5) - discrimination based on a sense of superiority. So “misogynism” would seem to be a class of discriminatory acts, with hints of biological disorder and quirkiness. A corollary of (5) is that the act has to be from a position of superiority, which excludes incels, discussed next.

“Incel” is an endonym expressing dissatisfaction by some white males about their inability to achieve a heterosexual relationship. The Wikipedia entry (24/05/22) for it includes this sentence: “discussions in incel forums are often characterized by resentment and hatred, misogyny, misanthropy, self-pity, self-loathing, racism, a sense of entitlement to sex, endorsement of violence against women and [against] sexually active people”. There appear to be ten depersonalising mass nouns in this one sentence, with no sentence attributed to the persons. Instead, they are referenced with ten pejoratives that readers might perceive egocentrically as causes of harm to themselves. The NASUWT added the term “simp”, derived from incel culture, as a term of abuse for other boys who were respectful of women. Should Wikipedia and the BBC slur incels, who are at high risk of suicide, as well as harming



others?

The lexical referent of misogyny/ -ism as threatening non-sentient mass nouns is clearest in chemical metaphors such as “toxic masculinity” and “vitriol”. Dany Cotton (2017) on taking leadership of the London Fire Brigade immediately chose to make negative remarks about manliness: “We have to change that perception of a six foot hairy-arsed bloke who can kick a door down.” She elicited a large number of objections, which she labelled as “vitriol and spite”. Cotton was then in place during the Grenfell Tower fire and retired soon afterwards.

The next area which might elucidate lexicology of “misogyny” is the attempt to make it a “hate crime”. The Crown Prosecution Service in the UK says this: “the term ‘hate crime’ can be used to describe a range of criminal behaviour where the perpetrator is motivated by hostility or demonstrates hostility towards the victim’s disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity”. These aspects of a person’s identity are known as ‘protected characteristics’. Slocum (2017) reasserts the principle that “the legal meaning is the same as the ordinary meaning”. Accordingly, the CPS says it “offers no legal definition of hostility so we use the everyday understanding of the word which includes ill-will, spite, contempt, prejudice, unfriendliness, antagonism, resentment and dislike.” “Ill-will” is a near synonym for “hate”. The three terms “spite”, “contempt” and “prejudice” combine an additional attribute, of being in a superior position. Two are relatively light adaptive emotions - “resentment” and “sense of unfairness”; voting in an election is hardly a hate crime and might involve these two emotions. “Unfriendliness” is also a moderate emotion. The CPS has only dictionary entries to rely on, as emotions have proved extremely difficult to define scientifically - except for two: fear and anger. Many prosecutions, notably those the Community Security Trust claims as evidence of “antisemitism”, are of people who have briefly expressed anger and bad language; evidence in court of an enduring underlying belief was not required. They are very old in evolutionary terms, recruiting the sympathetic-adrenal-medulla-medullary system, usually simplified as “Fight or Flight”. Terror and rage have a short duration because they are very exhausting. Further muddle and probable false imprisonment have been avoided by rejection of expansion of the already unscientific term “hate crime”. The House of Lords (2022) still voted to make “misogyny” a crime after the Law Commission rejected this expansion. The main teachers’ union in the UK, the NASUWT, opted to present its women members as “victims of misogyny” in the run-up to their conference on 16th April 22. It reported a survey of 1586 women teachers in which 72% described themselves in this way. The attributions were to pupils (58%), senior leadership team (45%), other teachers (42%), headteacher (30%) parents (27%). This victim statement received wide coverage, while the actual vote, to “press Government for compulsory lessons about sexism”, was hardly mentioned.

The feminist lexicon of threat words expands rapidly, with the abrupt emergence of “Gilead” (♯) in 2022. In the “Handmaid’s Tale” novel and TV series, the few fertile women are made the property of senior males. Fertility has declined because of inorganic farming and radioactivity, or as result of sin. “Welcome to Gilead” (Population Matters web-site, retrieved Nov 21) says it is “exposing how

politicians across the world are justifying the restriction of women's reproductive rights because of fears of population decline . . . a toxic (<sup>k</sup>) mix of nationalism, economic anxiety, sexism, racism and contempt for human rights which can combine to drive measures such as abortion bans, restrictions on contraception access and political pressure on women to have more children" . . . "The Chinese government aggressively perpetuates traditional gender norms and reduces women to their roles as dutiful wives, mothers and baby breeders in the home, to minimize social unrest and give birth to future generations of skilled workers". Here is a cluster of about 15 mass nouns with threat qualities for women and denied sentence for the other party. This cluster is quite odd: a coup by right-wing Christians in atheist China is improbable; Population Matters has been accusing China of forced sterilisation until recently; China's small family policy had a 76% approval rating when it was discontinued; the total fertility rate has remained unchanged at 1.70 births per woman. So, is "Gilead" a new slur?

This question must therefore be asked: is the word "misogynist" merely a slur? Julia Gillard in her speech in 2012 told the Australian opposition leader that he "needed a mirror to see what a misogynist looks like". Gillard's use of classical language sounds more educated than the Anglo Saxon words for body parts and functions that were being applied to her, but is it any more meaningful? She was speaking from a position of power, with great access to broadcast TV. Could Tony Abbott's supporters require Youtube to take the video down as gender-discriminatory hate speech? Should Ofcom interview some lower-class white males to see if they perceive "misogynist" as "seriously offensive"?

### 3. Conclusion

The review of slurs listed by Ofcom taboos a list of pejorative exonyms for broadcasters. The inclusion of Romanies and Arabs show how an identity group has to achieve credibility as an oppressed group before its view of offensive words becomes generally accepted. Bangladeshis, Poles, Greeks and lower-class white males remain of low visibility to broadcasters.

The British Asian Muslim identity has many pejorative terms, though most are Arabic and not well-known in English. The terms "gonimoter maal" and "gawur" could be considered severe slurs as they have resulted in murder or rape. They are not recognised by Ofcom. The other five identities had low levels of slurs towards out groups.

"Misogyny" is currently used freely by broadcasters. Thorough lexicology here failed to find a credible theory of "hatred of women" or a set of credible actions. The preceding lexicology has failed to find a psychological theory of "hatred of women". Acts that have been advanced as components of misogyny/-ism have unclear referents. These actions are mass nouns that combine threat, non-sentence, pathology, doctrine and quirk, often criminal, sometimes comparable to harmful chemicals.

Although women historically were often able to empathise with men, even when they were behaving badly, current terminology removes sentence from the adversary and precludes empathy and dialogue. Ofcom could consider inviting lower class white males to consider whether "misogynist" and nine other words are offensive.

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